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## Baseball: Steinkamp's retirement spells the end for Bruins

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Mike Anderson doesn't hold back when he describes what Beatrice Bruins coach Bob Steinkamp has meant to baseball in the state.

"He's a Nebraska baseball icon is what he is," the University of Nebraska coach said.

The beacon of Bruins baseball is calling it quits after this weekend, ending a 40-year run as the head man on the bench for the Beatrice summer team. That spells the end for the Bruins, too: Steinkamp started the Bruins and will be the only manager in the organization's history after the team disbands following a weekend road trip.

"It was just the right time," Steinkamp said. "It was something I've contemplated for the past couple of years. We just wanted a local town team, and this is what it grew in to. I had no clue that we'd still be around this long."

Steinkamp, a major league scout since 1993, has drawn players to Beatrice from all over the country, recently having a run on players from the state of Texas. This year's Bruins team has two players from the University of Texas, four from Texas A&M and one from Texas Tech.

Bruins alumni include Jeff Huson and Randy Velarde, who went on to the major leagues. Steinkamp also coached a number of Huskers, including Joba Chamberlain, now with the New York Yankees, and Alex Gordon of the Kansas City Royals.

Steinkamp called Chamberlain the best pitcher he ever coached.

Anderson, who had four Huskers playing for Steinkamp this summer, said he considers Steinkamp a close friend. "He'll do anything he can to get them to the next step in baseball and life," Anderson said. "He's a remarkable man. He really is."

The Bruins, postseason regulars, will not play after this weekend. Steinkamp said he made the decision to allow some of his players to catch on with other teams around the country in hopes of getting to the national tournament.

The Bruins played their final games at Christenson Field in Beatrice Tuesday night, sweeping rival Clarinda. Steinkamp said the doubleheader drew the Bruins' biggest crowd in years.

Steinkamp said there were "definitely" some emotions on the night. He said he'll miss the players and game, but not the "begging for money and some of the off-the-field things."

The Bruins visit the Ozark Generals on Friday in Ozark, Mo., but Steinkamp won't be there. He'll miss his sixth game in 40 years when a new grandson is born at 8:30 a.m.

"That's a little more important than a game," he said. "I've got a great family. It's time to spend a little more time with them."

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