

Thursday, January 29, 2026

Bowling Green Ballpark

### **2026 Staff Revealed, Valenzuela Jr. Returns for Fourth Season**

*Bowling Green welcomes new coach, Six returning staffers for upcoming campaign*

**Bowling Green, Kentucky** – The Bowling Green Hot Rods are excited to announce the field staff for the upcoming 2026 season. Rafael Valenzuela Jr. returns to Bowling Green Ballpark for his fourth season, alongside with six other familiar staffers and one new member.

Valenzuela Jr. has experienced a vast amount of success during his time in Bowling Green. During his three previous seasons, Valenzuela Jr. has led the Hot Rods to a 213 and 172 record, including a 2024 SAL Championship and another playoff appearance in 2025.

His tenure with Bowling Green came after three seasons as a manager in the Tampa Bay Rays system. He spent the 2019 season with the GCL Rays. In 2021, he won FCL Manager of the Year, leading the FCL Rays to a championship. Valenzuela followed with another division title with the FCL Rays in 2022. The Hot Rods skipper played four seasons of Minor League Baseball, ending his playing career in the Astros system in 2013. The Nogales, Arizona, native attending the University of Arizona, batting .277 over 39 games during his final season in 2009.

Perry Roth returns for his third season as the Hot Rods bench coach. He first joined the Hot Rods in 2024 after spending two seasons as the hitting coach for the Single-A Charleston RiverDogs. Prior to his time in the Rays organization, Roth also recorded more than 20 years coaching at the collegiate level, with stops at Birmingham Southern, Illinois State, and the University of Alabama Birmingham.

After his addition to the staff late last season, pitching coach Ryan Pennell joins the Hot Rods staff for his first full season. Pennell handled the pitching coach duties from July through September last season, helping the Hot Rods make their final playoff preparations. The former Hot Rods pitcher rejoins Bowling Green after ending his playing career at Bowling Green ballpark in 2015. Pennell worked his way up through the Rays organization, holding positions in the performance science and scouting departments.

# Hot Rods **PRESS RELEASE**

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The newest addition to the Hot Rods staff is hitting coach Brett Schneider. He started his coaching career as a student assistant coach, and eventually Director of Baseball Operations, at the University of North Florida. After working with Florida Atlantic from 2016 to 2019, Schneider joined the Seattle Mariners organization as the hitting coach in the Dominican Summer League. He spent 2022 and 2023 in the Arizona Complex League, leading the team to a league-leading season in home runs with a .263 batting average. Schneider spent 2024 and 2025 with the Single-A Charleston RiverDogs.

Alongside the Hot Rods skipper, athletic trainer Ruben Santiago also prepares for his fourth season in Bowling Green. 2026 marks his 11<sup>th</sup> year as an athletic trainer within the Rays organization. Santiago began his Rays tenure in the Gulf Coast League, and after two seasons, moved on to the Princeton Rays for three seasons. In 2021, he was in the Florida Complex League and spent one season with the Single-A Charleston RiverDogs before coming to Bowling Green in 2023.

Grace Cullen enters her second season with the Hot Rods as the strength and conditioning coach. She began her career with the University of Evansville in 2019. After a year-long stint as a personal trainer, Cullen joined the Cleveland Guardians as a strength and conditioning intern in 2021. In 2022, she took over as a strength and conditioning coach in the St. Louis Cardinals system. In 2024, she spent the year as assistant strength and conditioning coach with Queens University of Charlotte before joining the Rays in 2025.

Camden Allen starts his ninth season with the Hot Rods and his first as home clubhouse manager. He started his journey with the Hot Rods as a bat boy, eventually taking over visiting clubhouse duties, including winning SAL Visiting Clubhouse Manager of the Year in 2022. In 2023, Allen was promoted to assistant home clubhouse manager and now takes over as the sole home clubhouse manager in 2026.

The first chance to see the Hot Rods in action is on Opening Day, Friday, April 3, when Bowling Green takes on the Winston-Salem Dash at Bowling Green Ballpark with 6:35 PM CT first pitch. Fans can secure their seats for future home Hot Rods games by calling (270) 901-2121, visiting the Bowling Green Ballpark box office during normal business hours, or going to [www.bghotrods.com](http://www.bghotrods.com).

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**Hot Rods Baseball**