

July 12, 2013

Dear Rice Baseball Insider:

Now that the season has ended, albeit a bit more prematurely than we had hoped, I wanted to take the time to thank you for your continued support of Rice baseball and to share some thoughts with you about where we are, and where we are headed. The coaches and players are so grateful for all the RBI club does for our program. I wanted to make sure you know that without your support, none of our championships and success would be possible.

First, let me say how proud I am to lead this program. This past season certainly had its challenges, but our appearance in the super regional this year was a significant accomplishment for our program. Rice and Cal State Fullerton were the only schools without membership in a BCS conference to win a regional. Because I know many of you expect more, I want to assure you that the coaching staff, the players and I are determined to return to Omaha.

In spite of the difficulties a small school like Rice must overcome, I believe we have the returning talent and a talented incoming class that makes the College World Series a realistic goal again. I think our fans are going to be particularly excited about the coming season. Not only are we going to have a great team, we are going to play a competitive schedule with some familiar opponents and a challenging new conference. Although the schedule remains preliminary, we are slated to continue our in-state rivalries with Houston, Lamar and Sam Houston, in addition to welcoming Texas, Texas A&M and TCU back to Reckling Park.

Second, I want you to know how important your support for RBI is to our program. Without the enhancements RBI provides, it would be impossible to get these talented recruits to Rice in the first place or to survive in the modern landscape of college baseball. Your support not only allows our players to enjoy significant upgrades in the travel experience, but your gifts allow us to keep our facility one of the best in the country.

At a school like Rice with a limited athletic budget, enhancement money must come from support organizations like the RBI club. When we use RBI funds to buy the players nice meals, supplemental equipment, or stay in more comfortable hotels we enhance our program. In the same way, when we preserve the community treasure that is Reckling Park, we ensure that Rice is viewed as an elite program with facilities to match. This year, your contributions to RBI have helped us replace the safety netting behind home plate, correct drainage issues in our bullpens, and spruce up the baseball offices for the first time since Reckling Park was built. All of these enhancements are essential to our mission and will allow the program to remain among the elite for years to come.

Third, I would like to publicly offer my thanks and support to the new RBI board. They have worked tirelessly with Bill Davis and Gene Walker to ensure that every dollar is accounted for and that your donations are being used appropriately. Maybe more importantly, they have worked with our athletic administration to reduce the burdens on travel costs billed to RBI. This season our travel budget was increased by almost \$70,000 by the athletic department and that meant that in spite of the trip to Hawaii, we were able to limit the amount of money RBI spent on travel. More importantly, we have received assurances that the travel budget for next season will include the same funding as this past season even though we will not be traveling to Hawaii. This means that we can use more of the RBI budget on projects that will truly enhance the program, facilities and overall experience of our student athletes. In addition, the RBI board is moving toward creating an endowment for baseball where any unused funds will be placed in an endowment with earnings paid back into the RBI fund. This will ensure that every dollar given to RBI will be used exclusively on baseball enhancements.

Finally, I have always told my teams that the road to Omaha begins in the fall with "Fall Ball" workouts. After discussions with the RBI board, we have decided that Rice baseball would be better served by a fundraising cycle for the RBI Club that coincides with the team's preparation and needs. Thus, starting this fall, the RBI Club will fundraise in the fall term. These efforts will culminate in a Baseball Awards Dinner to be held in early November, rather than waiting until January. Having the fundraising completed in November will allow us to better plan for the coming season. I hope you share my excitement for this event, which will allow our fans to honor the previous year's team and meet the young men who will represent Rice in the coming season.

Greg Thielemann will be sending you more information about the RBI fundraising this summer along with a summary of our expenditures from this season, but for now I wanted to let you know how grateful I am for your past support and how enthusiastic I am about the coming season. Thanks again for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you at Reckling Park in the fall.

Sincerely,

Wayne Graham