

The First Twenty-five Years of  
Baxter Springs' High School Baseball  
1981 to 2005

The Baxter Springs' High School baseball program was started in 1981 with Coach Don Karnes hired to implement the new sport. The first year the team only played fourteen games, winning 8 and losing 6. The second year the team was off and running! They went 17/5 and played in the Kansas High School State Baseball Tournament. By the fifth year the team went 22/1 and won the State Tournament.

The program continued to be strong under the leadership of Coach Karnes for the rest of the first 25 years. During those years, the teams were Sub-state Champions for 18 years, State Runner-Up for 4 years, and State Champions for 5 years, 1985, 1991, 1992, 2002 and 2003. During Coach Karnes' 25 years of coaching high school baseball, his teams won 81% of their games with a record of 537/103. However, Coach is most proud of the fact that 43 of his players went on to play college baseball, and 3 even played professionally.

Coach Karnes had high expectations of his players, both on and off the field. On the field he taught not only the skills of baseball, teamwork and good sportsmanship, but also life skills such as working hard to achieve one's goals and never giving up. Off the field, Coach Karnes expected his players to make good grades and stay out of trouble.

Every player had to earn a position on the team by his own ability, character and effort. One of Coach Karnes yearly speeches was, "I don't care how good looking your mom is or how ugly your dad is. I don't care which side of the railroad tracks you live on. But I do care if you're one of the best players or not. And if you're not, work hard, practice and improve!"