

Former Campesinos manager takes position with Cleveland MiLB affiliate

Daniel Robertson led the Campesinos de Salem-Keizer to a championship in the Mavericks League inaugural season last year. This season, the former Campesinos skipper will be taking role with the Cleveland Guardians Single-A squad

Q: What can you tell us about your new position with the Guardians?

A: I will be a bench coach for our Low A affiliate in Lynchburg, Va. in my first year. I will assist the manager in all things, assist the hitting coach when he needs help, lead the infielders in their quest to become the best they can be, lead base running and probably coach first base or third base when we are on offense.

Q: What was your favorite memory from last year?

A: To me the whole season is the greatest memory. It was all a memory that I will never forget. From the first Zoom call for introductions to our last Zoom call when we opened the rings together. The relationships are for life and when you are working hard everyday and giving it your very best everyday that's how the respect is created. That respect is what makes friendships last. But how can you not go crazy about Colin Runge's home run in the first round? That was a moment that made the hair on my neck stand up. Big players make big plays in big games.

Q: Your team had by far the best record in the league. What do you feel most contributed to your team's overwhelming success?

A: Hard work was the biggest contributor. Then the respect for each other came after. How hard they worked at practice and in the gym made it difficult for the guys to give up on each other. Each game was a chance for them to do something together and all of them brought their best to the group because they didn't want to let each other down. Their will to win was their collective driving force. They wanted to prove to themselves that they were winners and that was awesome to watch for five months.

Q: The Campesinos had the least amount of transactions/turnover in the league. What was it that kept your guys such a close knit group?

A: They were genuinely interested in each other. These guys were from all over the place and with different backgrounds. They took the time to get to know each other and figure out what each guy was all about both off the field and on the field. They hung out a lot and we had a lot of team functions. We were tight from the start and that's why we played well. When you're playing well you don't have to make any changes because I trusted every guy on the team to do what the game was asking them to do. That trust allowed our coaching staff to identify areas to grow in and then we got to work. We were just focused on improving as a group and bringing people in and out would have disrupted that focus.

Q: Which player on your team reminded you most of yourself from your playing career?



Former Campesinos manager Daniel Robertson gives instructions during Mavericks League tryouts last April
FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes

A: I think the whole team embodied what I was as a player. Our offense didn't give one at-bat away. Even when we were up by a lot they still battled at bats until the game was over. Every guy ran the bases hard. They knew how important runs were and they became unbelievable when it came to manufacturing them. They had a lot of different ways they could beat you. Whether it Chung and Ybarra having 10-12 pitch at-bats and winning them, Rick's quiet confidence and willingness to get better even when he was playing great, Runge and Morrison's relentless attitude day in and day out, Cruz/Nunn/Prater's energy was awesome when the days got long, Bayard/Whitfield/Rey/Kozak were never willing to give up and never backed down from a challenge. The pitching staff of Nealy/Crowson/Fultz/Herrera/Rosales/Baxter/Laurita/Walker/Aulger/Asa/Ostroff/O'Connor competed every pitch and took pride in not making things easy for our opponents. And they were like that in their bullpens and pregame work. I would see Herrera an hour before the game with headphones on sweating in the bullpen already. He probably threw a whole game in his mind. Every guy wanted to be at the park to play baseball and nothing else mattered and that's all I ever wanted as a player was to be playing the game I loved and playing at the very best level I could play it at.

Q: Is there a decision that stands out at some point during the season that you think back on that had the largest impact on your team?

A: Every decision from our staff impacted our season in some way shape

or form. I think the biggest decision at first glance was building a staff in Daniel Turpen and Patrick Durbin. They communicated with the players at an elite level. This allowed me to put the players in their best position because the staff had them ready to play. From a lineup standpoint, when Jeff Chandler decided to retire that was a blow I was worried about. The first weekend he was gone we struggled badly. It was a morale thing and not an ability issue. But when Nick Ybarra went to the leadoff spot we really took off. He was an electric player that could hurt you in so many ways and his quiet confidence fueled his teammates and got under the skin of his opponents.

Q: Any final thoughts on the season, the hopes for your future career, thoughts on the fans etc.

I thought it was a great first season. It had challenges but everything in life has those. I just hope that the players and coaches that were a part of the first year earned their place in the league's history. I know we put some pressure on the acts to follow but that's how hard those guys worked. The fans were great and they brought good energy. I always appreciate a good heckler. For my career, I want to see how far I can go and continue to get better in hopes of helping the next generation of players learn and play the game at a high level. I learned a lot in my experience in the Mavericks League. So much that I will always remember the first experience and all the good and bad that went with it. This league will always be a part of my history and I hope I can be a part of the long history the Mavericks League is creating.

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