For eight seasons, Gary Kendall was a mainstay in Bowie, managing the Baysox to five winning seasons, and the 2015 Eastern League championship. But in 2019, 32-year-old Buck Britton takes over as the head man for the Baysox after a season managing the Orioles’ A-ball affiliate, the Delmarva Shorebirds.

Britton, the older brother of all-star closer Zack Britton, had a nine-year minor league playing career of his own, which included five separate stints with the Baysox. Now just three years removed from his playing days, Britton is already managing in AA, in a place he once called home.

“We had a couple of playoff runs when I was here. I think just the baseball aspect of it excites me. This is a good league with good talent,” said Britton.

After retiring from playing in 2016, Britton spent a year as the hitting coach in Delmarva, before leading the Shorebirds to a 68-66 record in his only year as managing. Now jumping to the AA-level, Britton knows there will be an adjustment, saying “the speed of the game changes as you go up every level. But at the end of the day it’s kind of like as a player, when you make that jump you have to find ways to slow the game down.”

One of the ways Britton will slow the game will be relying on his coaching staff, which includes Hitting Coach Keith Bodie, who coached both Buck and Zack Britton during their times in Bowie.

“I have major support here with Keith Bodie, a guy who’s done this for years who I’m going to be leaning on, and with [pitching coach] Kennie [Steenstra] helping me learn how to run a bullpen. I’m not here on an island by myself.”

The Baysox open the season with loads of talent on the roster, and Britton is excited about the brand of baseball his club is going to play. He said, “We got some of the top prospects here in the organization. I think we’re going to be a little different than we have been in the past. I think we’re going to be more versatile. You’re going to see guys move around the field, a little more team speed.”

Adding to that, Britton said that he expects his Baysox to play similarly to the big club in Baltimore, “pushing the envelope” and being “very aggressive on the bases.”

2019 not only marks a new era in Bowie, but an overhaul in the entire Baltimore organization. An infusion of youth is going through a system that has turned its sights to the future.

The new Orioles General Manager, Mike Elias, is just 36 years old. Brandon Hyde, only 45 years of age, is in his first year as manager in Baltimore. Looking down the system, you see the 32-year-old Britton, just a few years past his playing days and already a rising star in the coaching ranks, ready to embark on a new challenge, and an opportunity to mentor the young players who will soon be donning the black and orange in Baltimore.
Even with his youth and short time in the coaching ranks, Britton still recognizes the great chance and task he has in front of him, and is determined to succeed.

“I understand how blessed and fortunate I am to be in this spot. There’s a lot of people who would love to be where I’m at and I’m going to take full advantage of it.”