

[MV Sharks fire head coach amidst 0-5 start](#)

Sean Stevens lasted two games

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By Sam Canfield

The Martha's Vineyard Sharks of the New England Collegiate Baseball League are off to an 0-5 start, and have already parted ways with first-year head coach Sean Stevens, firing him on Thursday, June 6 — just two games into the 44-game season.

General manager Russ Curran and interim head coach Ryan Miller don't attribute the firing to the Sharks' record, and remain staunchly optimistic about the season going forward despite losing their first five games by 4.8 runs per outing.

“He was going no matter what, win, lose or draw,” Curran said. “We've been doing things a certain way for a long time, and Stevens wasn't a good fit. I'm taking the blame — I didn't vet him enough. I should have read into his resume more.”

“I'm not worried about this team at all,” added Curran.

Stevens is a 41-year-old Jacksonville native that serves as a pitching coach at Middle Georgia State University (NCAA Division II) during the school year, and previously worked as an assistant coach with the Brewster Whitecaps of the Cape Cod League in 2021.

Stevens first applied to be the Sharks' pitching coach for the 2023 season, and was on-boarded by Curran this past fall.

Stevens feels he was betrayed by the Sharks organization, especially considering he hired Miller to be his pitching coach, and helped recruit roughly 25 percent of the Sharks' roster.

“I didn't do anything wrong, and wasn't given an opportunity to make any adjustments. A lot of the players [and coaches] are there because of me, and I don't understand why I was fired,” Stevens said. “The NECBL is a premiere summer league, and my credibility is tarnished now. I just want to coach baseball, and Russ pulled this out of his hat.”

Curran refuted Stevens' claims, stating that the players were being arbitrarily overworked during practice sessions prior to and during the season.

Stevens' decision to live in Sharks housing along with his girlfriend expanded the rift between Curran and Stevens even further.

“He had the kids at the field all day long, and was on the phone the whole time. If I didn’t get rid of him, the players and coaches were talking about leaving,” Curran said. “I don’t have the housing for a family man, and the situation was a liability with our insurance.”

“My girlfriend and I were sharing a bed,” Stevens said. “It was all an excuse.”

Taking the coaching reins are Miller, a 23-year-old student manager at Longwood University in Virginia, and Will Flanders, a 21-year-old player development manager at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), originally hired by Stevens to be the Sharks’ hitting coach.

Under Miller and Flanders’ leadership, the Sharks have lost 5-0 to the Mystic Schooners (4-3) away last Friday, 8-6 to the Sanford Mainers (3-3) at home on Monday, and 7-3 to the North Shore Navigators (3-2) at home on Tuesday.

Miller points toward the Sharks’ 8-7 win over the Cotuit Kettleers (Cape Cod League) in a weekend exhibition match as a sign of what’s to come.

“It’s been a quick change of events, but the win over Cotuit was a good step in the right direction,” Miller said. “These guys have handled it all really well. I want them to have fun, play loose, and become better players before they go back to college in August.”

So far this NECBL season, the Sharks have a team batting average of .209 (.629 on-base plus slugging), and a team ERA of 6.61.

These marks rank ninth of 13 and 13th of 13, respectively.

The Sharks’ three returning hitters (Scott Seeker, Carsten Sabathia and Demitri Diamant) from last year are each batting .150 or less, but Miller is grateful for their leadership to start the season.

“Those guys have done a great job as veterans and leaders,” Miller said. “I couldn’t ask for a better group of guys.”

The Sharks will get back on the horse Wednesday night after our print deadline, versus the Newport Gulls (2-3) away at 6:35 p.m. Their next home game will be against Mystic on Saturday at 6:35 p.m., at the Shark Tank in Oak Bluffs.