

The Black Hawk College baseball team is starting the Spring 2022 season ranked #9 in the country in NJCAA Division II.



"This is our highest preseason ranking in the history of the program," said Arnie Chavera, BHC athletic director and former Braves baseball coach. "I am thrilled that Coach Keim's team is getting national recognition."

Second-year head coach Josh Keim, a BHC alum who played baseball for Chavera, said one of the program's goals is to be in the national conversation each year.

"We have taken the preseason ranking and used it more in the sense of a 'prove them right or prove them wrong' to keep the team pushing for more," Keim said.

Being #9 in the nation puts the Braves ahead of 130 NJCAA DII baseball programs in 47 states. Only three other Illinois schools made the preseason Top 20 - Lincoln Land (3), McHenry County (11) and Parkland (16).

"The national poll reflects the successful year that the baseball team had in 2021, along with the current talent on this year's team," Chavera said.

Keim is working with 16 returning players and 17 newcomers.

"Last year's team set the foundation for this year's team," Keim said. "Losing in the Region IV Championship game left this team hungry, and it shows every day in all facets of our program."

BHC players to watch include:

- Payton Lawrence - Dixon H.S. (IL) - pitcher - returning All-American, signed to NCAA DI Southeastern Missouri State University.
- Chance Resetich - Hall H.S. (IL) - utility player - returning All-Conference and All-Region, signed to NCAA DI Southeastern Missouri State University.

- Colin Bruce - Benet Academy (IL) - outfielder - returning All-Conference
- Johnny Hernandez - Plainfield South H.S. (IL) - catcher - returning All-Conference
- Brandon Roth - Normal West H.S. (IL) - outfielder/pitcher - returning All-Conference

The Braves' roster includes 13 local players from both sides of the river:

- Ely Adams - Pleasant Valley H.S. (IA) - utility player/pitcher
- Charlie Allison - Rock Island H.S. (IL) - infielder
- Maverick Chisholm - Rockridge H.S. (IL) - catcher
- Tucker Cole - Dixon H.S. (IL) - infielder/pitcher
- Alex Heckroth - Assumption H.S. (IA) - pitcher
- Dalton Kottmer - United Township H.S. (IL) - pitcher
- Payton Lawrence - Dixon H.S. (IL) - pitcher
- Reid Murphy - United Township H.S. (IL) - catcher
- Ryne Schimmel - Moline H.S. (IL) - utility player
- Kale Ven Huizen - Riverdale H.S. (IA) - pitcher
- Bryan Verdon - Davenport North H.S. (IA) - pitcher
- Seth West - Orion H.S. (IL) - pitcher
- Kyle Yeater - Sherrard H.S. (IL) - outfielder/pitcher

The Braves will open their season with a four-game series Saturday, March 5 and Sunday, March 6 at Lake Land College in Mattoon, IL.

For more information, visit [BHC Baseball](#).

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