

SPORTS

Sunday,
May 1, 2011



THE MARTINS
Ferry Lady Riders accept the OVAC Class 3-A Championship Trophy from OVAC Executive Secretary Tom Rataiczak. From left are Christina Boyd, Taylor Campbell, Shayla Outward and Katelyn Armitage. The Lady Riders downed Edison, 2-0, for the title. Additional images may be found at cu.timesleaderonline.com

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

PURPLE REIGN

• Martins Ferry captures first OVAC softball crown since 2005

By **KIM NORTH**
Times Leader Sports Writer

Defense wins championships.

That couldn't have been any truer Saturday morning at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove.

Martins Ferry (12-6) turned three outstanding double plays that helped keep Edison off the scoreboard en route to a 2-0 blanking of the defending champions in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class 3-A girls' softball championship game on Lisa's Field.

"That's always been my motto," second-year Martins Ferry head coach Paige Williams said. "We've had a solid defense all year, and they certainly came through today. I don't know how many double plays we've had all season, but we had three today that really got us out of some key situations."

The OVAC title was Martins Ferry's third in school history, and first since 2005. The other was during the 2000 season.

"This is a great feeling," Williams continued. "I don't know how the girls did it, but they did and that's the important thing."

After the Purple Riders went 1-2-3 in their first at-bat, the Wildcats (10-4) threatened in theirs. Kristin Prokopakis slapped a leadoff single to left and went to second on Mycaela Stewart's sacrifice bunt. Trisha Trifonoff then lifted a short popup behind the mound that was somehow gloved by Martins Ferry pitcher Taylor Campbell in an athletic move. She then turned and flipped to second baseman Addie Suriano to catch Prokopakis off the bag to end the



MARTINS FERRY sophomore Addie Suriano yells words of encouragement to a teammate during the sixth inning of Saturday's OVAC Class 3-A final in Elm Grove.

See, **FERRY**, Page C2

● Ferry

Continued from Page C1

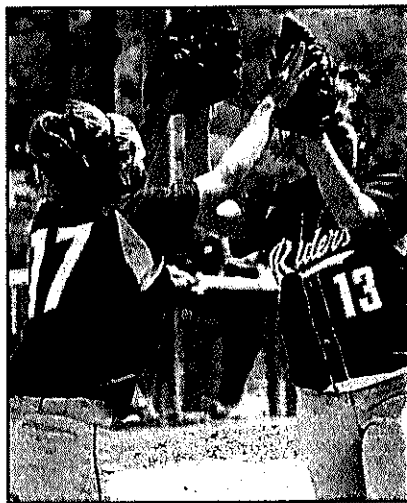
inning. Campbell smashed a single through the left side of the infield leading off the second and she was replaced by cat-quick Cirstie Delguzzo as the courtesy runner. Delguzzo was moved up 90-feet on Suriano's sacrifice bunt. Shayla Outward's dribbler in front of the plate resulted in an infield single as Delguzzo held at second. The two then executed a perfect double steal before Katelyn Armitage smoked a shot through the left side of the infield to plate Delguzzo.

Edison ran itself out of a potential big inning in the third when Prokopakis doubled to deep center with two outs. However, a perfect relay from Outward to Suriano to third baseman Morgan Stalder nailed the Wildcat runner to end that threat.

The Purple Riders added an insurance tally in the fifth as Cassie Hanson reached on an infield single with one out. She went to second on a groundout and would come around to score when Shauna Bandy's grounder was thrown wildly to first base.

The Wildcats were rallying again in the bottom of the frame as they had runners on first and second with just one out. However, Stewart's liner was gloved by Suriano at her shoe tops. The Martins Ferry junior alertly dove head-first to the bag at second to just nip a sliding Prokopakis to snuff out that rally.

"Outstanding," Williams said of Suriano's heads-up play. "That was



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

MARTINS FERRY players Kylie Stalder (left) and Morgan Stalder high five after the Lady Riders captured the OVAC Class 3-A title Saturday morning.

huge at that time."

Martins Ferry let a golden scoring opportunity go by the boards in the top of the sixth, and then watched as Edison loaded the bases with no outs in the bottom of the inning.

That's when Campbell did her best impression of Houdini. She induced a grounder to Armitage at first and she threw home for the force. Bandy, the Purple Riders' strong-armed catcher, tried to turn the double play by relaying the throw back to first but it was

too late. However, Kayla Prokopakis, who was on second when the play started, tried to score, but got caught in a 2-3-2-5 rundown. Campbell then fanned her only batter of the game to end that threat.

"That double play there was huge," Campbell said of her defense.

Edison head coach Spencer Bendle lamented the fact that his team had its chances, but just couldn't get the job done.

"We definitely had a lot of runners on base early, but they kept doubling us off," Bendle said.

"They were doing all the right things. Martins Ferry deserved to win this ballgame because they did everything right."

Campbell struck out the one and didn't issue a free pass. She scattered nine hits. Outward had three singles and Suriano two.

"Taylor pitched a great game," praised her coach. "She's not going to overpower anyone, but she makes people hit the ball and relies on her defense. She was outstanding today."

Martins Ferry, which has now won 9 of its last 10 outings, is back in action Wednesday at home against Bridgeport. The two teams meet Friday on Irene Ehni Field in Wolfhurst.

Martins Ferry 010 010 0 — 2 8 1
Edison 000 000 0 — 0 9 1
BATTERIES: Campbell and Bandy, Westfall and Kr. Prokopakis, Sheets (7)
North can be reached at knorth@timesleaderonline.com

Riders Stun Wildcats

Martins Ferry claims
Class AAA crown

By KIM NORTH
For the News-Register

WHEELING — Defense wins championships.

That couldn't have been any truer Saturday at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex. Martins Ferry (12-6) turned three outstanding double plays that helped keep Edison off the scoreboard en route to a 2-0 blanking of the defending champions in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AAA softball championship game on Lisa's Field.

"That's always been my motto," second-year Martins Ferry coach Paige Williams said. "We've had a solid defense all year, and they certainly came through. I don't know how many double plays we've had all season, but we had three (Saturday) that really got us out of some key situations."

The OVAC title is Martins Ferry's third, and first since 2005. The other was during the 2000 season.

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circle that was somehow gloved by Martins Ferry pitcher Taylor Campbell in an athletic move. She turned and flipped to second baseman Addie Suriano to catch Prokopakis off the bag to end the inning.



Photo by Josh Stroppe

Martins Ferry players celebrate after capturing the Class AAA title.

Campbell smashed a single through the left side of the infield leading off the second and was replaced by Cirstie Delguzzo as the courtesy runner. Delguzzo was moved up on Suriano's sacrifice bunt. Shayla Outward's dribbler in front of the plate resulted in an infield single as Delguzzo held at second. The two then executed a perfect double steal before Katelyn Armitage smoked a shot through the left side of the infield to plate Delguzzo.

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"Outstanding," Williams said of Suriano's heads-up play. "That was huge at that time."

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opportunity go by the boards in the top of the sixth, and then watched as Edison loaded the bases with no outs in the bottom of the inning.

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VNS ITS BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS



Photo by Josh Strobe

Wheeling Park's Ashleigh Sidon slides into home plate safely after a passed ball as JM pitcher Amy Rotrigo (18) awaits the throw.

Park Holds Off JM for 4-A Title

Davis was tired of being the runnerup

By JOSH STROPE
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Wheeling Park softball coach Dee Davis shows a lot of emotion when it comes to her team and makes no secret that she wants to win.

So the sting of losing OVAC championships doesn't go away easy.

But a big smile graced Davis' face after Saturday's 5-3 victory against John Marshall that gave the Patriots their first title since 2007, and the first in the tournament-era.

"I have all these plaques in my room that say runnerup, runnerup, runnerup, and I got tired of seeing them," Davis said. "I called them into my room and I said 'I'm tired of being a runnerup, get me a championship.' They said they would get me one and they did. They played really

well."

Maybe the cure to those blues was playing their top rival.

John Marshall is surely no slouch, but has seemed to have recent troubles against Wheeling Park. It was the third victory against the Monarchs this season for Davis' club.

The first two came as a result of the Patriots rallying in the seventh to stun the Monarchs.

Wheeling Park got the chance to play from in front in this one as two errors in the third inning helped put the Patriots up 2-0.

The Patriots doubled their lead in the fifth as Keleigh Sidon singled up the middle past a diving John Marshall second baseman Megan Garcia, as Sissy George (who walked all four times she was at the plate) and Carly Greer came around to score.

"We got some key hits and the girls executed at the plate," Davis said.

See, Park, Page B5



Photo by Josh Strobe

Wheeling Central's Joni Zavolta (14) gets instructions from assistant coach Ambrose Bober during Saturday's OVAC Class AA title game.

Central Edges Fort Frye

Christakis outduels Cadets' Mimken, 3-1

By NICK BEDWAY
For the News-Register

WHEELING — Brittany Miller provided the big hit with her two-run double in the third inning and Alexis Christakis took care of the rest by tossing a sparkling two-hitter as Wheeling Central ended Fort Frye's bid to repeat as the OVAC Class AA champion Saturday afternoon on Lisa's Field at the Cham-

bers I-470 Complex.

Prevailing in a classic pitching duel against Cadets sophomore dazler Victoria Mimken, Christakis struck out eight, walked two and did not allow an extra-base hit as the Maroon Knights jumped in front early on their way to a 3-1 victory.

"What more can I say about Alexis?" Wheeling Central coach Rick Magruder asked. "She's been here four years and is our leader. She stepped it up again when she

See, Central, Page B2

"Cameron is a school that really doesn't win a whole lot of OVAC championships, so it means a lot to be able to bring this back for our school and our community."

Cameron coach Mark Witzberger



Photo by Josh Strobe

Cameron pitcher Tara Paczewski hurled a no-hitter in leading the Dragons to the Class A championship.

Paczewski Hurls No-No

Whipkey provides big blast as Cameron tops Madonna

By TRACY WATSON
For the News-Register

WHEELING — In a softball pitcher's duel it normally takes one swing of the bat, one big hit to make a difference.

Saturday's Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class A championship game was evidence of that, and Cameron junior Taylor Whipkey was the one toting the bat.

Whipkey sent a towering shot over the left-field fence leading off the fifth inning and junior standout Tara Paczewski did the rest spinning a no-hitter, as the Dragons captured their third consecutive small-school championship with a 5-0 victory against previously unbeaten and No. 1 seed Weirton Madonna, at Lisa's Field.

The victory for Coach Mark Witzberger's crew is not only the third in a row, but second in three years against the Blue Dons of coach Cris Conti. It was also a little revenge for Cameron's regional semifinal defeat at the hands of Madonna (12-1) last season.

With the triumph, the Dragons improve to 11-3 and are winners of eight in a row after a 3-3 start.

"Cameron is a school that really doesn't win a whole lot of OVAC championships, so it means a lot to us to be able to bring this back for the school and our community," Witzberger said with a smile. "We had an awful big backing here (Saturday), and this really means so much to us.

"But things could get tougher next year, and we probably won't get the opportunity to defend this again because it looks like we will be moving up to Class AA."

Paczewski, who fanned 11 and did not issue a free pass while hitting one batter, was locked into a classic pitching duel with Blue Dons standout Rebecca Stewart, who fanned eight and walked two through four.

The only run Cameron needed came in the top of the fifth when Whipkey sent a long, high fly ball to deep left that cleared the fence and put the Marshall Countians up by a 1-0 count.

See, Paczewski, Page B5

PARK

Continued from page B1

"We played flawless defense and that was the key to winning the game."

But much like Wheeling Park in the previous two meetings, John Marshall had a rally of its own.

After a groundout to the pitcher to begin the sixth inning, Shannon Stipetich walked before Kylie Howard tripled to score her teammate from first base.

Two batters later, Natalee Rogerson brought Howard home with a single. Then it was Madi Namath's turn to come up with the big hit with a double to score Rogerson and make it a one-score game at 4-3.

Namath advanced to third on a passed ball as Wheeling Park pitcher Alexis Phillips had a rough time getting out of the inning.

But as fate would have it, it was another passed ball that ended the threat.

Kilee Simmons walked on four pitches, the last getting past Wheeling Park catcher Ashleigh Sidon. Namath broke for the plate but the ball took a generous hop off the backstop and into Ashleigh Sidon's glove. She turned around and easily tagged out Namath before

she reached home.

"Park played well and made the plays they needed to and we didn't," John Marshall coach Ed West said. "We had the top of the order up (in the sixth) and I knew if we were going to make a run, that was when we were going to do it."

"We got three runs across and it was just a fortunate play for them when the ball went back to the catcher. (Namath) went on her own and I tell them with two outs, we can take a chance. She has good speed, got a good jump, but the ball just went back to the catcher. If it goes anywhere else, she scores."

Wheeling Park added an insurance run in the home half of the sixth when Kelsi Johnson scored Emily Puskarich on a sacrifice fly.

Kristin Lewicki reached on a two-out single for John Marshall in the seventh, but Stipetich grounded to the shortstop to end the game.

The teams begin sectional play Monday at the same location with John Marshall facing Brooke at 4 p.m. and the winner taking on Wheeling Park immediately after.

PACZEWSKI

Continued from page B1

It was one of five hits in the contest with Whipkey also singling earlier for the first hit of the game.

"Taylor Whipkey has been getting big hits for us night in and night out," Witzberger said. "And we are all very excited about how much she brings to the table for us."

The three-time titlists added a little insurance in the sixth, loading the bases without the benefit of a hit before Kelsey Allen's one-out, sacrifice fly.

To make matters even worse for Madonna, the Dragons put up a three-spot in the seventh, including a Lexi Benline double, Emily Johnson RBI fielder's choice, singles by Cassidi Richmond and Paczewski and Allen's big two-run double into the left-center field gap to make it 5-0.

Madonna's only baserunner came in the fourth when third baseman Ashley Jones was hit by a pitch on a 1-2 count and two down in the frame.

"Our bats are really starting to come around, and we are close right now, but I still don't think we are playing at 100 percent," Witzberger added. "But getting wins like this sure

makes things a lot easier and is very exciting.

"Tara was just phenomenal. We allow the catcher (Shelby Wood) to call the game and she really called a great one. With those two all I have to do is sit back, relax and let them do the work."

During a three-day stretch against Bellaire St. John, in the OVAC semifinals, West Greene, Pa., on Friday and Saturday against the Dons, Paczewski has allowed four hits with Cameron outscoring the trio by a whopping 25-0 margin.

For Conti, who guided Weirton Madonna to the 2008 Class A title, it was matter of who would be able to come up with the hits.

"It was a pitcher's duel, and Tara and Rebecca were both very good," he said. "So it really came down to which team would get its timing down and get some big hits, and it was them."

"I know that we were swinging at a lot of high pitches out of the strike zone and we just couldn't get away from that. The hits just never came for us. Tara Paczewski is a very good pitcher, but I think we played a good game - they just beat us."

had to and put the ball in nice spots the entire game."

Christakis had to be near her very best because Mimken was in good form, as well. Coming off a brilliant 16-strikeout winning effort in the semifinals against Barnesville, Mimken picked up 12 more Ks against the Maroon Knights while issuing one walk and six hits.

If not for a couple of defensive mistakes behind her in the field, the outcome could have been much different.

In the opening inning, Central's leadoff batter, freshman Joni Zavolta, got aboard with a scratch single as her hard-hit one-hopper bounced out of the glove of Fort Frye third baseman Kasi Isner. Taylor Whorton then dropped down a sacrifice bunt and the ball was thrown into right field for a two-base error. Vanessa Saseen followed with a sacrifice fly to left field scoring Zavolta.

With one out in the third inning, the Maroon Knights received a little more help from the usually solid Fort Frye defense. Whorton and Saseen both slapped singles up the middle and an outfield error allowed both runners to take an extra base. Mimken nearly escaped the frame unscathed after whiffing

through with a clean single into center field. After Emily Wizba made a nice catch of Isner's bid for a flare hit into left field, Christakis hit Kylee Close with an inside delivery that didn't break to load the bases.

Morgan Lidtke went down on strikes for the second out of the inning and, with the Cadets' top hitter, Nicole Miller, standing in the on deck circle hoping for a chance, Christakis was able to retire the side by forcing Devan Vaughn to hit a harmless pop that Whorton gloved in the infield.

"We had a couple of opportunities but just could not have come up with the big hit," Sleek said. "I would have loved to have seen Nicole have a chance with the bases loaded."

When Fort Frye's Miller finally got to the plate leading off the bottom of the sixth, she promptly singled to right. Lexi Huck then walked putting runners at first and second with none out.

After Leah Baker grounded into a force out at second, Mimken drove in Fort Frye's only run by bouncing out to Madison Basinger at first base. Christakis then fielded Hockenberry's one-hopper in the middle of the circle

OVAC Softball

CLASS 4-A				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Wheeling Park	10	9	1	656 65.60
Indian Creek	8	8	1	464 51.56
John Marshall	10	9	3	566 47.17
Parkers South	6	10	4	608 43.43
Meadowbrook	6	8	3	474 43.09
Buckeye Local	9	4	5	264 29.33
University	4	5	6	312 28.36
Brooke	11	6	7	358 27.54
Morgantown	9	6	8	382 27.29
*Cambridge	6	3	6	160 17.78
*Beaver Local	3	1	4	60 12.00
**Zanesville	1	0	1	0 0.00
Steubenville	7	0	7	0 0.00
East Liverpool	5	0	8	0 0.00

CLASS 3-A				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Magnolia	6	10	0	522 52.20
Buckeye Trail	7	7	0	358 51.14
St Clairsville	4	3	1	180 45.00
Edison	4	4	2	260 43.33
Bellaire	9	8	1	386 42.89
Martins Ferry	9	4	5	206 22.89
Harrison Central	9	3	6	180 20.00
Weir	8	3	5	138 17.25
Union Local	8	2	6	88 11.00
Oak Glen	9	2	7	84 9.33
*Tyler Consolidated	4	2	7	64 7.11

CLASS 2-A				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Steuben Central	8	8	0	408 50.75
Barnesville	7	6	1	278 39.71
Fort Frye	10	7	3	292 29.20
River	9	6	3	214 23.78
Caldwell	5	2	3	82 16.40
Wheeling Central	7	3	4	110 15.71
Bridgeport	5	2	3	76 15.20
Frontier	6	2	4	72 12.00
Monroe Central	6	1	5	42 7.00
Shadyside	8	1	7	42 5.25
Linsly	8	1	9	42 4.20
**Wellsville	2	0	2	0 0.00
*Shenandoah	5	0	6	0 0.00

CLASS 1-A				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Madonna	8	9	0	382 42.44
St John Central	9	7	3	304 30.40
Cameron	8	6	3	252 28.00
Toronto	9	6	4	246 24.60
Valley	6	2	4	84 14.00
Paden City	10	3	7	98 9.80
Bishop Donahue	11	2	9	66 6.00
Hundred	3	1	5	30 5.00
*Bishop Rosecrans	2	0	2	0 0.00
*Conotton Valley	2	0	2	0 0.00
Beallsville	5	0	5	0 0.00
Trinity Christian	2	0	7	0 0.00

* Schools not reporting scores.
** Ineligible for tournament play.

OVAC SOFTBALL

AAAA				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Wheeling Park	10	9	1	656 65.60
Indian Creek	8	8	1	464 51.56
John Marshall	10	9	3	566 47.17
Parkersburg South	6	10	4	608 43.43
Meadowbrook	6	8	3	474 43.09
Buckeye Local	9	4	5	264 29.33
University	4	5	6	312 28.36
Brooke	11	6	7	358 27.54
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Steubenville	7	0	7	0 0.00
East Liverpool	5	0	8	0 0.00

AAA				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Magnolia	6	10	0	522 52.20
Buckeye Trail	7	7	0	358 51.14
St Clairsville	4	3	1	180 45.00
Edison	4	4	2	260 43.33
Bellaire	9	8	1	386 42.89
Martins Ferry	9	4	5	206 22.89
Harrison Central	9	3	6	180 20.00
Weir	8	3	5	138 17.25
Union Local	8	2	6	88 11.00
Oak Glen	9	2	7	84 9.33
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AA				
School	OVAC	W	L	CP AVG
Steubenville Central	8	8	0	408 50.75
Barnesville	7	6	1	278 39.71
Fort Frye	10	7	3	292 29.20
River	9	6	3	214 23.78
Caldwell	5	2	3	82 16.40
Wheeling Central	7	3	4	110 15.71
Bridgeport	5	2	3	76 15.20
Frontier	6	2	4	72 12.00
Monroe Central	6	1	5	42 7.00
Shadyside	8	1	7	42 5.25
Linsly	8	1	9	42 4.20
**Wellsville	2	0	2	0 0.00
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Cameron	8	6	3	252 28.00
Toronto	9	6	4	246 24.60
Valley	6	2	4	84 14.00
Paden City	10	3	7	98 9.80
Bishop Donahue	11	2	9	66 6.00
Hundred	3	1	5	30 5.00
*Bishop Rosecrans	2	0	2	0 0.00
*Conotton Valley	2	0	2	0 0.00
Beallsville	5	0	5	0 0.00
Trinity Christian	2	0	7	0 0.00

* Schools not reporting scores.
** Ineligible for tournament play.

OVAC Softball

CLASS 4-A				
School	W	L	CP	AVG
Wheeling Park	8	1	550	61.11
Indian Creek	6	0	336	56.00
Meadowbrook	6	1	344	49.14
John Marshall	7	3	414	41.40
Parkersburg South	6	3	346	38.44
Morgantown	6	5	370	33.64
Brooke	5	4	296	33.11
University	4	4	240	30.00
Buckeye Local	2	3	116	23.20
Cambridge	2	4	100	16.67
Beaver Local	1	4	60	12.00
Zanesville	0	3	0	0.00
Steubenville	0	5	0	0.00
East Liverpool	0	7	0	0.00

CLASS 3-A				
School	W	L	CP	AVG
Buckeye Trail	4	0	214	53.50
Magnolia	6	0	424	53.00
St Clairsville	2	1	112	37.33
Bellaire	5	1	222	37.00
Harrison Central	3	3	180	30.00
Weir	3	3	138	23.00
Edison	1	2	64	21.33
Oak Glen	2	5	80	11.43
Union Local	1	3	42	10.50
Martins Ferry	1	4	42	8.40
Tyler Consolidated	1	6	30	4.29

CLASS 2-A				
School	W	L	CP	AVG
Steubenville Central	5	0	234	46.80
Barnesville	5	0	232	46.40
River	5	1	172	28.67
Fort Frye	4	2	144	24.00
Bridgeport	2	2	74	18.50
Frontier	2	3	72	14.40
Caldwell	1	2	42	14.00
Monroe Central	1	3	42	10.50
Shadyside	1	4	42	8.40
Wheeling Central	1	4	32	6.40
Wellsville	0	2	0	0.00
Shenandoah	0	5	0	0.00
Linsly	0	7	0	0.00

CLASS 1-A				
School	W	L	CP	AVG
Madonna	6	0	274	45.67
St John Central	5	2	230	32.66
Cameron	4	3	168	24.00
Toronto	6	3	184	20.44
Paden City	3	4	96	13.71
Valley	1	2	30	10.00
Hundred	1	4	30	6.00
Bishop Donahue	1	8	36	4.00
Bishop Rosecrans	0	2	0	0.00
Conotton Valley	0	2	0	0.00
Beallsville	0	3	0	0.00
Trinity Christian	0	4	0	0.00

THRU 4-11-11

Rotriga Helps Lift JM Past Creek



Photo by Rick Thorp

Indian Creek's Brey Mays leads off first base as John Marshall's Anna Phillips tries to keep her close during their OVAC game Wednesday.

Monarchs' lefty fires a one-hitter

By RICK THORP
 Staff Writer

WHEELING — Prior to the start of Wednesday's OVAC Class 4-A semifinal, John Marshall coach Ed West stepped into his dugout and reminded his team that a strong start was imperative to victory.

The Monarchs listened.

Bolstered by a one-hitter from Amy Rotriga and an offense that pounded out 11 hits, John Marshall dominated Indian Creek, 5-1, on Lisa's Field at the Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

The victory put the Monarchs into Saturday's championship game opposite rival Wheeling Park, which downed defending tournament champion Parkersburg South in the day's second contest.

The showdown between the Redskins and Monarchs had all the makings of a pitcher's duel, what with Rotriga and Ashley Starr taking the circle.

But from the get-go it became apparent it wouldn't be Starr's day.

The Creek ace allowed an RBI single

in the first, and in the third she watched as a pair of outfield errors led to three more runs.

Meanwhile, Rotriga, after a shaky first inning which included a walk and a hit batter, went on to strike out 13, including five of the final six Redskins she faced.

"We couldn't hit her," said Indian Creek coach Angela Penner, who watched her team lose for the second time this season. "She did a nice job of keeping our hitters off-balance."

West agreed.

"She looked sharp coming out," he said of the southpaw. "She had a couple of loose pitches, but overall, she was in control."

"Thirteen strikeouts ... I couldn't ask for much more."

Rotriga got plenty of offensive support. Kylie Simmons went 4-for-4 with a double and an RBI, while Natalee Rogerson slapped three hits and also drove in a run.

Please See ROTRIGA, Page 18



Photo by Rick Thorp

Wheeling Park's Marissa Tucker slides safely into third base during Wednesday's game vs. Creek.

Patriots Garner Revenge

Park knocks off Parkersburg South

By TRACY WATSON
 For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — Revenge was something that Wheeling Park was hoping for Wednesday afternoon in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AAAA softball semifinals against Parkersburg South.

After achieving that goal, the Patriots enter Saturday's championship game hoping to prevent arch-rival John Marshall from obtaining that same goal.

Hitting the ball hard and taking advantage of South errors, Wheeling Park erased a 1-0 lead with a five-run, fourth-inning rally and never looked back in rolling to a 7-2 victory against the Wood County Patriots at Lisa's Field.

Coach Dee Davis' squad will take a 13-2 record into the title tilt, slated for 12:15 p.m., against a Monarchs team it has already beaten twice. Ironically, the same two teams will begin West Virginia Class AAA sectional play against each other on Monday.

"We have beaten them twice and

Please See PARK, Page 18

Maroon Knights Finish off Crusaders

Christakis strikes out last four she faces

By NICK BEDWAY
 For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — Alexis Christakis struck out the last four batters she faced to put the finishing touches on Wheeling Central's 9-2, rain-delayed victory against previously undefeated Steubenville Catholic Central in the

Ohio Valley Athletic Class AA softball semifinals.

The game, which was halted in the top of the sixth inning Tuesday by rain and wet grounds at the Chambers I-470 Complex was moved to Belle Isle Park to be completed Wednesday.

By halting the Crusaders' 11-game winning streak, Coach Rick Magruder's Maroon Knights qualified for Saturday's Class AA finals against either Barnesville or Fort Frye.

Those two teams were also scheduled

to play Tuesday but had their contest rained out and reset for 6:45 tonight, also on Lisa's Field at the I-470 site.

Christakis, Central's four-year pitching vet, limited Steubenville Catholic to seven hits, all singles, while issuing one walk. Half of her eight strikeouts occurred after play was resumed Wednesday.

She went to the circle in the bottom of the sixth and retired Lacey Murphy on a

Please See KNIGHTS, Page 18

Madonna Scores Early, Often to Beat Toronto

Moss leads hit parade with a trio of singles

By TRACY WATSON
For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — Weirton Madonna coach Chris Conti did not know what to expect from his Blue Dons softball team entering the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class A Tournament.

After all, like most teams the Hancock County squad has played a limited amount of games because of the heavy spring rains.

However, Madonna had swept through its first 11 outings and with the help of

Rebecca Stewart, Courtney Moss, Ashley Jones and a slew of others, the Blue Dons wasted little time putting their coach at ease Wednesday night.

Stewart allowed only one hit, that coming with two outs in the fifth and final inning, Moss collected three infield singles and Jones chased home four runs as Weirton Madonna scored early and often in a 12-0 rout of Toronto in a Class A semifinal contest played mostly in a driving rain at Lisa's Field.

Conti's 12-0 squad will face the winner of today's other semifinal between Cameron and Bellaire St. John on Saturday for the small-school title. The Dons lost to the Fighting Irish in last year's semifinals and

the previous year to the Dragons in the finals.

"We will have to wait until (today) to see who we will play, but they are two great teams and I know we will have our hands full either way," Conti said. "But we are just so excited to be back in this position. The OVAC does a great job and this is a whole lot of fun for the girls."

Wednesday night's onslaught began in the bottom of the first when Moss, who had made a nice running catch in right to end the top of the frame, beat out an infield single.

Catcher Sam Myers singled to left with Moss going to third and Myers ending up at second on the throw. Both runners advanced on a wild pitch for a 1-0 score. Myers then

crossed the dish on a one-out Ashley Jones sacrifice fly to make it 2-0.

Madonna added to the Red Knights' misery in the second with a one-out, two-run single to center to make it 4-0. Myers, who was intentionally walked, then scored on a wild pitch for a 5-0 reading.

Stephanie Magnone contributed by ripped a run-scoring triple to deep left-center field and scored to make it 7-0 on Isabella Anile's RBI fielder's choice. The Dons managed to send eight to the plate in the inning, pushing across five runs.

Madonna added three more in the third including Moss' third infield single, and first RBI, of the contest and another Jones sacrifice fly, which chased home her fourth run.

BIG RED

(Continued from Page 17)

us a good, early start."

Joe Pierro had a second-inning single that drove in Joe Garay who had reached base on another inning-starting walk. Big Red led innings off with walks in three of its four at-bats.

Meyer drove in Joe Pierro when he grounded out to third two batters later to make the score 5-0 Big Red.

The only Steubenville hit not to drive in a run was Dominic Garay's single to open the third. He scored, along with Jordan Mavromatis, who had drawn a free pass, on the most bizarre play of the game.

With Mavromatis and Dominic Garay on first and second, Joe Garay laid down a bunt in an attempt to advance both runners. The bunt was placed perfectly and both runners advanced, but when Monarchs first baseman Dakota Wellman couldn't bring in the throw, both Dominic Garay and Mavromatis scored and Joe Garay ended up on third.

The next batter, Lucas McClurg, drove Joe Garay in with a single and scored on an Anthony Pierro sac fly to put Steubenville up 9-0.

Big Red closed out the mercy-rule victory by scoring four, fourth-inning runs on zero hits.

Josh Mamula led the inning off with a walk and then advanced around the bases to score on three passed balls. Then Dominic Garay, Mavromatis, Joe Garay, McClurg, and Joe Pierro all drew walks. McClurg's and Joe Pierro's pushed in Dominic Garay and Mavromatis, respectively. The final run of the game came on Anthony Pierro's second sacrifice fly, this one knocking in Joe Garay to make the score 13-0.

Pitcher Tyler McGee closed out his complete game shutout victory with

Prep Baseball

three straight flyouts after giving up a single to John Marshall's Jimmy Henderson to open the fifth inning. McGee struck out five and gave up five hits to help lead his team to victory.

"Ty settled down early and pitched a good game," Heatherington said. "If he knows we can get him some runs he throws a lot of strikes and stays ahead in the count."

Big Red is scheduled to take on Steubenville Catholic Central today before they move on to the OVAC AAAA title game against Cambridge on Saturday.

"I know they (Cambridge) have a winning record against us so we have to be ready to play, and I'm sure we will be," Heatherington said.

Baseball

OVAC Class AA Semifinal Shenandoah 4, Shadyside 3 10 innings

SHADYSIDE — Kalob Davis drove home Shane Crum in the 10th inning and Shenandoah rallied to down top-seed Shadyside in a game that took two days to complete.

The Zeps will face Fort Frye for the championship Saturday in Steubenville.

Brett Farnsworth paced Shenandoah with five hits, including two doubles.

Matt Duda doubled and scored twice for the Tigers, while Josh Kernik doubled.

Linsly 7, Wheeling Central 4

WHEELING — Leighton Gibson homered and Haydon Stanley drove in two as Linsly bested city rival Wheeling Central at Holloway Field.

Dylan Williams added two hits, including a double, for the Cadets.

Joey Baker drove in two for the

Maroon Knights, while P.J. Ratcliffe doubled and singled.

Oak Glen 12 Harrison Central 10
NEW MANCHESTER — Oak Glen exploded for 11 runs combined during the fourth through sixth innings to rally from a 7-0 deficit.

Martin Mazezka was a homer short of the cycle for the Golden Bears with three RBI. Ryan Ford homered and knocked in three, while Jeff Hissam slapped two singles with two RBI.

Brooke 6, Bishop Donahue 1

WELLSBURG — Brooke scored five runs in the sixth inning and Ryan Trimmer tossed a one-hitter in the victory.

Kyle Wales belted a homer and plated three, while Billy Perkins slapped a pair of singles.

Edison 10, Weir 3

WEIRTON — Mark Smyth and Mike Rogers both homered as Edison scored at least two runs in four innings.

Ethan Tice collected three hits for the Wildcats.

Ryan Duke laced two hits for the Red Riders.

Toronto 19, Steub. Catholic 2

TORONTO — Toronto scored 14 runs in the fourth inning en route to its 11th victory of the season.

Tyler Owens doubled, singled twice and knocked in for the Red Knights, while Tyler Butler slapped three hits.

Steve Mihalyo had two hits for the Crusaders.

Paden City 10, St. John 8

BELLAIRE — Cody Gillespie laced a double, two singles and knocked in a run as St. John held off Paden City.

Michael Gregorcic, Bo DeCoy, Braeden O'Connell, Kollin Melko, Travis Ogden and Kevin Johnson all drove in runs for the Irish.

KNIGHTS

(Continued from Page 17)

sharp line drive snagged by Brittany Miller at shortstop. After hitting Paige Creamer with a pitch, Christakis got Kayla Lloyd on a popper to Miller and then began her string of four strikeouts in a row by fanning Sara Maziejko, who had touched the Knights ace for an RBI single earlier in the game.

"Alexis finished strong, which was nice to see," Magruder said after Central improved its record to 10-5. "We were debating whether to bring her back or go with Taylor Whorton. But I thought, 'hey she pitched well yesterday, let her finish the game.'"

The Knights' nine-hit attack against Steubenville Catholic's Creamer also saw Christakis get very much into the act with her single, double and two RBI. Miller singled and doubled, driving in one run, while Bri Robbins collected two RBI with a single, double and sacrifice fly.

Mandy Gulan and Maziejko had the RBI hits for the Crusaders.

"We are playing with a lot more focus right now and showing very good patience at the plate," Magruder said in explaining Central's nine-out-of-10 victory run after starting the season 1-4. "Early in the year we were swinging at everything. Our kids have to remain focused because we have a tough challenge ahead of us when we get to tournament time. The teams in our sectional and regional are very strong."

Jim DiCarlo, coach of the Crusaders, felt his team gave a good effort in the OVAC contest despite the top sided score.

"When we resumed play, Lacey ripped the ball pretty good and they caught it. I thought we hit the ball hard both days but everything was right at them."

Prep Softball

"Central has some good athletes, so give them all the credit. Our kids kept battling and never gave up. '(Tuesday) we didn't make some plays we usually make, but the wind was pretty nasty up on the hill. No excuses, though, Central played very well and deserved to win.'"

Frontier 6, River 5

HANNIBAL — Frontier's Heather Ogaz drove in two runs to edge River.

Lindsay Goddard hit a single, home run and three RBI. Losing pitcher Gabby Goudy struck out seven, hit a single, double, and an RBI, while Rachel Hutchison hit a single and a double for the Pilots (8-5).

Brooke 6, Weir 3

WEIRTON — Leanne Mazzella struck out nine and knocked in a run for the Red Riders.

Clarissa Kowalczyk rapped a double and knocked in a run for the Bruins, while Katie O'Connell had two hits.

Ashlin Drizake plated a run for the Red Riders.

Steubenville 5 Union Local 0

MORRISTOWN — Brooke Carroll twirled a complete game two-hitter as Steubenville blanked Union Local.

Carroll fanned eight, while aided her own cause with two RBI.

Terri Lynn Wolfe was a triple short of the cycle for Big Red, while Christina Archer and Abby Taylor tripled and doubled, respectively.

Edison 11, Beaver Local 0

RICHMOND — Zoey Westfall tossed a two-hitter and Molly McCoy homered and drove in four for Edison.

Trisha Trifonoff added two singles, a double and three RBI for the Wildcats (9-2).

ROTRIGA

(Continued from Page 17)

If it was a base hit, the Monarchs got it. If it was a sacrifice bunt, the Monarchs got that, too.

JM's offensive machine was clearly well-oiled.

"I have a lot of confidence in the top of our order," West said. "We usually hit the ball pretty well."

"I preach it all the time.

We have to play good defense, execute and make plays. And if we do those things, we have a chance to win."

In that third inning, Kylie Howard reached on an error made by the Creek right fielder. The next batter, Megan Garcia, laced a fly ball to deep left field, which fell out of the glove of the Redskins outfielder.

Howard scored on the play to give JM a 2-0 lead.

Rogerson followed with a single, sending Garcia to third. She scored two batters later on a Madi Namath groundout to make the score 3-0.

Moments later, Simmons singled to center scoring Rogerson for a 4-0 Monarchs lead.

Indian Creek scored its

lone run in the fifth when an Megan Markja sacrifice fly brought home Alexis Monroe. But it was too little, too late for the Redskins.

"We had some errors that didn't help us early on," Penner said. "And they hit the ball well early and we didn't."

"We're better than how we played."

PARK

(Continued from Page 17)

now we have two days to get ready to play them again," Davis said with a smile. "They say that it is hard to beat a team three times, (but) we are going to have to beat them five times to achieve our goals and keep going."

The game was a rematch of last season's big-school championship game in which Parkersburg South defeated Park in its first year of eligibility.

Katelyn Hamilton got South going early Wednesday, singling to left to begin the game and going to second on a throwing error. She advanced to third on a fielder's choice and crossed the dish on Taylor Wittekind's run-scoring base hit, also to left.

Wheeling Park watched a golden opportunity go by the board in the bottom of the first, loading the bases with one out on consecutive singles by Marissa Tucker, Allie Dailer and

Kelsey Johnson. However, an infield roller turned into an inning-ending double-play to stop the threat.

Davis' squad again filled the sacks in the home-half of the third, this time on a pair of singles and a hit-batsman. But once again a fly out and a pop out held the it off the scoreboard with the count remaining 1-0.

"I was really getting worried after the second time we left the bases loaded," Davis said. "I was afraid that was going to come back and bite us. But I knew we were hitting the ball and I felt we could get it going."

Wheeling Park finally broke things open in the fourth with four hits, three errors and five runs. Sissy George began the rally with a double and it ended when both Emily Puskarich and Tucker both scored on an infield miscue for a 5-1 advantage.

A big play came after George advanced to third on a one-out sacri-

fice bunt and raced home on an infield grounder a few pitches later. South catcher Genna Trippett appeared to tag George out, which was the initial call, however, she dropped the ball and the contest was knotted at 1-1.

Wittekind pulled Parkersburg South to within three with a towering home run over the left-field fence to begin the sixth.

Keleigh Sidon added a pinch-hit, two-run single for Wheeling Park to push the count to 7-2 in the bottom half.

"We played South softball for the first three innings and then mental mistakes cost us," South coach Jennifer Null said. "You can't make that many errors or you are going to hand the other team the game and that is what we did."

"Now we have to bounce back in the sectionals."

OVAC SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT



T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

BARNESVILLE SECOND baseman Paige Gibbons looks to turn a double play after forcing out Fort Frye's Devan Vaughn during the sixth inning of Thursday's OVAC Class 2-A semifinal against Fort Frye on Lisa's Field in Elm Grove. The Shamrocks dropped a 1-0 decision. *Additional images can be found at cu.timesleaderonline.com*

Shamrocks are silenced

• Fort Frye's Mimken fans 17 in 1-0 win

By **KIM NORTH**
Times Leader Sports Writer

Fort Frye knew that defending its Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AA softball title wouldn't be easy.

And it wasn't.

But, with sophomore Victoria Mimken fanning 17, the No. 3 seeded Cadets (12-3) squeaked out a 1-0 semifinal victory over Barnesville Thursday afternoon on Lisa's Field at the 1-470 J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove.

"That was a battle," Fort Frye head coach Barbara Sleek allowed. "I told the girls coming in that it was going to be a pitching battle."

And she was right.

Mimken was near perfect. She struck out nine of the first 10 Shamrocks (10-2) that strode to the plate before allowing an infield bloop single to Lane Hanlon with one out in the fourth. She responded with back-to-back strikeouts to get out of the inning.

"Victoria was really on her game today," Sleek added. "She's come along way in two years."



VICTORIA MIMKEN

See, **SHAMROCKS**, Page B2

Dragons breath fire

• Cameron run-rules St. John Central in Class A semi, 10-0

By **KIM NORTH**
Times Leader Sports Writer

Cameron is the two-time defending Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class A softball titlists.

And the second-seeded Dragons (9-3) showed third-seeded St. John Central (10-5) why they are worthy of a third straight championship.

Thursday night on Lisa's Field at the 1-470 J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove, Cameron made quick work of the injury-riddled Irish by a 10-0 count in five innings.

"Not at all," Cameron head coach Mark Witsberger said when asked if he expected the one-sided outcome. "We've played St. John in the past

and they have a class program that is always competitive, but once our bats came alive, it was over."

The Dragons scored a pair of unearned runs in the first inning and added one in the fourth before exploding for seven runs in the bottom of the fifth to institute the mercy rule.

"I really don't know what happened," St. John Central head coach Jerry Magistro offered. "They (Cameron) did really whatever they wanted to do today."

Leading 3-0 after four-and-a-half innings, Audrey Bryan, Lexi Benline and Emily Johnson, the Dragons' 7-8-9 hitters, drew consecutive walks off Irish ace Ayla Spoljar to load the bases. A

See, **DRAGONS**, Page B2



ST. JOHN Central catcher Jordan Nickerson awaits a throw to the plate as Cameron's Tara Paczewski scores. The Irish lost, 1-0, in the OVAC Class A semifinals.

T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

● Shamrocks

Continued from Page B1

Barnesville first-year head coach Bryce Allen also praised Mimken.

"She did a great job of keeping us off balance. She mixed her fastball and changeup and hit her spots."

Following Hanlon's seeing-eye base hit, Mimken set down eight of the next nine — an error ruined the streak — before giving up a leadoff double to Becky Burkhart to start the bottom of the seventh.

However, Barnesville couldn't get the clutch hit it needed, and Mimken didn't allow pinch runner Taylor McCort to advance any further.

"It was just an unfortunate thing tonight. We didn't have our bats out," Allen lamented.

The Shamrocks' Justina Campbell was the hard-luck loser as she struck out 11 and allowed just five hits

and walked a pair.

"Justina pitched well and our defense played well in certain situations," Allen continued. "Our defense made some big plays."

Fort Frye scored the game's lone run in its very first at-bat as Devan Vaughn lined a one-out single to center and moved to second on a wild pitch. Hard-hitting catcher Nicole Miller followed with a solid single up the middle to chase home Vaughn.

With the hard-earned win, Fort Frye will meet No. 4 seed Wheeling Central, which ousted top-seeded Steubenville Catholic Wednesday, in Saturday's championship game at 2 p.m., also on Lisa's Field. Barnesville hosts Martins Ferry today at Memorial Park.

North can be reached at knorth@timesleader-online.com

● Dragons

Continued from Page B1

ground ball to second was bobbled as a run scored and winning pitcher Tara Paczewski promptly drilled a two-run single to center, making it 6-0. A ground out advanced both runners, and Shelby Wood's long fly ball to right resulted in a sacrifice as Benline crossed the plate.

The inning continued when Taylor Whipkey drilled a run-scoring single to left. Shenai Wade reached on an infield single and both runners rounded the bases when Bryan, batting for the second time in the inning, smacked a gap-shot to right-center.

"We've won six games in a row now," Witsberger said. "I really didn't know what to expect today because of all the rain we've had. You practice in the gym all the time, and then when you do get a chance to go outside, it's an adjustment."

The Dragons seemed to adjust well Thursday night.

"Tara's been in this position before. She handles it very well," Witsberger said of his veteran ace. "Our catcher (Shelby Wood) called a good game. I let her call the game today because she has great knowledge of the game."

Although his team is the two-time reigning conference titlists, Witsberger has some new faces in the lineup that contribute.

"A lot of the girls knew what to expect, but we've got some new girls in new positions this year, so we just don't know what is going to happen with. We're still trying to define ourselves and find our lineup because of all the cancellations."

Paczewski struck out seven and walked two in tossing a two-hitter. Whipkey and Kelsey Allen had multiple-hit games for Cameron. Paczewski, Wood, Whipkey and Bryan all had a pair of RBI each.

Cameron will meet top-seeded Weirton Madonna Saturday for the championship on Lisa's Field.

North can be reached at knorth@timesleader-online.com

OVAC SOFTBALL

OVAC SOFTBALL

Coach of the Year
Dee Davis, Wheeling Park
Players of the Year
Class AAAA
Ashley Starr, Indian Creek
Class AAA
Tori Tharp, Magnolia
Class AA
Alexis Christakis, Wheeling Central;
Victoria Mimken, Fort Frye (tie)
Class A
Samantha Myers, Weirton Madonna; Tara Paczewski, Cameron

All-Conference

First Team (Ohio schools)
Barnesville: Justin Campbell, Becky Burkhart; Beallsville: Madde Stephen; Beaver Local: Kim Rotellini; Bellaire: Casey Garloch; St. John: Bethany Cera, Ayla Spoljar; Bridgeport: Ashley Hadzima; Buckeye Local: Amy Baik; Buckeye Trail: Alexa Abrams, Danielle Salls; Caldwell: Stacey Mudge; Edison: Kristin Prokopakis, Mycaela Stewart, Trisha Trifonoff; Fort Frye: Victoria Mimken, Nicole Miller, Leah Baker; Frontier: Andrea Pope; Indian Creek: Ashley Starr, Emily Mathieu; Martins Ferry: Kylie Stalder, Taylor Campbell, Shayla Outward; Meadowbrook: Sarah Stine; Monroe Central: Alex Kuhn; River: Renae Riley; Shadyside: Karli Bonar; St. Clairsville: Tashia Hummel; Steubenville: Terri Lynn Wolfe; Steub. Catholic: Taylor Clark, Maddy Gulan; Toronto: Jenna Rampello, Cari Horne; Union Local: Kayla Cole.

First Team (West Virginia schools)
Bishop Donahue: Taylora Barry; Brooke: Clarissa Kowalczyk; Cameron: Tara Paczewski, Kelsey Allen, Cassidi Richmond; Hundred: Raven McDiffitt; John Marshall: Megan Garcia, Amy Rotriga, Kristen Lewicki; Linsly: Emma Cecil; Weirton Madonna: Samantha Myers, Rebecca Stewart, Ashley Jones; Magnolia: Tori Tharp, Marissa Bosley; Morgantown: Tara Hanson; Oak Glen: Jordan Cunningham; Paden City: Dominique Craft; Parkersburg South: Taylor Wittkink; Katelyn Hamilton; Tyler Consolidated: Torrye Cline; University: Marilyn DeSantis; Valley: Britany Guthrie; Weir: Danica Rasicci; Wheeling Central: Alexis Christakis, Britany Miller, Taylor Whorton; Wheeling Park: Emily Puskarich, Marissa Tucker, Kelsi Johnson.

Second Team (Ohio schools)
Barnesville: Lane Hanlon; Beallsville: Jacey Palmer; Beaver Local: Alysha Jones; Bellaire: Megan Ging; St. John: Kaydie Coppa; Bridgeport: Sarah Bowers; Buckeye Local: Karlee Leonard; Buckeye Trail: Jessica Bates; Caldwell: Hannah Jones; Cambridge: Nicole Bort; Edison: Kayla Prokopakis; Fort Frye: Lexi Huck; Frontier: Hilary Thatcher; Harrison Central: Madison Richards; Indian Creek: Ashley Schimko; Martins Ferry: Shauna Bandy; Meadowbrook: Maurie DeLong; Monroe Central: Erica Hooper; River: Lexy Wells; Shadyside: Hannah Caldwell; St. Clairsville: Jesse Machovina; Steubenville: Christina Archer; Steub. Catholic: Paige Creamer; Toronto: Madison Stoica; Union Local: Olivia Minamyer.

Second Team (West Virginia schools)
Bishop Donahue: Bath Wolfe; Brooke: Leanne Mazzella; Cameron: Lexi Benline; Hundred: Mercedes Goff; John Marshall: Kylie Howard; Linsly: Lauren Novotney; Weirton Madonna: Courtney Moss; Magnolia: Abbey Horner; Morgantown: Heather Mellie; Oak Glen: Taylor Maxwell; Paden City: Amanda Heasley; Parkersburg South: Cecilia Bailey; Tyler Consolidated: Keri Suter; University: Elizabeth Kolar; Valley: Ashley Staley; Weir: Taylor Gianangeli; Wheeling Central: Joni Zavalta; Wheeling Park: Alexis Phillips.



T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Brittany Saffell (8) is forced out at second base Monday afternoon as Buckeye Local shortstop Dana Bettineschi reaches for the throw. The Red Devils won, 3-2. Additional images may be found at cu.timesleaderonline.com

St. C. girls sneak past Buckeye

By **KIM NORTH**
Times Leader Sports Writer

Buckeye Local was breezing along Monday afternoon as it led Buckeye 8 rival St. Clairsville 2-0 with one out in the top of the fifth inning.

However, one error led to two runs and the Red Devils (6-2) capitalized to rally for a 3-2 victory in Connorville.

"Errors," was all Buckeye Local head coach Carrie Laase-Whitehead could say. "That one error led to both of those runs."

Trailing by the two runs, Lauren Figura's roller back to the mound was misplayed and Taylor Clark rolled a seeing-eye single through the right side of the infield as Figura advanced 90 feet. A subsequent wild pitch moved both runners up a base, and Alexis Emrisko, St. Clairsville's No. 9 hitter, blasted a two-run double to deep left-center that cleared the bases.

"Our hitting was a little weak today, but we came through at the end when we needed them," St. Clairsville head coach Rachel Duncan allowed. "The hit by Alexis was huge. It got us back in the game."

After the Lady Panthers (7-10) went quietly in the bottom of the fifth, the visitors mounted their game-winning rally in the sixth. With one out, Tashia Hummel singled sharply to center. Brittany Saffell replaced Hummel on the basepaths, but was quickly erased when Kaci Rykowski's looper to right field fell in, but Saffell, who was caught between a rock and a hard place, was forced at second for the second out.

Figura, playing shortstop instead of The Ohio State University recruit Jesse Machovina, then drilled a double deep center field that chased home Rykowski with the eventual winning run.

See, **ST. C.**, Page B2

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● St. C.

Continued from Page B1

"Lauren came through really big for us," Duncan praised.

Buckeye Local threatened in its final at-bat as Karlee Leonard drew a leadoff walk, and one out later, Amy Balk singled to left. A wild pitch advanced both runners, but an infield pop out resulted in the second out.

With the count 1-1 on Jenna Clark, Hummel, St. Clairsville's rocket-armed catcher, rifled a strike to younger sister Brenna at third who applied the tag on Leonard to snuff out the threat and end the game.

"That was all Tashia," Duncan said.

Sarah Slenski was a horse inside the circle, throwing 138 pitches and striking out nine. She issued eight free passes, but did a good job of keeping most of those runners from scoring. She yielded but four hits.

"She did enough to get the win," Duncan said. "Her rise ball was working today. They have a good hitting team, so this was a very good win for us."

Buckeye Local took a 1-0 lead in the first inning as Leonard doubled home Aliyah Morelli, who had reached on a two-base error.

The hosts made it 2-0 when senior catcher Tori Nest unloaded a solo home run well over the fence in left.

"Offensively, we can hit with anyone, but we left too many runners on base today," Laase-Whitehead remarked. "There were many opportunities."

Linescore:

St. Clairsville 000 021 0 - 3 5 1

Buckeye Local 101 000 0 - 2 4 3

BATTERIES: Slenski and T. Hummel, Clark and Nest.

North can be reached at knorth@timesleaderonline.com



**OVAC
SOFTBALL
TOURNAMENT**

CLASS 4-A
Semifinals
Today at Lisa's Field
4 p.m.
John Marshall vs. Indian Creek
5:45 p.m.
Wheeling Park vs. Pkbg. South
**Championship
Saturday
12:15 p.m.**
Winners

CLASS 3-A
Semifinals
Tuesday
at John Marshall
Martins Ferry, 6, Buck. Trail 5
Edison 2, Magnolia 0
**Championship
Saturday
10:30 a.m.**
Martins Ferry vs. Edison

CLASS 2-A
Semifinals
Today at Belle Isle
4:30 p.m.
Whg. Cent. vs. Steub. Cent.
Thursday at Lisa's Field
5:45 p.m.
Fort Frye vs. Barnesville
**Championship
Saturday 3:45 p.m.**
Winners

CLASS 1-A
Semifinals
Today at Lisa's Field
7:30 p.m.
Weirton Madonna vs. Toronto
Thursday at Lisa's Field
6:45 p.m.
Cameron vs. St. John
**Championship
Saturday 2 p.m.**
Winners

Class AAA



Photo by Josh Strobe

Edison's Kristin Prokopakis rounds third en route to scoring the Wildcats' first run Tuesday.

Wildcats Get By Eagles

Tice's four-hitter helps Edison top Magnolia

By TRACY WATSON
For The Intelligencer

GLEN DALE — In defending its 2010 Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AAA softball title, Edison got a little defensive Tuesday night against Magnolia.

Sophomore Mikayla Tice scattered four hits in earning a victory, and the Wildcats scratched out a couple of early runs as the defense turned in a pair of big double plays in grinding out a 2-0 victory against the Blue Eagles in a semifinal contest under the lights at John Marshall High School.

At 10:30 on Saturday morning at the J.B. Chamber's Sports Complex, Edison (8-2) will try to capture its seventh OVAC softball crown since 2001 and second straight in Class

Please See WILDCATS, Page 16

Purple Power

Martins Ferry tops Trail in 11 innings

By TRACY WATSON
For The Intelligencer

GLEN DALE — After starting the season 2-5, it has been a year-long struggle for Martins Ferry's softball team to get back on its feet.

And after playing in stop and winning a doubleheader last Saturday to squeeze into the OVAC Tournament, Coach Paige Williams' squad proved Tuesday it belongs.

Just a year after falling in extra innings to lose in the conference semifinals, Kylie Stalder's two-out, sacrifice fly in the top of the 11th inning plated pinch-runner Kirstie DelGuzzo with the eventual game-winning run as Ferry stunned top-seeded, and previously unbeaten, Buckeye Trail by a 6-5 count at John Marshall High School.

The victory moves Williams' squad into Saturday's championship game against defending champion Edison at 10:30 a.m. at the J.B. Chamber's I-470 Sports Complex. Meanwhile, the hard-luck loss drops the Warriors to 10-1.

"I guess they just didn't have 12 in them," Williams joked. "We got beat in extra innings last year in the semis, so this is extra special. We have worked very hard to get to this point and we are really looking forward to Saturday."

For the championship game to become a reality, the Purple

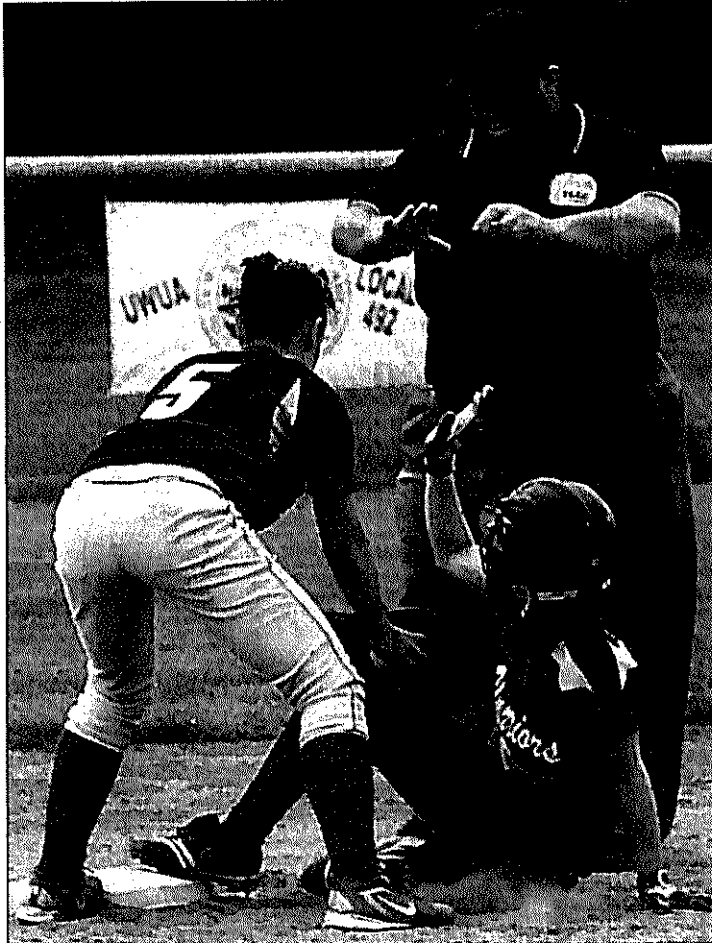


Photo by Josh Strobe

Buckeye Trail's Catie Smith asks for time after reaching second base ahead of a tag by Martins Ferry's Addie Suriano (5) during Tuesday's game in Glen Dale.

Riders had to overcome a lot, including giving up an early 4-0 lead and watching Trail load the bases on three different occasions.

But Ferry was true to the test, allowing two runs in bases-loaded situations, and not giving up a base hit.

"That was very nerve-rack-

Class AAA

ing," Williams said. "But the girls fought hard, played great and did not give up."

The Purple Riders broke things open in the second with four hits, including three doubles, and a Buckeye Trail error, setting the stage for a four-run outburst.

Shauna Bandy got it going with a double to deep right field with courtesy runner Christy Delguzzo scoring when Shayla Outward reached on a two-base error.

Following a fielder's choice, Morgan Stalder collected a run-scoring single and Cassie Hanson, the Purple Riders' No. 9 hitter, stroked a double putting runners at second and third. Kylie Stalder's two-run double to deep left pushed the advantage to 4-0.

The Warriors did some damage of their own in the bottom of the frame, also getting clutch hits from the lower part of the order. Kaylieh Smith and Jessica Bates each reached on one-out singles with No. 9 batter Courtney Poland bringing them home with a two-out base hit.

Kaylie Warnock ripped a double to deep right to plate another and made it 4-3, however, she was thrown out trying to stretch it into a triple.

Ferry got one back in the third with Stephanie Perdok reaching on a fielder's choice and Bandy chasing her home

Please See PURPLE, Page 16

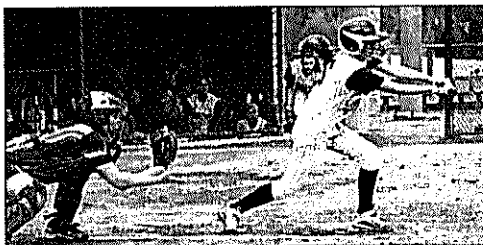


Photo by Josh Strobe

Wheeling Central's Taylor Whorton (6) attempts a bunt as Steubenville Catholic's Taylor Clark looks on.

Maroon Knights Lead

OVAC semifinal will be completed today

Class AA

By NICK BEDWAY
For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — Jumping in front 5-0 after two innings, the Wheeling Central softball team held a 9-2 lead against undefeated Steubenville Catholic when rain

suspended the game in the top of the sixth of their Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AA semifinal tournament contest Tuesday on Lisa's Field at the Chambers I-470 Complex.

Please See LEAD, Page 16

PURPLE

(Continued from Page 15) with another two-bagger to make it 5-3.

Trail appeared ready to fight back in the bottom of the inning, loading the bases with nobody out on an error, Cori Poland's base hit and a fielder's choice. However, pitcher Taylor Campbell buckled down and retired the Warriors' 5-6-7 hitters in order to end the threat.

The Warriors did not waste their opportunity after filling the sacks again with one down in the fourth. Cori Poland's fielder's choice brought home Courtney Poland, who had

also reached on a fielder's choice to cut the margin to 5-4.

A two-out, four-pitch, walk to Sells knotted the count at 5-5 and finally got Buckeye Trail back to even.

For the third consecutive inning the Warriors loaded the bases in the fifth, and for second time Perry recorded three straight outs to keep them off the board.

Still tied at 5-5, the Purple Riders threatened in the seventh, putting a runner at second with one out, only to have her thrown out trying to steal third for the final out.

Another wasted chance by Trail in the bottom of the seventh sent the game to extra innings. Catie Smith singled with two down, stole second and went to third on a throwing error. However, she did not score and became the 13th baserunner stranded by the Warriors.

It took three innings to even get another runner on base with Martins Ferry loading the bases with two down in the 10th, but pitcher Jessica Bates induced a roller back to the mound and forced the third out at the plate.

The Purple Riders finally broke the scoring drought in the 11th with a leadoff Kailyn Armitage double to left, an error and Kylie Stalder's two-out sacrifice fly to left for a 6-5 reading.

"Shauna Bandy hit the ball real well and has been clutch for us all season

long and as usual, and Taylor Campbell came through for us on the mound when we needed her," Williams said.

For Buckeye Trail, the most glaring statistic was that it stranded 14 runners and was 0-for-9 with the bases loaded. Ten runners were left in scoring position.

"This is a tough loss, especially with the undefeated season gone," Buckeye Trail coach Staci Smith said. "We just couldn't get it done (Tuesday). Ferry battled and we spotted them a four-run lead early on."

"It is just amazing that we left that many on base. That is very uncharacteristic for us and something that we normally just don't do. We have hit the ball well all season, but couldn't get the big hit when we needed it."

WILDCATS

(Continued from Page 15) AAA.

Tuesday's game was one that had plenty of fine pitching, with Tice and Magnolia's Tori Tharp each turning in nice games, and good defense.

It didn't take long for the Wildcats to get going in the first. Kristin Prokopakis beat out an infield single and scored when Mycaela Stewart reached on a three-base throwing error for a 1-0 upperhand, and eventually the only run the Jefferson County squad needed.

After the Blue Eagles (13-4) wasted a golden opportunity with a leadoff Tharp double in the second, Edison used three singles and a sacrifice bunt to push the lead to 2-0. Kylie Smith was credited with an RBI.

The Wildcats turned double plays in the third and fifth to turn back threats and Magnolia's second hit, a two-out Abby Horner double in the sixth, did not do any harm.

"I don't know if I have seen a double play all season long and they turned two of them in one game on us," a dejected Batton said. "And they weren't line drives and tag out either. They were legit, and big-time plays."

Batton's crew had another chance in the seventh with back-to-back singles to start the inning from Tharp and freshman Mallory Chapman. However, courtesy runner Kennedy Slampak was thrown out trying to get to third and the Blue Eagles could not capitalize.

"This was a game that had two good pitching performances and both teams struggling for momentum and runs," Edison coach Spencer Bendle said. "But the biggest difference was probably our defense."

"We have played well defensively all season long. It tends to be our forte. We preach defense and then going out and trying to scratch out a couple of runs and that is exactly what we did."

"Magnolia has a nice team and I really like how Tori Tharp works. That is a team that could go far in the postseason."

Batton, meanwhile, realized his team made just enough mistakes to give the Wildcats an edge.

"You can't make mistakes against a program like Edison or it is going to cost you," Batton said. "But that's softball. We hit the ball hard at times, but we hit it right at them and they made plays."

"They have a great defense and they make all of the fundamental plays. They are not going to beat themselves."

"Tori pitched a tremendous game, but you have nights like this when you just put runners in scoring position and just can't get them in."

Tharp allowed five Edison hits, including three in the second inning, two of which were infield singles. In all, three of the Wildcats' five hits never touched the outfield grass.

LEAD

(Continued from Page 15)

Tournament officials scheduled the game to be completed at 4:30 p.m. today at Belle Isle Park on Wheeling Island.

The Maroon Knights, coming on strong after a 1-4 start, are six outs away from improving their record to 10-5. The Crusaders entered with a perfect 11-0 record and are looking at their first loss unless they can come up with a huge rally in their final two at-bats.

If Wheeling Central maintains the lead when play is resumed, it will be matched up against the Fort Frye-Barnesville survivor in the OVAC AA championship game this Saturday at a time to be determined. Weather conditions forced the postponement of that contest as well as the Class A semifinal between Cameron and Bellaire St. John Central.

Both those games have been rescheduled for Thursday at the I-470 Complex, weather permitting. The Fort-Frye-Barnesville clash is slated for a 5 p.m. start, with St. John and Cameron to play at 6:45.

Central took advantage of an early break to go up 1-0 when Joni Zavolta's harmless infield popper fell untouched between first and second base for a single. Zavolta moved up to second on a sacrifice bunt by Taylor Whorton and scored when Bri Robbins doubled into left center to pick up

the RBI.

The Maroon Knights loaded the bases in the top of the second as Alexis Chrstakis singled, Vanessa Saseen walked and Megan Griffin reached safely on a fielder's choice. A passed ball plated the second run and Zavolta promptly knocked in two more with a ground single into right field. Sarah Henry later bounced out to account for the other RBI.

Central added three runs on three hits and a walk in the fourth inning. Brittany Miller's single knocked in one run, while Christakis, the Knights' pitching standout, helped her own cause again, this time with a two-run double over the head of Crusaders left fielder Mandy Gulan.

The game was suspended with one out in the top of the sixth after the Maroon Knights had pushed another run across the plate when Whorton doubled down the left-field line, took third via a wild pitch and came home on Robbins' sacrifice fly to center.

Sara Moziejko's infield single accounted for Steubenville Catholic's first run in the bottom of the second after a walk to Lacey Murphy and singles by Paige Creamer and Kayla Loyd. Micca Mirabella reached on a bunt single in the bottom of the fifth and eventually scored the Crusaders' second run when Mandy Gulan singled up the middle.

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SPORTS

Wednesday,
April 27, 2011

T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

MARTINS FERRY'S Kylie Stalder, left, awaits a throw to second base as Buckeye Trail's Kayleigh Smith slides in. Smith was safe on the play as called by umpire Bob Gable. Looking on is Purple Riders' second baseman Addie Suriano (5). Martins Ferry won 6-5 in 11 innings. Additional images can be found at cu.timesleaderonline.com

MARATHON GIRLS

• Martins Ferry nips Buckeye Trail, 6-5, in 11 innings in OVAC thriller

By KIM NORTH
Times Leader Sports Writer

It was deja vu for Paige Williams and Cirstie Delguzzo.

With Martins Ferry and Buckeye Trail locked in a marathon OVAC Class 3-A semifinal, Delguzzo found herself standing on third base with one out and the game tied at 5 in the 11th inning.

Moments later, Kylie Stalder lifted a sacrifice fly to left field that chased home the speedy Delguzzo with what turned out to be the game-winning run in a 6-5 victory over the previously undefeated Warriors (10-1) on the John Marshall High School field in Glen Dale.

Flash back one year ago.

Delguzzo was on third with one

'That was the same exact play as last year.'

- Paige Williams

out and tagged on a fly ball to the outfield with the game tied against Edison. She scored, but the Wildcats appealed that she left too early, and they were given the reversal.

"That was the exact same play as last year," Williams recalled. "I told her this time that I would watch the ball and I would tell her when to go.

We made sure that she didn't leave early this time."

With the win, their 10th in 16 games but eighth in the last nine outings, the Purple Riders punched their ticket to the championship game to be played Saturday on Lisa's Field at the 1-470 Complex in Elm Grove. They will meet Buckeye 8 rival Edison, which defeated Magnolia 2-0, in Tuesday night's second game. Game time is set for 10:30 a.m.

Buckeye Trail was its own worst enemy as the Warriors stranded an eye-popping 14 baserunners, including 10 in scoring position. They were also 0-for-9 with the bases loaded and left the sacks full in the third, fourth and fifth frames.

See, MARATHON, Page B2

Edison back to defend its Class 3-A title

By TRACY WATSON
For The Times Leader

GLEN DALE — In defending its 2010 Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class AAA softball title, Edison got a little defensive Tuesday night against Magnolia.

Sophomore Mikayla Tice scattered four hits in getting a victory, the Wildcats scratched out a couple of early runs and the defense turned in a pair of big double plays in grinding out a 2-0 victory against the Blue Eagles in a semifinal contest under the lights at John Marshall High School.

Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. at the J.B. Chamber's Sports Complex, Edison (8-2) will try to capture its seventh OVAC softball crown since 2001 and second straight in Class AAA.

Tuesday's game was one that had plenty of fine pitching, with Tice a n d Magnolia's Tori Tharp each turning

in nice games, and good defense.

It didn't take long for the Wildcats to get going in the first. Kristin Prokopakis beat out and infield single and scored when Mycaela Stewart reached on a three-base throwing error for a 1-0 upper hand, and eventually the only run the Jefferson County squad needed.

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The Wildcats turned double plays in the third and fifth to turn back threats and Magnolia's second hit, a two-out Abby Horner double in the sixth, did not do any harm.

"I don't know if I have seen a double play all season long and they turned two of them in one game on us," a dejected Batton said. "And they weren't line drives and tag out either. They were legit, and big-

See, EDISON, Page B2

'I don't know if I have seen a double play all season long and they turned two of them in one game on us.'

- Mark Batton

● Edison

Continued from Page B1

time plays."

Batton's crew had another chance in the seventh with back-to-back singles to start the frame from Tharp and freshman Mallory Chapman. However, courtesy runner Kennedy Slampak was thrown out trying to get to third and the Blue Eagles could not capitalize.

"This was a game that had two good pitching performances and both teams struggling for momentum and runs," Edison coach Spencer Bendle said.

"But the biggest difference was probably our defense.

"We have played well defensively all season long. It tends to be our forte. We preach defense and then going out and trying to scratch out a couple of runs and that is exactly what we did (Tuesday).

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Batton, meanwhile, realized that his team made just enough mistakes to give the Wildcats an edge.

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softball. We hit the ball hard at times, but we hit it right at them and they made plays.

"They have a great defense and they make all of the fundamental plays. They are not going to beat themselves.

"Tori pitched a tremendous game, but you have nights like this when you just put runners in scoring position and just can't get them in."

Tharp allowed just five Edison hits, including three in the second inning, two of which were infield singles. In all, three of the Wildcats' five hits never touched the outfield grass.

● Marathon

Continued from Page B1

"This is a tough loss, especially with the undefeated season gone," Buckeye Trail's Staci Smith explained. "We just couldn't get it done. Ferry battled and we spotted them a four-run lead early on."

Katelyn Armitage led off the 11th with a double to deep left and Delguzzo was summoned to pinch run. Morgan Stalder's sacrifice bunt was thrown wide of first, allowing Delguzzo to reach third. After the first out was recorded, K. Stalder worked the count to 3-2 before fouling off a pitch. The next pitch she saw she fled to left as Delguzzo raced home.

Martins Ferry jumped out to a 4-0 lead after the top of

the second, but Buckeye Trail continued to battle back as it finally evened the count at 5-all with a 2-run fourth.

However, both pitchers settled into grooves and shut the door the remainder of the game until the 11th. That included a 20-minute rain delay after the fifth inning.

Taylor Campbell, Martins Ferry's senior hurler, went the distance. She only struck out three and walked three. She did surrender 14 base hits, but continually pitched her way out of jams. She threw 154 pitches, but 107 of them were strikes.

"She really came through today for us," Williams said of her ace. "I told people at the beginning of the season that she was going to help us pitching this season, and she sure has."

The big play defensively for the Purple Riders came in the fifth when Buckeye Trail had the bases loaded and no one out. Kylie Warnock's slicer to left-center was gloved by a sliding Cassie Hanson, who righted herself and threw a strike to the plate as the runners held. A force at home and a liner to Shayla Outward in center ended the threat without any harm.

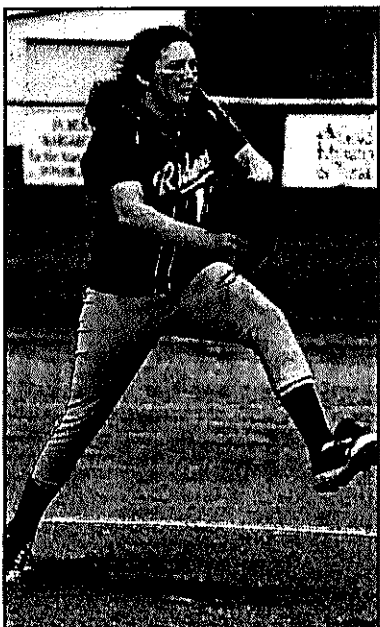
Martins Ferry banged out 13 hits, including three off the bat of senior catcher Shauna Bandy, who had a single, two doubles and an RBI. K. Stalder collected a single, double and three ribbies, while Stephanie Perdok singled twice. M. Stalder added an RBI single. All nine Purple Rider hitters had at least one base rap.

"The girls fought hard today," Williams allowed.

Jessica Bates, the hard-luck loser on the mound, had a trio of singles for Trail. Catie Smith, Lori Poland and Kayleigh Smith also had multiple hit games.

Linescore:

OVAC Class AAA Semifinal
(at John Marshall High School)
Martins Ferry 6, Buck. Trail 5, 11 Inn.
Ferry 041 000 000 01 — 6 13 6
Trail 030 200 000 00 — 5 14 3
BATTERIES: Campbell and Bandy. Bates and Sells.
North can be reached at
knorth@timesleaderonline.com



T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

MARTINS FERRY'S Taylor Campbell winds up before throwing a pitch plateward Tuesday.

IES LEADER - Tuesday, April 26, 2011 - B4

OVAC softball tournament opens today

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

If you don't think the OVAC title matters to softball teams you obviously weren't paying attention to the last few days of action.

After rain caused many of the scheduled games throughout the pre-OVAC cutoff portion of the regular season to be washed out, teams found themselves calculating points down to the final minutes this past weekend.

It paid ultimate dividends for Martins Ferry and Wheeling Central, who both punched a ticket to the semifinals, which begin today at two sites in the Mountain State.

The annual OVAC Softball Tournament semifinals were finalized Sunday morning and the first pitch is scheduled to be thrown at the Chambers I-470 Complex in Elm Grove today at 4 p.m. when the aforementioned Maroon Knights meet top-seeded Steubenville Central on Lisa's Field.

"It was kind of wild down the stretch," said OVAC Softball Director Tom Bechtel. "Central and Ferry earned their way in because they played their games."

The Lady Riders made good use of their Easter vacation, knocking off Meadowbrook on Good Friday and then sweeping a twinbill from Buckeye Local on Saturday to edge past St. Clairsville and Bellaire, which battled through the rain drops on Friday and appeared to be headed for the tournament until the Lady Riders worked their magic.

"There are always issues because some schools can't get their fields ready as quickly as others," Bechtel said. "We changed the rule this year to let teams move games up if they see rain in the forecast and both teams have an open date."

The Lady Riders earned the fourth seed in Class AAA and will meet top-seeded Buckeye Trail today at 5 p.m. at John Marshall High School in the lidlifter. The second Class 3-A game will find second-seeded Edison battling Magnolia.

The 3-A schools were the odd group out for playing at Chambers. All three other classes will battle in Elm Grove as an additional tripleheader is slated for Wednesday night.

Normally, two fields are utilized at Chambers for the semifinals, but a renovation project on Field 4 wasn't able to be completed in time because of the battles with bad weather.

"We had about one window to get the work done, and since that day, we've not had two consecutive dry days," Bechtel, who is also the director of the Wheeling Recreation Department, which oversees the fields, said. "We never dreamt that in November when we missed by one day that we'd be almost to May still working on that field."

St. John Central and Cameron will play at approximately 7:30 at I-470, which will follow the second 2-A game (Barnesville vs. Fort Frye), which is slated to begin at 5:45 p.m.

The softball committee kicked around the idea of playing on different days, but due to the weather being a continual issue, they determined the best course of action would be to squeeze as many games onto the opening day card it could.

"We're going to make every effort to get all of these games played because we want to play the games," Bechtel said. "We've talked about a lot of different combinations, but we're hoping we can get these games played as scheduled."

Wednesday's action pits Madonna and Toronto as well as the two 4-A semifinals.

All four championship games are slated for Saturday at Lisa's Field.

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