

Ben Johnson

Baseball

Homecomings are always ice, and that's the story for Ben Johnson, who enters his seventh season as the Memphis Redbirds manager in 2026.

Ben was named the Redbirds manager in 2019, but his ties to baseball and success on the diamond go back to the previous century. Ben began his baseball career in the late 1980s, playing in the Memphis Boys Athletic Association for the Memphis Tigers. He had a 10-year association with the Tigers and played for his father, Larry, for four years; his pitching coach, Larry Edwards, from 1991-93; and Al Woods, another inductee in this class, in 1995. He helped lead the Tigers to state championships in 1989 and 1999.

Ben carried that success to the high school ranks, where he starred for legendary head coach Phil Clark at Germantown High School. In 1998, Ben was a member of the Red Devils squad that posted a 40-4 record and was runner-up in the TSSAA Class 3A tournament. The next season, in 1999, Ben was named the Memphis-area high school player of the year.

Following high school graduation, Ben was pursued by several colleges to play both baseball and football. However, he received an offer he could not refuse when the St. Louis Cardinals selected him in the 4th round of the Major League Baseball draft at the mere age of 17.

He played 10 years in the minor leagues, appearing in more than 900 games. Ben moved up to "The Show" with the San Diego Padres in 2005. He played 31 games with San Diego in his first season and 58 games the next year. In 2007, Ben was traded to the New York Mets and saw action in several games in The Big Apple.

Ben moved to the managerial side of baseball and made his debut with the Arizona/Goodyear Centennials in 2012. Seven years later, he returned to his hometown to take over the reins of the Memphis Redbirds. Early in the 2025 season, Ben became the winningest manager in Redbirds' history and enters the 2026 year with 428 victories. Last year's campaign was Ben's most successful at the helm, posting an 80-68 record.

Please welcome to the Hall of Fame, for baseball — Ben Johnson. Accepting the honor on Ben's behalf is his father, Larry.