

SPORTS

Ferry rallies to win OVAC champ

By RICH GIBSON
Times-Leader Sports Editor

You couldn't have liked their chances.

Trailing 2-0....two out....bases empty...bottom of the seventh.

But John Josefczyk's Martins Ferry Purple Riders were still alive.

And not long, thereafter, they were

OVAC champions.

How the Riders pulled off Saturday afternoon's 3-2 comeback over Meadowbrook will be replayed for years by the participants.

The Colts of Tim Roller -- needing but one out -- could not make it happen at Toronto's Red Knight diamond.

Ferry, in turn, prevailed via an incredible set of circumstances to

achieve what is believed the school's first ever OVAC 3-A baseball trophy.

"In the dugout, the guys said we were going to get it done," smiled Josefczyk, who literally had to see what transpired to believe it.

Meadowbrook showed no signs of letting its two-run margin slip away as righthander Zac Zifzol retired Ferry's Tyler Train and Ryan Fox in the sev-

enth.

Josefczyk opted to send junior Mike Edwards to the plate in a do-or-die pinch-hitting role. Edwards was able to work a five-pitch walk to keep the contest going.

Then up stepped freshman Jon Nagel making only his second varsity plate appearance.

The ninth-grader was able to connect



T-L Photo/PAULA GINTHER

ST. JOHN Central's four seniors hoist the OVAC Class A Championship after the Irish downed Beallsville Saturday afternoon at Toronto's Red Knight Complex. Pictured, from left, are Joey Vavra (9), Ben Shutler (15), Sean Zeakes (4) and Joe Rykowski (3). St. John's downed the Blue Devils by a 5-2 verdict.

St. John's regains OVAC 1-A title

By RICH GIBSON
Times-Leader Sports Editor

St. John Central has returned to the throne.

Following a one-year absence, Tom Sliva's Fighting Irish regained the OVAC 1-A baseball championship, a result of Saturday's 5-2 decision over Beallsville.

A year before, the Green had fallen to Ron Street's Blue Devils in the 1-A title tilt. But Saturday, behind senior mound ace Ben Shutler, St. John's was impressive.

"Give Ben Shutler a lion's share of credit. He went out and gave us one terrific performance today," Sliva related.

Indeed, Shutler was dominant at Toronto's Red Knight complex. The Irish southpaw fired a three-hitter en route to recording 10 strikeouts and two walks.

"We just couldn't get it going with the bats," Street lamented. "Ben Shutler was mostly responsible for that."

Street distributed high praise for his 11-8 ballclub. "I think most teams would love to be in position to play for a championship. It's a sign our kids worked hard this season," he stated.

The Irish, meanwhile, improve to 17-4 and retain strong postseason hopes.

"Obviously, we're thrilled winning an OVAC title. But our top priority year in and year out is advancing in the (state playoffs)," Sliva advised. "In all honesty,

this is really the fun part of our schedule. Hopefully, we can hang around a little while longer."

St. John's faces Harrison Central for the East Ohio Baseball League crown Wednesday afternoon (5:00) at Cadiz.

The Johnnies then return to Toronto where they'll compete in Division IV district tournament play beginning Monday evening, May 20.

Saturday's game was up for grabs, tied at 2-2 before St. John's scored three times in the last of the fifth.

Leftfielder Ryan Rico ignited the frame, the Irish junior reaching after being plunked by a Seth Venick

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Sunday, May 12, 2002

Championship

for a game-saving single just past Colts' shortstop T.J. Mitchell.

On the play, Edwards rounded second and unexpectedly dashed for third where Meadowbrook's Lance Schultice grabbed the relay throw well ahead of Edwards' arrival.

But Edwards somehow managed to

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MF's Train derails Zeps, 2-1

By BUBBA KAPRAL
T-L Executive Sports Editor

Martins Ferry's up-and-coming baseball team boarded a Train to the OVAC finals Saturday afternoon.

Coach John Josefczyk's Purple Riders rode the dominating right arm of Tyler Train to a 2-1 victory over a 13-3 Shenandoah club in the OVAC Class 3-A semifinals at Brookside's Perkins Field. The Purple will now face Meadowbrook in Saturday's OVAC title tilt at Toronto. The Colts defeated favored Magnolia, 3-1.

Train was on track from start to finish. The crafty junior -- mixing a stifling curveball with a well-placed fastball -- limited the Zeps to a mere three hits.

Moreover, he struck out 12 and walked none. The lone run came in the seventh via the unearned variety.

Train improved to 6-0 on the year for the much-improved 12-9 Riders.

"Tyler was in total command," said a most pleased Josefczyk. "He had great control and mixed his pitches well. He has worked hard to improve from last year and it has paid big dividends."

Ferry -- which hit the ball solidly all day -- wasted several early opportunities before breaking through with single runs in the fifth and sixth innings, respectively.

In the fifth, catcher Lance Delbrugge opened the inning by reaching on an error. Designated hitter Mike Reasbeck followed with an infield single while the heads-up Delbrugge advanced all the way to third on the play. Hard-hitting senior Rod Gentile delivered a sacrifice fly to left field for the game's first run.

The Riders added what turned out to be a crucial run in the sixth.

Senior second baseman J.R. Anderson launched a cannon shot to deep right center for a stand-up triple. He later scored on frosh Zack Fairbanks' sacrifice fly to center.

Matters got quite interesting in the bottom of the seventh. The frame opened with Train striking out three-sport star Jediaiah Stephen.

Lucas Robertson singled before Train recorded another strikeout.

Matt Hannahs followed with a seemingly game-ending flyball which was misplayed into a two-base error, plating Robertson. Train wasn't going to be denied on this day, however, as he coaxed Chris Steed into a ground ball out to slick-fielding sophomore third baseman Anthony Reasbeck.

"We used our last three games to get mentally ready for today as well as Monday's sectional game," said the affable Josefczyk. "Our kids were focused today."

"We have stressed playing smart, heads-up and aggressive baseball from day one," he added. "The kids were aggressive at the plate and backed Tyler with some nice

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Irish

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offering.

Rico advanced to second after a successful sacrifice bunt executed by shortstop Sean Zeakes.

After Shutler drew a free pass, Street opted to bring on senior Aaron Boughner.

Irish veteran Mark Hartlieb promptly pounded a single, plating Rico with the go-ahead tally.

Senior Joe Vavra followed with another clutch hit, a two-run single to left, scoring both Shutler and Hartlieb.

Shutler yielded a leadoff single to Beallsville's Joey Crum in the sixth, but stranded Big Blue's junior at third base.

"Once we got the lead, Ben was even stronger out there," Sliva observed.

St. John's grabbed an early lead when sophomore rightfielder Bryan Nardo delivered an RBI hit, scoring centerfielder Chad Taylor.

Beallsville got even in the third on a Crum base knock that scored senior shortstop Tyler Brown.

Big Blue took a 2-1 advantage in the fourth when Venick reached on an error and eventually raced home on a Boughner ground ball.

The Irish came back for a 2-2 lighting with junior designated hitter Chris Jingle drilling a base hit to plate Vavra.

"We had seven different guys get hits. That's a great team effort," Sliva pointed out.

Beallsville has three regular season games remaining. Big Blue is scheduled to visit Caldwell (Monday); entertain Fort Frye (Wednesday) and play at Shenandoah (Thursday).

Linescore:

Beallsville 001 100 0 2 3 4

St. John's 010 130 x 5 7 2

BATTERIES: Venick, Boughner (5) and Rich. Shutler and Rykowski.

Riders

Continued from Page C1

avoid what would have been a game-ending tag. "I was holding Jon (at second base) all the way," Josefczyk noted. "I still had to chew him out a little bit."

At this point, fate may have intervened with leadoff hitter Rod Gentile at the plate.

Reliever Aubrey Neuhart uncorked a wild pitch, permitting Nagel to reach second base.

Gentile would then jump on a Neuhart fastball, sending a rocket up the middle, scoring Edwards and Nagel for a 2-2 tie. Gentile, in turn, was able to take second on the throw home.

"I told (Jon) I wanted one more at-bat," grinned Gentile. "Give those guys (Edwards, Nagel) the credit. They were able to get on base. This is the best feeling I've ever had."

Sophomore third baseman Anthony Reasbeck then stepped up and took a pitch before drilling an opposite-field single to right field. Gentile raced around third and easily beat the throw resulting in a wild celebration at home plate.

"Rod had just tied it, so there wasn't any pressure on me," a happy Reasbeck reported. "I just concentrated on trying to put the bat on the ball. (He) gave me a fastball a little outside and I just went with the pitch."

Train, meanwhile, also came up big. The junior continually worked out of trouble, stranding 11 Meadowbrook runners. Train totaled six strikeouts and five walks.

"I guess it was just our turn," Josefczyk theorized. "The kids have worked hard all spring. They really deserve this honor."

Ferry remains alive in sec-

tional play and will oppose River Wednesday at Brookside for a district bid.

Meadowbrook fell to 13-11 and will attempt to rebound from a 2-0 third inning deficit when the Colts resume a suspended sectional outing against Cambridge Monday at Vaccaro Field.

The Guernsey County club grabbed an early 1-0 lead Saturday when cleanup hitter Devin Singleton plated Neuhart with a single to left field.

Meadowbrook added its final run in the fourth on a Neuhart base rap which scored Zifzol.

Ferry's best chance to retaliate occurred in the last of the fourth when centerfielder Ty Platt drew a base on balls.

Riders' cleanup hitter J.R. Anderson followed with a towering drive to the gap that Colts' centerfielder Ryan Oliver ran down by making a diving catch on the warning track.

Platt, who was already between second and third base, was forced to quickly retreat, but failed to touch second base on the return, resulting in a double play.

In the Purple sixth, Platt and Anderson clubbed consecutive two-out singles before Zifzol was able to retire freshman first baseman Zach Fairbanks.

Gentile singled twice for Ferry with Mitchell also socking two Meadowbrook hits.

Zifzol fanned three and walked two in a stellar outing.

Line score:

Meadowbrook 100 100 0 2 7 1

Martins Ferry 000 000 3 3 8 2

BATTERIES: Zifzol, Neuhart (7) and Daugherty. Train and Delbrugge.

Big Red Pitcher No-Hits Patriots

By NICK BEDWAY
Executive Sports Editor

After losing to Wheeling Park during the regular-season, Steubenville High head baseball coach Fred Heatherington had a definite game plan coming into Saturday's OVAC Class AAAA championship game at Toronto.

"A team like Park that's so aggressive," said Heatherington, "the best way to beat them is to keep them off the bases."

Junior righthander Trevor Kalinowski executed that game plan to near-perfection, spinning a no-hitter and allowing only two Patriot runners to reach base in a 3-0 Big Red win.

Kalinowski struck out three, walked one and hit a batter in authoring the mound gem as Steubenville improved to 17-5 on the season.

"I felt real good today," said Kalinowski, "but my teammates really deserve the credit."

"They made some really good plays behind me."

Something else Kalinowski's teammates did was provide him with all the offensive support he would need before he ever toed the rubber.



Joe Pease led off the game with a ringing double that just missed clearing the left field fence and Mike DiAngelo followed with an RBI single off Patriot starter Keith "Noity" Banks.

After a fly ball out, Justin Gerber singled to left to put runners on first and third and Dominic Harper walked to load the bases.

Sean Liggett then roped a double into the right center gap that brought home DiAngelo and Gerber with Harper stopping at third.

At this point, Wheeling Park (18-4) head coach Doug Tush lifted Banks and brought in Doug Tusk.

Tusk got the next batter to fly out to Jason Linton in left and Linton gunned down Harper, who had tried to tag up and score, to end

the inning but the damage had been done.

"We wanted to go out and jump on them right at the start," said Heatherington. "That's what they did to us when they beat us."

Tusk was disappointed with the outcome of the game but not with the effort of his kids.

"We were trying to get Noity through three or four innings and then bring Tyak in to close," said Tush.

"Noity was throwing strikes but they were just hitting the ball."

Kalinowski was on cruise control throughout.

Adam Saseen was hit by a pitch with two out in the second but died on first base.

Justin Hartzell drew a one-out walk in the third but was erased on a double play when Robbie Downer hit a soft liner to the second baseman with Hartzell in motion.

"Trevor did a wonderful job," said Tusk.

"We hit a couple of balls pretty good but they were right at them."

"Steubenville's a very good team but we're a darned good team, too."

"We're looking forward to the sectional this week."

Ferry Claims 1st Title

By NICK BEDWAY
Executive Sports Editor

It can't get much better than this for Martins Ferry head baseball coach John Josefczyk.

In his first season at the helm, Josefczyk's Purple Riders won their first-ever OVAC Class AAA championship Saturday afternoon in Toronto.

And they did it in thrilling fashion, scoring three runs with two out in the bottom of the seventh to stun Meadowbrook, 3-2, in a nail-biter at the Knight Baseball Complex.

"Our seniors really came through for us today," beamed Josefczyk immediately after the wild finish.

"This is our first OVAC banner and we're really going to be proud of it, too."

Colt freshman Zac Zifzol had outdueled Ferry fireballer Tyler Train through the first six innings.

Devin Singleton had an RBI single for Meadowbrook in the top of the first and Aubry Neuhart singled Zifzol home with another tally in the top of the fourth for a 2-0 lead.

The Riders looked as if they would close the gap in the bottom of the fourth.

With Ty Platt on first, J.R. Anderson launched a Zifzol offering to the deepest part of the park in left center.

Centerfielder Ryan Oliver broke with the crack of the bat, however, and laid out to make a diving catch on the warning track.

Oliver sprung quickly to his feet and fired the ball back in to double up Platt trying to get back to first.

After that, Zifzol coasted into the bottom of the seventh and retired the first two batters in order, putting the Colts one out away from an OVAC title.

It never came.

Pinch-hitter Mike Edwards walked on four straight pitches and John Nagel followed with a line shot up the middle to put runners on first and third.

Neuhart came on in relief but a wild pitch allowed Nagel to take second, putting the tying runs in scoring position.

Rod Gentile then singled up the middle on a 1-1 pitch to knot the score, steaming into second on a late throw to the plate.

Anthony Reasbeck then stepped in against Neuhart and laced a line drive over the first baseman's head for the game-winner.

Gentile scored without a throw, touching off a wild celebration.

Ferry finished with eight hits — all singles — with Gentile the only Rider to pick up two base knocks.

Train went the distance, striking out six and walking five, to pick up the win.



Martins Ferry's Rod Gentile dives back to first base as Meadowbrook first baseman Matt Bradley awaits the throw during Saturday's OVAC Class AAA championship game at the Knight Baseball Complex in Toronto.

Photo by Scott McCloskey

Irish Win Championship Again

By NICK BEDWAY
Executive Sports Editor

Bellaire St. John Central won its fourth Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class A baseball championship in the past six years at Toronto Saturday, riding the strong left arm of Ben Shutler to a 5-2 win over Beallsville in the first of four OVAC title tilts set for the Knight Baseball Complex.

It was a revenge win for Coach Tom Sliva's Irish (17-4), who also won the OVAC Class A regular-season championship this season.

"We're real happy to get this win," said Sliva. "Beallsville beat us in the (OVAC) finals last year."

With the score tied at 2 in the bottom of the fifth, an opportunistic St. John's attack broke the game open.

Ryan Rico was hit by a pitch and moved up to second on a

Cory Rinkes sacrifice.

When Shutler drew a walk to put runners on first and second, starting pitcher Seth Venick yielded the mound to Blue Devil ace Aaron Boughner.

Mark Hartlieb greeted Boughner with a ringing single to left, however, bringing Rico in with the go-ahead run.

Hartlieb and Shutler used some heads-up baserunning to move up on the throw to the plate, putting themselves in scoring position for Irish vet Joey Vavra.

Boughner poured two strikes past Vavra but the senior third baseman turned on the next offering and ripped a single to left that scored both runners and pushed the count to 5-2.

That was more than enough for Shutler, who seemed to get stronger as the game went on.

The senior southpaw finished

off the Blue Devils (11-8) with just three hits, striking out 10 and issuing just two walks.

"Benny Shutler just came out and did one heck of a job for us," complimented Sliva.

"He threw really good for a kid going on just three days rest."

Jody Crum had two of Beallsville's three hits and drove in a run.

Chris Jingle and Bryan Nardo added RBI singles for the Fighting Irish.

Bellaire St. John, which will play in next week's Ohio Division IV district tournament in Toronto, will try to add an Eastern Ohio Baseball League trophy to its trophy case later this week.

The Irish are scheduled to play Harrison Central Wednesday at 5 in the EOBL championship game at Mazeroski Park in Cadiz.



OVAC Baseball Finals Set

The Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Baseball Committee has announced the starting times for Saturday's four championship games.

All games will be played at the Toronto Red Knight Baseball Complex.

Action gets underway at 11 a.m. with a rematch of last season's Class A final between Bellaire St. John's and Beallsville.

The Blue Devils won last year's battle at Vaccaro Field and appear to be up to their giant-killing tricks again after upsetting Linsly, 6-3, in Saturday's semifinals.

St. John's was the OVAC Class A regular season champion on this spring and coasted to an 8-5 victory over Weirton Madonna in Saturday's other small-school semi.

Beallsville is the only OVAC champion from last year to make it back to this year's title tilts.

The Class AAA final between Martins Ferry and Meadowbrook will be played at 2 p.m.

Both teams come into the game off upset wins on Saturday. Meadowbrook handed Magnolia's triple-A regular season champs their first home loss of the season while Ferry rode the strong right arm of junior Tyler Train to a 2-1 victory over Shenandoah.

The Class AAAA matchup sends regular season champion Wheeling Park against Steubenville at 5 p.m.

Coach Doug Tush's Patriots bring a school-best 17-3 record into their first final since winning the 1998 OVAC championship. The Park outlasted a scrappy Weir High team, 8-7, in Saturday's semifinals.

Coach Fred Heatherington's Big Red squad is no stranger to championship competition. Big Red took advantage of five Edison errors to hand the Wildcats a 6-4 loss in Saturday's other big-school semi.

The final game of the night sends host Toronto against Steubenville Central.

Coach Matt Morrison's Red Knights, who fell to Linsly in last year's Class AA finale, won the regular season championship this season but had to hang on for a 5-4 win over Wellsville in Saturday's semifinal round.

Steubenville Central advanced Saturday when it pounded out 17 hits in pummeling Wheeling Central, 13-3.

OVAC Baseball Championships Saturday, May 11

Class A
Beallsville vs. *Bellaire St. John Central, 11 a.m.

Class AA
Steubenville Central vs. *Toronto, 8 p.m.

Class AAA
Meadowbrook vs. *Martins Ferry, 2 p.m.

Class AAAA
Steubenville vs. *Wheeling Park, 5 p.m.

*home team

Steubenville claims OVAC 4-A crown

AT THE RED KNIGHT BASEBALL COMPLEX, Steubenville's Trevor Kolanowski pitched a no-hitter, missing a perfect game by just two walks as the Big Red earned the Class 4-A OVAC title by knocking off Wheeling Park by a 4-0 count.

Big Red got into the scoring column early and never looked back riding the arms of their ace. Big Red was able to get on the board thanks in part to

and RBI double by Mike DeAngelo, while Justin Gerber singled to put runners on first and third.

The batters that Wheeling Park were able to get on base were due to a hit batter and a walk, as no other Patriot batter could seem to get the metal on the ball.

Linescore:
Steubenville 300 000 0 -- 3 7 0
Wheeling Park 000 000 0 -- 0 0 1
BATTERIES: Kolanowski and Straker; Banks, (1)Tysk and Clifford.

OVAC Baseball Champs



WINNING the OVAC Class A baseball championship at the recent tournament was this team from St. John Central. Pictured, front row, from left are T.J. Sliva, Joe Rykowski, Ben Shutler, Joey Vavra, Sean Zeakes, Mark Hartlieb and Joe Van Dorn. Standing, from left, are head coach Tom Sliva, Chris DiCesare, Drew Bednarczyk, Johnny Anderson, Chris Jingle, Mike Sullivan, Chad Taylor, Ryan Rico, Bryan Nardo, assistant coach Eric Petho and assistant coach Mike Bozan.

Wheeling Park, SCC capture OVAC baseball semifinals

Wheeling Park and Steubenville Central claimed victories in the OVAC Baseball Tournament Saturday.

The finals are set for next Saturday afternoon in Toronto.

OVAC AAAA
WHEELING PARK 8 WEIRTON 7
AT PERKINS FIELD. Wheeling Park held off Weirton, who could only muster one run in the top of the seventh, as the Patriots moved on to the OVAC AAAA finals via a tough 8-7 win.

Josh Tysk led the winners with a double, single and three RBI's, while teammates Rob Downer and J.J. Newman chipped in with two singles apiece.

Newman also had a RBI for the Patriots. John Kolawski led the Red Riders with three singles and a RBI. Matt Magnone also had two singles in the loss.

Wheeling Park will oppose Steubenville in Saturday's finals.



OVAC A
STEUB. CENTRAL 13 WHG CENTRAL 3
AT MEMORIAL FIELD. Steubenville Central scored four runs in the third and sixth en route to defeating Wheeling Central 13-3 in the OVAC A semi-finals.

Ryan Bartimez led the Crusaders with three singles, while Steve Spence and Pat McKittrick each had a double. Matt Miller also contributed three RBI's for the winners. Josh Sleime led the Maroon Knights on the afternoon as he drove in all three of Wheeling Central runs via a three run blast in the fourth inning.

WHEELING PARK 8 WEIRTON 7
102 003 1-- 7 8 3
Weirton 210 212 x -- 8 9 3
BATTERIES: Fisher, Kalowski(3) and Buffo; Banks, Tysk(4) and Clifford.
STEUBENVILLE CENTRAL 13 WHEELING CENTRAL 3
Steubenville Central 004 234 0 -- 13 17 1
Wheeling Central 000 300 0 -- 3 8 2
BATTERIES: Spence and Cummings; Edwards, Simons(3), O'Brien(5), Eberhart(5), and Coyne and Carp.

Irish down Dons

By RICH MATERKOSKI
Times Leader Sports Writer

St. John Central and Weirton Madonna combined for 10 errors Saturday afternoon in the opening round of the OVAC A tourney at Brooke's Memorial Field, but it was the Irish that were able to overcome their mishaps en route to defeating the Blue Dons, 8-5.

Irish hurler Mark Hartlieb earned the win on the hill for St. John's as he fanned 10 while walking only two batters.

Most of the five errors the Irish committed were because of Hartlieb's ability to force ground balls.

"Mark really came out and performed for us today. He is a real bulldog on the mound," noted Irish boss Tom Sliva. "We know errors are going to happen, but the guys did a great job bouncing back and making plays after an error.

"This was a really intense baseball game...one of the better ones we've played in this year. Our fielders just came out and made plays when they needed to and that was the whole difference in the game."

The Irish were quick to make the most of the Blue Dons' mistakes as the Green received two runs in the first inning.

Sean Zeakes laced a single to right field and would later score on an overthrow to first. St. John's second run would come on a sacrifice fly by junior Chad Taylor as he drove in Joey Vavra to give the Irish the upperhand.

Madonna retaliated quickly as the Blue Dons jumped ahead in the top half of the second inning.

Brad Nicka roped a single to center to get things started for the Dons and Hartlieb walked T.J. Weimarskirch to set up a three-run homer by Jonathan Wessler.

Wessler blasted the Hartlieb fast ball some 350-feet as the ball sailed over the left-center fence, giving Madonna a 3-2 lead.

The Blue Dons struggled the rest of the afternoon as they could not muster another run until their final at-bat, but the Irish had no problem with their bats, especially in the bottom of the third when the Green exploded for six runs.

The Irish batted around in the third, thanks in part to singles by Ben Shutler, Hartlieb, Vavra and Joe Rykowski.

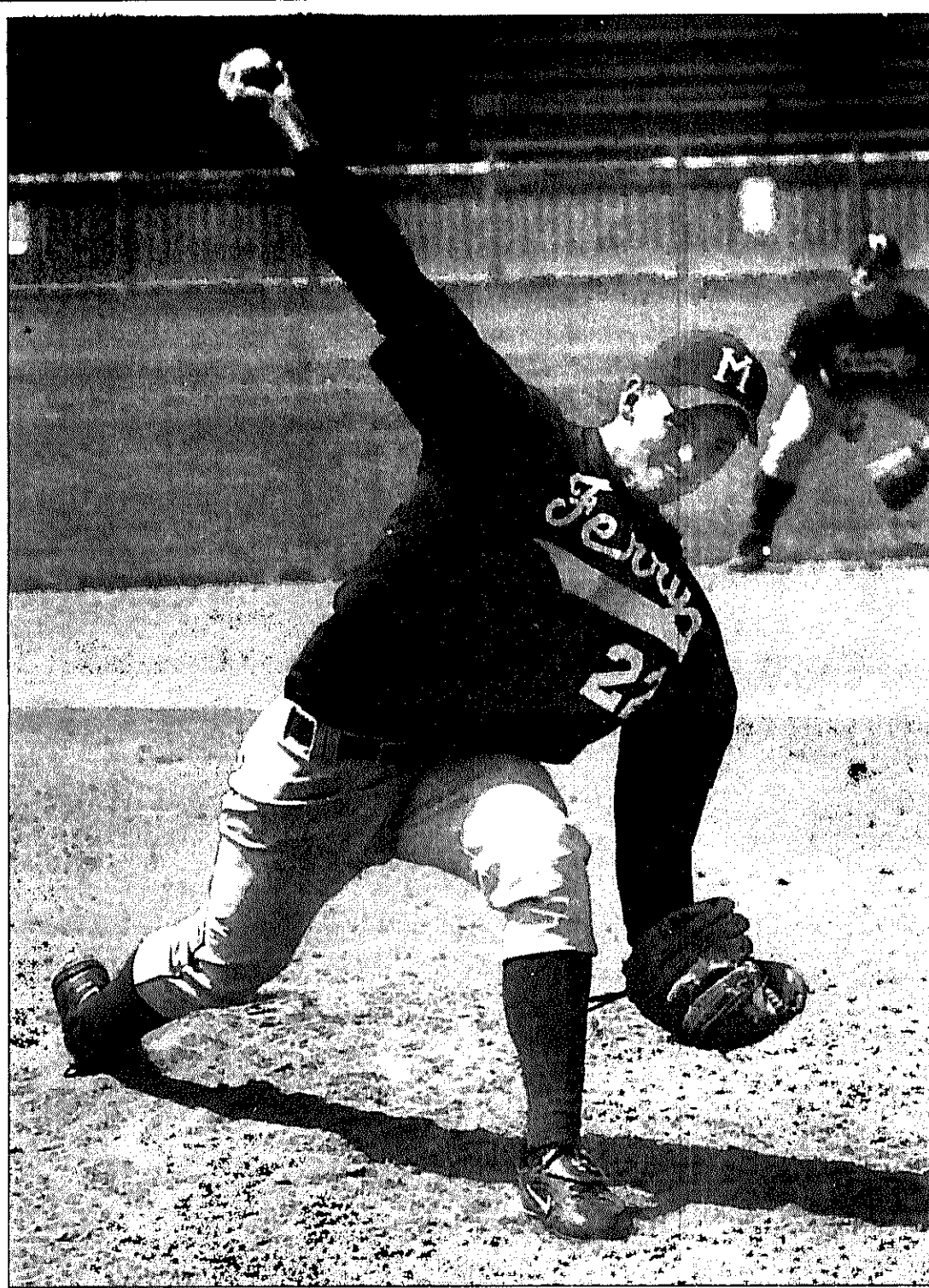
Sliva was pleased his troops were able to get the bat on the ball and produce runs after the first two innings had been up and down.

"We really came alive in the third inning and hit some good shots out of the infield," admitted Sliva.

"I think we did a really nice job of base running today, also. We moved guys along when we need to and whenever there was a passed ball, we were on the move. That put a lot of pressure on them (Madonna) and it worked to our advantage."

The Blue Dons did make a final push in the top of the seventh as the Weirton-based school tacked on two more runs.

Madonna received a single



T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA

MARTINS FERRY junior Tyler Train delivers a pitch during Saturday afternoon's OVAC Class AAA semi-final baseball game at Perkins Field in Brookside. Train fanned 12 and walked none as Ferry won 2-1.

● Riders

Continued from Page B1

defense."

Matt Harris pitched well in defeat for the Zeps. He scattered eight hits, fanned two and didn't issue a walk in dropping to 3-1 on the campaign.

Ferry wasted a scoring opportunity in the initial frame. Gentile opened the game with a rocket double but was eventually stranded on third.

In the second, the Purple Riders again placed a runner in scoring position only to come up empty. With one out, Train engineered a hit off Harris but was left standing at second base as the next two Riders were retired on fly balls.

The fifth inning was once again the same story for the Ferrians -- a wasted chance to break the scoreless deadlock. Junior centerfielder Ty Platt singled to open the inning and

advanced to third when the Zeps mishandled a ground ball off the bat of Anderson.

Harris -- staring at runners at the corners and no outs -- was up to the task. He recorded a strikeout before inducing a popup and ground ball out.

All told, the Purple Riders left seven men on the bases.

Gentile enjoyed a fine day at the plate for the winners. He singled, doubled and produced a sac fly.

Martins Ferry will make its Division III sectional debut Monday against ancient rival Bellaire at 7 p.m., again at Perkins Field.

Linescore
Martins Ferry 000 011 0 2 8 2
Shenandoah 000 000 1 1 3 2

BATTERIES: Train and Delbrugge; Harris and Moore

Beallsville stops Linsly

By JEREMY MIDEI
Times Leader Sports Writer

With an OVAC 1-A title game berth riding on the outcome, the Beallsville Blue Devils set up a rematch of the 2001 title game with St. John Central by dispatching the Linsly Cadets, 6-3.

Boasting an outstanding pitching effort from senior hurler Aaron Boughner, coach Ron Street's Devils stymied Linsly's patiently aggressive batters, holding them to only three hits on the day.

But, even though the Cadets parlayed those three base-knocks into three runs, coach Gary Sprague explained that his team was just not able to overcome its "uncharacteristic" showing.

"Defense and pitching have been our strengths all season, but they (Beallsville) took advantage

ducks on the pond, delivered a game-deciding single that scored teammates Ryan Kinzy and Clint Marcum. A throwing error plated clean-up hitter Seth Venick, effectively ending the game and downing the Cadets' title hopes.

"Aaron really keeps our team together," Street continued. "He did that today and picked us up when we really needed it."

Linsly drew first blood in the home half of the opening frame, as two Blue Devil errors put leadoff hitter Witzberger in scoring position. Three batters later, senior catcher R.J. Zitzelsberger singled home the centerfielder with laser beam between third and short.

With the bases loaded and only one out recorded, Linsly threatened to add to its lead before a Boughner-to-home-to-first twin-killing ended the

sive tide turned in the seventh as Boughner delivered his game-winning hit.

Linsly threatened in the seventh, jamming the bases with only one out before Boughner extinguished the fire by striking out Linsly's last two batters.

"Aaron has been doing it all year for us. He's been one of our top guns and has really risen to the occasion when we needed him.

"He really challenged batters today and played with a lot of guts."

When asked about the rematch with St. John's, Street replied, "The Irish are a good team. The kids really want to defend our championship.

"We started out strong this season and then tailed off, but we've played well lately and I think we'll be ready to go."

great job bouncing back and making plays after an error.

"This was a really intense baseball game...one of the better ones we've played in this year. Our fielders just came out and made plays when they needed to and that was the whole difference in the game."

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The Irish batted around in the third, thanks in part to singles by Ben Shutler, Hartlieb, Vavra and Joe Rykowski.

Sliva was pleased his troops were able to get the bat on the ball and produce runs after the first two innings had been up and down.

"We really came alive in the third inning and hit some good shots out of the infield," admitted Sliva.

"I think we did a really nice job of base running today, also. We moved guys along when we need to and whenever there was a passed ball, we were on the move. That put a lot of pressure on them (Madonna) and it worked to our advantage."

The Blue Dons did make a final push in the top of the seventh as the Weirton-based school tacked on two more runs.

Madonna received a single by Luke Myers and a RBI from first baseman Frank Piertranton to narrow the gap, but it wasn't enough as Hartlieb fired his way of the jam forcing the last two Madonna batters to ground out.

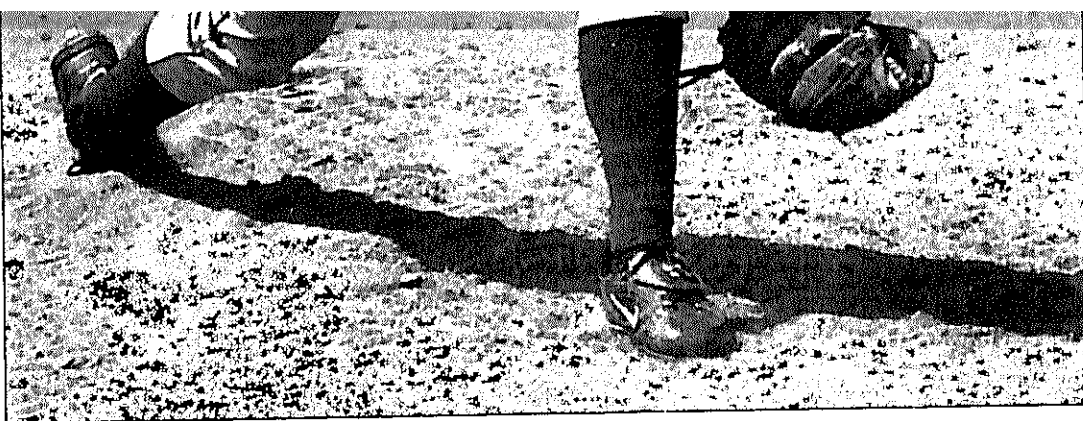
"I told the kids that we're really proud of the way they bounced back all day, but in baseball, they always say the hardest three outs are the last three, but we were able to fight through and get it done," Sliva said.

The Irish will next face Malvern in the sectionals, and will face the winner of the Linsly-Beallsville game Saturday for the OVAC 1-A crown.

"Malvern has really nice baseball team. They are consistently a good team and are well coached, so it should be a dandy of a game," said Sliva.

St. John Central is now 14-4 on the year.

Linescore:
Madonna 030 000 2 -- 5 8 5
St. John's 206 000 x -- 8 8 5
BATTERIES: Goodall, Gianni (4) and Gianni and Goodall (4); Hartlieb and Rykowski.



T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA

MARTINS FERRY junior Tyler Train delivers a pitch during Saturday afternoon's OVAC Class AAA semi-final baseball game at Perkins Field in Brookside. Train fanned 12 and walked none as Ferry won 2-1.

● Riders

Continued from Page B1

defense."

Matt Harris pitched well in defeat for the Zeps. He scattered eight hits, fanned two and didn't issue a walk in dropping to 3-1 on the campaign.

Ferry wasted a scoring opportunity in the initial frame. Gentile opened the game with a rocket double but was eventually stranded on third.

In the second, the Purple Riders again placed a runner in scoring position only to come up empty. With one out, Train engineered a hit off Harris but was left standing at second base as the next two Riders were retired on fly balls.

The fifth inning was once again the same story for the Ferrians -- a wasted chance to break the scoreless deadlock. Junior centerfielder Ty Platt singled to open the inning and

advanced to third when the Zeps mishandled a ground ball off the bat of Anderson.

Harris -- staring at runners at the corners and no outs -- was up to the task. He recorded a strikeout before inducing a popup and ground ball out.

All told, the Purple Riders left seven men on the bases.

Gentile enjoyed a fine day at the plate for the winners. He singled, doubled and produced a sac fly.

Martins Ferry will make its Division III sectional debut Monday against ancient rival Bellaire at 7 p.m., again at Perkins Field.

Linescore
Martins Ferry 000 011 0 2 8 2
Shenandoah 000 000 1 1 3 2
BATTERIES: Train and Delbrugge; Harris and Moore

Beallsville stops Linsly

By JEREMY MIDEI
Times Leader Sports Writer

With an OVAC 1-A title game berth riding on the outcome, the Beallsville Blue Devils set up a rematch of the 2001 title game with St. John Central by dispatching the Linsly Cadets, 6-3.

Boasting an outstanding pitching effort from senior hurler Aaron Boughner, coach Ron Street's Devils stymied Linsly's patiently aggressive batters, holding them to only three hits on the day.

But, even though the Cadets parlayed those three base-knocks into three runs, coach Gary Sprague explained that his team was just not able to overcome its "uncharacteristic" showing.

"Defense and pitching have been our strengths all season, but they (Beallsville) took advantage of the opportunities we gave them today. This is basically the end of the season for us, so its very disappointing," Sprague lamented after the game.

Linsly starter Josh Norman started the game for Sprague, but gave way to Jason Witzberger in the sixth.

Street echoed the sentiments of his Linsly counterpart.

"Linsly played very well -- they are a great baseball school -- but we held our own and took advantage of some opportunities late. Aaron kept us in it until he delivered that big hit in the seventh.

Boughner, batting with the score tied at three and three

ducks on the pond, delivered a game-deciding single that scored teammates Ryan Kinzy and Clint Marcum. A throwing error plated clean-up hitter Seth Venick, effectively ending the game and downing the Cadets' title hopes.

"Aaron really keeps our team together," Street continued. "He did that today and picked us up when we really needed it."

Linsly drew first blood in the home half of the opening frame, as two Blue Devil errors put leadoff hitter Witzberger in scoring position. Three batters later, senior catcher R.J. Zitzelsberger singled home the centerfielder with laser beam between third and short.

With the bases loaded and only one out recorded, Linsly threatened to add to its lead before a Boughner-to-home-to-first twin-killing ended the Cadets' inning.

The Blue Devils jumped out to a 3-1 lead in the top of the third as centerfielder Ryan Kinzy check-swunged a Josh Norman offering over the 315-foot mark in leftfield.

"Ryan's been peaking the last three or four games and he really put us over the top today."

Linsly evened the score in the bottom of the third as second baseman Matt Buchwach singled home Norman -- who reached by fielder's choice -- and Zitzelsberger, who got on base the hard way -- by taking a Boughner pitch in the side.

Pitching dominated the middle innings as neither team could muster any offense. The offen-

sive tide turned in the seventh as Boughner delivered his game-winning hit.

Linsly threatened in the seventh, jamming the bases with only one out before Boughner extinguished the fire by striking out Linsly's last two batters.

"Aaron has been doing it all year for us. He's been one of our top guns and has really risen to the occasion when we needed him.

"He really challenged batters today and played with a lot of guts."

When asked about the rematch with St. John's, Street replied, "The Irish are a good team. The kids really want to defend our championship.

"We started out strong this season and then tailed off, but we've played well lately and I think we'll be ready to go."

The OVAC 1-A championship game will take place next Saturday at the Red Knight Baseball Complex in Toronto. Beallsville is back in action this Monday with a sectional matchup with Bridgeport.

With Linsly's season winding down, Sprague added that he's "proud of the team, especially the way they rallied."

"Baseball is a game of opportunities -- either you take advantage or you don't -- and we didn't today."

Linescore:
Beallsville 003 000 3 -- 6 7 4
Linsly 102 000 0 -- 3 3 1
BATTERIES: Boughner and Rich; Norman, Witzberger (6) and Zitzelsberger.

Meadowbrook surprises Magnolia

The Meadowbrook Colts, in a mild upset, defeated the highly regarded Magnolia Blue Eagles in OVAC 3-A semifinal action Saturday, 3-1.

Meadowbrook's Aubrey Neuhart went the distance, allowing only three Magnolia hits. Neuhart also singled home the Colts' first run in the third inning.

Joe Blatt was the tough-luck loser for coach Dave Cisar's Blue Eagles, striking out nine and

giving up only four hits in seven innings of work; one hit, however, was a two-run blast by Logan Shultice in the sixth inning.

"We stranded six runners in scoring position, but Neuhart was able to pitch them out of some jams," Cisar said. "Meadowbrook deserved to win because they made plays when the had to."

Meadowbrook 001 002 0 -- 3 4 1
Magnolia 000 010 0 -- 1 3 1
BATTERIES: Neuhart and Daugherty; Blatt and Carroll.

Tysk's Two-Run Single Lifts Wheeling Park Past Weir

By NICK BEDWAY

Executive Sports Editor

Running wild on the bases to put pressure on the opposition is Wheeling Park's game.

On occasion the Patriots have been known to do it a little too much, according to head coach Doug Tush.

"Live by that sword and die by it sometimes," sighed Tush. "Fortunately, we were able to overcome a few mental mistakes today and squeak out a big win."

With leadoff batter Rob Downer collecting two hits and stealing four bases and winning pitcher Josh Tysk rapping a clutch two-out, two-run single in the bottom of the sixth inning, the Patriots held off Weir High 8-7 in Saturday's Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AAAA semi-final game.

The one-run victory at Perkins Field in Brookside advanced the top-seeded Patriots into this Saturday's title game at the Red Knight baseball complex. Wheeling Park (17-3) will face Steubenville in what will be its first appearance in the conference title game since winning the OVAC crown in 1998 with the late Tommy Dale at the helm. Big Red eliminated Edison, 6-4, in a 4A semifinal played yesterday at Toronto.

Downer's speed at the top of the batting order has been an upper for the Patriots. The four steals yesterday gave him 35 on the year, which is already a school record. "He can fly,"



Photo by Alex Kozlowski

Wheeling Park's J.J. Newman spins to fire to first base as Weir baserunner Sean Meador slides on Saturday during their Class AAAA semifinal at Brookside.

Tush said. "If he was in track, he'd probably be winning one of those races at the OVAC meet today."

After Weir rallied for three runs in the top of the sixth to tie the score at 6, the Patriots scored twice to go back in front. Justin Hartzell dropped a one-out single over the head of Red Rider second baseman Justin Pernel into short right field. He quickly stole second. After Downer flied out to right - the only time he was retired all day - Keith Banks was hit by a pitch.

Both runners moved up on a wild pitch, causing Weir coach Bob Rosnick to order an intentional walk to Park slugger J.J. Newman, who already had two hits. But the move backfired as Tysk rapped an off-speed pitch from John Kolosky in between third and short for a single that scored both Hartzell and Banks.

The Red Riders, who rallied twice previously to tie the score, gave it another go in the seventh against Tysk, who had replaced Banks on the mound in the previous frame. With two out and none-on Kolosky got his third single of the afternoon and continued on to second when Newman's errant throw from deep in the hole at shortstop got past first base. Josh Buffo walked and Matt Magnone singled, scoring

Kolosky.

Tysk, with the tying run at second and the go-ahead run at first, then struck out Pernel on three pitches to end the game.

"Give Weir credit, they kept battling back today," Tush said. "We are real pleased to get out of here with our 17th win and have a chance to play for the OVAC championship next week."

It was a see-saw struggle most of the way. The Red Riders scored in the top of the first inning on a walk, a balk and Jordan Pate's single over the head of third baseman Tysk. Further damage was prevented when Patriot second baseman Mark Maguire dove to cut off Kolosky's grounder headed to centerfield and then threw him out at first base.

Downer bloomed a single to center to start the bottom of the first, stole second and scored on Newman's base hit. An error moved Newman up a base and he crossed the dish on a Tysk double that fell in fair territory down the right field line.

Park got a gift run in the second inning with runners on first and third and two-out as Maguire raced home after Red Rider starting pitcher Dan Fisher went to first base trying to pick off Downer, who wound up stealing second base.

OVAC BASEBALL

Weir (9-5) got even in the third inning on a walk, hit batsman, sacrifice fly by Cory Pepler and a Kolosky RBI single.

Hartzell's safety squeeze bunt scored one run and Downer's swinging bunt down the third base line gave Park the lead back at 5-3 in the fourth. It became a 6-3 game in the fifth on Adam Saseen's two-out RBI single. Both the fourth and fifth innings ended with Patriot players being thrown out on the basepaths.

Weir's three-run sixth inning also featured some unusual circumstances. Kolosky singled and came all the way around from first on a Patriot throwing error as Buffo reached base. Magnone singled and stole second. With runners at second and third, Joe Marino struck out but the ball got away from the Park catcher. When he threw to first for the out on Marino, another run scored.

Marlin Anderson's infield single plated the tying run. Anderson then used his head to steal second. He appeared to be out sliding into second but his head knocked the ball out of the glove of the Patriot shortstop. However, Tysk retired the side on a strikeout and popout to Newman to keep the game tied.

Class AAAA

Steubenville 6, Edison 4

At Toronto, Justin Banks homered and Justin Garber added two singles and two RBI for Big Red, which advanced to the "big school" championship game against Wheeling Park.

Steubenville scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to increase a one-run advantage and then held off a closing rally by Edison. Winning pitcher Trevor Kalinowski doubled in a run.

Class AAA

Meadowbrook 3, Magnolia 1

At New Martinsville, the regular-season champion Blue Eagles (19-4) suffered their first home loss at the most inopportune time.

Logan Schultice launched a tie-breaking two-run home run in the sixth and Aubrey Neuhart held the potent Magnolia attack to just three hits as the Colts (11-9) earned a trip to the Class AAA title tilt.

Coach Tim Roller's Meadowbrook squad will take on Martins Ferry in Saturday's triple-A final at the Red Knight Baseball Complex in Toronto.

The Purple Riders edged Shenandoah, 2-1, at Brookside in Saturday's other Class AAA semi.

"Their kid (Neuhart) pitched a real good ballgame," said Blue Eagle head coach Dave Cisar.

"He was really tough in the clutch. We stranded six runners in scoring position."

The Colts drew first blood off hard-luck loser Joe Blatt when Neuhart helped his own cause with an RBI single in the top of the third.

Magnolia drew even in the bottom of the fifth when Michael Carroll ripped an RBI double but the deadlock proved short-lived.

See, PARK, Page B3

Crusaders Earn OVAC Class AA Crown

By NICK BEDWAY
Executive Sports Editor

Steubenville Catholic Central baseball coach Tom Bartemes said his team had a reason to play on Saturday night when the Crusaders faced host Toronto in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AA championship game held at the Knight Baseball Complex.

Eliminated by Union Local in its Ohio sectional tournament bid earlier last week, Bartemes and the Crusaders were anxious to end their season a winning note.

And win they did. Scoring 11 runs and pounding out 15 hits, Steubenville Catholic handed the Red Knights an 11-3 defeat in a game finally halted by a heavy downpour with Toronto at bat in the bottom of the seventh inning.

Showers fell throughout that two-hour and 32-minute marathon. Then, the skies really opened up during the top of the seventh inning while the Crusaders were pushing four

more runs across the plate to open up a commanding lead.

The umpires and OVAC officials did their best to try and finish the bottom of the seventh. But the heavy rain continued to fall and, although the Red Knights had gotten their first three runners on base, the risk of injury to the players on the field became everyone's paramount concern.

Home plate umpire Dave Reitter halted play and OVAC officials on the scene ruled that the game was over at that point and that the final score would stand at 11-3.

"It was nice to come back after the sectional loss and have our players finish the year this way," Bartemes said.

The key to the victory, along with a torrid-bat assault, was the steady pitching of righthander Pat McKittrick over the first six innings. McKittrick, mixing up his pitches well, carried a no-hitter into the bottom of the fifth as he threatened to become the second OVAC hurler during cham-

pionship Saturday to hurl a no-no.

Earlier in the day at the same site, Steubenville's Trevor Kalinowski tossed a no-hitter as Big Red defeated Wheeling Park 3-0 in the Class AAAA final.

Trailing 4-0 at the time, Toronto's Zak Thomas dropped a double down the left-field line with one-out for the Red Knights' first hit. Josh Hughes followed with a single to right as Thomas then scored the initial Toronto run. Unruffled, McKittrick got the final two outs of the inning on a strikeout and a pop to short.

The Crusaders widened the lead to 7-1 entering the last of the sixth when Toronto began mounting a comeback. With one out, Mike Romey ripped a single up the middle as McKittrick barely got out of the way from the hot smash. Scott Lewis then doubled to score Romey and Doug O'Halek went back up the middle with another base hit that plated the second run of the inning.

Ryan Fidak's attempt for still

another single up the middle was cut off this time by McKittrick, who started a 1-6-3 double play to end the inning.

Steubenville Catholic went up 1-0 in the second inning thanks to a Toronto error, followed by Ryan Bartemes' double on a 1-0 pitch into the left-center gap, chasing Andrew Donaher home. It was the first of three hits for Bartemes, who singled in a run in the third inning and doubled home two more teammates in the top of the seventh, giving him a total of four RBI.

The three-run second-inning also featured a Steve Spence line-drive double to left, a single by McKittrick and a blast for a two-run triple by Matt Miller, who stroked the ball into the gap to the fence in right centerfield.

Miller, who had three hits in five trips to the plate, had another RBI triple in the three-run sixth inning.

He continued on to score when the ball was thrown away on the relay to third base. Two

walks, a McKittrick double and a Drew Mihalyo RBI single also were part of the sixth inning uprising.

Four runs scored after two were out by the Crusaders in the seventh inning. Bartemes knocked across two runners with a double, Mihalyo got his second RBI single and Mike Gianni also drove in a run with a double.

Steubenville Catholic rudely treated four Toronto pitchers during the long, wet evening. "We are either all hot together or all cold together," Bartemes said. "When we start hitting somehow it works its way through our entire lineup."

While the season is over for the Crusaders, Toronto will spend this week preparing for its district tournament bid, which begins on Monday, May 20, also at the Red Knight Complex. OVAC Class A champion Bellaire St. John's Central also will in the four-team district field. The other two qualifiers have yet to be determined.

HIGH SCHOOL LINESCORES

BASEBALL OVAC Tournament Semifinals Class AAAA (at Brookside)

Weir	102	003	1-7	8	3
Wheeling Park	210	212	x-8	9	3

We-Fisher (OSO, 2W), Kolosky lp (3) (1SO, 3W) and Buffo. Pata S, rbi; Co. Peppler SF; Kolosky 3S, rbi; Buffo S; Magnone 2S, rbi; Anderson S, rbi.

Edison	200	000	2-4	9	5
Steubenville	102	003	x-6	8	1

E-Meyer lp (4SO, 2W) and Reese. Tingle 3S; Reese S, rbi; Andrew Martus S, 2rbi; Ujich S, rbi.

Class AAA (at Brookside)

Martins Ferry	000	011	0-2	7	1
Shanandoah	000	000	1-1	3	3

MF-Train wp (12SO, 0W) and Delbrugge. Gentile D, S, rbi; Fairbanks rbi; Reasbeck S, Platt S, Train S, Fox S; Anderson T.

Class AA (at Toronto)

Wellsville	100	030	0-4	3	2
Toronto	113	000	x-5	8	3

W-Hamilton lp (6SO, 3W) and Congrove. Thomas D, 3rbi.

Class A (at New Martinsville)

Meadowbrook	001	002	0-3	4	1
Magnolia	000	010	0-1	3	1

Mea-Neuhart (3SO, 4W) and Daugherty. Schultice HR, 2rbi; Neuhart S, rbi; Mag-Blatt (9SO, 1W) and Carroll. Carroll D, rbi; Mason D.

Class A (at Wellsburg)

Steub.Cent.	004	234	13	17	1
Whg. Cent.	000	300	3	8	2

St.C — Spence wp (0SO, 2W), and Cummings. Spence 2S, 1D, Miller 4S, 3rbi; Bartemes 3S, 2rbi; McKittrick D, rbi.

Class A (at New Martinsville)

Beallsville	003	000	3-6	5	3
Linsly	102	000	0-3	5	1

B-Boughner wp (8SO, 2W) and Rich. Kinzy 3-run HR; Boughner S, D, 3rbi; Tyler Brown S.

Class A (at Wellsburg)

Madonna	030	000	2-5	5	8
St. John's	206	000	x-8	8	6

M — Goodall lp (2SO, 2W), Gianni (3) (5SO, 3W) and Gianni, Myers. Myers 2S, HR, 3rbi.

S.J — Hartlieb wp (9SO, 3W) and Rykowski. Taylor 2S, Vavra 2S.