

T-L Photo/PAULA GINTHER

DELIVERING A pitch during Wednesday's 10-0 victory over Martins Ferry in an OVAC semifinal matchup at the J.B. Chambers Complex is Union Local standout Megan Jack.

# UL girls stun Ferry in OVAC tourney

By RICH GIBSON  
Times Leader Sports Editor

Twice-beaten and twice-blanked by Martins Ferry during the regular season, Union Local's Lady Jets turned the tables in a big way Wednesday night.

Not only was UL finally able to solve Lady Riders' mound ace Natalie Vinci, the Jets did so in stunning fashion, recording a 10-0 rout at the J.B. Chambers Complex.

Wednesday's OVAC 3-A semifinal conquest sends Bill Weller's now 15-6 squad to Saturday's title game where UL opposes Oak Glen.

"We were involved in two very close (regular season) games with Ferry," Weller advised. "I'll gladly trade those two losses for an opportunity to play in a championship game on Saturday. Who wouldn't?"

Entering with a 13-2 record, Ferry found the going tough against UL's talented Megan Jack.

"She was really fired-up for this one and may have been a little too pumped in the beginning," said Weller of his sophomore ace. "Once Megan settled down and got in a good groove, she was very effective."

The Riders managed but three singles and had runners cut down at home

plate and third base.

"About all you can do is congratulate Union Local," said Ferry coach Jess Cordery. "We just got hammered tonight, plain and simple. But I know our kids haven't lost any confidence. They realize there's a lot more to play for out there."

Ferry is scheduled to make its sectional tournament debut next Tuesday at Cambridge versus Buckeye Trail. "It's not out of the question we could meet up with Union Local again," Cordery theorized.

Vinci, one of the valley's premier pitchers, experienced a very rare performance, yielding all 10 runs and 10 hits.

"I can't recall Natalie getting roughed-up like that — probably since her freshman year," Cordery confessed. "But she's the type kid who won't let something like this get her down. She'll go back out and dominate someone the next time."

Vinci had no-hit the Jets early in the season, then returned to do another number on Weller's club in a 1-0 Purple triumph.

"Once we got a base hit tonight, it seemed everyone started swinging the bat. I could see it in the kids' eyes," the Jets' coach pointed out.

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## 2002 OHIO VALLEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT



### Cadets Down Pilots

By MIKE HUGHES  
Staff Writer

Fort Frye coach Barbara Sleek believed that in order for her team to knock off River, it needed to bring the bats.

Fresh off a 1-0 victory over Beallsville on Wednesday that saw the Cadets (16-5) muster only two hits, Sleek knew that a repeat performance at the plate on Thursday was not going to get it done.

Led by a 3-for-3 outing from catcher Danielle Polk, Fort Frye belted out seven hits and seven runs off River starter Leah Baker by the fourth inning, leading the Cadets to an 8-2 win.

"Yesterday at Beallsville, we were just dead at the plate," explained Sleek following her team's victory in the OVAC Class AA semifinals at the J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove Thursday. "And I told the girls, 'If you guys bring the bat, you will be fine.'"

"And they did. The first inning, they came out and attacked the ball. But the only thing I was worried about is that River always scores, and they always attack the ball."

But thanks to a brilliant outing from Fort Frye hurler Kim Heldman — her third start in as many days — the Cadets were able to keep the River batters at bay for most of the game.

Heldman finished with six strikeouts, no walks, and limited River to two runs on five hits. She retired the side in order in three separate innings. This despite fighting through a pinched nerve in her back.

"Kim has pitched three games in a row, and it seems like she gets better and better," said Sleek. "She has a pinched nerve in her back that she has played with all season, and sometimes it acts up on her. But she is a workhorse."

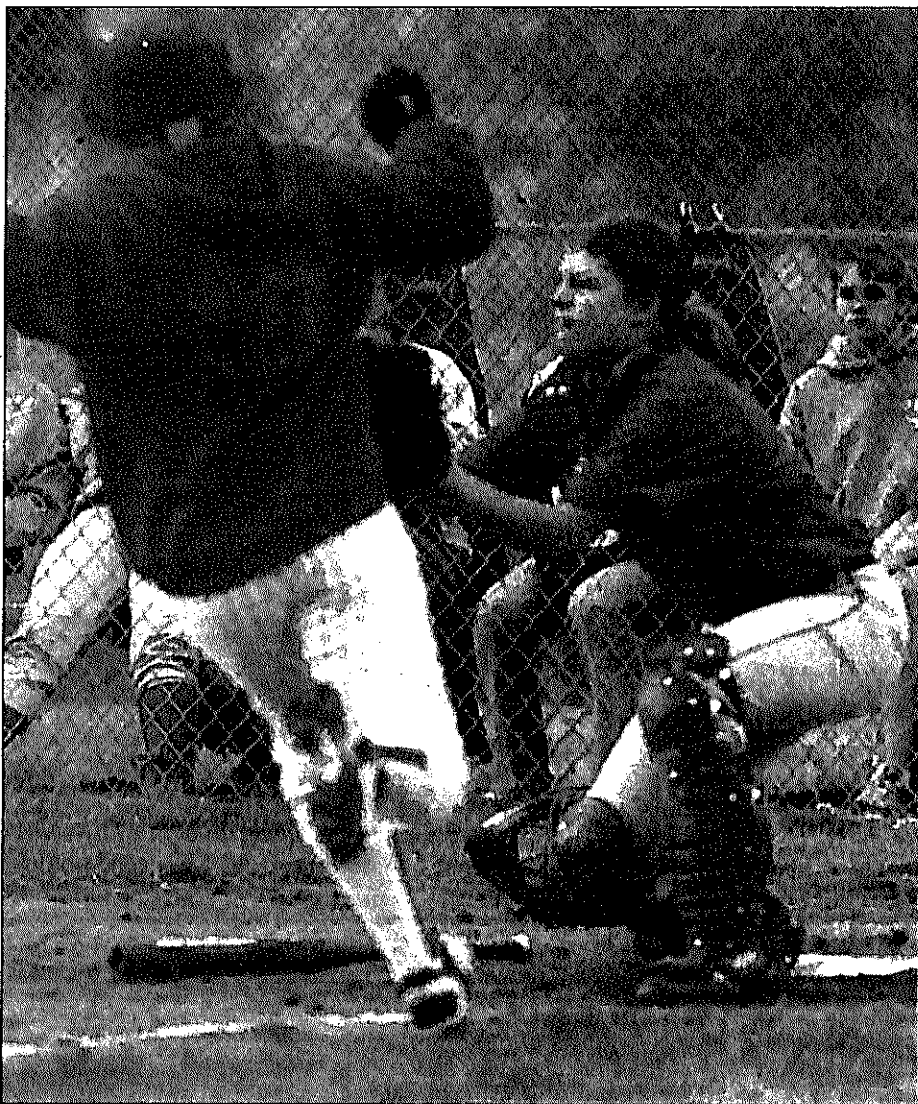


Photo by Art Limann

Fort Frye Rhyan Close (10) gets ready to slide into home as River catcher Lindsay Romick awaits the throw during their OVAC Class AA softball game at the J.B. Chambers/1-470 Complex in Elm Grove. Close was safe on the play.

"She will work as hard as anybody we have."

Fort Frye went to work early, scoring three runs in the first inning. Polk drove in one run on a groundball double past the shortstop, and two River errors and a pair of passed balls allowed the other two runs to score.

Baker, usually solid on the mound for River, was having an off day — and the combination of a few early-inning errors spelled doom for the Pilots.

"We didn't play the caliber of ball we have been playing all year," explained River coach Mark Romick. "Fort Frye has a very good team and if you come out and commit errors early, they will jump all over you."

"We have been fundamental all year, but for some reason, tonight we weren't."

With an opening round sectional on May 10 against Bridgeport looming, Romick believes this just might be the

Please See CADETS, Page 24



Photo by Art Limann

Bellaire St. John's Kayla Bittengle runs through the bag as Beallsville first baseman Sasha Burkhart squeezes the throw during their OVAC Class A game softball game Thursday.

### Bruins Nip Red Riders

Brooke rallies for 10-9 win

Brooke's RaeAnn D'Aurora singled home Marissa Ciccolella in the bottom of the seventh, as the Bruins came from behind to defeat Weir in OVAC Class AAAA semifinal action.

Weir held a 7-6 lead in the bottom of the fifth when play was postponed Wednesday because of rain.

The BruMandy DiPasquale finished with four RBIS on a single and a double, and Michelle DiGiacinto smacked out four singles while driving home a run.

Tiffany Bright was one double shy of the cycle for Weir, and drove in a run. Kerri Phillips (seven strikeouts, one walk) had two singles and a double, despite taking the loss on the hill.

Ashley Visco went the distance to earn the win for Brooke, fanning two and walking one.

Brooke advances to play Edison in the Class AAAA finals on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at the J.B. Chamber's Complex.

# Arms race

• OVAC tourney features number of pitching stars

By GREG HARKNESS  
Times Leader Sports Writer

The first pitch is set for the OVAC softball tournament ... and chances are with the collection of arms assembled it will be a strike.

The tournament will get started with semifinal action Tuesday night at the Chambers/I-470 Complex in Wheeling and continue Thursday night. The finals will be contested Saturday afternoon.

IN CLASS A, St. John Central is back in a bid to defend its title. The Green will oppose Beallsville in the 6 p.m. game on Thursday.

The Irish posted a sparkling 15-3 record under the direction of head coach Jerry Magistro. St. John's has gotten a tremendous first-year effort from ace Meghan Johnson on the mound.

The Irish offense is keyed by table-setters Lauren Crecion and Kayla Bittengle, while St. John's counts on the likes of Retta Rico, Brië Donaher and Jonni Jo Magistro to bring them home.

The Blue Devils, meanwhile, finished the season strong to secure the fourth seed. Head coach Deb Street's Blue Devils finished the season with a 6-10 record.

Sophomore standout Charity Street keys Beallsville on the mound and at the plate, but she is hardly a one-person crew with the likes of Tiffany Crum, Cody Marcum and Holly Johnson.

Linsly, which posted a school-record for victories with a 11-4 mark, will face Conotton Valley (6-4) in the other semi-final contest. That game will be played Thursday at 7:30.

IN CLASS AA, a new champion will be crowned with the absence of defending champion Toronto.



T-L Photo/GREG HARKNESS

THE OVAC Softball tournament will get under way beginning Tuesday night in Wheeling. Pictured from, left, are five of the area's top mound performers including Union Local's Megan Jack, Martins Ferry's Natalie Vinci, Shadyside's Lisa Merryman, St. John Central's Meghan Johnson and River's Lea Baker.

Head coach Jackie Marook's Steubenville Central club grabbed the top seed with a sterling 15-2 record. The Crusaders feature one of the area's top pitchers in Sarah Franckhauser.

The Crusaders will have a battle on their hands in the semifinals where it will face coach Tim Merryman's Shadyside Tigers.

Shadyside put together a 10-3 regular season, riding the arm of sophomore standout Lisa Merryman. Providing offensive support are seniors Nikki Fluharty and Jillian Johnson.

The game is set for Tuesday night at 7:30.

The other semi-final will feature Fort Frye against River. The game will begin at 6:00 on Thursday.

The Cadets enter with a 10-3 mark and



are seeded second.

River, meanwhile, posted a 12-3 record thanks to mound ace Lea Baker's fine season.

Coach Mark Romick's offense is keyed by junior standout Lindsey Romick and classmate Ashley Arman. Sophomores Mariah Hulsey and Ricci Cecil also add solid sticks.

CLASS AAA will also see a new champion as Beaver Local failed to qualify for the OVAC postseason.

Martins Ferry is the top-seed as coach Jess Cordery's Riders put together a superb 13-2 campaign. The Purple is in action on Monday night against Union Local at 7:30.

Ferry rides the right arm of senior ace Natalie Vinci who sports an ERA of under one. The veteran-laden club relies on seniors Danielle Neavin, Courtney Allar, Ashley Bruney and Sarah Kelner to provide offensive support.

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## ● Softball

Continued from Page B1

Union Local enters with a 13-6 record under coach Bill Weller's tutelage.

The Jets have come on strong as sophomore ace Megan Jack has shined. Union Local's offense is led by senior Jenny Campbell with support coming from Crystal Bittenger, Summer Kinney and Danielle Holt.

In the other semi-final game, Magnolia will hook up with Oak Glen. That game is set for Tuesday night at 6 p.m.

IN CLASS AAAA, Edison will bid for the repeat as the Stephanie Peddicord led Wildcats (15-1) are in action Monday night at 6 p.m. against Cambridge (8-3).

In the other semifinal game, Brooke — the only team to beat Edison — will take on Weirton at 7:30 on Tuesday night.

Pairings:

OVAC SOFTBALL  
TOURNAMENT 2002  
CHAMBERS/I-470 COMPLEX  
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA  
April 30, 2002

Field A 6:00 p.m. — Edison vs Cambridge

7:30 p.m. — Martins Ferry vs Union Local

Field B 6:00 p.m. — Magnolia vs Oak Glen

7:30 p.m. — Brooke vs Weir

May 2, 2002

Field A 6:00 p.m. — Bellaire St. John vs Beallsville

7:30 p.m. — Steubenville Central vs Shadyside

Field B 6:00 p.m. — Fort Frye vs River

7:30 p.m. — Linsly vs Conotton Valley

Finals are scheduled for May 4, 2002

Class AAAA — 10:30 a.m.

Class A — 12:00 noon

Class AA — 1:30 p.m.

Class AAA — 3:00 p.m.





T-L Photos/MICHAEL HARVILLA

**LEFT PHOTO:** Union Local sophomore pitcher Megan Jack fires a pitch to the plate during Saturday's OVAC Softball Championships at Chambers field in Wheeling. The Jets dropped a 10-4 decision to Oak Glen.

**BOTTOM PHOTO:** St. John Central's Lauren Crecion scores during Saturday's Class A Championship game. The Irish pocketed a 14-2 victory.



## St. John Central claims OVAC Class A crown

By RICH GIBSON  
Times-Leader Sports Editor

The Lady Irish made it look all too easy.

Even head coach Jerry Magistro expressed surprise in the manner his St. John Central softball team captured the OVAC 1-A championship Saturday afternoon.

"I watched Conotton Valley beat a pretty good Linsly team the other night. They hit the ball all over the place," he remarked. "Things just really fell into place for us today."

A slight understatement, perhaps, considering the Irish erupted for nine first inning runs.

With impressive freshman Meghan Johnson on the mound, the final score was a mere formality in a 14-2 St. John's triumph at the J.C. Chambers complex.

"What's been so much fun with this group is the fact there are no superstars," Magistro added. "The girls' attitudes are great and so is their work ethic."

Conotton Valley starter Laramie Polen retired the first batter she faced in the bottom of the first.

Before Polen was to record another out, however, seven St. John's runners were to cross the plate.

Junior shortstop Kayla Bittingle reached on one of four Rocket errors in the opening frame.

Senior catcher Retta Rico followed with a base hit before junior first

See, IRISH, Page C4



# Oak Glen wins OVAC Class 3-A Championship

• Bears topple Union Local, 10-4

By RICH GIBSON  
Times-Leader Sports Editor

After four and one half innings, Union Local's Lady Jets were looking very much like OVAC champions.

Coach Bill Weller's team had mounted a 4-0 lead against Oak Glen and were nine outs from taking home the hardware to Morristown.

What started as a seemingly innocent error to open the Bears' fifth, would turn into a Saturday afternoon nightmare for UL.

Oak Glen sent 12 hitters to the plate and scored eight times en route to achieving the 3-A crown with a 10-4 comeback triumph.

"We built a nice lead, then, for some reason, we went flat," Weller stated. "In the fifth inning, Oak Glen did a nice job exploiting one of our major weaknesses -- they executed a few perfectly placed bunts and we didn't make the plays."

Still, Weller found it difficult to complain.

"It's been a good season and it's not over yet," he noted. "We still have some goals we can accomplish."

For Oak Glen, under fourth-year head coach Lola Bender, Saturday's title was especially sweet.

"I'm just thrilled for the girls and our assistant coaches," Bender explained. "We've played fairly well as a team and today was no different. The kids didn't panic when they fell behind. They really deserve this honor."

UL shortstop Crystal Bittinger had belted a leadoff double to open the contest. Veteran Jenny Campbell singled as did pitcher Megan Jack.

When first baseman Alison Artrip came through with another hit, UL was a 2-0 leader.

The Jets scored twice more in the fourth. Bittinger again doubled, scoring teammate Danielle Holt. Campbell followed with a sacrifice fly.

Oak Glen's fifth inning rally started when sophomore Mayghan McPherson reached on an error.

The Eckleberry sisters, Jade and Jenna, would follow with consecutive singles. Catcher Kayla Morris' base rap plated the tying tally.

Designated hitter Deanna Wedgewood and pitcher Susan Cashdollar would reach, the latter via a bases loaded free pass.

A sacrifice fly off the bat of sophomore Mandi Lamb send the Bears ahead 5-4.

The bases were again filled two batters later when Jenna Eckleberry drilled a three-run triple to the left center field gap and an 8-4 lighting.

Cashdollar set the Jets down in order in the sixth before the Bears added two more runs.

Holt hammered a two-out single in the UL seventh before Cashdollar recorded the final out.

The Bears' junior mound ace struck out two and did not permit a base on balls. Jack struck out one and also walked a batter.

Oak Glen's Krista Evans produced a four-hit performance, drilling a double and three singles. Jade and Jenna Eckleberry collected two hits apiece.

Bittinger belted three doubles for the Jets. Holt socked a single and double. Artrip contributed two singles.

UL (15-7) opposes St. Clairsville in sectional play Thursday at Cambridge. Oak Glen (11-5) faces Weir High, also on Thursday at Weirton.

Linescore  
Union Local 200 200 0 4 9 5  
Oak Glen 000 082 x 10 12 1  
BATTERIES: Jack and Faunda.  
Cashdollar and Morris.

## ● Irish

Continued from Page B1

baseball Jodie Coyne's drive to centerfield was misplayed.

That brought to the plate sophomore third baseman Brie Donaher who delivered a run-scoring triple to deep left field.

Junior second baseman Jonni Jo Magistro legged out an infield hit, scoring Donaher before Johnson also reached via a base rap.

Junior rightfielder Jaclyn Cera was safe on a Rockets' error and freshman leftfielder Ellie Swartz socked a run-scoring single.

Irish leadoff hitter Lauren Crecion also singled for a 7-0 lighting.

Bittinger was retired preceding Rico's two-run base hit that capped the Green's marathon frame.

St. John's made it 10-0 in the third when Crecion walked and came on to score following a Bittinger base hit and a CV mis-play.

The Rockets reached Johnson for their only two tallies in the fourth when Polen pounded a two-run triple to left centerfield.

But St. John's immediately

retaliated with four more runs in the last of the fourth.

Donaher and Magistro hit back to back singles and Johnson was safe on a fielder's choice.

After Donaher dashed home on a wild pitch, Cera singled and Swartz induced a bases loaded walk.

Crecion's ground ball scored a teammate and Rico connected for a sacrifice fly.

When Johnson retired Conotton in order in the fifth, the Irish were champions. The Irish's frosh mound ace struck out five and did not allow a base on balls.

Donaher, Rico and Magistro collected two hits apiece for St. John's.

Now 18-4, St. John's prepares for sectional action this week.

The Irish battle Beallsville, a team the Green beat in the OVAC semis, on Monday afternoon at Shadyside.

Linescore:  
Conotton 000 21 2 3 6  
St. John's 901 14 14 11 3  
BATTERIES: Polen, Cummings (1),  
and Loudermilk. Johnson and Rico.



T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA  
OAK GLEN catcher Kayla Morris blocks the plate as Union Local's Jenny Campbell prepares to slide into home. Campbell was called out on the play.



Photo by Alex Kozlowski

Cambridge baserunner Jayme Cline slides safely into home ahead of a tag by Edison catcher Holly Cline during OVAC Class AAAA semifinal action Wednesday at the J.B. Chambers Softball Complex's Field A.

## Edison Tames Cambridge

By MIKE HUGHES  
Staff Writer

For two innings, Edison's Stephanie Peddicord appeared to be on cruise control.

The senior hurler retired the first nine of eleven batters she faced — seven by strikeouts — and entering the fourth inning, the Wildcats' early 3-0 lead appeared to be more than safe.

But Cambridge managed to get a run across in the fourth thanks to an error and a well-placed bunt from first-baseman Jackie Golden, and the following innings, Cambridge began to get a feel for the Edison ace.

"Steph pitched well and started out real strong," explained Edison coach Spencer Bendle following his teams' 5-2 victory in the semifinals of the OVAC Class AAAA championships at the J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove.

"But I have always said that Cambridge is a real good hitting ball team, and I think that it took them a few innings to get used to her (Peddicord)."

After the fourth, Cambridge managed three more hits and thanks to another pair of Edison fielding errors, was able to get one more run before coming up short.

With Edison (17-2) leading 5-1, Cambridge's Jackie Golden led off the sixth inning with a double to center, advanced to third, and would later score when Amanda Bailey popped up to second, but the ball was dropped, allowing Golden to cross the plate.

"We didn't play very well defensively," said Bendle.

On the same token, Cambridge starter Maggie Mccoy did not receive much help from her defense either during the first few innings.

Of Edison's five runs, only two were earned, as both Missy Evans and Jessica Shepherd scored on fielding errors in the second inning, and sophomore Angie Skinner tripled to right in the third, and was sent home thanks to the relay throw finding its way out of bounds.

Steph Snyder and Missy Evans both singled to start off the fifth. Sam Steele's sacrifice allowed Snyder to score and Shepherd's grounder to short one batter later took a strange bounce, sending a streaking Evans across the plate for the Wildcats final run.

That was all the runs that Edison would need, as Peddicord retired the side in the seventh, recording a strikeout of Jayme Cline to end the game.

Edison, which broke out of its mild

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## ON THE MOVE

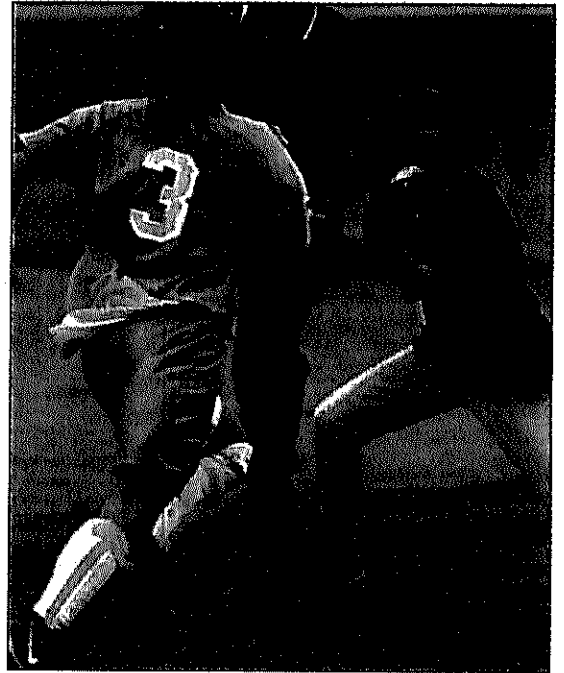


Photo by Alex Kozlowski

Oak Glen's Jade Eckleberry races toward first base as Magnolia's Ashley Duke takes the throw. Oak Glen won 4-3.

## Weir, Brooke Delayed By Rain ... Again

By MIKE HUGHES  
Staff Writer

Just when you thought it was safe to play an OVAC tournament softball game, down came the rain ... again.

For the second-straight day, inclement weather caused a postponement in tournament play, and this time, only Brooke and Weir fell victim.

The Red Riders held a 7-6 lead in the bottom half of the fifth inning when lightning caused a brief stoppage in action. Rain followed shortly, and the officials on hand elected to finish the second half of the OVAC Class AAAA semifinals today at the J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove.

This game figured to be a low scoring affair, as both teams top-notch pitchers in Weir's Kerri Phillips and Brooke's Ashley Visco, but both clubs provided more than enough offense.

Weir took the early lead in the second-inning when Tiffany Bright's bomb to right field sailed over the head of Gina Lastoria, and Bright was able to motor around the bases for an inside the park home run.

Brooke answered the next half inning when Kim Ayers tripled to left and was driven home on a successful bunt attempt from third baseman Michelle DiGiacinto.

The tally would seesaw back and forth as every time Weir would manage a lead, Brooke immediately answered the next half inning.

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## River Takes Early Lead in AA Track

Small School portion resumes Friday

By TRACY WATSON  
For The Intelligencer

River High exploded to a 16-point first-day lead at the OVAC/Cal Giffin track and field championships at Fleming Field in Shadyside Wednesday night.

However, the Pilots are no sure thing in Friday night's finals.

While River was tallying 44 points, the Pilots only own four finalists. Second-place Shadyside (28) has seven runners ready to go tomorrow, and Steubenville Central — which is third with 25 points — qualified five.

Meanwhile, the host Tigers racked up 30 first-day points to lead the Crusaders, who have 18.

Caldwell and the Pilots are each at 13.

Steubenville Central swept the opening-night distance events with Jake Trombetta breaking the tape in the 3,200 in 9:56.67 and also leading the Crusader 3200-meter relay team to victory in 8:23.82.

Shadyside's Shane Bickmeier impressed with a 12-foot effort to claim the pole vault, while River's Eric Doty soared 20-1 in the long jump. Wheeling Central's Jon Gordon twirled the discus 137-ft. 4-in.



The Tigers reeled in a pair of firsts on the day with juniors Jody Gavlik taking the pole vault with an impres-

sive 8-6 effort and Jenna Johnson winning the high jump at 5-ft.

The Maroon Knights took home the 3200-meter relay crown with Bara Slaidkova, Jodie Gantzer, Bethany Sloane and Melanie Gantzer combining for a 10:25.83 clocking. Meanwhile, Steubenville Central's Jamie Dent threw the shot 32-1 for victory.

While the Crusaders have qualified seven for the finals, Shadyside has six and River has the aforementioned four into the championship round.

Finals action gets underway at 4 p.m. Friday at Fleming Field.



# OVAC softball finals set

• Champions will be decided Saturday afternoon

By RICH GIBSON  
Times-Leader Sports Editor

St. John's, Steubenville Central, Conotton Valley and Fort Frye gained championship berths as the OVAC Softball Tournament completed semifinal play Thursday evening at the J.B. Chambers Complex.

In the 1-A semis, St. John's topped Beallsville, 6-1 while Conotton Valley surprised Linsly, 7-3.

In 2-A action, Steubenville Central stopped Shadyside, 5-2, and Fort Frye ousted River, 8-2.

Saturday's four title games are set and will be played in the following order: 3-A -- Oak Glen vs. Union Local at 10:30 a.m.; 1-A -- Conotton Valley vs. St. John's at 12:15 p.m.; 2-A -- Fort Frye vs. Steubenville Central at 2 p.m.; 4-A -- Brooke vs. Edison at 3:45 p.m.

ST. JOHN'S mounted a six-run lead against the Lady Devils and rode the right arm of freshman Meghan Johnson who fired a four-hitter.

"As young as we are, this team has been finding

ways to win games all season," reported Irish head coach Jerry Magistro.

"Meghan just goes out and gets the job done. I can't say enough about her composure. For a freshman, she's really been something."

Johnson was forced to work out of a bases loaded situation in the Devils' fifth frame before losing her shutout bid in the seventh.

The Irish scored single runs in the first and third frames then struck for four tallies in the fourth.

Catcher Rhetta Rico rapped two singles, good for a run batted in. Kayla Bittengle also socked two singles. Centerfielder Lauren Crecion scored two runs while teammate Jodie Coyne contributed a single and RBI.

Beallsville's Alicia Marcum clubbed a double. Coty Marcum singled to plate Big Blue's lone tally.

"Beallsville's a formidable team. We knew coming in we'd have our hands full," Magistro

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## Softball

Continued from Page B1

Johnson recorded four strikeouts and no walks while her pound opponent, sophomore Charity Street fanned six but issued eight walks.

The Lady Irish prevailed for the 17th time in 21 starts.

Linescore:

Beallsville 000 000 1 1 5 2  
St. John's 101 400 x 6 6 4

BATTERIES: Street and Crum, Johnson and Rico.

### CONOTTON VALLEY

came up with 11 hits in knocking off the Lady Cadets.

Junior Laramie Polen fired a three-hitter for the mound decision. She struck out seven and issued three walks.

Coach Craig Boles' Rockettes were sparked by junior Rachelle Cole who drilled a double and two singles, driving in two teammates.

Freshman shortstop Rachel Cummings collected two singles and two RBIs. Freshman Ashley Williams also singled twice.

Coach Liz Hofreuter-Landini's Linsly club received a single and double from losing pitcher Kilaine Parsons. On the mound, Parsons fanned five and issued one walk.

Linescore:

C. Valley 002 032 0 7 11

Linsly 000 030 0 3 4 4

BATTERIES: Polen and Loudermilk, Parsons and Chapman.

SHADYSIDE suffered a hard to take loss against Central, considering sophomore mound ace Lisa Merryman pitched perfect softball in five of six innings.

Coach Jackie Marook's 17-5 Crusaders, however, got it done in efficient manner, batting around in the bottom of the fifth to score five times.

"It was a matter of just getting someone on base so we had a chance to make something happen," Marook pointed out. "Lisa Merryman is a such an outstanding pitcher. You're not going to get many opportunities to score against her."

Merryman issued her only walk of the contest to Central leadoff hitter Cristen Biggio in the fifth.

Catcher Megan Gould followed with a single to center and rightfielder Kelly McQuiston reached on a sacrifice bunt and ensuing Tigers' error.



T-L Photos/MICHAEL HARVILLA

LEFT PHOTO: River ace Lea Baker fires a pitch to the plate against Fort Frye during Thursday night's OVAC semi-final game.

TOP PHOTO: Shadyside standout Lisa Merryman delivers a pitch during the Tigers OVAC semi-final game against Steubenville Central.



When second baseman Angela Petrozzi singled, the go-ahead run scored. Designated hitter Julie Zamana reached on a fielder's choice, scoring McQuiston for a 3-1 reading.

That brought to the plate third baseman Shana Icuss whose ground ball was misplayed into two more runs, leaving the Orange down 5-1.

"Sometimes, when a little adversity sets in, it becomes contagious. That's what happened out there in that inning," said Shadyside coach Tim Merryman.

"Give Central credit. They're as good as anyone we've played. We experienced one bad inning and unfortunately paid the price."

The Crusaders received also received clutch pitching from sophomore Meredith Hitchcock who struck out seven and

walked a pair.

Shortstop Jillian Johnson collected two singles and accounted for both Lady Tigers' tallies.

Shadyside makes its sectional debut next Wednesday afternoon against Toronto. Line score:

Shadyside 000 101 0 2 4 2

S. Central 000 050 x 5 2 1

BATTERIES: Merryman and Fluharty, Hitchcock and Gould.

RIVER'S Lady Pilots committed four, first inning errors, directly leading to three runs for Fort Frye.

"It just seemed we weren't very focused and it really cost us," said River coach Mark Romick. "One error led to another, then it started to snowball. What's disappointing is the fact we're a much better team than what we showed."

The loss was River's fifth in 18 starts

prior to a regularly scheduled contest this evening at Parkersburg South.

Fort Frye's Kim Heldman tossed a five-hitter, compiling six strikeouts and no walks. River's Lea Baker issued three free passes with reliever Katie Jones walking a pair.

Lady Cadets' catcher Danielle Polk produced three singles and a run batted in.

For the Lady Pilots, right fielder Ricci Cecil singled twice and knocked in a run. First baseman Mariah Hulsey hammered a triple. Hulsey and catcher Lindsey Romick scored River's two runs.

The Lady Pilots make their sectional debut next Friday versus Bridgeport.

Linescore:

River 001 100 0 2 5 5

Fort Frye 302 210 x 8 9 0

BATTERIES: Baker, Jones (4) and Romick, Heldman and Polk.

# Peddicord Dominant in Title Game

By RYAN GEORGE  
Staff Writer

Brooke knew entering Saturday's Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AAAA softball championship that it was the only league team to defeat Edison.

Stephanie Peddicord knew it, too. And she wasn't letting it happen again.

The Wildcat hurler held Brooke to two hits in a 2-1 Edison win in the big-school softball championship at the J.B. Chambers complex.

"I said at the beginning of the year that Brooke would be our toughest competitor this year, and as it turned out, it was so," said Wildcat coach Spencer Bendle.

Peddicord duelled Brooke's Ashley Visco and both teams expected a low scoring affair.

And that's what they got.

"I think everybody knew who ever scored the first run of the game had a pretty good chance of winning this ball game," said Bendle.

Yet Brooke had a chance to tie it.

The Bruins, trailing 2-0, got things started when Peddicord walked Marissa Ciccolella to start the inning. Gina Lastoria moved Ciccolella to second, and Ciccolella scored on Edison third baseman Steph Snyder's error on Rae Ann D'Aurora.

Peddicord stopped the threat

## OVAC SOFTBALL

by retiring

D'Aurora followed and slapped the ball down the third base line, but Edison third baseman Steph Snyder which allowed Ciccolella to cross the plate. Peddicord followed, however, by retiring the next to hitters she faced to end the threat.

"I told the girls with a tough pitcher in there like Peddicord to just put the ball into play and make them make the play, and they made the play," Brooke coach John Leary said.

The Bruins (14-8) forced the Wildcats (19-3) to strand eight base runners in the 7-inning game.

"We had ten hits today and I was pleased with our at bats, but on the flip side of that we left eight runners on base. That kept it a tight ball game," said Bendle.

Edison took a lead in the fourth on an RBI groundout by Sam Steele.

Erika Alloggia doubled and Missy Evans successfully bunted her to third.

That set the table for Steele, who hooked one just inside the third base line. The subsequent throw to first allowed Alloggia to score.

The Wildcats scored their second run in the fifth.



With two outs, Snyder, Alloggia and Missy Evans had consecutive hits — and Evans knocked in Snyder from second base. That gave Edison a 2-0 lead.

"Their second run was big, and they got three straight hits and that was to their credit," said Leary.

"I never doubted we could come back because we had done it many times before, but we just didn't get enough hits."

### Class A

#### St. John's 14, Conotton Valley 2

The Irish took the suspense out of this one early by scoring nine runs in the first inning, and Meghan Johnson tossed a three-hitter as St. John's won its second straight OVAC championship.

Retta Rico had three RBIs and went 2-for-4, while Brie Dongher singled, tripled and had an RBI and Jonni Jo Magistro

went 2-for-3 with an RBI.

Johnson struck out five and walked none in the five-inning win.

### Class AA

#### Steub. Central 4, Fort Frye 1

Tessa Valerio had two RBIs and Meredith Hitchcock struck out seven in a four-hit victory over Fort Frye (16-6).

A.J. DiAbert singled twice for the Crusaders (18-5), who took advantage of six Fort Frye errors.

The Crusaders won the Class AA championship with an opportunistic offense — Steubenville Central totalled just six hits in the two tournament victories. They had two hits in a 5-2 semifinal win over Shady-side and tallied four hits on Saturday.

### Class AAA

#### Oak Glen 10, Union Local 4

Jenna Eckleberry knocked in four runs and Krista Evans had four hits as the Golden Bears stormed back from a 4-0 fifth-inning deficit.

Union Local held a 4-0 lead after 4 1/2 innings but Oak Glen (11-5) scored eight runs in the fifth and added two more in the sixth to ice the Class AAA title.

Jade Eckleberry went 3-for-4 with an RBI for the Golden Bears, who pounded out 12 hits and enjoyed six Union Local errors.

Crystal Bittenger went 3-for-4 with three doubles for Union Local.



T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA

ST. JOHN Central first baseman Jodie Coyne (3) stretches to take the throw as Beallsville's Holly Johnson (25) reaches the bag during Thursday night's OVAC Softball Tournament semifinal action in Wheeling. Umpire Greg Sanders prepares to make the out call.

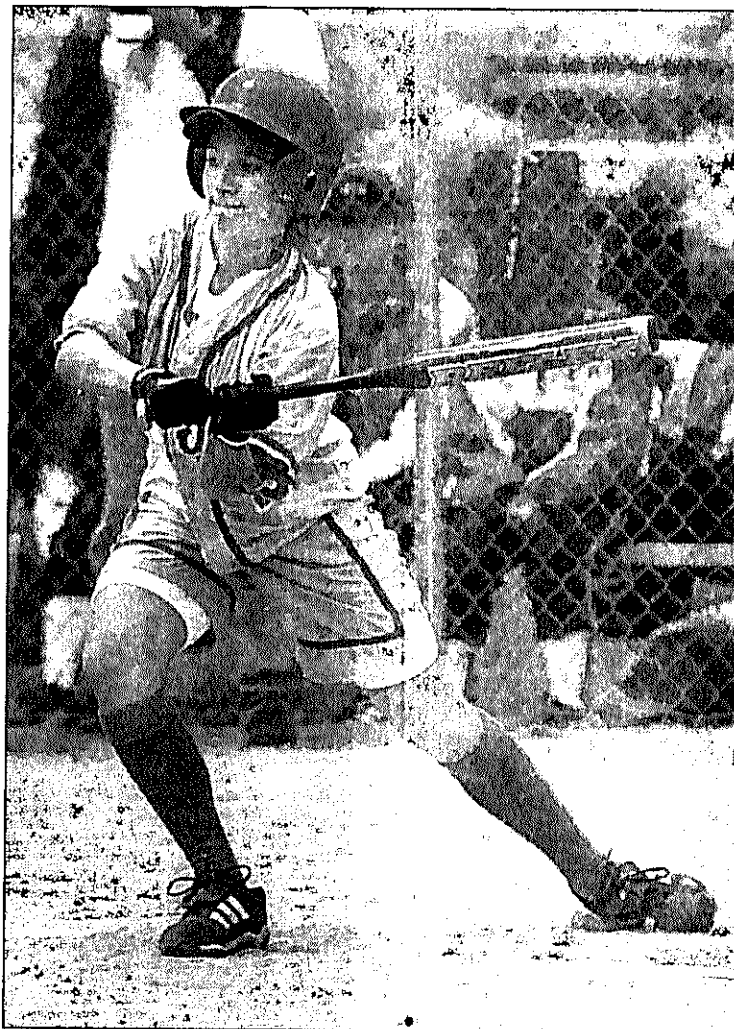


Photo by Alex Kozlowski

Bellaire St. John's hitter Jaelyn Cera prepares to take a cut at a pitch Saturday during the Class A championship game at the J.B. Chambers complex in Elm Grove. St. John's on Saturday claimed its second straight league championship.