



# PRESS RELEASE

## PIONEERS ADD LOCAL COACHES JONES, MORAN TO STAFF

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GERING, NE – The Western Nebraska Pioneers of the Expedition League today announced the completion of the team's 2018 coaching staff with the additions of Mike Jones and Mark Moran. Both coaches have deep Western Nebraska roots – Jones is the current Head Baseball Coach Western Nebraska Community College and Moran recently retired as Head Coach of Scottsbluff's WESTCO Zephyrs American Legion program. Both will serve as assistants to Pioneers Head Coach Jimmy Turk.

"We're very happy with the additions of Mike and Mark to the Pioneers family," Pioneers owner Chuck Heeman said. "Mike was the person who originally referred me to Coach Turk, and Mark's record with WESTCO on the field and in developing young men speaks for itself. To have both of these men joining us on this journey is a wonderful thing for us and for our community."

### ABOUT MIKE JONES

Mike Jones will be beginning his 17th season at the helm of the Cougar baseball team in the fall and the team has had a lot of success in the last four years, including winning the Empire conference in 2017, hosting the regional tournament, and finishing second at the regional tournament..

In 2007, the Cougar team recorded its first Region IX championship by defeating Trinidad State twice for the title, and Jones also earned Region IX Coach of the Year honors.

In 2009, The Cougars finished second in the Empire Conference before falling in the first-round Region IX Playoffs. This past season, the Cougars finished second in the Empire Conference, won their first round regional playoff series games, and finished runner-up for the regional title. Still, the team played in the District Playoffs where they fell to No.1 ranked Southern Nevada and first overall Major League draft pick Bryce Harper 9-8.

Jones has made the Cougars a Region IX power after taking command of the baseball team in 2001-02. Jones is the only baseball coach WNCC has had. In his 16 years at WNCC, he has a 381-501-1 record and needs just 19 wins to capture his 400th win at WNCC. Before coming to WNCC, he spent the previous three years at Dodge City Community College. At Dodge City, he had a 94-71 record. His overall junior college record stands at 475-572-1 and needs 25 wins to capture his 500th career coaching win. He also served as an assistant baseball coach at Dodge City from 1995-96.

As a native of Overland Park, Kan., Jones began his playing career at Avila College in Kansas City. Following two seasons at Avila, he transferred to Emporia State University where he helped lead the team to its first MIAA championship as a starting pitcher in 1993. His coaching career started in 1994 at Emporia State as an assistant coach.

Jones has been active with the American Legion in both Dodge City and Gering. He was also a coach of the 1998 American Legion tournament champions in Kansas, a member of the 1993 MIAA championship team at Emporia State and participated in the NCAA Division II national tournament.

Jones is married to Jude, and they have three children, Jack, Alexander, and Luke.

### ABOUT MARK MORAN

Mark Moran is currently a Social Studies teacher and assistant football coach at Scottsbluff High School. He has 30 years of coaching experience. Moran retired as the Head Coach of the WESTCO Zephyrs following the 2017 season. During his 26 years with WESTCO, Moran's team won 884 games, qualified for the Nebraska Class A State Tournament 10 times, produced 75 players that went on to play college baseball and four that got an opportunity in professional baseball. Before coming to Scottsbluff, Moran was an assistant coach at the University of Wyoming where he worked with outfielders and helped with the strength and conditioning program.

Moran has degrees in Finance, Social Studies Education and an MA in Educational Administration. Moran and his wife Dyana have two sons, Vince and Joe, and a husky named Deuce.

Jones and Moran will report to Gering during the last week of May when players and coaches come together in Gering to start the 2018 Expedition League season.

The Pioneers and the Expedition League begin their inaugural season on May 25, 2018. For information on the Expedition League visit [www.expeditionleague.com](http://www.expeditionleague.com) and for more information on the Hotshots visit [www.wnpioneers.com](http://www.wnpioneers.com).

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