



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Schlact Agrees to Return to Dugout for 2022 Campaign & Beyond** *PaddleHeads Retain Schlact as Manager in 5 Year Contract Extension*

**Missoula, MT.** – The Missoula PaddleHeads Professional Baseball Club took on a new challenge during the 2021 season its first season as an independent franchise. It could not have been a more successful first season taking on the new format as the PaddleHeads would take home the 2021 Pioneer League Championship its sixth title in franchise history. Missoula would do so in dominant fashion finishing with the league's best record at (65-31). The PaddleHeads would also lead the league in home runs, strikeouts, ERA, and fielding percentage. Leading the PaddleHeads on the field night in and night out was first-year manager Michael Schlact.

The Georgia native's first season at the helm in Missoula proved to be a particularly rewarding one as Schlact would claim his first league title in his coaching career. Schlact would also take home the Manager of the Year award in the Pioneer League for his efforts in 2021 for the first time in his career. It is fitting that this will be far from the last chapter for Schlact in Missoula as the former Rangers farmhand will return to the dugout for the 2022 season as Manager. Furthermore, Schlact has also agreed to a 5-year contract extension that will keep Schlact in the Garden City through the 2028 season.

The journey as both a player and coach for Schlact has taken a lot of twists and turns over the last 17 years. Injuries as a player, and an unprecedented circumstance with the pandemic surely presented numerous challenges. It all came together for Schlact however in 2021 as the PaddleHeads would claim their sixth league title. Schlact could not be happier to be returning to his new home in the Garden City.

"I can't begin to describe what an honor it is to be returning to Missoula," Schlact said. "The trust that owners Peter & Susan Davis have placed in me to help lead this organization is humbling and a true blessing. Being able to collaborate with President Matt Ellis and the rest of the front office makes my job not even feel like a job at all. This organization is like family to me, and the town of Missoula feels like a second home. We accomplished so much in year one that I can't wait for the 2022 season to start."

Schlact's professional baseball journey began as a player after being drafted in the third round of the MLB June Amateur Draft by the Texas Rangers in 2004 as a high school prospect at Wheeler High School in Marietta, Georgia. Schlact would go on to spend seven seasons in the Rangers organization making 130 career starts as a pitcher in affiliated baseball advancing as high as AA with the Frisco RoughRiders. Injuries would take their toll on Schlact over his career however as a pair of shoulder surgeries would cut his playing career short.

After the conclusion of his playing career, Schlact would begin his coaching career with the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks of the American Association as a pitching coach in 2015. Schlact would remain in that role until 2017 when he would be promoted to the position of manager late in the season. Schlact would remain in his role as manager with the Hawks till the 2019 season when he would resign to accept a role with the Brewers organization as a pitching coach.

The pandemic would present a challenge for Schlact in his coaching career as the affiliated minor league baseball season would be cancelled in 2020. However, the opportunity for Schlact to manage once again with the newly branded PaddleHeads would also present itself the next season. It was not Schlact's first appearance in the Pioneer League as he spent time with the Rocky Mountain Vibes as a pitching coach while with the Brewers organization. PaddleHeads President Matt Ellis is thrilled that Schlact will be continuing his time in the Pioneer League with the PaddleHeads for years to come.

“We are honored that Michael Schlact will be returning to the dugout next season and has agreed to remain with the organization for the long haul,” Ellis said. “Our goal is to provide our community a level of entertainment and community engagement that is unmatched in professional baseball. Michael not only led our team to the best record in the Pioneer League, but he guided us to the best winning percentage in all professional baseball. We are thrilled that he will continue to lead this team in 2022, and beyond.”

The PaddleHeads will welcome players back to Western Montana in preparation for the upcoming season for Spring Training in May of 2022. One way to have a unique view of this 4–5-month journey down the road to a championship is to become a Host Family by joining the 2022 Adopt-A-PaddleHead Program. This rewarding program provides players a comfortable place to call home while they pursue their professional baseball dreams. It also will allow a hospitable family the opportunity to connect with professional baseball players on a personal level while following their team's successes on the field. Each host family will receive season tickets for the upcoming season which also includes numerous benefits. Visit [gopaddleheads.com](http://gopaddleheads.com) today to learn more information.

Missoula will open its 2022 Pioneer League slate on Wednesday May 25 at home against the rival Billings Mustangs. Visit [www.gopaddleheads.com](http://www.gopaddleheads.com) to stay up on all the latest offseason news and to learn more about season ticket packages.