

Two Club Baseball Seniors on Different Paths for the 2025-26 Season

By Matt Shiffman

Elon Club Baseball has been a part of senior's Bennett Simpson and James Renda life during the entirety of their Elon careers. Both members of the Class of 2026 are graduating this spring.

Simpson served the role of closer on the team last year and will look to play that part of the team in this coming season. Off the field, he serves as mental health chair.

As for Renda, he played a combination of second and third base, and this year is fulfilling the housing chair position for the club.

Their 2025-26 year with the club has one major difference.

Simpson will continue to play baseball for the club in his pitching role, but Renda called it quits after his junior season last year.

I talked to both of them to learn about the state of the team, what their 2025-26 year will look like, and the transition from high school

Club Baseball's team will look a lot different in the spring of 2026 compared to 2025. The team has open spots at catcher, first base, third base, and outfield. As for the pitching side, their starting pitchers are set, but they can always use more relievers.

One of those voids is because Renda, the third basemen in 2025, decided to bypass playing his senior year and focus on his role as a social member.

"Performance was a big toll on my mental health." Renda explained to me.

He talked about how his junior fall he played well and earned the third base spot, while also filling in some at designated hitter. But the spring did not go as he hoped. It was a big step back from the performance he had in the fall prior.

Renda talked about how if he played poorly, it would ruin the rest of his day and would make him want to be anti-social the rest of the day, and he did not want that for his senior year.

“It just felt like time.” He said.

Simpson, on the other hand, will continue to play in his final year at Elon.

“It feels like I’m just playing baseball with my friends.” He said.

Simpson was looking for a more laid-back way to play baseball when he came to college. In high school, he played for a prep school that was in an extremely competitive league. Club baseball has been the balance of commitment and fun he was looking for in his transition to college.

That transition from high school to club baseball presents new elements to players. One is being coached by their peers as opposed to adults significantly older than them.

Another is the schedule. All games are on the weekends, typically three games a weekend in the spring. Players are being asked to give up a large portion of their free time to commit to the team.

For Renda, that commitment was too large considering the payoff was not there emotionally anymore. Simpson, however, still sees it as worthwhile.

Potential club members wondering if they can still make the team can show up to team practice Wednesdays at 7pm and Thursdays at 5:30pm. There is a different roster of tryout players for each of the five-fall series, before the official spring roster is set. The first fall series is September 20th-21st, against James Madison University.