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Hutch Looks to Pratt for New Baseball Coach

Ryan Schmidt has accepted an offer to become the new Hutchinson Community College baseball coach, the Blue Dragon Athletic Department announced on Tuesday evening.

The hire is pending HCC Board of Trustees approval. The next scheduled board meeting is July 19.

“Ryan will be a wonderful fit to our program,” HCC athletic director Randy Stange said. “Ryan is a tremendous young coach who has a plan to keep our baseball program in contention for conference and regional championships.”

Schmidt becomes the 10th head coach in Blue Dragon baseball history, which dates back to 1975. Schmidt takes over for Kyle Crookes, who led the Blue Dragons for eight seasons and was part of the program for 12 seasons.

Schmidt takes over a Blue Dragon program that shared the 2012 Jayhawk West championship and advanced all the way to the to the Chanute Sub-Regional championship game against eventual regional champion Neosho County. The 2012 Blue Dragons posted the sixth 40-win season in team history, going 40-17.

“I am extremely excited and extremely humbled,” Schmidt said. “This is a great opportunity for me. Kyle left some big shoes to fill there.”

Schmidt comes to HCC after five seasons at Pratt Community College. His record at Pratt is 107-172. Schmidt had to rebuild the Beaver baseball program upon his arrival, consistently building both talent level and facilities each year. In addition to growing success on the field, Schmidt’s teams continually improved in the classroom as well. This past season, Pratt baseball’s aggregate GPA was 3.10.

This past season, Schmidt led Pratt to a fourth-place finish in the Jayhawk West and then stunned top-seeded Johnson County to win the Overland Park sub-regional. The Beavers dropped a pair of one-run games in the Region VI/Central District championship at Lawrence-Dumont Stadium in Wichita. The Beavers finished the 2012 season with a 33-26 record, tying the program record for wins.

Schmidt was named the 2012 Jayhawk West Coach of the Year and the upgrade in talent was evident with one first-team NJCAA All-American, two All-Region VI selections and six all-Jayhawk West players, including the Jayhawk West Player of the Year.

“It was very gratifying to all your hard work pay off (at Pratt),” Schmidt said. “With the payoff we had this year, there was a lot of blood and sweat that went into that. It was good for me to build a program from the ground up and have it become what we envisioned. It was a great experience for me.”

Before Pratt, Schmidt served as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator at Barton Community College from 2004 to 2007. He was an assistant coach and intern for the entire athletic department at Fort Hays State University from 2002 to 2004.

A graduate of Valley Center High School, Schmidt started his collegiate

playing career at Barton County, earning first-team All-Jayhawk West honors in 1998. He then transferred to the University of Kansas where he was a team captain in 2000, academic all-Big XII second team in 2000 and a Jayhawk Scholar in 1999 and 2000.

Schmidt earned his degree in secondary education from Kansas in 2000 and earned his Masters in Administration of Sport from Wichita State University in 2003.

Schmidt and his wife Melissa have three children – Owen (6), Josiah (4) and Ellie (2) – with child No. 4 due in August.

HCC Athletics Steve Carpenter