

# ETBU baseball team ministers in Dominican Republic

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The East Texas Baptist University baseball team traveled to the Dominican Republic before Christmas to lead sports clinics for children, work on neighborhood renewal projects and share the gospel.

The Tigers also played four games—two against Dominican winter league teams and two facing Dominican national teams.

Fifty-one student athletes participated through the Tiger Athletic Mission Experience program, an ETBU initiative designed to allow students to use athletic talents as a platform to connect with people and share the gospel of Jesus globally.

“Watching Dylan Sumpter share the gospel with the D.R. Naval Academy made me realize that it can be as simple as a game of baseball to bring people closer to Christ,” ETBU junior Kepen Florence said.



The East Texas Baptist University Tigers baseball team prays with the Dominican National Police team at

the conclusion of their fourth and final game. The teams competed at Centro Olímpico, a formal Olympic training center consisting of a public park, basketball courts, tennis courts, an Olympic swimming pool, pavilions for gymnastics, volleyball courts and three baseball fields. (ETBU Photo)

"I have been reminded what it looks like to play for the love of the game. Throughout the trip, I was humbled because the people of the D.R. do not complain about their circumstances. They were welcoming and always had a smile on their faces. I was blessed to serve in the Dominican Republic."

The Tigers experienced local culture as they toured the downtown colonial area of Santo Domingo. They learned the history of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the Americas and the settling of Espanola. They also visited the Fort de Ozama on the Ozama River and spent time in the downtown Spanish cathedral.

Following the excursion, the ETBU team competed in Boca Chica against Los Caneros, a team in the Dominican league.

"After the game, Blaine Parker shared his testimony and our appreciation for allowing us to play against them," ETBU freshman James Veloff said. "A member of Los Caneros shared with us about his journey in baseball and how we should play the game the right way."

"After dinner, we attended a local church, Iglesias Fe' Apostolica, where Tiger Infielder Jesse Burns gave a challenging sermon to the congregation from Romans 1:15-17. It was a great experience to witness how the Dominican culture worships the Lord."

The ETBU baseball team conducted two-hour youth baseball clinics in Boca Chica and Gautier that involved more than 100 children. The clinics consisted of 10 stations, including hitting drills, ground balls, fly balls and a presentation of the gospel.

“It was an absolute joy to watch our Tiger Baseball players serve the people of Dominican Republic,” said Ryan Erwin, ETBU vice president for athletics. “To have a group of student athletes give up part of their Christmas break to travel to a Third World country and use the sport of baseball to impact the kingdom shows what type of dedicated Christian players we have at ETBU. The coaching staff and I were blessed to be able to observe the guys outside of their comfort zone to use their talents in baseball to teach others about Christ.”

The trip to the Dominican Republic was the third TAME project. Head Coach Cameron Burger will take the ETBU bass fishing team to Brazil Jan. 3-12. The team will live on a boat 10 days as they travel along the Amazon River, stopping at various villages to fish and minister to the people. For more information on TAME, click [here](#).