

# PRESS RELEASE



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Bowling Green Ballpark

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Rays, Hot Rods Announce 2021 Coaching Staff Led by Jeff Smith**

*Smith becomes seventh manager in Hot Rods history*

**BOWLING GREEN BALLPARK (Bowling Green, KY)** – The Bowling Green Hot Rods, in conjunction with the Tampa Bay Rays, are excited to announce the club’s 2021 coaching staff. Jeff Smith will be the Hot Rods new manager while Jim Paduch (pitching coach) joins coaches Brady North and Skeeter Barnes on staff. Brian Newman returns as the club’s Athletic Trainer while Jordan Brown will be the club’s Strength and Conditioning Coach.

Jeff Smith, 46, becomes the seventh manager in Hot Rods history and third in three seasons (Reinaldo Ruiz, 2019, and Craig Albernaz, 2018). Smith led the Charlotte Stone Crabs (the Rays former High-A affiliate in the Florida State League) to the league’s best record while earning Baseball America’s title of Best Managerial Prospect in the FSL for the 2019 season, the second time in his career he won the award. Before joining Tampa Bay, Smith spent two seasons as the Minnesota Twins first base coach and managed at three levels for the Twins, including four years for the AA New Britain Rock Cats. The Akron, Ohio native has a career managerial record of 868-806 (.519) over 12 years and owns a 686-385 (.561) over five seasons at High-A. Smith was drafted by the Twins in 1995 and played in the minors until 2002, finishing out his playing career with the Red Sox (2003) and Texas Rangers (2004) before starting his coaching career.

“We are excited to welcome Jeff and the rest of the staff to Bowling Green and show them how special a place this is. It is very special to see our schedule and staff coming together as we get to welcome professional baseball back to Bowling Green Ballpark.” Said Eric C. Leach, Hot Rods Chief Operating Officer and General Manager.

Jim Paduch, 38, joins Smith as the Hot Rods new pitching coach for the 2021 season. Paduch spent 2018 and 2019 on the Princeton Rays coaching staff after 11 years playing in the professional ranks. He took the field for parts of three seasons in the Rays system with the Montgomery Biscuits and Durham Bulls and was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in the 12<sup>th</sup> rounds of the 2003 Amateur Draft. Paduch was supposed to report to Bowling Green in 2020 as the team’s pitching coach prior to the MiLB season being canceled.

Brady North, 29, will coach on Smith’s staff after spending the 2019 season with the GCL Rays, his first time coaching at the professional level. Born in Nashville, TN, North played parts of two seasons as a professional in the Frontier League. Brady served as the Assistant National Hitting Coordinator for Factory Athletics and previously coached at his alma mater, Cumberland University (NAIA), where he earned a Master’s degree in Sport and Exercise Science while playing for the baseball team.

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Skeeter Barnes, 63, joins the Hot Rods after spending over a decade as the Rays' Outfield and Baserunning Coordinator. Barnes managed the Southwest Michigan Devil Rays (a former member of the Midwest League) in 2006 and the Lakeland Tigers (Florida State League) in 2000. Other coaching stops include the Toledo Mud Hens, West Michigan Whitecaps, Indianapolis Indians, Orlando Rays, and Montgomery Biscuits. Barnes enjoyed a successful playing career, logging over 350 MLB games with the Reds, Tigers, Expos, and Cardinals. His number (00) was retired by the Nashville Sounds in the early 1990's.

Jordan Brown enters his second season with Tampa Bay and takes over as the Hot Rods' Conditioning Coach. Brown spent two seasons with the St. Louis Cardinals in a similar capacity with the Johnson City Cardinals (2016) and State College Spikes (2017). Brown also filled in for the Hot Rods late in the 2019 season into the playoffs.

Finally, Brian Newman returns for his third season as the Hot Rods' Athletic Trainer. Newman, the last remaining member of the 2018 Championship field staff, begins his ninth season (10<sup>th</sup> year) with the Tampa Bay Rays after coming to Bowling Green in 2018 following three seasons with Hudson Valley.

On Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, the Hot Rods are hosting the Bowling Green Bourbon and Brewfest Inaugural St. Patty's Day Party. The event will be held at Bowling Green Ballpark from 6PM - 10 PM with free admission. Guests can enjoy live music by Highway Natives, green beer, Irish-themed food, outdoor games and more. Must be 21 years of age or older to attend.

The Hot Rods begin the 2021 season on the road with a six-game series in Greenville, NC against the Greenville Drive, but return to Bowling Green Ballpark for the 2021 Home Opener on May 11<sup>th</sup> against the Asheville Tourists. The only way to GUARANTEE tickets for the 2021 season is by having a ticket package. For more information on the Hot Rods socially distance ticket options, visit [www.bghotrods.com](http://www.bghotrods.com) or call 270-901-2121.

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Hot Rods Baseball