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## Local Men Active in College Baseball

Submitted by Eric Flett



Dave Esquer and seven-year-old daughter, Elle, at AT&T Park on March 31, 2009; UC Berkeley played the University of San Francisco in the fourth annual Dante Benedetti Classic Photo Kelley Cox

On most Saturdays Dave Esquer looks like any other Lamorinda dad watching his kids from the sideline of the sports field. However, when he steps onto the manicured grass at Evans Diamond at the University of California Berkeley, he transforms from fan to coach.

Esquer has just completed his tenth season as head coach of the Cal Golden Bear's baseball program. Under Esquer the Bear's have reached the NCAA post season playoffs twice, 2001 and 2008. He was also named Pac-10 Coach of the Year in 2001.

Esquer grew up in Salinas where he played three sports in high school before heading to Stanford for baseball. He played shortstop and capped his career by hitting .350 in the 1987 College World Series helping the Cardinal win the National Championship.

Despite Esquer's successes, his journey included trials as well. He said, "Baseball is a great game to learn life lessons." Esquer spent four years playing minor league baseball and nine years as an assistant coach at two schools before being named the tenth head coach in Cal baseball history. Along with the success came many disappointments. "Baseball is a game where you fail a lot, so you have to learn how to handle tough times and fight your way through," Esquer said.

When Esquer made the decision to become a baseball coach, he chose coaching college ball for a reason. "Being able to watch kids develop over several years is what it's all about. We hope we are a bigger part of their development than just baseball."

Esquer's assistant coach is Jon Zuber, a local product. Zuber played in the Moraga Baseball Association growing up and was a star at Campolindo High School. He went on to play at Cal where he had a Hall of Fame career. Zuber played two seasons with the Major League Baseball team the Philadelphia Phillies before turning to coaching.

Both Esquer and Zuber use their personal experience to teach aspiring ball players the skills required to succeed in the ultra-competitive Pacific 10 (Pac-10) conference and beyond. This past year, Esquer's team included seven players selected in the MLB draft including Miramonte graduate Brett Jackson, a first round selection.

Esquer, his wife, Lynn, and their two children live in Moraga. The atmosphere drew him to make this decision he said, "...because of the community, the good schools and the personal connections in the neighborhoods-and we have not been disappointed." Esquer's children, Elle and Xavier, both participate in multiple recreational sports in the area. Esquer said, "I really appreciate how parents volunteer their time to spend with our kids at all of the practices and games."

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