

Baseball was the Beauchamps' link

BY JEFFREY LUTZ
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It's 11:30 on a Thursday morning, not exactly a prime television viewing hour.

Flipping channels in his office in the back of the Wingnuts' clubhouse, manager James Beauchamp — who goes by his middle name, Kash — stops on a program about baseball in the 1960s.

Beauchamp's eyes light up as they drift back to his childhood, when he and his father, Jim, who played in the major leagues from 1964-73, devel-

oped a bond woven tighter by baseball. It began to develop when Kash uttered his first word — ball.

Jim's superior talent alone would have made him a productive professional ballplayer, but he accentuated it by playing with an all-out style that he passed down to his son.

Beauchamp, 45, is still grinning as he reaches for a biography about Ty Cobb, his favorite player. He reads out loud a brief passage and through his words comes a self-appointed responsibility to make sure his father's memory — and style of play — live on.

"He was old school," Beauchamp said.

"Hard-nosed, tough, fair and honest."

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Jim Beauchamp possessed speed and power that drew comparisons in Oklahoma, his home state, to another native son, Mickey Mantle.

Also a standout amateur basketball and football player, Jim made his name on the baseball field. He signed with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1958 at 18 after less than a year at Oklahoma State and made his major-league

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