



## **RITSCHKE WILL RETURN TO COACH COPPERHEADS IN 2018**

Keith Ritsche, who was Copperheads head coach for three summers from 2014-16, will return to that familiar role in 2018.

Ritsche led the Copperheads to the Coastal Plain League's Petit Cup Playoffs in two of his 3 seasons at the helm, narrowly missing them in his first year when he was hired only 3 weeks before the season. The team won the second half in the CPL west division in 2015 and also had the best overall record in the west. In 2016, the snakes won the west division in the first half on their way to another playoff appearance.



Ritsche returns after taking a year off to focus on he and his wife Megan relocating to the Atlanta area.

"We are thrilled to be able to bring Keith back," said Copperheads General Manager Max Kaufmann. "We weren't even sure he would be interested now that he lives further away, but when we spoke to him about returning he was very excited to have the opportunity. He did a great job for us in the three years he was here, and we hope to return to that level of success."

"I'm thrilled to be going back to Asheboro to reunite with not only the whole organization but with the fans as well. I was fortunate to have had a great 3 year run as head coach for the Copperheads from 2014-2016. We shared a lot of great memories and even won some games along the way," said Ritsche.

"I wasn't anticipating missing the 2017 season but after a tough decision to step down, I spent time away and knew that Asheboro was a place that I could always come back to. It's a fantastic baseball atmosphere there and the Coastal Plain League is top notch. I'd like to thank the Copperheads organization, especially the ownership group of the Pugh family for allowing me back to coach my 4<sup>th</sup> season with the team. I'm excited to see what the Copperheads can achieve on the field in 2018," he continued.

Ritsche, a 32-year old native of Superior, WI, coached at Winston Salem State University from 2011 until relocating after the 2017 season. He was the pitching coach under his older brother Kevin, who remains as head coach of the Rams. While not currently coaching at a school, Keith certainly retains plenty of knowledge and experience in the game of baseball.

Ritsche was a four-time all-conference pitcher at the College of St. Scholastica, an NCAA Division III institution in Duluth, MN. He was named the 2006 Upper Midwest Athletic Conference Player of the Year as a pitcher and first baseman. He played one season of professional baseball in the independent Frontier League before earning his Master's degree in occupational therapy from CSS. After moving to the Atlanta area earlier this year, Ritsche works for Marietta City Schools as an occupational therapist.

For additional information on the Copperheads, visit the team's website at [www.teamcopperhead.com](http://www.teamcopperhead.com) as well as the team's Facebook page.

The Coastal Plain League is the nation's premier summer collegiate baseball league. Set to begin its 22nd season in 2018, the CPL features 16 teams playing in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. The CPL has had over 1,400 alumni drafted and 109 of those – including 2011 AL MVP and Cy Young winner Justin Verlander – make their Major League debut; while another notable alum – Russell Wilson – won Super Bowl XLVIII. For more information on the Coastal Plain League, please visit the league website at [www.coastalplain.com](http://www.coastalplain.com) and follow us via Twitter @CPLBaseball.