

SPORTS

Sunday,
May 7, 2023



Seth Staskey
Sports Editor

Wheeling native Thalman to be honored by Pro Football HOF

Budd Thalman could — and should — write a book.

The people, events and experiences the 1953 Wheeling Central and 1957 West Virginia University graduate encountered in a 40-year career working in sports communications both at the collegiate and professional level would impress even the most casual sports fan.

A lot of interesting anecdotes are accumulated working in sports alone, but when your path crosses with some of the people Thalman did and then the chapters begin to write themselves.

Thalman will have a chance to share some of his memories and stories on June 28 and 29 when he's honored at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton with an 'Award of Excellence' for his career working as the PR director for the Buffalo Bills from 1973-86.

Pro Football Hall of Famer Dan Fouts will serve as the master of ceremonies for the event, which will be held at the Hall of Fame.

"To say that you've been recognized by the Pro Football Hall of Fame is sort of a validation of your career," Thalman said. "I've talked to a couple of guys I've known who have been recognized previously and they've all said what a great event it is, especially for the families. I know my family is all super excited. I am really looking forward to it, too. It's very humbling to be recognized."

The NFL and the Pro Football Hall of Fame has consistently tried to pay homage to folks who have added to the pro football experience, but aren't going to get into the actual hall of fame like players, coaches and executives.

"A friend of mine, former Ravens PR guy Kevin Byrne, nominated me for this award last year and now he's being honored with me this year, so that makes it even more exciting," Thalman said.

Thalman's passion for sports, writing and journalism began at a young age. Actually, despite his father's urging to become a dentist, Thalman decided to follow his mother's advice and pursue writing.

"I was always attracted to writing, but my mother really encouraged it," Thalman recalled. "Even though she didn't go to college, she was a writer herself. But, my dad saw becoming a dentist as a quick way to make a lot of money, and it just never appealed to me, so I ended up in journalism school."

After graduating from WVU, Thalman had a two-year military obligation to fulfill, but it was delayed for a year, so in the meantime, he landed a job with the Associated Press in its Huntington office.

He started his duty with the army in 1958 and in 1960, upon leaving the service, he worked in Annapolis, Md. At the time, Thalman had no idea the opportunity that would present him.

In 1962, Thalman was hired as the Sports Information Director at the Naval Academy. He held that position until the summer of 1973. During his time at Navy, he began to earn some acclaim for his work because of his work promoting eventual Heisman Trophy winner Roger Staubach.

As he worked through his time at Navy, he became friends with a lot of other collegiate SIDs, which happened to open the door for his opportunity in pro football.



RIVER'S LUCAS
Dennis races to third base during Friday night's OVAC Class 2A championship game against Steubenville Catholic Central at the Edison Unified Sports Complex. The Pilots fell to the Crusaders in nine innings.

Photo/ANDREW GRIMM

River comes up short in 2A

By ANDREW GRIMM
For The Times Leader

RICHMOND — The Catholic Central baseball team has been fighting all season.

It fought its way back to get victories in several games this season, including in the OVAC semifinals.

Friday night, the Crusaders fought back again, this time erasing a three-run deficit to capture the OVAC Class 2A championship with a 5-4 walk-off, extra-innings victory over River

at Edison.

"I'm so proud of these guys, the players, our staff," Central head coach Don Young said. "We go into each game saying we want to compete and that has served us well. It's all on these young men."

"We never give in, we got behind there, we were one swing away from the game getting away from us but we stayed in there, stayed tight and stuck with it until we got our opportunity."

"It was a great high school baseball."

Brayden Rauch's RBI single in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted Central (17-1) to the title after it trailed 4-1 through six and a half.

"It's huge for our program," Young said. "It was a total team effort. We have 17 guys that have banded together. Our parents support us to no end. I have a great staff."

"This is huge for us in my second year back. I'm really proud of these kids."

The hit was Rauch's second of the

See, RIVER, Page D2



LINSLY'S ALEX Taylor delivers to the plate during Friday's OVAC Class 3A championship game against Fort Frye.

Photo/ANDREW GRIMM

Linsly wins 3A title

By ANDREW GRIMM
For The Times Leader

RICHMOND — Winning the OVAC title is an annual goal for Linsly, and for the 23rd time in program history, the Cadets checked that box on Friday at the Edison Unified Sports Complex.

Linsly scored two runs in each the second, third and fourth to open a lead and tacked on three more in the top of the seventh to pull away from top-seed Fort Frye, handing them just their third loss to win the Class 3A title, 9-4.

"We knew it was going to be a fight," Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright said. "(Fort Frye) is always well coached, they're going to compete. They're an outstanding baseball team ... We're really

pleased with this one, we did a lot of things well. We had some big hits, we did some things well on the bases.

"I tell these kids all the time I've coached them harder because I know how good they can be and I think they showed it."

Trey Prather had a big day at the plate, crushing a homer in the third inning and also knocking an RBI double, while Matt Scouvar drove in three runs on the day and Jax Murray had a pair of doubles.

Alex Taylor went six strong on the mound for Cartwright's club, firing seven strikeouts against three walks before his pitch count forced his departure.

"Alex was tough as nails," Cartwright said. "Things didn't come See, LINSLY, Page D2

St. Clairsville fends off HC for Buckeye 8 title

By SETH STASKEY
Times Leader Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Trophy games seem to bring out the best in St. Clairsville.

For the second time in less than a week, the Red Devils found themselves in a championship game and answered the bell once again.

The Red Devils, despite Harrison Central's unwillingness to go quietly in the seventh, pock-

C. head coach Tom Sliva said. "We'll see what draw we get (on Sunday) and then we have a week of baseball to get better."

The Red Devils, who are now 15-7 on the season, got impressive pitching from Hunter Hoffman, enough offense from throughout the order and they were able to overcome three fielding blunders, including a pair that ignited the Huskies' seventh-inning uprising.

"It's a testament to all of our guys, but also to Hunter Hoff-



came back to help stick it to the suddenly shaky 76ers.

"That was kind of nasty," Celtics guard Jayson Tatum said.

So, too, is what the Celtics have done to Embiid. James Harden and the rest of the Sixers while seizing control of the series.

Tatum scored 27 points, Jaylen Brown had 23 and Boston spoiled Embiid's MVP coronation, beating Philadelphia 114-102 Friday night to take a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Game 4 is Sunday in Philadelphia.

Williams didn't score a point in 23 minutes, but his toughness in shaking off the sneaker to the back of his head symbolized the way Boston has continued to fight after a Game 1 embarrassment.

"I was like, 'Dang, I really got curb-stomped.'" Williams said. "I'm just thankful he didn't like

Boston gave 76ers fans a reason to cheer again.

The Sixers pulled within five on De'Anthony Melton's 3-pointer to get the crowd back into the game for all of 20 seconds before Malcolm Brogdon countered with a 3 to give Boston a 100-92 lead. Al Horford crushed the Sixers again — as he has most of his career — when he buried a 3 for a seven-point lead.

Embiid, forced to try and win it alone without any serious offensive help, missed a pull-up 18-footer and Tatum drained a jumper that all but put the game away. Tatum hit one more 3 for good measure and the Celtics won their second straight.

"We just held the ball too long, too much," Embiid said. "We don't start our actions fast enough. That's why it looks so slow. We're not scoring the ball. We're not making

of his father.

Embiid held his son, who wore a "My dad is the MVP" T-shirt, and wiped tears from his eyes as fans chanted "MVP! MVP!"

"Honestly, he's the main reason why I'm really here," Embiid said. "Becoming a father really changed my whole life. I just wanted to show him a good example."

The good times didn't last long. Boston spiked any emotional carryover from the ceremony and raced to a quick 10-point lead.

The Sixers spent the rest of the game playing catch-up. All the energy spent to come back and take brief leads quickly evaporated and the Celtics snagged them right back.

Embiid gamely tried to carry the Sixers on one good knee, but got almost no help from Harden and Tyrese Maxey.

• River

Continued from Page D1

game. His first, a double, started the Crusader rally in the bottom of the sixth that knotted the score.

After falling behind the Pilots, Rauch led off the sixth with the aforementioned double, then Daniel Free brought him around with a double of his own to cut the deficit to 4-2.

Free scored on an error when a throw to second on a steal attempt sailed into the outfield, then Eli Fayak's RBI double knotted the score at 4-4. Fayak had scored on an error an inning prior to get Central on the board.

Neither team threatened in the

seventh, then Central seemed poised to end the game in the eighth but left the bases loaded.

However, an inning later, Alex Solema — who threw the final three innings and got the win in relief, led off the bottom of the ninth with a triple and two intentional walks loaded them up for Rauch, who ended it.

Solema struck out three, including two in the top of the ninth, while Kody Carver started, went six strong and also fanned three.

River jumped ahead 3-0 with a pair in the second and one in the third, then led 4-1 going to the bot-

tom of the sixth.

The Pilots' Lucas Dennis and Brody Lollathin had RBI singles and Carson Makris drove in a run with a HBP.

Kaden Hunt went 5 1/3 on the mound, fanning six.

"We got beat by a very good, well-coached team," River head coach Tim Blue said. "We played very well and Kaden Hunt, our freshman pitcher, threw one heck of a game. It's definitely tough to lose an OVAC final in extra innings, but we'll have to put this behind us, play next week and get ready for the OHSAA playoffs."

• Linsly

Continued from Page D1

easy for him, he got out of some jams and just kept coming."

Fort Frye committed some costly mistakes, being charged with three errors while just four of Linsly's runs went in the scorebook as earned.

"We just made too many mistakes," Fort Frye head coach Trey Engle said. "It's hard to beat a good, well-coached team like Linsly when you have that many errors and five hits."

"Congrats to them."

Fort Frye's Carter Booker tripped in a run and Matthias Kesselring and Owen Brown each tallied RBIs. Clay Gruey tallied five strikeouts in 6 2/3 before being lifted in the seventh.

• St. C.

Continued from Page D1

Even then he induced a pair of ground balls that were misplayed.

Harrison Central, which had just one hit until the seventh inning, scored four in the inning, all of which were unearned. It had the tying run at second in the former of senior Jace Madzia, who had two hits and two RBI in the game.

However, Hoffman "bulled his neck" according to his head coach and induced a come backer to give the Devils the title.

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happened today."

In the other dugout, Harrison Central head coach Mike Valesko was proud of the way his guys battled, but disappointed they put themselves into a six-run hole.

"We were pretty fortunate to even have a chance, considering we went into the seventh inning down 8-2," Valesko said. "I told the guys we didn't lose the game in the seventh. We lost it in the fourth and fifth innings."

Those were the innings when the Red Devils got their bats going.

Harrison Central starter Kaden Jurosko held St. C. hitless in the first three innings, but talented junior shortstop Braylen Blomquist changed that

quickly.

He ignited the St. Clairsville offense when he hit a solo home run to lead off the fourth.

Jurosko then issued a walk to Mason Myers and Marcus Bush reached on an error.

Hoffman helped his own cause with a solid single to score the speedy Myers. Harrison cut down a run at the plate for the first out of the inning, but Hoffman eventually scored on the second fielding miscue of the frame.

St. C. didn't stop there. Jurosko did himself no favors in the fifth when he walked Brody Saunders and plunked Blomquist. Following a sacrifice bunt by Myers, Bush sliced a triple down the line in right, plating a pair. Hoffman followed with a RBI single.

Senior Zach Vickers singled and then Max Fogle reached on a fielder's

choice in which nary an out was recorded. Noah Turley followed with a two-run single.

"It's tough to survive when you issue a walk and hit a guy to begin an inning," Valesko said. "It's frustrating because the little plays are hurting us. If there is someone in America who practices bunt offense and bunt defense more than us, I tip my cap to them, but when you don't execute those situations, it's frustrating. What are you going to do? Give credit to St. Clairsville. Hoffman is really good and it's tough to get anything off of him."

With plenty of run support, Hoffman continued to shine on the mound. For the game, he finished with nine strikeouts and three walks, two of which were of the intentional variety to Huskies senior Treston Nemeth.

Thalman still contends that Penn State should have won the title in 1994 when it finished undefeated and rolled past Oregon in the Rose Bowl with the likes of Ki-Jana Carter, Kerry Collins and Kyle Brady leading the way.

Thalman indicated that he and Paterno had a great relationship in their time working together.

"Though he didn't always agree, Joe always listened to me," Thalman said. "He respected my opinion and that's really all you can ask for. If the people around you respect your opinion, you're succeeding."

Thalman retired in 2001, which was three years after he was inducted to the College Sports Information Directors Hall of Fame.

"I had a wonderful career that led to meeting a lot of wonderful people and experiencing a lot of great events in a lot of wonderful places," Thalman said.

Since the announcement that Thalman was being honored, he's been blown away by the number of people he's heard from.

"One of my great friends at Navy is Tom Lynch and he was the center on the 1963 team and he sent out a note to the team and I've gotten at least 20 emails from players on that team," Thalman said.

Though he's moved around, Annapolis will always be a special place in Thalman's heart and it's not just professionally. He and his wife, Patricia, met at the academy. They've been married 57 years.

As he approaches his 88th birthday, Thalman is still a huge sports fan, but the way media and sports coverage has changed is something of which he's not the biggest fan.

"I tell myself I could not deal with today's media atmosphere," Thalman said without hesitation. "When I was in Buffalo, for instance, we would make a trade, I announced it and that would be the end of it. Now, you have the player announcing it, the agent announcing it and some guy you've never heard of announcing all of the particulars. I simply could not deal with that."

Thalman pointed out he watched "not one minute" of the recent NFL Draft because of the so-called experts involved.

"I can't stand the talking heads," Thalman admitted. "I've been in those draft rooms, and I know what goes on in there. These guys today are just talking. I simply could not deal with people spouting their opinions on social media."

There are some parts of today's sports communication climate that Thalman wishes existed when he was still working. But most of those center around making his job easier.

"They're able to hit a button and send a release to 500 media outlets at one time," Thalman said. "I used to have to type it on a typewriter and then mail it out. Covering the events is much easier now, too."

Budd and Patricia, who live in Fredericksburg, Va., which is some 50 miles from Washington D.C., have three adult children Mark, Scott and a daughter, Kelly. They also have five grandchildren, ranging in age from eight to 20.

Though he's not been back to the Ohio Valley in a while, Budd's sister, Carol Wilhelm, still lives in Wheeling. He has a brother, Tim, who resides in Southern California.

VICTORY AWARDS DINNER

Two Ohio Valley prep athletes and a college coach will be recognized Sunday at the 76th annual Victory Awards Dinner in Charleston.

Wheeling Park sophomore Alexis Bordas and senior Brett Phillips plus West Liberty University men's basketball coach Ben Howlett will be among honorees by the W. Va. Sports Writers Association at the nation's oldest statewide sports fete.

Bordas will receive the Ostrowski Award as the state Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Phillips is recipient of a Kennedy Foundation Scholarship by WesBanco. Howlett is honored as the Furfari Award winner as state College Coach of the Year.

SETH'S SCOOPS

BUCKEYE LOCAL grad Chet Pobolish has been hired as head football coach at Arkansas City High School in Arkansas City, Kansas. Pobolish has spent the last 24 seasons coaching at the collegiate level and the last few seasons at Reinhardt University, which is a NAIA school in Georgia.

JERRY NARCISI, a long-time track and field official, will be recognized by the Ohio High School Athletic Association at its Officials Hall of Fame Banquet for his 50 years of service as an official in the sport. He will also be inducted to the Eastern District Track and Field Hall of Fame in June.

MONROE CENTRAL grad Trista Morris, who plays softball at Bethany, was recently named Rookie of the Week in the Presidents Athletic Conference. She hit .538 for the week with three runs scored, three RBI and stole three bases.

FORMER AREA prep wrestling standouts — Peyton Hall (Oak Glen) and Anthony Carman (John Marshall) — were both recognized on the Big 12's Winter Academic All-Conference teams. Both are sports management majors.

• Derby

Continued from Page D1

champion and has six wins in seven career starts, including five in a row. Tapit Trice is 4 for 5 and Kingsbarns is 3 for 3.

"You could say it's the deepest squad we've brought so far," Pletcher said.

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PEACE PIPES

By **SETH STASKEY**
For the Sunday
News-Register

ST. CLAIRSVILLE
— Trophy games seem to bring out the best in St. Clairsville.

For the second time in less than a week, the Red Devils found themselves in a championship game and answered the bell once again.

The Red Devils, despite Harrison Central's unwillingness to go quietly in the seventh, pocketed the school's 10th Buckeye 8 baseball title Friday afternoon by virtue of an 8-6 victory against the Huskies (10-10) at Memorial Park.

"We gave goals and we've accomplished two (OVAC and Buckeye 8) and now we'll start to focus on our main goal, which is the (OHSAA) tournament," St. C. head coach Tom Sliva said. "We'll see what draw we get (on Sunday) and then we have a week of baseball to get better."

The Red Devils, who are now 15-7 on the season, got impressive pitching from Hunter Hoffman, enough offense from throughout the order and they were able to overcome three fielding blunders, including a pair that ignited the Huskies' seventh-inning uprising.

"It's a testament to all of our guys, but also to Hunter Hoffman for battling and continuing to make the pitches he needed to make," Sliva said. "He never got down. He just continued to make the pitches he needed to make."

After spotting the Huskies two runs in the third, Hoffman really settled into a groove. He retired 10 in a row until the seventh. Even then he induced a pair of ground balls that were misplayed.

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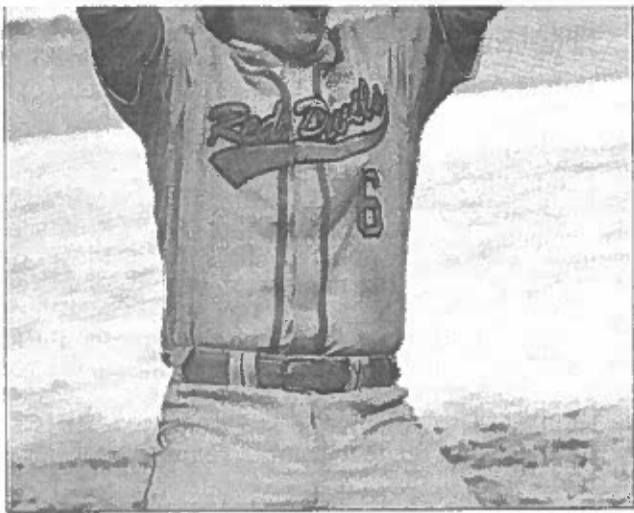


Photo by Seth Staskey

St. Clairsville's Marcus Bush celebrates his two-run triple Friday against Harrison Central at Memorial Park in St. Clairsville.

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to lead Indian Creek's 11-hit attack. Sy Howell had a pair of singles while Sal Amis singled in two runs.

Chance Maffe had two singles and a double to pick up an RBI for the Big Reds. Landon Preston collected a pair of runs batted in and Jakob Dowling singled twice.

**John Marshall 6,
Bishop Reading 1**

GLEN DALE - Five Monarch pitchers combined on a no-hitter as they defeated Bishop Reading from Ontario, Canada.

Ethan Cook had three of John Marshall's eight singles. He drove in one run. Braden Sobotka had two singles and Brennan Sobotka singled in a run, as did Kaden Yuncke.

Alex Wilhelm, Brody Williams, Michael Clemons, Jacob Harr and Isaac Koontz teamed on the no-no. Wilhelm fanned four in two innings as the starter. Koontz struck out three in his two innings.

The Monarchs open up W.Va. Class AAA sectional tournament action on Monday at Wheeling Park

**Martins Ferry 12,
Edison 2**

MARTINS FERRY - The Purple

two singles and an RBI, while Ayden Ludolph, who was the winning pitcher, and Mason Redinger each had a single and RBI. Senior Joe Green added a double.

Madonna 3, Barnesville 1

BARNESVILLE - The Blue Dons received brilliant pitching in posting a victory over the Shamrocks inside Memorial Park on Friday.

Grant Wilharm was the winner, going three innings with four strikeouts.

David Connors led the Blue Dons at the plate with a double, single and three RBI. Brock Reinacher had two singles and Kaleb Grishkevich had a double.

Barnesville was limited to two singles.

Cameron 4, Union Local 3

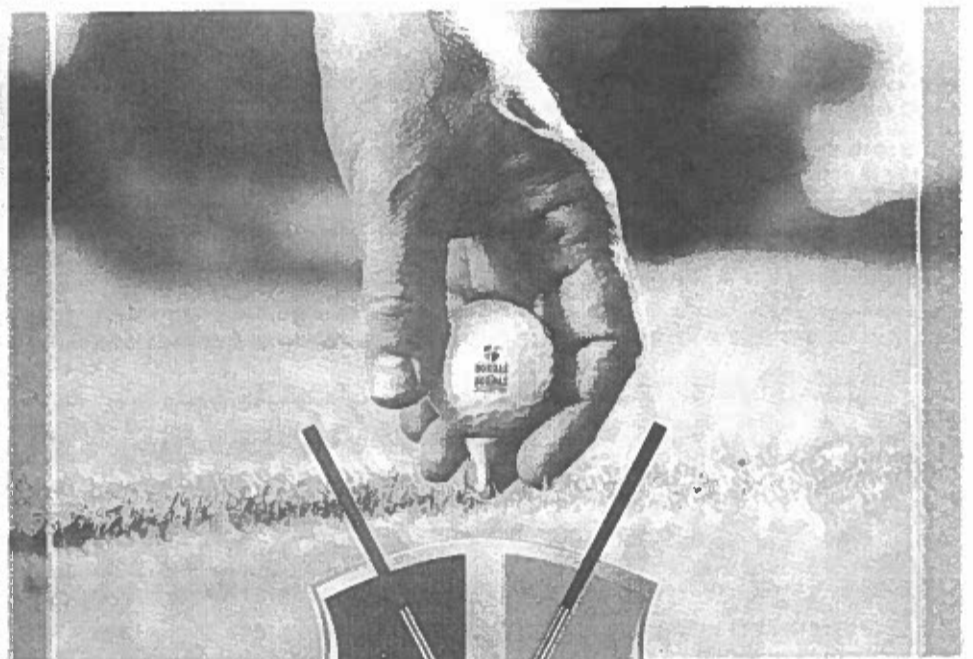
MORRISTOWN - The Dragons were able to overcome the 12 walks they issued in picking up a win over Union Local on Friday.

Kason Angel had a pair of singles and an RBI.

Coy Angel had a single and an RBI, while Lance Hartley, who picked up the mound win, drove in two runs.

Alex Moore had two singles for the Jets, while Dylan Higgenbotham added a single and RBI.

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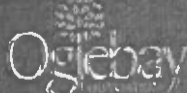
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Steubenville Catholic Wins 2A Baseball

By **ANDREW GRIMM**

For the Sunday News-Register

RICHMOND - The Catholic Catholic baseball team has been fighting all season.

It fought its way back to get victories in several games this season, including in the OVAC semifinals.

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Free scored on an error when a throw to second on a steal attempt sailed into the outfield, then Eli Fayak's RBI double knotted the score at 4-4. Fayak had scored on an error an inning prior to get Central on the board.

SATURDAY'S BEST HORSE RACING

■ Noon — Kentucky Derby Prep: Preliminary Races, Churchill Downs, Louisville, Ky.

■ 2:30 p.m. — The 149th Kentucky Derby: Churchill Downs, Louisville, Ky.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

■ 2 p.m. — Regional Coverage: Detroit at St. Louis or Miami at Chicago Cubs, MLB

■ 5 p.m. — Regional Coverage: NY Yankees at Tampa Bay (joined in progress) or Miami at Chicago Cubs, MLB

■ 6:35 p.m. — Toronto at Pittsburgh, ATTSN

■ 7 p.m. — Regional Coverage: Baltimore at Atlanta or Boston at Philadelphia, FOX

■ 10 p.m. — Regional Coverage: Houston at Seattle or LA Dodgers at San Diego (joined in progress), MLB

NBA PLAYOFFS

■ 3:30 p.m. — Eastern Conference Semifinal: New York at Miami, Game 3, ABC

■ 8:30 p.m. — Western Conference Semifinal: Golden State at LA Lakers, Game 3, ABC

NHL PLAYOFFS

■ 7 p.m. — Western Conference Semifinal: Edmonton at Vegas, Game 2, TNT

PRO GOLF

■ 3 p.m. — PGA Tour: The Wells Fargo Championship, Third Round, Quail Hollow Golf Course, Charlotte, N.C., CBS

USFL FOOTBALL

■ 1 p.m. — Houston vs. Philadelphia, Detroit, FOX

■ 7:30 p.m. — Memphis at Michigan, NBC

SUNDAY'S BEST**AUTO RACING**

■ 3 p.m. — NASCAR Cup Series: The AdventHealth 400, Kansas Speedway, Kansas City, Kan., FS1

BOWLING

■ Noon — PBA: Players Championship, Match Play, North Brunswick, N.J., FS1

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

■ 11:30 a.m. — Baltimore at Atlanta, NBC/PEACOCK

■ 1:35 p.m. — Toronto at Pittsburgh, ATTSN

■ 7 p.m. — LA Dodgers at San Diego, ESPN

NBA PLAYOFFS

■ 3:40 p.m. — Eastern Conference Semifinal: Boston at Philadelphia, Game 4, ESPN

■ 8 p.m. — Western Conference Semifinal: Denver at Phoenix, TNT

NHL PLAYOFFS

■ 3:30 p.m. — Eastern Conference Semifinal: Carolina at New Jersey, Game 3, TBS

■ 6:30 p.m. — Eastern Conference Semifinal: Toronto at Florida, Game 3, TBS

■ 9:30 p.m. — Western Conference Semifinal: Dallas at Seattle, Game 3, TBS

PRO GOLF

■ 3 p.m. — PGA Tour: The Wells Fargo Championship, Final Round, Quail Hollow Golf Course, Charlotte, N.C., CBS

Hertzel: Don't Overlook Mountaineers' Tucker

MORGANTOWN — West Virginia second baseman JJ Wetherholt's spectacular sophomore season is harvesting all the headlines for West Virginia and, certainly, they are well deserved, but it creates a situation where others can easily be overlooked.

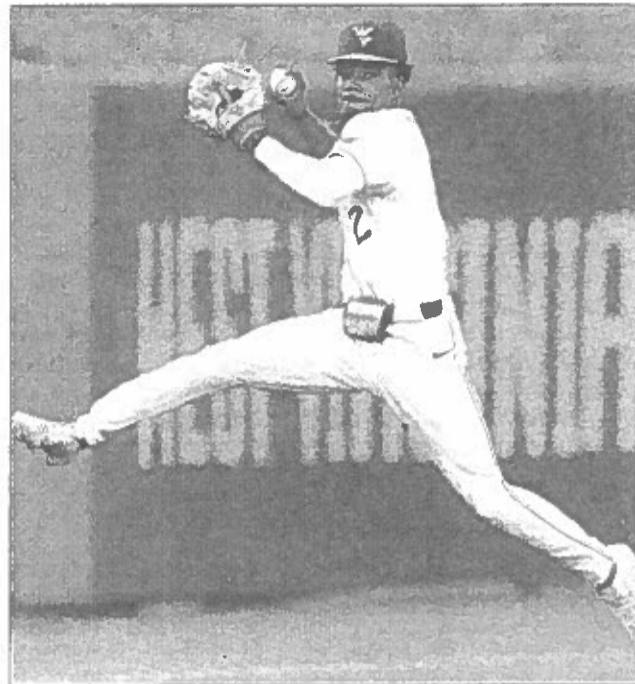
And so it has been with Tevin Tucker, the senior shortstop who has authored a year that may be less spectacular but no less meaningful to the success of the Big 12-leading Mountaineers, who opened a weekend series at home against Oklahoma on Friday night.



BOB HERTZEL
WV News

If history tells anything it is a necessity for winning teams to be solid at shortstop, be the New York Yankees' dynasty built around Derek Jeter, the spectacular defense of Ozzie Smith on the St. Louis Cardinals world champion, the steady play of light-hitting Mark Belanger for Earl Weaver in Baltimore or Davey Con-
ception partnering with second baseman Joe Morgan for a near flawless double play combination on Cincinnati's Big Red Machine.

Please see Tucker, Page C2



TEVIN TUCKER

Linsly Wins Another OVAC Baseball Title

Cadets Defeat Fort Frye, 9-4, In Class 3A

By **ANDREW GRIMM**
For the Sunday News-Register

RICHMOND — Winning the OVAC title is an annual goal for Linsly, and for the 23rd time in program history, the Cadets checked that box on Friday at the Edison Unified Sports Complex.

Linsly scored two runs in each the second, third and fourth to open a lead and tacked on three more in the top of the seventh to pull away from top-seed Fort Frye, handing them just their third loss to win the Class 3A title, 9-4.

"We knew it was going to be a fight," Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright said. "(Fort Frye) is always well coached, they're going to compete. They're an outstanding baseball team ... We're really pleased with this one, we did a lot of things well. We had some big hits, we did some things well on the bases.

"I tell these kids all the time I've coached them harder because I know how good they can be and I think they showed it."

Trey Prather had a big day at the plate, crushing a homer in the third inning and also knocking an RBI double, while

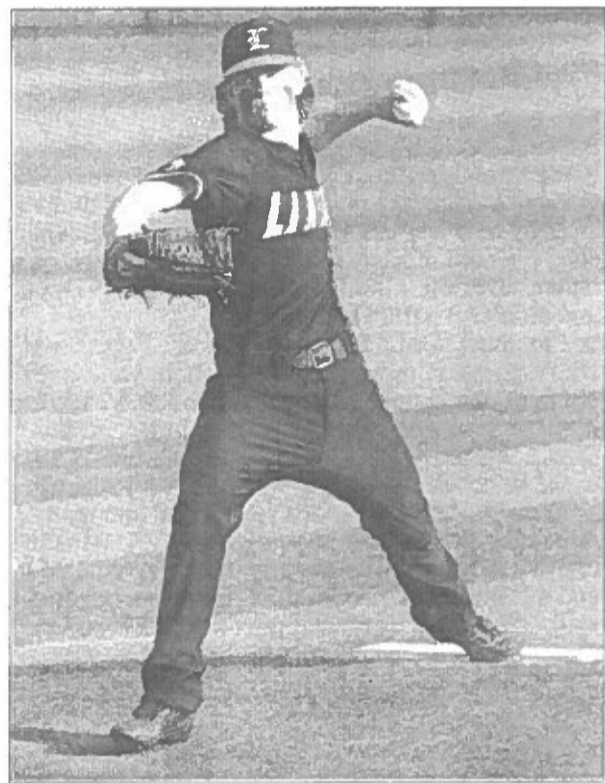


Photo by Andrew Grimm

Linsly's Alex Taylor fires a pitch to the plate Friday against Fort Frye in the OVAC Class 3A championship game at Edison's Unified Sports Complex in Richmond. Linsly won, 9-4.

Matt Scouvar drove in three runs on the day and Jax Murray had a pair of doubles.

Alex Taylor went six strong on the mound for Cartwright's club, firing seven strikeouts against three walks before his pitch count forced his departure.

"Alex was tough as nails," Cartwright said. "Things didn't come easy for him, he got out of some jams and just kept coming."

Fort Frye committed some costly mistakes, being charged with three errors while just four of Linsly's runs went in the scoreboard as earned.

"We just made too many mistakes," Fort Frye head coach Trey Engle said.

"It's hard to beat a good, well-coached team like Linsly when you have that many errors and five hits."

"Congrats to them."



Photo by Kim North

Wheeling Central's Josie Frizzell works to the plate Friday against Magnolia in W.Va. Class A sectional tournament action on Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex. She struck out 11 and allowed just one hit in a 3-0 victory.

Wheeling Central Blanks Magnolia

Frizzell Fans 11, Tosses 1-Hitter In 3-0 Victory

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

WHEELING — On Thursday, Magnolia scored 18 runs and banded out 23 hits. Friday was a different story — and pitcher.

Wheeling Central's Josie Frizzell continued her excellent work inside the circle as the top-seeded Maroon Knights blanked No. 2 Magnolia, 3-0, in the W.Va. Class A Section I winner's bracket finals on sun-soaked Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

"Josie did a really good job. She walked a few but was able to work through it," Wheeling Central head coach Buck Davidson said. "She made some big pitches to get outs when she was behind in the count."

Please see Blanks, Page C2

**Blue Jays' Bassitt Impressive In Blanking Slumping Bucs**

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The settling-in process appears to be just about over for Chris Bassitt.

The Toronto pitcher dominated the Pittsburgh Pirates over seven strong innings on Friday night as the Blue Jays rolled to a 4-0 victory to end a five-game losing streak.

Bassitt (4-2), signed to a three-year, \$63-million contract in December, struck out five against

his last five starts.

"I think we're in a really good spot right now," Bassitt said.

It helps that he's starting to find a rhythm with a new club, in a new league, in a new country after turning a solid 2022 season with the New York Mets into a lucrative deal to help Toronto keep pace in the AL East.

There have been adjustments

Classified/B5-6

SPORTS

Monday,
May 1, 2023

St. Clairsville claims 4A OVAC crown

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

RICHMOND — St. Clairsville junior Hunter Hoffman isn't shy about taking the baseball in a big game.

Actually, the southpaw wants head coach Tom Sliva to give him the ball in those situations.

The veteran Red Devil skipper obliged Saturday morning at Edison High School's chilly, damp and gorgeous all-turf Unified Sports Complex. Hoffman didn't let him down.

Hoffman pitched in and out of some jams in the second, third and fourth innings, but managed to sit down the final 11 Indian Creek batters he faced en route to leading the Devils to a cherished 3-1 victory and the coveted OVAC Class 4A title. The title marks the Red Devils' 13th in school history and first since 2021.

"Winning these (OVAC titles) is always exciting, but seeing how excited the kids are makes it even more special," St. Clairsville head coach Tom Sliva, who now owns 11 as a skipper between his St. C. and St. John Central tenures, said. "This is a big goal. Our number one goal, every year, is to make a run in the tournament, but winning the OVAC is our second-biggest goal. This 4A was a bear with four quality teams, so we're happy and fortunate to be on top."

Hoffman wasn't overpowering. He only retired five Indian Creek hitters via the strikeout. He didn't need to do it all himself because the defense behind him was sparkling.

For instance, Indian Creek's biggest offensive threat came in the second when the Redskins loaded the bases

See, ST. C., Page B2



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

ST. CLAIRSVILLE pitcher Hunter Hoffman jumps into the arms of his catcher, Marcus Bush, after the final out was recorded in Saturday's OVAC Class 4A championship game held at Edison High School in Richmond. Hoffman threw a complete game and Bush drove in a run as the Red Devils knocked off Indian Creek, 3-1.

Ferry denied third straight 3A softball title

By **MIKE HUGHES**
For the Times Leader

WHEELING - Martins Ferry entered Saturday as a two-time defending OVAC champion. So did Caldwell.

So, when the Redskins made the jump to class 3A from 2A in the OVAC, it set up a potential battle of the champions come tourney week-end.

That's just what fans were treated to Saturday afternoon at Wheeling Park's turf field. The team's battled to a 3-3 deadlock before Caldwell ripped it wide open with a 4-run fourth inning.

The result? A 14-3 victory in five innings for head coach Doug Pfeffer's Redskins and a bit of revenge in the process.

Back in March, Martins Ferry took down Caldwell 10-0 in five innings on the Purple Riders home diamond. But there was one slight difference between that game and Saturday's. This time, the Redskins had the services of reigning OVAC Class 2A Player of



MARTINS FERRY'S Kelsi Gillespie drops down a bunt during Saturday's OVAC Class 3A softball championship game against Caldwell at Wheeling Park High School.

Photo/MIKE HUGHES

the Year in Madi Mumaw.

Mumaw struck out five batters and limited Ferry to three runs on eight hits, with every run coming in a five-hit third inning. But those other four innings? Goose eggs across.

"We practiced for her, scouted her, so we knew what she does and what

she throws, but that's why she has all those victories, strikeouts, and signed to play for college," remarked Martins Ferry head coach Jerry Magistro. "She's pretty good. We knew we could hit her and did a bit for that one inning, but when you get behind like

See, FERRY, Page B2

Shadyside captures 2A OVAC softball

By **KIM NORTH**
For The Times Leader

WHEELING - For the first time in nearly three decades Shadyside has won an OVAC Tom Bechtel Class 2A softball championship. The last time the Tigers took home the title was in 1994.

The wait is over.

Third-seeded Shadyside (17-6) scored three times in the top of the fifth and tacked on another trio of runs in the sixth to rally past top-seeded Wheeling Central, 6-5, Saturday high atop the Friendly City on the all-turf surface at Patriot Field on the Wheeling Park High School campus.

"This is what the girls wanted. They talked about (winning the title) and they went out and did it," Shadyside head coach Robert Gorrell Jr. said amidst a wild celebration. "This is what they've worked so hard for. I'm very happy for them."

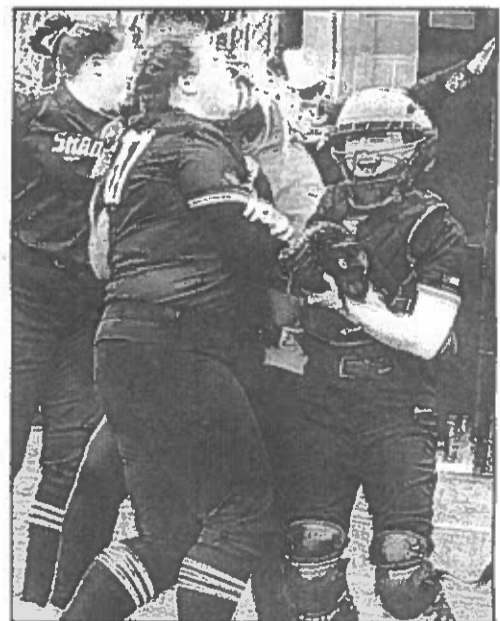
The Maroon Knights (16-4) took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the third courtesy of a Brook Edge 2-run homer to deep right-center with two outs. Edge would finish a triple shy of the cycle with a pair of singles and a double to go along with the roundtripper.

The Tigers finally broke through against Wheeling Central ace Josie Frizzell as Abby Gorrell reached on an error leading off. With one out, Rylee Fulton singled to right and Gentry Brown followed with a bunt single to load the bases. Bella Honeywell doubled to the gap in right-center as Gorrell and Fulton both scored, tying the game at 2.

With two outs and Brown still at third, she raced home on a wild pitch to put the Tigers ahead for the first time, 3-2.

A pair of Wheeling Central errors in the sixth allowed three Shadyside runs in the sixth. Keying the outburst was an RBI single to right by Fulton, and when the ball

See, SHADYSIDE, Page B2



Photo/KIM NORTH

SHADYSIDE SENIOR Bella Honeywell (left) and catcher Malaya McAngues celebrate after the Tigers won the OVAC Class 2A championship by a 6-5 score over Wheeling Central on Saturday at Wheeling Park High School.

Wheeling Park rallies to win OVAC 5A baseball title

By **BUBBA KAPRAL**
For The Times Leader

RICHMOND - Wheeling Park ex-

ing across three tallies to earn its second OVAC crown in three years. Park was runner up a year ago.

"I am so proud of these guys. They

Thomas and Noah Braham singled and came scooting home on a ringing triple down the right field line off the bat off Wenkai Campbell. However,



• Ferry

Continued from Page B1

that, you can't do everything you want to do like when it's a close game.

"We gave up too many hits, made too many mistakes here and there and they hit the ball hard."

Caldwell managed to plate 14 runs on 15 hits, including four in that fateful fourth inning that featured a leadoff solo blast from Sydney Sailing to center.

Six more runs on five more hits followed and by the time Kelsi Gillespie struck out the number nine hitter for the third out, Caldwell retook the lead in commanding fashion at 10-3.

"Ferry had just gotten the momentum back and our next at-bat, we just came in and took it right back from them," said Pfeffer, whose Redskins were voted the number four seed in Division IV for the east district. "If we only scored one or two runs, they may have thought they had a chance to come back, but getting seven across takes a bit out of you."

Caldwell received contributions across the board.

Freshman Mak Mumaw, had a single, double, and two RBI while also reaching via error from the leadoff spot. Katie Franklin drove in two runs, Jaden Haught had a single and a run-scoring two-bagger. Jordan Haught had two singles and plated a pair.

But it was the play from the sixth through eight spots, which resulted in six hits and five runs that Pfeffer was most proud of.

Sophie Shockling went 2-for-4 with two singles and three RBI, Sailing had her home run with three walks, and No.

• Park

Continued from Page B1

affair with a groundout to first base. Senior Quinn Jamison produced the game-winner via an infield single which brought home the winning run, setting off a wild Patriot celebration.

"This is a special group. They have done everything we have asked of them," Myers said. "Winning OVAC championships is special. I am very happy for our seniors. They are great leaders."

"University deserves a lot of credit. They beat a quality Morgantown team in the semifinals to get here," he added. "We got up 2-0 after the first two innings but we didn't do much at the plate until we had to."

The fourth-seeded Hawks fell to 16-9 on the season. They beat city rival Morgantown 10-4 in the semifinals. Second-seeded Park, which downed Brooke 5-2 to advance to the finals, won for the 18th time in 24 starts.

Park drew first blood in its initial at-bat. Bittinger singled, stole second and was plated on a Degenova groundout. The Patriots made it 2-0 in the second. Jamison singled, stole second and came home on a Tino Nardone single.

University halved the deficit with a run in the fourth. Brodee Latocha singled and came home on Braham's dou-

8 hitter Hanna Reiter went 3-for-4 with a double and two singles.

"Everyone one through eight had an RBI and everyone had a hit," Pfeffer said. "But our 6-7-8 hitters had been struggling, but they hit really well today."

"You just never know who's going to come up big."

Ferry's lone scoring inning started with two-out lightning as Danielle Lude drove a line drive into left field for a double. She scored on a single from Taylor Bell, who later scored on a single from Kaylynn Zinn. Lude's double drove in Sam Goddard, who led off the inning with a single.

Abbey Snedecker attempted to rally the bats yet again in the home half of the fourth, answering Caldwell's outburst with a leadoff single.

But Madi Mumaw quickly slammed the door on any comeback thoughts, striking out the next two batters before inducing a pop-up to her sister at short to end the inning.

The first of two strikeouts that inning gave the elder Mumaw 400 strikeouts for her career. Keep in mind, Mumaw's freshman season was the lost COVID season, so that's 400 through only three seasons. Not bad for the future West Liberty Hilltopper.

"When you have your ace going and she's feeling better, you can get into a groove," Pfeffer said. "They put the ball in play but we made plays behind her and minimized any damage."

ble off the left centerfield fence.

The Hawks knotted the affair in the sixth. Latocha walked and moved to third on singles from Braham and Campbell. Gabe's Templeton's ground-er plated Latocha.

University had the makings of a potential big fifth frame only to fall victim to a pair of sparkling Park defensive plays. Jake Crosten and Gabe Jansen opened the inning with back-to-back singles. However, Conrad gunned down Crosten in his attempt to steal third before Marsh made a terrific throw from center field to nail Jansen at the plate. He was attempting to score from second on a Jett Walters' single.

Senior southpaw Luke Doyle was the first of three Park hurlers. He pitched well, striking out two and walking one. He gave way to Degenova in the sixth. Luke Myers earned the mound win as he entered in the eighth.

Cody Vance started on the bump for the Hawks. He fanned five and walked four before giving way to Cory Thomas in the sixth. Thomas struck out one and walked a like amount in taking the loss.

Park was limited to five hits. Jamison was the lone Patriot to have a pair of safeties.

• Shadyside — • St. C.

Continued from Page B1

ball was misplayed, a second run crossed the plate for a 5-3 reading and Fulton stood at third. She sprinted home on another error.

"That's the worst game we've played defensively all year," Wheeling Central head coach Buck Davidson noted. "You can't give up 2-base errors, especially to a good team like Shadyside. We made the errors and they capitalized on them."

Wheeling Central didn't roll over, however. Bella Rine's pinch-hit single in the sixth drove in Erin Maxwell and Frizzell's 2-run single in the seventh drew the Maroon Knights to within 6-5, but Shadyside's Arianna Saxton got the next batter to fly out to Fulton in left to seal the victory.

Saxton, while not overpowering, struck out three and walked five. She allowed nine hits and threw 116 pitches, of which 68 were strikes.

Guardians fall to Sox

BOSTON (AP) — Connor Wong hit a two-run homer, Alex Verdugo singled home a pair of runs and added a late solo homer, and the Boston Red Sox beat the Cleveland Guardians 7-1.

Chris Sale (2-2) struck out five, holding the Guardians to three hits over 6 1/3 innings. Boston took two of three from Cleveland in the series and climbed above .500 at 15-14.

Christian Arroyo added a two-run double during a three-run seventh that sealed it for the Red Sox, who overcame a strong start by rookie Logan Allen (1-1) and piled on late runs against Cleveland relievers.

Amed Rosario drove in Cleveland's only run with a single in the sixth, one of just four hits for the Guardians.

Sale took a shutout into the sixth before Steven Kwan led off with a double and scored on Rosario's single.

Continued from Page B1

with nary an out.

Landon Pownell and Nick Maurer singled and Ty Householder drew a walk between the two.

Hoffman calmly got an innocent pop fly on the infield for the first out.

Senior Jayden Vandeborne stepped in and appeared to have knotted the game at one. He lofted a fly ball to medium deep right. St. Clairsville right fielder Zach Vickers, however, had other ideas.

He camped under the ball and rifled the ball to the plate where junior catcher Marcus Bush went up the first base line to get the ball and then dove across home plate to just put the tag down on Pownell to end the inning.

"That was a killer," Indian Creek head coach Mike Cottis said. "It was a shallow fly ball, but we decided to roll the dice. I thought (Pownell) got in there, but it was a bang-bang play and the (call) could have gone either way. We knew runs would be hard to come by in a game like this, so we knew we had to try to scratch one across."

Indian Creek did get on the board and cut the Red Devil lead in half with a run in the third.

Gavin Pownell, who came on in relief for the Redskins, drew a lead-off walk, which came back to haunt Hoffman. After an out was recorded, Pownell moved all the way to third after an error in the infield.

Creek catcher Sy Howell followed with a solid single, but the rally stopped there as Hoffman induced a 6-4-3 double play to escape the jam.

The pitcher's best friend proved to be big once again in the Creek half of the fourth. Householder and Maurer started the inning with back-to-back singles.

"This was a great game between two great teams, but their guy (Hoffman) got the outs when he needed them," Cottis said. "I felt like we had a good game plan at the plate and we executed, but we couldn't get the big hits when we needed it. Both of our pitchers threw well, but we just couldn't cash in offensively."

Hoffman promptly got a chopper to talented junior shortstop Braylen Blomquist, who stepped on second and threw on to first for the double play. A lazy fly ball to right got St. C. back in the dugout.

"Hunter did a really good job and we executed (defensive) plays that we needed to have to get the momentum back in our dugout," Sliva said. "Creek pitches, fields and hits it well, so getting the lead early and being able to keep the lead when we got into jams was big for us."

Hoffman, who appeared to be gaining velocity as the game went along, retired the Redskins in order in the final three frames.

"I kind of settled into a groove," Hoffman said. "I feel like after the second, third and fourth innings, I really settled in and knew how to pitch to them. And our defense was really good behind me to help me out."

Sliva was really impressed with how his ace got better as the game moved along.

"I thought his curveball became sharper and he had more juice on his fastball," Sliva said. "It was a combination of him digging down a bit in a big game and also the ball wasn't as slick. It wasn't ideal (weather) conditions, especially at the start, but both teams made plays."

St. Clairsville, which had lost to Creek by a run as recently as last Thursday, got just enough offense despite being out-hit by the Redskins.

The Red Devils wasted no time in grabbing the lead by scoring in the first. Blomquist roped a triple that landed just inside the foul line in deep right.

A couple of hitters later, Blomquist scored on a ground out by Bush.

In the second, sophomore Mickey Balgo produced a one-out single and moved to second on a sacrifice bunt from classmate Noah Turley.

He was promptly driven in on a two-out single by Brody Saunders, which spelled the end of the afternoon for Creek starter Trevor Lash.

It wasn't until the fifth when the Red Devils got an add-on-run. Saunders drew a lead-off walk, but Sliva called upon Maddox Trennar to pinch run.

Blomquist laid down a bunt to move him into scoring position. It looked like Creek would keep it a one-run game after Gavin Pownell got an innocent fly out to right and then got Bush to pop up into shallow center, but the ball was dropped and Trennar raced around to score.

The Redskins will now shift attention back to the remainder of the regular season, which includes a Monday date with Weir.

"We have a lot of season ahead, and we'll keep plugging away," Cottis said.

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Patriots Rally In 8th To Win OVAC Title



Wheeling Park rightfielder Nathan Bittinger makes a running catch Saturday in the OVAC Class 5A championship game at the Edison Unified Sports Complex in Richmond. The Patriots rallied by University, 5-4, in 8 innings.

Photo by Seth Staskey

Park Plates 3 In Extra Frame To Get By University

By **BUBBA KAPRAL**
For The Intelligencer

RICHMOND — Wheeling Park exhibited the heart of a champion Saturday afternoon. As a result, the Patriots of Coach Steve Myers are just that — OVAC Class 5A champions.

Park posted an amazing, 5-4, eight-inning win over a quality University High squad at the gorgeous Edison High Unified Sports Complex. The Hawks struck for two runs in the top of the eighth, pinning the Patriots back to the walls.

Myers' resilient charges, however, were up to the monumental task, pushing across three tallies to earn its second OVAC crown in three years. Park was runner up a year ago.

"I am so proud of these guys. They showed a lot of resolve," Myers noted. "They kept battling and never quit. They didn't hang their heads when University took the lead in the eighth."

"It was one tremendous game. University played extremely well," added the classy mentor. "It feels great winning another

OVAC championship," especially the way we had to do it."

Deadlocked at 2 after seven well-played frames, University wasted no time seizing the lead in the eighth, opening with three straight hits. Cory Thomas and Noah Braham singled and came scooting home on a ringing triple down the right field line off the bat off Wenkai Campbell. However, despite no outs, Campbell was stranded at third, which would prove key.

Please see **PATRIOTS**, Page 10

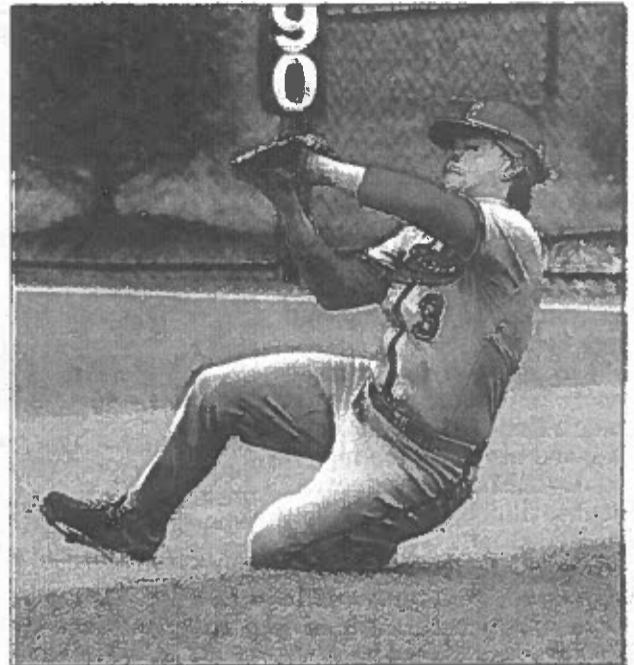


Photo by Seth Staskey

St. Clairsville rightfielder Zach Vickers made a sliding catch Saturday against Indian Creek in the OVAC Class 4A championship game at the Edison Unified Sports Complex in Richmond. The Red Devils won, 3-1.

Red Devils Ride Pitching, Defense To Class 4A Title

By **SETH STASKEY**
For The Intelligencer

RICHMOND — St. Clairsville junior Hunter Hoffman isn't shy about taking the baseball in a big game.

Actually, the southpaw wants head coach Tom Sliva to give him the ball in those situations.

The veteran Red Devil skipper obliged Saturday morning at Edison High School's chilly, damp and gorgeous all-turf Unified Sports Complex. Hoffman didn't let him down.

Hoffman pitched in and out of some jams in the second, third and fourth innings, but managed to sit down the final 11 Indian Creek batters he faced en route to leading the Devils to a 3-1 victory and the coveted OVAC Class 4A title. The title marks the Red Devils' 13th in school

history and first since 2021.

"Winning these (OVAC titles) is always exciting, but seeing how excited the kids are makes it even more special," St. Clairsville head coach Tom

Sliva, who now owns 11 as a skipper between his St. C. and St. John Central tenures, said. "This is a big goal. Our number one goal, every year, is to make a run in the tournament, but winning the OVAC is our second-biggest goal. This 4A was a bear with four quality teams, so we're happy and fortunate to be on top."

Hoffman wasn't overpowering. He only retired five Indian Creek hitters via the strikeout. He didn't need to do it all himself because the defense behind him was sparkling.

Please see **4A**, Page 10

Angels Carry Cameron To OVAC 1A Championship

By **AARON PETCHAL**
For The Intelligencer

TORONTO — The Cameron baseball team presents "Angels in the Infield."

Adam Angel IV tallied four hits and an RBI. Coy Angel collected two singles and an RBI, while striking out seven and recording the win, and Kasen Angel contributed a single, while also providing strong defense behind the plate as No. 1 seed Cameron defeated No. 3 seed Conotton Valley on Saturday, 8-2, enabling the Dragons to repeat as OVAC Class 1A champions on an overcast Saturday afternoon at the Knights Baseball Complex.

"It feels good," Cameron (18-8)

head coach Adam Angel said about winning the conference championship. "The guys have worked hard. This was a goal we set at the start of the season. We lost some key pieces from last year's group. We have had some freshmen and underclassmen step up and fill those holes in the lineup. They do a good job. We played well."

The Dragons made history last year when Cameron defeated Madonna, 6-5, in the final to win the school's first tournament title.

"Both are great," Coach Angel said. "The first one was history for Cameron. This one is a little different. We re-



COY ANGEL

peated as champions. I have got my third son on the team. That's pretty cool. It's nice the three boys were able to play together. It's a great experience."

Adam Angel IV — the team's shortstop against the Rockets — was named the game's MVP. Angel IV went 4-for-4 with two singles, two triples, three runs scored, an RBI and a stolen base. He also played strong defense as he had two assists, while also starting a 6-3 inning-ending double play in the bottom of the second.

"He played well," Coach Angel said. "They could not keep him off the bases. He made a difference for us on de-

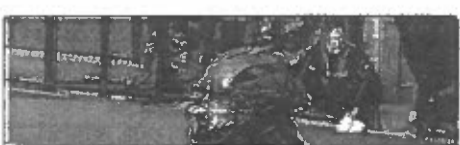
fense. He was a big key for us.

"Going into the game, I was thinking about mixing up the lineup. A friend of mine told me to stop overthinking it and to just play with what you have. I didn't make any changes, and it worked out. Kasen did a great job at catcher behind the plate. He had no passed balls and no errors. I could not ask for a better day."

The double play started by Angel IV was one of three the boys from Harrison County hit into during the game. The Green-and-White hit into one in each of the first two innings, and all three proved costly.

Please see **CAMERON**, Page 11

Central Falls To Shadyside



Nationals Beat Pirates, Avoid



Steubenville's King No-Hits JM In OVAC 5A Softball Final

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

WHEELING — It's been said many, many times that good pitching will beat good hitting any day of the week.

Outstanding pitching will also do the job as Steubenville ace Julianna King outdueled John Marshall's Kadence Pettit in a 2-0 victory Saturday in the OVAC Tom Bechtel Class 5A softball championship game at cloud-covered Patriot Field high atop the Friendly City on the campus of Wheeling Park High School.

"I'm proud of my team because they battled the entire game. They fought the entire time and never got too high or too low. They stayed even," Steubenville head coach Gus DiMarzio said.

"About two weeks ago I had a conversation with (former Pittsburgh Pirates bench coach) Rich Donnelly and he told me the essence of baseball in baserunners and not batting averages," DiMarzio said. "For two weeks now we've been preaching to the girls to just get two feet on first base and take one base at a time and we'll see what happens. It's paid off for us."

The championship was the fourth for Steubenville and the

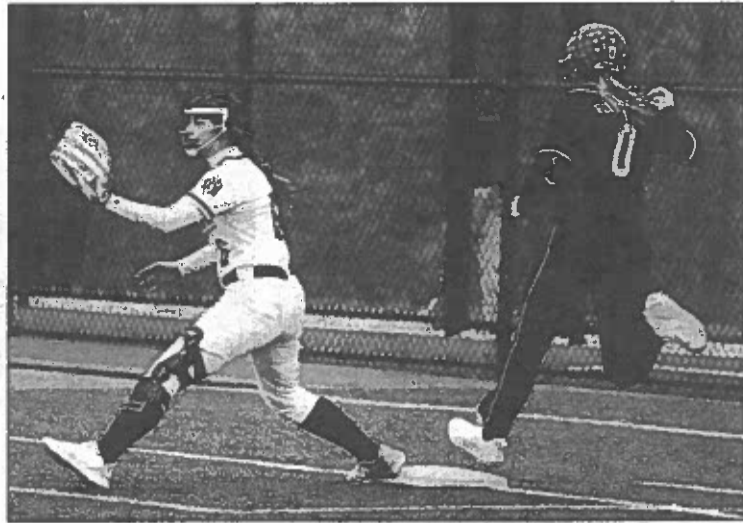


Photo by Kim North

John Marshall first baseman AC Cumberledge stretches for a throw during the OVAC Tom Bechtel Class 5A softball championship game Saturday against Steubenville on Patriot Field at Wheeling Park High School. Big Red's Julianna King was out on the play but pitched a no-hitter in a 2-0 victory.

first since 2019.

King, who will continue her career at NCAA Division II Tiffin University, didn't allow a hit and struck out 13 Monarchs. However, she did walk four — one intentionally — and only allowed one ball out of the infield, a pop up to shallow right by Pettit leading off the fourth.

"What a stage to throw a no-hitter and to do it against a pitcher like that (Pettit). Ka-

dence is as good as anyone in the valley, and for Jules to throw a no-hitter in the OVAC championship game, I'm very proud of her."

However, the other three base-on-balls came to the first three batters she faced as John Marshall loaded the bases with no outs. King came back to fan the next three and escape the only real jam she faced.

"I went out and settled her

down. I told her to get one out at a time and we'll go from there, and she did," DiMarzio said of King's Houdini act. "She settled down, maybe she needed a moment, and her teammates supported her."

The fact that John Marshall couldn't put the ball in play had veteran head coach Ed West shaking his head.

"We just didn't play very well. We had a very good chance in the first inning but couldn't capitalize on it," West said. "We couldn't put the ball in play ... three strikeouts in a row wasn't good."

"And when they scored, we committed two errors and gave them extra outs," he added. "You can't do things like that in big games. Give Steubenville credit though. They played better than we did."

Pettit, who is headed to West Liberty, matched King zero-to-zero through 5 innings, but a pair of errors by the Monarchs allowed Big Red to score.

Gia Bowman, the No. 9 hitter, beat out a tapper in front of the plate for a leadoff single. King followed by legging out another infield hit. After the first out was recorded, Sena Smith's smash went off the glove of the John Marshall third baseman for

an error to load the bases. Paige Matteson hit a comeback to Pettit, but her throw to the plate was low and mishandled as Bowman slid in safely with the first run of the contest.

Including the trio of Ks to end the first, King retired the next 16 batters she faced before Paytyn Tucker reached first after an error following a strike out. Tucker then scooted to second on a passed ball, but the next batter struck out. Pettit was intentionally walked and King got out of the mini-jam with another K.

Steubenville played some small ball in the seven to add an insurance marker. With two outs, Bowman singled up the middle and King reached on a slow roller to short. Sophia Zorne loaded the bases with another infield single. With Smith at the plate, Bowman raced home on a wild pitch for a 2-0 count.

King set the Monarchs down in order to preserve the win.

Of the seven singles that Pettit yielded, five were of the infield variety.

"Kadence pitched a really good game," West said. "We couldn't make a routine play at third and a routine play on a comebacker. If we do, it's a different ballgame."

SHADYSIDE

(Continued from Page 9)

With one out, Rylee Fulton singled to right and Gentry Brown followed with a bunt single to load the bases. Bella Honeywell doubled to the gap in right-center as Gorrell and Fulton both scored, tying the game at 2.

With two outs and Brown still at third, she raced home on a wild pitch to put the Tigers ahead for the first time, 3-2.

A pair of Wheeling Central errors in the sixth allowed three Shadyside runs in the sixth. Keying the outburst was an RBI single to right by Fulton, and when the ball was misplayed, a second run crossed the plate for a 5-3 read-

ing and Fulton stood at third. She sprinted home on another error.

"That's the worst game we've played defensively all year," Wheeling Central head coach Buck Davidson noted. "You can't give up 2-base errors, especially to a good team like Shadyside. We made the errors and they capitalized on them."

Wheeling Central didn't roll over, however. Bella Rine's pinch-hit single in the sixth drove in Erin Maxwell and Frizzell's 2-run single in the seventh drew the Maroon Knights to within 6-5, but Shadyside's Arianna Saxton got the next batter to fly out to Fulton

in left to seal the victory.

Saxton, while not overpowering, struck out three and walked five. She allowed nine hits and threw 116 pitches, of which 68 were strikes.

"She did what she had to do," Gorrell said of his pitcher.

Frizzell fanned eight and didn't walk a batter. She yielded a dozen hits.

Even though Shadyside won an Ohio Division IV state softball championship in 2015, the Tigers didn't win the OVAC Class 2A title, nor did they make the finals. They fell to Steubenville Catholic in the semifinals.

PATRIOTS

(Continued from Page 9)

Jared Marsh ignited the Park comeback by reaching on a throwing error. Nathan Bittinger singled Marsh to third. Braydon Kupsky delivered an RBI groundout, cutting the deficit to 4-3.

Gian Degenova coaxed a walk before Ryan Conrad reached on a fielder's choice with no outs being recorded on the play. Nate Simon knotted the affair with a groundout to first base. Senior Quinn Jamison produced the game-winner via an infield single which brought home the winning run, setting off a wild Patriot celebration.

"This is a special group. They have done everything we have asked of them," Myers said. "Winning OVAC championships is special. I am very happy for our seniors. They are great leaders."

"University deserves a lot of credit. They beat a quality Morgantown team in the semifinals to get here," he added. "We got up 2-0 after the first two innings but we didn't do much at the plate until we had to."

The fourth-seeded Hawks fell to 16-9 on the season. They beat city rival Morgantown 10-4 in the semifinals. Second-seeded Park, which downed Brooke 5-2 to advance to the finals, won for the 18th time in 24 starts.

"This is a gut-wrenching loss for sure. We were three outs away from the title," University coach Brad Comport said. "We made a couple



Photo by Seth Staskey

Wheeling Park's Nick Tsoras takes a swing during Saturday's OVAC 5A championship game against University at the Edison High Unified Sports Complex in Richmond.

"Give Wheeling Park credit. They did what they needed to do. They responded well in the last inning," he added. "But I am proud of how we competed. Our guys played hard. They just came up a little short."

Park drew first blood in its initial at-bat. Bittinger singled, stole second and was plated on a Degenova

stole second and came home on a Tino Nardone single.

University halved the deficit with a run in the fourth. Brodee Latocha singled and came home on Braham's double off the left centerfield fence.

The Hawks knotted the affair in the sixth. Latocha walked and moved to third on singles from Braham and Campbell. Gabe's Templeton's grounder plated Latocha.

University had the makings of a potential big fifth frame only to fall victim to a pair of sparkling Park defensive plays. Jake Crosten and Gabe Jansen opened the inning with back-to-back singles. However, Conrad gunned down Crosten in his attempt to steal third before Marsh made a terrific throw from center field to nail Jansen at the plate. He was attempting to score from second on a Jett Walters' single.

Senior southpaw Luke Doyle was the first of three Park hurlers. He pitched well, striking out two and walking one. He gave way to Degenova in the sixth. Luke Myers earned the mound win as he entered in the eighth.

Cody Vance started on the bump for the Hawks. He fanned five and walked four before giving way to Cory Thomas in the sixth. Thomas struck out one and walked a like amount in taking the loss.

Park was limited to five hits.

Caldwell Breaks It Open In 4th, Defeats Ferry For Class 3A Championship

WHEELING — Martins Ferry entered Saturday as a two-time defending OVAC champion. So did Caldwell.

So, when the Redskins made the jump to class 3A from 2A in the OVAC, it set up a potential battle of the champions come tournament weekend.

That's just what fans were treated to Saturday afternoon at Wheeling Park High School's all-turf Patriot Field. The team's battled to a 3-3 deadlock before Caldwell ripped it wide open with a 4-run fourth inning.

The result? A 14-3 victory in five innings for head coach Doug Pfeffer's Redskins and a bit of revenge in the process.

Back in March, Martins Ferry took down Caldwell 10-0 in five innings on the Purple Riders home diamond. But there was one slight difference between that game and Saturday's. This time, the Redskins had the services of reigning OVAC Class 2A Player of the Year in Madi Mumaw.

Mumaw struck out five batters and limited Ferry to three runs on eight hits, with every run coming in a five-hit third inning. But those other four innings? Goose eggs across.

Caldwell managed to plate 14 runs on 15 hits, including four in that fateful fourth inning that featured a leadoff solo blast from Sydney Sailing to center.

Six more runs on five more hits followed and by the time Kelsi Gillespie struck out the number nine hitter for the third out, Caldwell retook the

CLASS 4A Oak Glen 5, Edison 2

WHEELING — Coming into this season, a lot of people focused on who Golden Bears didn't have back, not who they did have returning.

While it is true some key pieces from the back-to-back state tournament teams had graduated, perhaps flying under the radar a bit was just how talented this version was.

Under the radar no more.

Saturday coach Sherrie Garner's club finished another impressive 20-win regular season by capturing its third straight OVAC Class 4A championship with a win over the Wildcats at Wheeling Park High School's all-turf Patriot Field.

The victory not only gave the Golden Bears, who are ranked in the top-10 in W.Va. Class AA, the conference trophy, but was their 14th consecutive win and 17th in the last 18 games.

The Golden Bears were able to score a run in each of the first two innings, but had several opportunities to break things open, slip away and saw Edison battle back to tie the game in the sixth.

The Wildcats, who also came in red-hot having won seven of their last nine, surging into the tourney field on the cut-off day and upsetting top-seed Indian Creek in the semifinals, made a few too many mistakes in the end, though, as the Golden Bears took advantage and plated three runs in the bottom of the sixth to pull ahead for good.

Lizzie Kell fanned 11

In the third, he took a flyer on massive tight end Darnell Washington. In the fourth, he reunited outside linebacker Nick Herbig with older brother Nate, a veteran guard who signed with Pittsburgh in free agency last month.

Needing someone to protect quarterback Kenny Pickett's blind side for the next half-decade or more, Khan called up longtime rival New England and swapped picks to make sure the talented and still remarkably young Jones with the 14th overall pick. Then he held on to the first pick of the second round to return Porter — considered a first-round pick by many — to the city where he grew up while giving a second in need of young talent a potentially significant boost.

Not bad for a guy who said he wouldn't stray too far from the formula that has kept the Steelers competitive for the vast majority of the last 50 years. The pick swap with the Patriots was shrewd, and he got back the fourth-round selection he gave to New England when he traded down in the third round, a move that didn't stop him from landing the 6-foot-7, 265-pound Washington.

"I don't know if I'd call myself aggressive," Khan said. "I'm just trying to win a Super Bowl. That's what I'm trying to do."

Pittsburgh hasn't won a play-off game since 2016 and needed a second-half surge to finish 9-8 and avoid its first losing season since 2003. Khan and head coach Mike Tomlin have spent the last six weeks attacking areas of weakness, shoring up the offensive and

Pittsburgh Steelers first-round draft pick, Broderick Jones, second from right, an offensive lineman from Georgia, poses for a photo with, from left, Steelers general manager Omar Khan, coach Mike Tomlin and owner Art Rooney II at the team's headquarters in Pittsburgh on Friday.

NEW IN BLACK AND GOLD

Steelers 2023 Draft Class:

- Round 1 (14 OVR) — Broderick Jones, OT, Georgia
- Round 2 (32 OVR) — Joey Porter Jr., CB, Penn State
- Round 2 (49 OVR) — Keeanu Benton, DT, Wisconsin
- Round 3 (93 OVR) — Darnell Washington, TE, Georgia
- Round 4 (123 OVR) — Nick Herbig, OLB, Wisconsin
- Round 7 (241 OVR) — Cory Trice, CB, Purdue
- Round 7 (251 OVR) — Spencer Anderson, OG, Maryland

defensive line and the secondary in both free agency and the draft, wrapping up the weekend by taking 6-3 cornerback Cory Trice Jr. and 6-5, 305-pound guard Spencer Anderson in the seventh.

They also tipped their hand about how they plan to compete in what could become a very crowded playoff picture in the AFC.

"As far as we look at it, the games are won by the bigs," de-

fensive coordinator Teryl Austin said after Pittsburgh drafted 6-4, 310-pound defensive tackle Keeanu Benton from Wisconsin.

And the Steelers got big — or in the case of Washington, very big — over the course of three eventful days.

"I don't know if size per se was a point of emphasis, but obviously we value physicality and those are capable of playing a brand of football that we value," Tomlin said.

Jones morphed from a freshman who got whipped in drills during his early days at Georgia to an athletic tactician who started on a team that won back-to-back national championships. Jones, who doesn't turn 22 until May 16, sees similarities in how the Bulldogs and the Steelers go about things.

"Nobody plays as physical as us (at Georgia)," Jones said. "Nobody was running the ball like us. Nobody was taking shots down the field like us. You've just got to be able to play dominant."

Asked what he made of his new teammates, Jones called Pickett and third-year running back Najee Harris "dogs." Benton, who figures to get the chance to learn behind veterans Cam Heyward and Larry Ogunjobi, had another description in mind.

"(Tomlin) wants goons out there and he wants somebody to come out there who's not afraid to get their nose dirty," Benton said.

CAMERON

(Continued from Page 9)

"Those double plays killed us." Conotton Valley (12-7) head coach Jim Monigold said. "I told the boys, we had the bases loaded, and if we get a hit there, it could have been a different game. Then, we got runners on again, and we hit to the shortstop, who was 10 feet from the base.

"Cameron is a good team. They are solid. They can hit the ball. They hit the ball into the gaps. That's baseball. They hit the ball into the holes."

Coy Angel shook off a shaky start and ended up going the distance and recording the win for the boys from Marshall County. Coy, who threw 111 pitches, struck out seven and walked six, while allowing two runs on four hits — three of which were singles. He walked three batters in

the first and two more in the third, however, he was able to get out of each inning unscathed thanks to the defense turning a double play behind him.

Angel got better on the mound as the game progressed.

"That's not usually the case," Coach Angel said. "At the start, he was a little uptight. Us scoring in the bottom of the first calmed him down. He really pitched well. They had the bases loaded in the first inning and did not score. He competed. He pitched well."

The Blue-and-Gold scored in each inning following the first two double plays.

In the first, Adam Angel led off with a single, and Cole Burkett also collected a base hit as Adam moved up to third. After a strikeout, Coy Angel sin-

gled home Adam giving Cameron a 1-0 lead.

Cameron broke the game with four runs in the third.

Adam tripled with one out to get things rolling, and he scored on Burkett's double to give the Dragons a 2-0 advantage. Lance Hartley brought home a run, while also reaching on an error, and Mason DeBolt also tallied an RBI with a groundout.

"He struggled early, but we could not take advantage," Monigold said about Coy Angel. "He threw hard. He had his off-speed working. We just could not take advantage when we needed to."

The Rockets finally broke through with a run in the sixth on an RBI double by Justin Lambert. Lambert doubled off the fence in left field.

The Dragons delivered

three runs in the home half of the inning to increase their advantage to 8-1. Kade Norris singled home a run, Adam Angel plated Norris with his second triple, and Hartley doubled home Adam to account for Cameron's final run of the game.

"Our top of the order killed it today," Coach Angel said. "The bottom of the order was able to produce runs. We want to try and score one run an inning. Seven runs usually wins a game. That is what we wanted to try and do today. The bottom of our order produced runs."

Conotton Valley tacked on a run on an error in the seventh, but Coy Angel got a groundout to end the game.

Cameron is slated to play rival Madonna at 5 p.m. Tuesday at Bowman Field in Weirton.

PIRATES

(Continued from Page 9)

Added Pirates manager Derek Shelton: "Third inning we made him throw a lot of pitches and Suwinski hit that rocket right at Dominic Smith. That was kind of the difference in the game.

"If that ball's a foot or two one way or the other, we're at least at (5-3, maybe 5-4) and we run his pitch count up even more."

Andres Machado worked two scoreless innings for Washington, and Kyle Finnegan allowed a run in the ninth.

Pirates starter Johan Oviedo (2-2) gave up seven runs and nine hits in 2 1/3 innings.

"Definitely didn't execute my pitches the way I want to," said Oviedo, who has given up 11 earned runs in 7 2/3 innings over his last two starts. "They took advantage of it."

The first pitch was pushed back 2 hours, 26 minutes. But after being swept in a double-header Saturday, including a 16-1 loss in the nightcap, the

single highlighted a three-run second, and Robles made it 7-1 with his two-run double in the third.

"We were being a little bit more aggressive. Pittsburgh man, they pound the zone and we had to be ready," Nationals manager Dave Martinez said. "The bats were nice, they were crisp this game and we had some good swings."

UP NEXT

Pirates: RHP Roansy Contreras (3-1, 3.58 ERA) starts when Pittsburgh begins a three-game series at Tampa Bay on Tuesday. He has allowed three runs in 18 2/3 innings over his last three starts.

Nationals: LHP MacKenzie Gore (3-1, 3.00) starts the opener of a four-game series against the Chicago Cubs on Monday. Gore struck out 10 batters in six innings of a win over the Mets last time out.

RED SOX 7, GUARDIANS 1 BOSTON (AP) — Connor Wong hit a two-run homer and

ANGELS 3, BREWERS 0 MILWAUKEE (AP) — Shohei Ohtani hit a third-inning home run off Colin Rea that reached 162 feet above the field, the highest since Statcast started tracking in 2015, and helped the Los Angeles Angels beat the Milwaukee Brewers 3-0 on Sunday to avoid a three-game sweep.

ASTROS 4, PHILLIES 3 HOUSTON (AP) — Jake Meyers homered, Martin Maldonado ended his 0-for-24 slump with an RBI double and Houston defeated Philadelphia to avoid a three-game sweep.

PADRES 6, GIANTS 4 MEXICO CITY (AP) — Matt Carpenter capped an eighth-inning rally with a tie-breaking, two-run double off the glove of diving center fielder Mike Yastrzemski, and San Diego beat San Francisco for a two-game sweep of Major League Baseball's first regular-season series in Mexico City.

first win in a Dodgers uniform and Los Angeles got some timely hits and took advantage of mistakes by St. Louis pitchers for the win.

MARINERS 10, BLUE JAYS 8, 10 INNINGS TORONTO (AP) — Cal Raleigh hit two of Seattle's four home runs, including a tiebreaking shot in the 10th inning, to rally the team past Toronto and snap a four-game losing streak.

MARLINS 4, CUBS 3 MIAMI (AP) — Luis Arraez hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the eighth inning to give Miami the three-game series sweep over Chicago.

TWINS 8, ROYALS 4 MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Byron Buxton hit a three-run homer as part of a seven-run third inning and Sonny Gray kept rolling with six strong innings in Minnesota's win over Kansas City.

WHITE SOX 12, RAYS 9 CHICAGO (AP) — Andrew

ing streak with a wild victory over Tampa Bay.

ORIOLES 5, TIGERS 3 DETROIT (AP) — Adam Frazier homered in the fourth inning to help Baltimore take a four-run lead, and Yennier Cano made sure the Orioles held on against Detroit.

RANGERS 15, YANKEES 2 ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Josh Jung hit a first-inning grand slam, Nathaniel Lowe and Adolis Garc a also homered off All-Star Nestor Cortes and Texas routed New York to hand the Yankees their sixth loss in eight games.

ROCKIES 12, DIAMONDBACKS 4 DENVER (AP) — C.J. Cron had three hits, including a three-run homer, Austin Gomber gave up one run over six innings and Colorado beat Arizona to snap a seven-game home losing streak.

ATHLETICS 5, REDS 4 OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Esteury Ruiz singled in the

rick's Day all wrapped into one as Stills got to hear his name called all the way from the Sonoran Desert as the Arizona Cardinals took him with the 39th pick of the sixth round, the 213th pick in the draft.

He was right behind someone he'd chased for most of his career, Kansas State's dynamic running back Deuce Vaughn.

It meant that he will be the third member of the Stills family to sign an NFL contract, following his father, Gary, the great WVU pass rusher from the late 1990s, who made a decade long career out of playing in the NFL, mostly as a special teams force, and his older brother, Darius, who was expected to be drafted but passed over two years ago, signed as a free agent but has had injuries hamper his career.

"Congratulations to Dante and his family on getting drafted by the Cardinals," coach Neal Brown said. "I'm really proud of all his hard work and perseverance in pursuit of his dream of playing in the NFL."

"This is a well-earned opportunity that he has prepared for and has more than proven that he belongs. I look forward to watching him play on Sundays during his career and wish him the best."

Not quite so fortunate was another Mountaineer legacy, wide receiver Bryce Ford-Wheaton, who was preceded at WVU by the great running back and WVU Hall of Famer Garrett Ford Sr. and his son, Garrett Jr.

Ford-Wheaton did all he could to be drafted, turning in a big senior season that included a number of highlight reel plays, showing surprising speed at the NFL Combine from some who comes in a package that is 6-feet, 4-inches tall and 225 pounds.

He will sign, of course, and if he winds up in the right spot with his ability, determination and smarts, he will find a way to make an NFL roster, being very similar in character to David Sills V, the former Mountaineer whose stick-to-itiveness has allowed him to build a career.

One cannot read much negative into Ford-Wheaton falling through the cracks, however, because the problem would seem to be not so much with the player as with the program.

It is fair to suggest that the number of players attracted by the NFL is at least one way to evaluate a collegiate program. If you don't believe that, ask them at Georgia or Alabama or Ohio State.

While mid-majors may celebrate having one person drafted in seven rounds, that is no cause for celebration for a Power 5 team and certainly not WVU since Dana Holgorsen left after an 8-4 record in the 2018 season, his last team had five players go in the 2019 NFL Draft.

It was a talented group headed by Will Grier, David Long, Gary Jennings, Yodny Cajuste and Trevon Wesco.

True, he didn't leave Neal Brown much to work with coming in and then COVID hit to complicate the situation worse, but in the four drafts since Holgorsen's exit WVU has had only four players drafted: Colton McKivitz, Kenny Robinson Tony Fields Jr. and Stills.

This season TCU, who went to the national title game, had 8 drafted, followed by Oklahoma with 5, Texas and Kansas State with 4, Texas Tech and Iowa State with 3, Oklahoma State with 2 and WVU with 1.

That gap has shown up in the won-lost record, but the question is whether or not WVU isn't drawing quality talent to the school or if they aren't developing it right. Either way, it has to change for results to change and in this era of NIL and the transfer portal, that may prove to be a major problem.



Martins Ferry walks it off against Barnesville in OVAC 3A softball

By KIM NORTH
For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE - The old adage that it's hard to beat a team three times in the same season came into play once again on Tuesday during the OVAC Tom Bechtel Softball Class 3A semifinals.

Top-seeded Martins Ferry (13-2) had defeated fourth-seeded Barnesville twice already this spring. However, the Shamrocks (11-8) gave the Purple Riders all they could handle.

Sophomore Abbey Snedeker singled through the left side of the infield with one out in the bottom of the seventh and pinch runner Kendyl Brandon raced home from second base, sliding head-first across the plate as the Martins Ferry bench erupted in a 5-4 victory on Lisa's Field at the

J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

"She was clutch again today," Martins Ferry head coach Jerry Magistro said of Snedeker. "She has really been hitting the ball of late, which is good for us."

It appeared as though the two-time defending champions were going to breeze as they scored three times in their first at-bat despite only managing one hit. A throwing error and a mental error by the Shamrocks aided the Purple Riders.

"We played well but we had a couple of key errors at key times that hurt us," Barnesville head coach Kelly Hanlon said. "The first inning really hurt and we had a bad play in right that allowed the fourth run to score."

"I'm proud of the way we battled back. We're still a

rather young team and for them to come back against a team like Martins Ferry in a tournament like this is encouraging," Hanlon added. "Things didn't fall our way in the seventh."

The only hit in the first inning came from Avery Hughes in the form of a 2-run single to right-center. Her RBI double with two outs in the third bumped the margin to 4-0.

"Avery really came through for us today," Magistro said. "She's capable of hitting the ball and she hits it hard when she does."

Meanwhile, Kelsie Gillespie was cruising with a 5-hitter through five innings. She pitched out of a 2-on, 2-out jam in the second and hadn't allowed a runner past second base.

See, FERRY, Page B2

Photo/JEFF HARRISON
MARTINS FERRY'S Kendyl Brandon dives across home plate with the game-winning run as Barnesville catcher Lilly Welch awaits a throw in the OVAC Class 3A softball semifinal. Looking on is umpire Randy Whitlatch.

Harrison falls to Oak Glen in 4A semis

By ANDREW GRIMM
For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE - It may have taken the Golden Bears a little while to find their groove this season, but Oak Glen is right back where it's become accustomed to being - playing for an OVAC title.

The No. 2 seed Golden Bears used a big fourth inning to break open a close game and pull away from No. 3 seed Harrison Central for an 8-0 win in the nightcap of the OVAC Class 4A semifinals Tuesday.

The Bears advance to defend their title against Edison on Saturday.

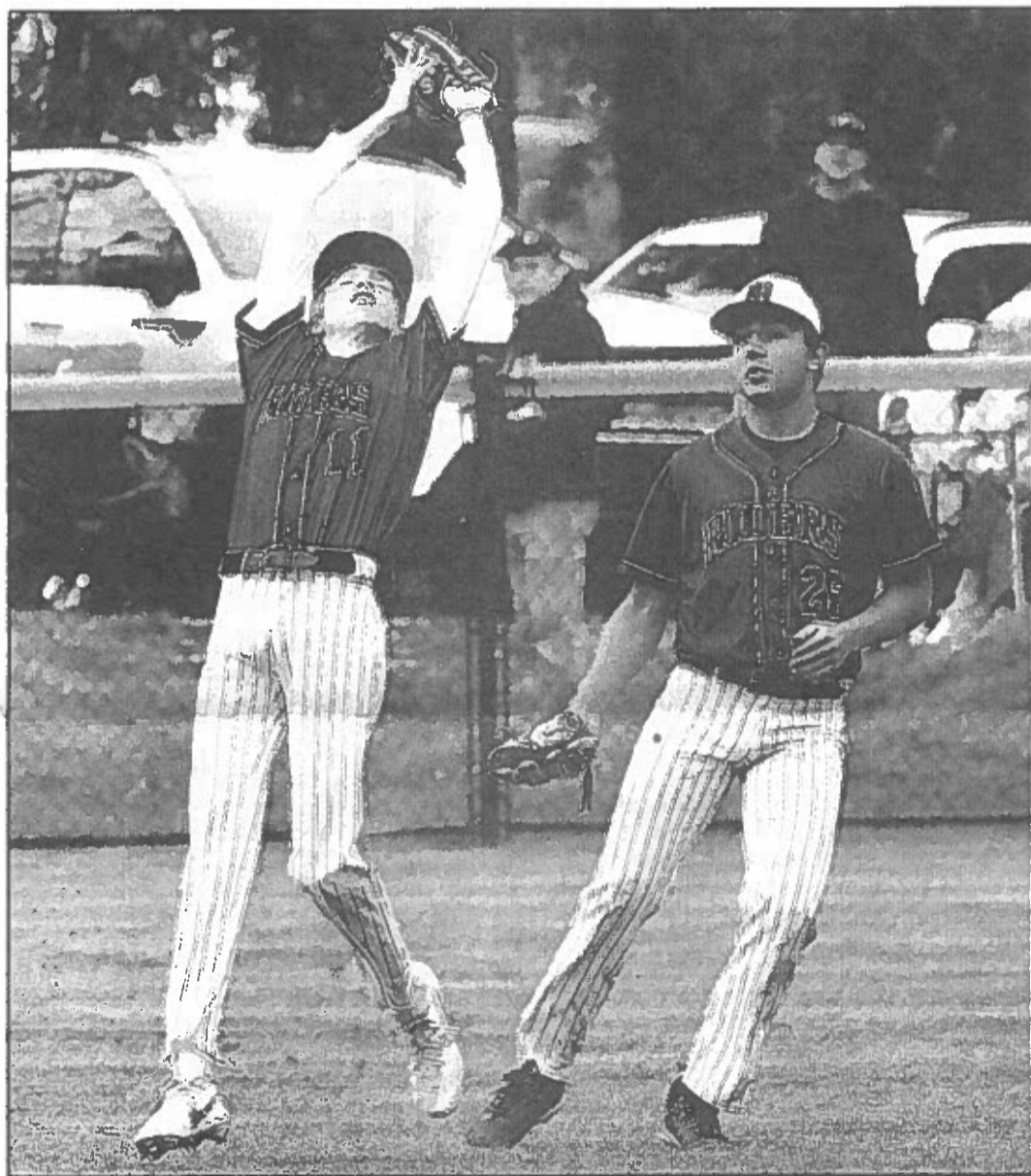
"We were able to come through and time up some hits," Oak Glen head coach Sherrie Garner said. "(Harrison Central's Emma Skinner) does a nice job and had us guessing (the first couple innings), but we were able to come through."

"It's a fun event to come down here and play in the OVAC championships, it's important to these seniors who have had a nice run of doing it. They want to continue the tradition. Hopefully we keep it up on Saturday."

The win is the 12th in a row for Oak Glen (18-8), now ranked No. 8 in the latest W. Va. coaches poll, after a 5-8 start to the season.

"We knew we were capable, I think it was just a matter of us settling in and making some adjustments," Garner said. "There's not really one thing we're doing better that's sparked it, the girls are just doing what they do and have dug in. They love to play ball and they

See, HARRISON, Page B2



AT LEFT: Martins Ferry second baseman Turner Kroll makes a catch as right fielder Ayden Ludolph pulls up on the play. The Purple Riders fell to Linsly in the OVAC Class 3A semifinal in Wheeling on Tuesday. Ferry fell, 10-0 and Linsly will take on Fort Frye on Friday in Toronto for the title.

BELOW: LINSLY pitcher Jack Selmon is congratulated by teammates Matt Turak after Selmon threw a complete-game no hitter Tuesday against Martins Ferry.

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

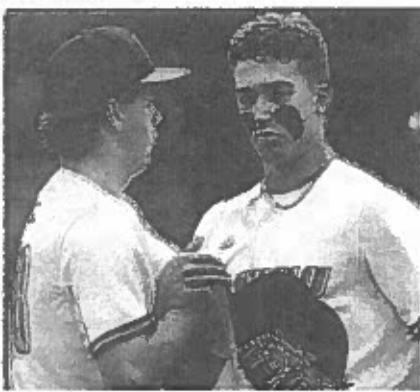
Linsly's Selmon no hits Ferry in 3A

By SETH STASKEY
Times Leader Sports Editor

WHEELING - Linsly pitcher Jack Selmon didn't have his best stuff by any means Tuesday afternoon on Holloway Field.

Some of his intangible traits, however, proved to be more than enough.

Despite command issues that led to him walking five and plunking three, Selmon found a way to get himself out of jams in the first three innings, settled in and threw a no-hitter as the



Now staked to a 2-0 lead in the top of the second, Selmon plunked back-to-back hitters before a strikeout and then a walk ninth-place hitter, Joe Green to load the bases. Again, he made pitches when he had to and recorded his second strikeout of the inning to thwart the rally.

Martins Ferry got Ayden Ludolph into scoring position in the top of the third after he drew a walk and swiped second. Selmon proceeded to catch the next two Rider hitters looking.

"We had (scoring) chances ear-





(11-8) gave the Purple Riders all they could handle. Sophomore Abbey Sneider singled through the left side of the infield with one out in the bottom of the seventh and pinch runner Kendyl Brandon raced home from second base, sliding head-first across the plate as the Martins Ferry bench erupted in a 5-4 victory on Lisa's Field at the

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through for us today," Magistro said. "She's capable of hitting the ball and she hits it hard when she does." Meanwhile, Kelsie Gillespie was cruising with a 5-hitter through five innings. She pitched out of a 2-on, 2-out jam in the second and hadn't allowed a runner past second base.

See, FERRY, Page B2

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For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE — It may have taken the Golden Bears a little while to find their groove this season, but Oak Glen is right back where it's become accustomed to being — playing for an OVAC title.

The No. 2 seed Golden Bears used a big fourth inning to break open a close game and pull away from No. 3 seed Harrison Central for an 8-0 win in the nightcap of the OVAC Class 4A semifinals Tuesday.

The Bears advance to defend their title against Edison on Saturday.

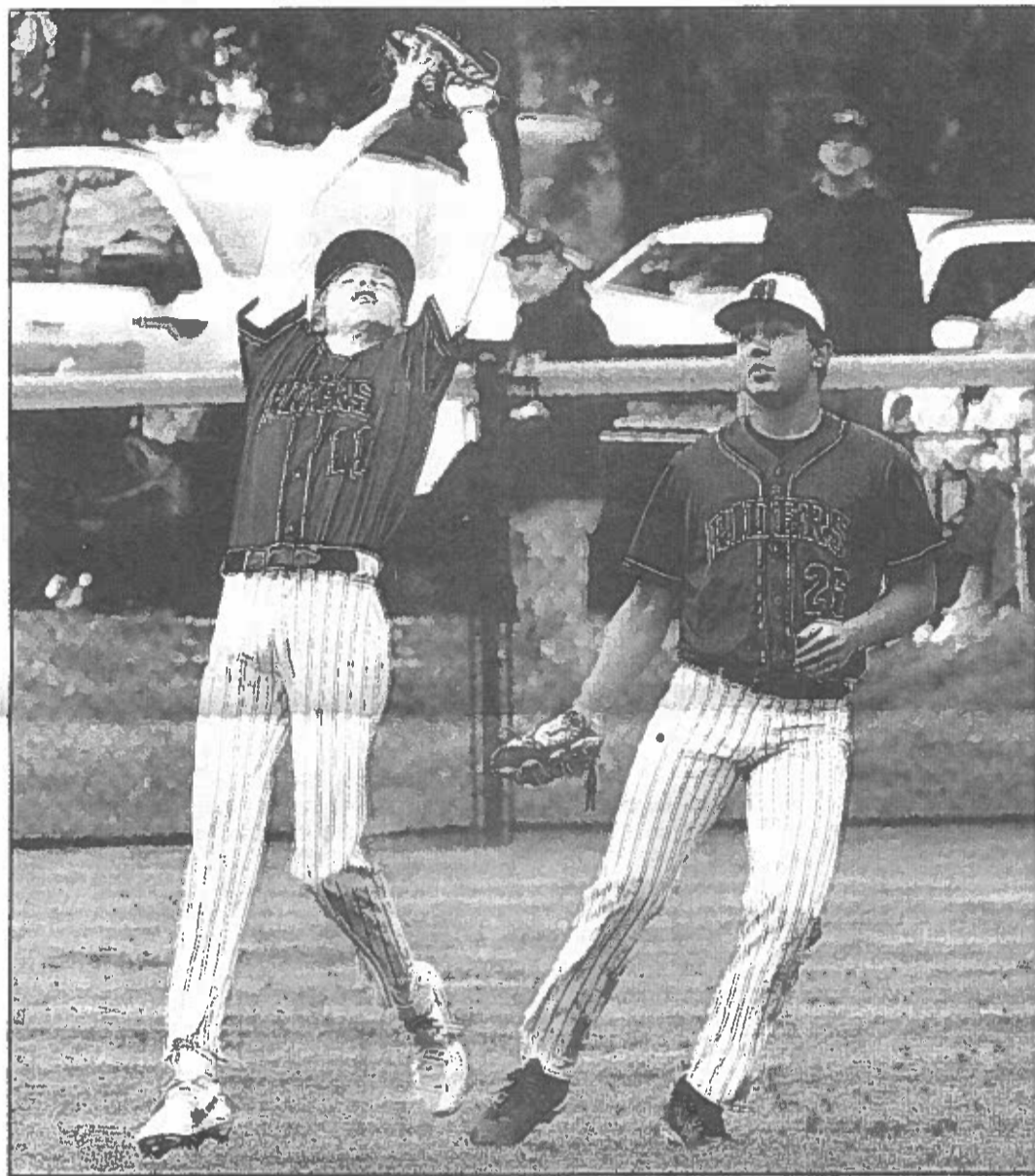
"We were able to come through and time up some hits," Oak Glen head coach Sherrie Garner said. "(Harrison Central's Emma Skinner) does a nice job and had us guessing (the first couple innings), but we were able to come through.

"It's a fun event to come down here and play in the OVAC championships, it's important to these seniors who have had a nice run of doing it. They want to continue the tradition. Hopefully we keep it up on Saturday."

The win is the 12th in a row for Oak Glen (18-8), now ranked No. 8 in the latest W.Va. coaches poll, after a 5-8 start to the season.

"We knew we were capable, I think it was just a matter of us settling in and making some adjustments," Garner said. "There's not really one thing we're doing better that's sparked it, the girls are just doing what they do and have dug in. They love to play ball and they

See, HARRISON, Page B2



AT LEFT: Martins Ferry second baseman Turner Kroll makes a catch as right fielder Ayden Ludolph pulls up on the play. The Purple Riders fell to Linsly in the OVAC Class 3A semifinal in Wheeling on Tuesday. Ferry fell, 10-0 and Linsly will take on Fort Frye on Friday in Toronto for the title.

BELOW: LINSLY pitcher Jack Selmon is congratulated by teammates Matt Turak after Selmon threw a complete-game no hitter Tuesday against Martins Ferry.

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

Linsly's Selmon no hits Ferry in 3A

By SETH STASKEY
Times Leader Sports Editor

WHEELING — Linsly pitcher Jack Selmon didn't have his best stuff by any means Tuesday afternoon on Holloway Field.

Some of his intangible traits, however, proved to be more than enough.

Despite command issues that led to him walking five and plunking three, Selmon found a way to get himself out of jams in the first three innings, settled in and spun a no hitter as the Cadets assured a new OVAC Class 3A champion by ousting defending champion, Martins Ferry, 10-0 in five innings.

"No one works harder in the offseason and during the season than Jack and he competes," Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright said. "He's a bulldog who loves to play. He doesn't quit and keeps coming."



Ferry had multiple runners aboard in the first inning before Conner Probst flew out to center fielder Alex Taylor who rifled a strike to third baseman Matt Scouvar for an inning-ending double play.

Now staked to a 2-0 lead in the top of the second, Selmon plunked back-to-back hitters before a strikeout and then a walk ninth-place hitter, Joe Green to load the bases. Again, he made pitches when he had to and recorded his second strikeout of the inning to thwart the rally.

Martins Ferry got Ayden Ludolph into scoring position in the top of the third after he drew a walk and swiped second. Selmon proceeded to catch the next two Rider hitters looking.

"We had (scoring) chances early, couldn't capitalize and it snowballed," Martins Ferry head coach Anthony Reasbeck said. "What are you going to do? We had a couple of questionable things not go our way and it just snowballed."

While the 2-0 lead was plenty, the Linsly offense, which was shut down just 24 hours prior in a 1-0 loss at

See, LINSLY, Page B2



Photo/ANDREW GRIMM
HARRISON CENTRAL pitcher Emma Skinner works to the plate during Tuesday's OVAC Class 4A semifinal vs. Oak Glen.

Dodgers rally past Pirates, 8-7

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Chris Taylor hit a go-ahead, three-run home run in the eighth inning to help the Los Angeles Dodgers overcome a five-run deficit and rally to an 8-7 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Tuesday night.

Taylor took a sinker from Colin Holderman (0-1) deep to left for his fifth homer of the season. He singled his previous two at-bats and reached on an error in the second.

The third baseman was coming off four straight games without a hit, bringing his average down to .111. Taylor didn't have more than

one hit in his first 16 games.

"It's not the first time I've had a slow start to the season," Taylor said. "It's always hard. Everybody wants to start the year off well. You just kind of have to take it one day at a time and focus on helping the team win any way you can."

Yency Almonte (2-0) struck out two in a scoreless seventh for the win and Shelby Miller sent the side down in order in the ninth for his first save in the majors.

Los Angeles has won three straight after a 10-11 start.

"It's big. It's big," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "Guys

kept grinding and having good at bats. ... There were a lot of good things that happened tonight."

It ended the Pirates' seven-game winning streak, their longest since an 11-game run in 2018.

"We just didn't play a clean game," Pittsburgh manager Derek Shelton said. "Certainly not the type of game you need to play to beat a team that is capable of winning the world championship. We made too many mistakes tonight and it eventually came back to beat us."

James Outman had two doubles, his first leading off a two-run sixth



AP PHOTO
PITTSBURGH PIRATES left fielder Jack Suwinski (65) leaps to make the catch on a fly ball hit by Los Angeles Dodgers' Mookie Betts during the sixth.

St. C. baseball falls at Wheeling Park; Buckeye softball scores first victory

WHEELING - Gian Degenova belted a 2-run homer in the bottom of the first inning and a trio of Wheeling Park pitchers teamed on a 7-hitter as it defeated visiting St. Clairsville, 4-0, Tuesday on the all-turf Patriot Field high atop the Friendly City.

Nick Tsoras and Quinn Jamison each singled in a run, with Jamison recording a pair of one-base raps. Braydon Kupsky singled and doubled.

Luke Myers, Nathan Bittinger and Zack Davis worked the mound for Wheeling Park. Bittinger earned the win with one strikeout and two walks.

Hunter Hoffman singled and doubled for the Red Devils. Max Fogle and Zac Vickers each doubled.

Paden City 7, Bridgeport 2

PADEN CITY - The Wildcats (16-8) tallied four times in the bottom of the sixth to break open a close game with the visiting Bulldogs.

Liam Clements doubled in two runs and Garrett Parrish added a 2-run single for Paden City. Joey Baker singled, tripled and knocked in two.

Gary Widmor singled in a run for Bridgeport. He also fanned seven and walked one in taking the loss.

Indian Creek 11, Toronto 1

MINGO JUNCTION - The Redskins scored in every inning in earning a 5-inning victory over the visiting Red Knights on Muth Field.

Sy Howell drove in three runs

with a single and double for Indian Creek. Nathan Maurer had two singles and a pair of ribbies. Ty Householder and Landon Pownall had RBI singles.

Householder went the first three innings to get the win. He struck out six and walked three.

Zack Kinsey tripled in a run for Toronto.

River 10, Magnolia 0

HANNIBAL - River continued its hot play by no hitting Magnolia in a 10-0, five-inning affair at Rick Bonar Field on Tuesday. The win improved the Pilots to 11-8 on the season.

The Pilots utilized three pitchers in the gem. Brody Lollathin was the starter and winner. River Thompson and Max Castro worked the fourth and fifth, respectively. All three combined for seven strikeouts.

Offensively, Peyton Blue had two singles and a RBI. Hunter Nething and Cody Simon and Hunter Nething each had a single and two RBI. Lucas Dennis singled home a run.

SOFTBALL Buckeye Local 17, Union Local 8

CONNORVILLE - Winless no more. Buckeye Local used an 11-run sixth inning to get past invading Union Local Tuesday by a 17-8 score.

The Panthers' Sam Ankrom was the winner in the circle. She also had a double, two singles and drove in two. Morgan Richardson had a double, single and rbi, while

Tatum Walker added a double and three RBI. Bella Russell had three singles and three RBI.

Union Local junior Lauren Miller finished a home run short of the cycle and had two RBI. Alli Kellaway had three singles and drove in a run, while Laken Vinskovich had a double and single.

Bridgeport 7, Paden City 3

PADEN CITY - Bridgeport scored six runs in its first two at-bats to pull out its fifth win in six outings against the Wildcats.

Vanessa Mullen was strong in the circle with 10 strikeouts.

Offensively, the Bulldogs were led by Markiee McCormick and Hanna Brewer, who each had a single, double and RBI. Rylee-McElroy, Brooke Stewart and Rowyn Herman each had two singles and drove in a run. Cora Cooper had a RBI single.

McKenzie Thomas led Paden City with a three-run home run. Carlee Sweeny had three singles, while Lexi Mathis posted two base hits.

River 10, Beallsville 4

BEALLSVILLE -- The Pilots scored six runs in their first three at-bats and never looked back en route to toppling the Blue Devils.

Addison Kovach had three singles, a double and drove in two. Ava Wohnhas had three singles and three RBI. Rylee Knight posted two singles and drove in a run.

Kinley Hughes led the Blue Devils with two singles. Kaylee Hagan had a single and double.

Pirates, Reynolds agree on new deal

PITTSBURGH (AP) - Pittsburgh Pirates general manager Ben Cherington has spent more than four years methodically overhauling the organization from the bottom up, relentlessly stockpiling prospects through three straight last-place finishes in the NL Central and promising the club would have the financial resources to in-

vest at the major-league level when the timing was right.

Cherington backed up his promise by giving outfielder Bryan Reynolds the largest contract in club history.

Three people with knowledge of the agreement told the Associated Press that it's an eight-year deal worth at least \$106.75 million, the

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• Pirates

Continued from Page B1

for the Dodgers.

Andrew McCutchen put Pittsburgh ahead 7-2 with a three-run homer, sending a sinker from Noah Syndergaard to right in a four-run fourth. Syndergaard was pulled after the inning, allowing seven runs on nine hits.

McCutchen popped out with the bases loaded to end the eighth.

Johan Oviedo gave up five runs on six hits in 5 1/3 innings for Pittsburgh.

After Los Angeles plated one in the fifth and two more an inning later to cut it to 7-5. Mookie Betts came to bat with two outs in the sixth.

He drove a slider from Robert Stephenson toward the bleachers in left. Jack Suwinski instead made a leaping grab at the wall to rob what would have been a three-run, go-

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Suwinski could not do the same to Taylor two innings later.

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TRAINER'S ROOM

Dodgers: INF Michael Busch was recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City to make his major league debut, serving as the designated hitter with INF Max Muncy on the paternity list. The 25-year-old prospect had an RBI single, his first hit in the majors, with one out in the sixth and walked in the eighth. ... DH J.D. Martinez did not play with back discomfort first experienced in his final at bat against the Chicago Cubs on Sunday.

UP NEXT

RHP Tony Gonsolin is expected to take the mound for the Dodgers opposite Pirates RHP Roansy Contreras (2-1, 4.57) on Wednesday. Gonsolin (left ankle sprain) is set to be activated from the 15-day injured list to make his season debut.

• Harrison

Continued from Page B1

love to have fun together.

"The seniors have played a lot together and the sophomores have played a lot together ... it took a little bit to put the pieces together but we're playing really well."

With her team clinging to a 1-0 lead, Sarah Brown started the fourth inning onslaught with a leadoff solo homer just inside the left field foul pole, Sydney Brown and Lizzie Kell later adding a two-run single each after a couple Huskies (11-7) errors.

Oak Glen ended up plating seven runs before Harrison Central could get out of the inning.

"She cranked that one," Garner said. "She took it sailing. They took some big hits from us with some nice plays in the outfield."

As it turned out, Liv Munoz's RBI double, also after a Harrison Central error, in the bottom of the first inning was all the offense Kell needed, as the senior racked up 14 punchouts and allowed just one hit, a Maddy Butler double in the third inning.

"She is doing excellent, we can't ask for anything more," Garner said.

Skinner was saddled with the tough-luck loss as just one of the Golden Bears' eight runs were earned.

• Ferry

Continued from Page B1

However, that all changed in the sixth.

With one out, Lily Welch singled and went to second on an error on Madelynn Tyson's grounder. Ellie Thompson singled to load the bases and Peyton Dudzik roped a 2-run double to right-center. After the second out was recorded, Katelyn Arigoni popped up into foul territory to seemingly end the contest, but the ball was misplayed to give her another chance. This time she drilled a 2-run single to the same gap in right-center to score Thompson and Dudzik.

Ella McFarland opened the bottom of the seventh for the Purple Riders by reaching on an error. Brandon was inserted to run and, with one out, Hughes drew a walk. Snedeker, who blasted a walk-off 3-run homer last week to give Magistro his 400th career win, ripped a shot between third and short on the first pitch she saw to send the Purple Riders to their third consecutive OVAC championship game.

Gillespie got the win. She struck out six, didn't walk a batter and allowed eight hits. She threw 93 pitches, of which 73 were strikes.

"Kelsi really turned it up today. She pitched well, got out of a couple of jams," Magistro noted. "She didn't panic there in the sixth and got out of it and gave us a chance."

Johnson suffered the loss, fanning two and walking five. She gave up eight hits, as well, and threw 126 pitches.

Martins Ferry will play Caldwell on Saturday at 12:15 p.m. for the championship on Ben's Field. Both teams are seeking their third straight title, but the Redskins moved up from Class 2A this season. Caldwell blanked Shenandoah, 4-0.

• Linsly

Continued from Page B1

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The big hit in the frame came from talented freshman Jakson Murray, who laced a two-run single to score Trey Prather and Skadra. Scouvar followed with another base hit, scoring Collin Paull, who ignited the first-inning rally when he launched a triple to the deepest part of the park in left, which one-hopped the fence.

Selmon capped the rally when he helped his own cause by driving in Murray with a sacrifice fly.

"These guys have been around the block now since this is like game 20 for us and we've seen some good pitching," Cartwright said. "The kids aren't shocked, fooled as much on off-speed stuff and we're starting to really scrap at the plate."

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In the fifth, Martins Ferry got a runner aboard, but he didn't advance past first base as Selmon closed the deal by catching a fourth Ferry player looking.

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Meanwhile, Linsly, which is in action today at Dover, will turn the majority of its attention to a date with Fort Frye on Friday afternoon at Toronto for the conference title.

"We have a shot," Cartwright said. "I am sure Fort Frye is very good. We've had some great games with them in this tournament both in the semifinals and finals. We're looking forward to it."

Linsly owns 22 OVAC titles in baseball and last won the crown in 2021.

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Celtics can't close out Hawks

BOSTON (AP) — His team trailing by a point and its season on the brink, Hawks star Trae Young got all the encouragement he needed in the huddle during his team's timeout.

"I just had to trust in what I've done my whole life and shoot it with confidence," Young said.

He did, and kept Atlanta's season alive.

Young had 38 points and drained a long go-ahead 3-pointer from beyond the top of the key with 2.8 seconds left to help the Hawks cap a late comeback and beat the Boston Celtics 119-117 Tuesday night.

The victory trims Boston's lead in the first-round playoff series to 3-2 and sends the teams back to Atlanta for Game 6 Thursday.

Young had 16 points in a frenetic fourth quarter, getting support from his teammates.



BRYAN REYNOLDS

Pittsburgh Inks Bryan Reynolds To Record Deal

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The agreement was first reported by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

It marks a somewhat of a turnaround for the soft-spoken Reynolds, who quietly requested a trade in December. Cherington insisted the team was willing to do what it takes to keep Reynolds in the fold for the long term, and both sides made steady progress toward an agreement in recent weeks with Reynolds talking multiple times with team owner Bob Nutting.

"Let's ride," Reynolds posted in typically brief fashion on Instagram shortly after he and the team agreed to terms on Tuesday.

The new contract includes a \$2 million signing bonus, a club option for 2031 that could make the agreement worth \$104.75 million over nine seasons and a limited six-team no-trade clause.

Please see RECORD, Page 12

Dodgers Rally Past Pirates On Taylor HR



Pittsburgh Pirates left fielder Jack Suwinski (65) leaps to make the catch on a fly ball hit by Los Angeles Dodgers' Mookie Betts during the sixth inning of a game in Pittsburgh, Tuesday.

Los Angeles Scores Three Times In 8th Inning

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Chris Taylor hit a go-ahead, three-run home run in the eighth inning to help the Los Angeles Dodgers overcome a five-run deficit and rally to an 8-7 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Tuesday night.

Taylor took a sinker from Colin Holderman (0-1) deep to left for his fifth homer of the season. He singled his previous two at-bats and reached on an error in the second.

The third baseman was coming off four straight games without a hit, bringing his average down to .111. Taylor didn't have more than one hit in his first 16 games.

"It's not the first time I've had a slow start to the season," Taylor said. "It's always hard. Everybody wants to start the year off well. You just kind of have to take it one day at a time and focus on helping the team win any way you can."

Please see PIRATES, Page 12

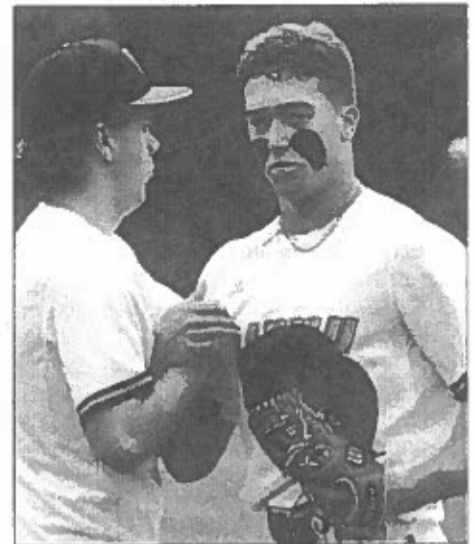


Photo by Seth Staskey

Linsly's Jack Selmon, right, is congratulated by teammate Matt Turak after Selmon threw a no-hitter at Martins Ferry Wednesday in an OVAC Class 3A semifinal on Holloway Field.

Linsly's Selmon No-Hits Ferry In Class 3A Semi

Cadets Will Meet Fort Frye For Championship On Friday In Toronto

By SETH STASKEY
For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — Linsly pitcher Jack Selmon didn't have his best stuff by any means Tuesday afternoon on Holloway Field.

Some of his intangible traits, however, proved to be more than enough.

Despite command issues that led to him walking five and plunking three, Selmon found a way to get himself out of jams in the first three innings, settled in and spun a no-hitter as the Cadets assured a new OVAC Class 3A champion by ousting defending champion, Martins Ferry, 10-0 in five innings.

"No one works harder in the offseason and during the season than Jack and he competes," Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright said. "He's a bulldog who loves to play. He doesn't quit and keeps coming."

Ferry had multiple runners aboard in the first inning before Conner Probst flew out to center fielder Alex Taylor who rifled a strike to third baseman Matt Scouvar for an inning-ending double play.

Now staked to a 2-0 lead in the top of the second, Selmon plunked back-to-back hitters before a strikeout and then a walk ninth-place hitter, Joe Green to load the bases. Again, he made pitches when he had to and recorded his second strikeout of the inning to thwart the rally.

Martins Ferry got Ayden Ludolph into scoring position in the top of the third after he drew a walk and swiped second. Selmon proceeded to catch the next two Rider hitters looking.

Please see SELMON, Page 12

Martins Ferry Slips By Barnesville, 5-4

Purple Riders Eye Repeat in 3A Softball

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The old adage that it's hard to beat a team three times in the same season came into play once again on Tuesday during the OVAC Tom Bechtel Softball Class 3A semifinals.

Top-seeded Martins Ferry (13-2) had defeated



WL Women's Tennis Earns Bid To 17th NAAs

FERRY

(Continued from Page 11)

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - The West Liberty women's tennis team has earned an NCAA Tournament bid for the 17th time in program history. Coach Heather Gallagher's Hilltoppers are the No. 5 seed in next week's NCAA D2 Atlantic Region championships and will take on No. 4 seed W.Va. State Monday at 9 a.m. in a regional semifinal at the Schoenbaum Courts in Charleston, W.Va. In a virtual replay of this past weekend's Mountain East Conference Tournament, the winner advances to Tuesday's regional final against host and No. 1 seed Charleston.

"We played well but we had a couple of key errors at key times that hurt us," Barnesville head coach Kelly Hanlon said. "The first inning really hurt and we had a bad play in right that allowed the fourth run to score. "I'm proud of the way we battled back. We're still a rather young team and for them to come back against a team like Martins Ferry in a tournament like this is encouraging," Hanlon added. "Things didn't fall our way in the seventh." The only hit in the first inning came from Avery Hughes in the form of a 2-run single to right-center. Her RBI double with two outs in the third bumped the margin to 4-0. "Avery really came through for us today," Magistro said. "She's capable of hitting the ball and she hits it hard when she does." Meanwhile, Kelsie Gillespie was cruising with a 5-hitter through five innings.

She pitched out of a 2-on, 2-out jam in the second and hadn't allowed a runner past second base. However, that all changed in the sixth. With one out, Lily Welch singled and went to second on an error on Madelynn Tyson's grounder. Ellie Thompson singled to load the bases and Peyton Dudzik roped a 2-run double to right-center. After the second out was recorded, Katelyn Arigoni popped up into foul territory to seemingly end the contest, but the ball was misplayed to give her another chance. This time she drilled a 2-run single to the same gap in right-center to score Thompson and Dudzik. Ella McFarland opened the bottom of the seventh for the Purple Riders by reaching on an error. Brandon was inserted to run and, with one out, Hughes drew a walk. Snedeker, who blasted a walk-off 3-run homer last week to give Magistro his 400th

career win, ripped a shot between third and short on the first pitch she saw to send the Purple Riders to their third consecutive OVAC championship game. Gillespie got the win. She struck out six, didn't walk a batter and allowed eight hits. She threw 93 pitches, of which 73 were strikes. "Kelsie really turned it up today. She pitched well, got out of a couple of jams," Magistro noted. "She didn't panic there in the sixth and got out of it and gave us a chance." Johnson suffered the loss, fanning two and walking five. She gave up eight hits, as well, and threw 126 pitches. Martins Ferry will play Caldwell on Saturday at 12:15 p.m. for the championship on Ben's Field. Both teams are seeking their third straight title, but the Redskins moved up from Class 2A this season. Caldwell blanked Shenandoah, 4-0.

SELMON

(Continued from Page 11)

"We had (scoring) chances early, couldn't capitalize and it snowballed," Martins Ferry head coach Anthony Reasbeck said. "What are you going to do? We had a couple of questionable things not go our way and it just snowballed." While the 2-0 lead was plenty, the Linsly offense, which was shut down just 24 hours prior in a 1-0 loss at Bellaire, broke out. The Cadets produced three hits and hung four runs in the bottom of the third. The big hit in the frame came from talented freshman Jakson Murray, who laced a two-run single to score Trey Prather and Skadra. Scouvar followed with another base hit, scoring Collin Paull, who ignited the first-inning rally when he launched a triple to the deepest part of the park in left, which one-hopped the fence. Selmon capped the rally when he helped his own cause by driving in Murray with a sacrifice fly. "These guys have been around the block now since this is like

game 20 for us and we've seen some good pitching," Cartwright said. "The kids aren't shocked, fooled as much on off-speed stuff and we're starting to really scrap at the plate." The Cadets (15-5) officially blew it open in the fourth with another four spot. The big hit came when Scouvar sliced a double down the right-field line to score a pair. Murray had singled home another run one hitter prior and Prather, who had three singles in the game, also drove in a run with a hit. "I think seeing (Heatherington) from Bellaire (on Monday) set us up well for (Tuesday)," Cartwright said. "I think our kids had the right approach and got after him and we strung some good at-bats together, but that only helped us in the long run." In the fifth, Martins Ferry got a runner aboard, but he didn't advance past first base as Selmon closed the deal by catching a fourth Ferry player looking. Martins Ferry, now 9-8 on the season, will return to regular season

play and continue to get ready for the OHSAA tournament, which begins in just a couple of weeks. "We graduated nine seniors, including a couple of all-staters, so for us to even get back into this tournament makes me proud as hell of these guys," Reasbeck said. "It's not a knock on our guys, but if we played this game 100 times, we probably would have lost 100 times. What am I going to do? Scream? Get mad? No. I am proud of these kids and now we'll get ready for the tournament." Meanwhile, Linsly, which is in action today at Dover, will turn the majority of its attention to a date with Fort Frye on Friday afternoon at Toronto for the conference title. "We have a shot," Cartwright said. "I am sure Fort Frye is very good. We've had some great games with them in this tournament both in the semifinals and finals. We're looking forward to it." Linsly owns 22 OVAC titles in baseball and last won the crown in 2021.

DODGERS

(Continued from Page 11)

Yency Almonte (2-0) struck out two in a scoreless seventh for the win and Shelby Miller sent the side down in order in the ninth for his first save in the majors. Los Angeles has won three straight after a 10-11 start. "It's big. It's big," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "Guys kept grinding and having good at bats. ... There were a lot of good things that happened tonight." It ended the Pirates' seven-game winning streak, their longest since an 11-game run in 2018. "We just didn't play a clean game," Pittsburgh manager Derek Shelton said. "Certainly not the type of game you need to play to beat a team that is capable of winning the world championship. We made too many mistakes tonight and it eventually came back to beat us." James Outman had two doubles, his first leading off a two-run sixth for the Dodgers. Andrew McCutchen put Pittsburgh ahead 7-2 with a three-run homer, sending a sinker from Noah Syndergaard to right in a four-run fourth. Syndergaard was pulled after the inning, allowing seven runs on nine hits. McCutchen popped out with the bases loaded to end the eighth. Johan Oviedo gave up five runs on six hits in 5 1/3 innings for Pittsburgh. After Los Angeles plated one in the fifth and two more an inning later to cut it to 7-5, Mookie Betts came to bat with two outs in the sixth. He drove a slider from Robert Stephenson toward the bleachers in left. Jack Suwinski instead made a leaping grab at the wall to rob

what would have been a three-run, go-ahead homer. Suwinski could not do the same to Taylor two innings later. "If that one wouldn't have went out, then I just felt it wasn't meant to be," Roberts said. "Because Chris really got into that one." **STAYING PUT** Pittsburgh outfielder Bryan Reynolds has agreed to an eight-year deal worth \$106.75 million, three people with knowledge of the agreement told the Associated Press. They spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal was not official pending a physical. The 2021 All-Star has a .294 average with five home runs and 18 RBIs in 22 games this season. Reynolds missed a second straight game since being placed on the Bereavement List on Sunday. **TRAINER'S ROOM** Dodgers: INF Michael Busch was recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City to make his major league debut, serving as the designated hitter with INF Max Muncy on the paternity list. The 25-year-old prospect had an RBI single, his first hit in the majors, with one out in the sixth and walked in the eighth. ... DH J.D. Martinez did not play with back discomfort first experienced in his final at bat against the Chicago Cubs on Sunday. **UP NEXT** RHP Tony Gonsolin is expected to take the mound for the Dodgers opposite Pirates RHP Roansy Contreras (2-1, 4.57) tonight. Gonsolin (left ankle sprain) is set to be activated from the 15-day injured list to make his season debut.

RECORD

(Continued from Page 11)

It's the latest bit of good news for the Pirates, who are off to a 16-7 start heading into a three-game series with the Los Angeles Dodgers beginning Tuesday night. Reynolds is not expected to play in the opener, remaining out after being placed on the bereavement list on Sunday. The team signed fourth-year manager Derek Shelton to a contract extension Sunday, a vote of confidence that the franchise is committed to the vision Cherington outlined when he took over in the fall of 2019. "The one thing that's the most important and again, this goes back to people signing here externally and coming in, is people want to be here," Shelton said. "They're trusting the process that

Ben's put in place." Reynolds, an All-Star in 2021, stressed during spring training that negotiations with the Pirates wouldn't be a distraction once the season began. It hasn't: Reynolds is hitting .294 with five home runs and 18 RBIs in 22 games for the surprising NL Central leaders. The agreement is a full-circle moment for the organization, which acquired the switch-hitting Reynolds in January 2018 as part of the trade that sent 2013 NL MVP Andrew McCutchen to San Francisco. Five years later, McCutchen is back with the Pirates and Reynolds — a career .282 hitter — is now the anchor of a lineup that's helped Pittsburgh get off to its best start since 1992 despite losing young shortstop Oneil Cruz to a fractured left ankle earlier this month. The Pirates have been one of the worst teams in the major leagues since 2019, with Cherington frequently flipping veteran players for prospects and investing heavily in the draft. Finding a way to retain Reynolds is the latest proof that the front office is serious about keeping a core group of players. The club signed third baseman Ke'Bryan Hayes to a \$70 million, eight-year deal in April 2022 and has followed up by locking down Reynolds for the rest of the decade. The signings give the team two youngish clubhouse fixtures to lean on while waiting for a farm system considered one of the best in the majors to start bearing fruit. "Reynolds) always

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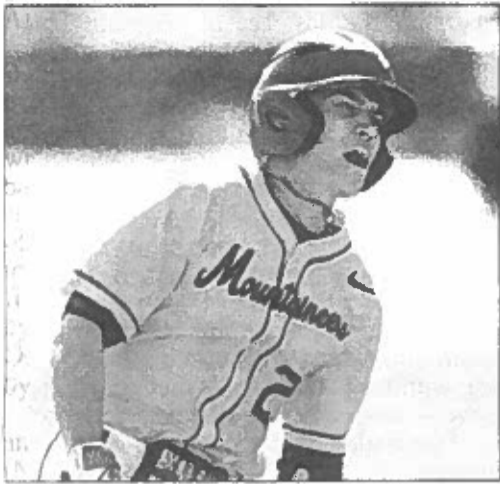
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HILL'S TOURS



AP File Photo

West Virginia's JJ Wetherholt runs the bases during a game from earlier this season. He is one of the leading hitters in NCAA Division I.

Baseball Is Fun Again For Mountaineers, Pirates

MORGANTOWN — All of a sudden, baseball season has become fun in these parts.

From Pittsburgh to Morgantown, the sport no longer is just a vehicle to fill time from March Madness to the start of football season.

Winning is fun, you see, especially in baseball, where professionally there is a game almost every day and collegiately there's four games a week.

What could be more fun than it was Monday morning when the fans woke up in these parts to see those Pirates leading the National League with a 16-7 record, the last seven of the victories consecutive, and to find the West Virginia Mountaineers leading the Big 12 with a sweep of TCU?

The players were frolicking in their success and maybe more so the fans, who are adopting the players on both squads as their heroes and being taken in not only by their play but by their personalities.



BOB HERTZEL
WV News

It started in Pittsburgh, perhaps, this past winter, when Andrew McCutchen came home. An influx of young talent coming together at the same time and the return of McCutchen brought back memories of years when the Pirates were laden with Hall of Fame talent and were challenging the Steelers for the top spot in the hearts of the city.

In Morgantown, West Virginia's baseball revival began with the arrival of Randy Mazey as coach and then with the construction of a beautiful ball park nestled into a hillside in Granville that has created an aura all its own.

Add all this together with the new major league clock rule that has livened up the game's action.

The sport is in the midst of a rebirth and Morgantown and Pittsburgh are along for the ride.

Please see FUN, Page 10



Photo by Seth Staskey

St. Clairsville's Hunter Hoffman works to the plate Monday against Harrison Central on the Memorial Park diamond.

St. C. Doubles Up Harrison In Class 4A Semifinal, 4-2

By SETH STASKEY
For The Intelligencer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Ohio Valley baseball fans couldn't have asked for more Monday afternoon inside Memorial Park.

A nip-and-tuck game in which the Red Devils led, 4-2, in the top of the seventh with two outs.

They had their ace — junior Hunter Hoffman — on the mound. Harrison Central, meanwhile, countered with the leading run at the plate in the form of multiple-time All-Ohioan Treston Nemeth.

The cliché that good pitching shuts down good hitting proved true once again. Hoffman, who got ahead in the count, got Nemeth, who had singled twice and drove a ball to the fence in the notch in left center in the first, out in front of an offering and he grounded weakly to second where Brody Saunders fielded it and threw on to Mickey Balgo at first, sending the Red Devils to another OVAC title game by the 4-2 score.

"Hunter really bulled his neck and made a great pitch to get (Nemeth) out front a little bit and we were able to hang on," St. C. head coach Tom Sliva said. "I can't say enough about what Hunter did because he was up in pitch count, but he didn't want to come out and wasn't coming out. We made plays

OVAC TOM BECHTEL SOFTBALL CLASS 2A SEMIFINALS

Wheeling Central Collects 18 Hits In Blanking Monroe, 8-0

Frizzell Strikes Out 14 In Win

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer
WHEELING

Top-seeded Wheeling Central wore its hitting shoes Monday night as it amassed 18 hits in an 8-0 blanking of No. 4 Monroe Central in an OVAC Class 2A semifinal on windy Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

Leadoff hitter Jensen Rine had four singles to lead the Maroon Knights (15-3). Brook Edge, Jocelyn Shaw and Maddie Miehle each had a trio of safeties.

"I was really proud of the girls today. The last few games we've really started hitting, but today was nice because we did it with runners on base," Wheeling Central head coach Buck Davidson said. "That really, really helped."

Please see HITS, Page 10



Photo by Kim North

Wheeling Central's Maddie Miehle slides across home plate before Monroe Central catcher Shyanne Baker can apply the tag during Monday's game on Ben's Field. The Maroon Knights won, 8-0, to advance to the championship game on Saturday.



Photo by Kim North

Shadyside first baseman Bella Honeywell applies a

Shadyside Outlasts Toronto, 10-6, in 8

Tigers Tally 4 Runs In Extra Inning

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Shadyside exploded for four runs in the top of the eighth inning late Monday night to outlast Toronto, 10-6, in an OVAC Class 2A semifinal on chill-filled Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

The third-seeded Tigers (15-6) will now play top-seeded Wheeling Central at 2 p.m. Saturday for the championship. The Maroon Knights blanked Monroe Central, 8-0, in the other semifinal.

"That was a huge win," said a relieved Shadyside head coach Robert Gorrell Jr. "We came through when we had to in the eighth."

Deadlocked at 6, Shadyside received a pair of 2-run singles from Abby Gorrell and Bella Honeywell in the top of the extra frame as eight Tigers went to the plate. Gorrell's game-winner came with no outs while Honeywell's was with two outs and gave

and outside of this organization believed in us, Butler said. "That's fine. We just want to continue to do what we know is possible."

It is a statistically improbable story: The No. 8 seed now leads the No. 1 seed 3-1, something that has only happened four other times since the NBA went to the 16-team playoff format in 1984.

But Butler has willed them there. He was 19 for 28 from the field. 15 of 18 from the foul line and added nine rebounds.

SHADYSIDE

(Continued from Page 9)

Saxton came in on the fifth to relieve starter Taylor Fulton. After giving up three runs in the fifth and a solo shot to Michelle Anderson in the sixth that drew the Red Knights even at 6. Saxton retired seven of the final eight hitters she faced, with five going down on strikes.

"Arianna was awesome," Coach Gorrell praised. "She settled down and got into a groove."

Saxton finished with nine punch outs in earning the win.

Toronto led 2-0 after two on the first of Michelle Anderson's two solo shots and an RBI groundout by Isabella Cattrell.

However, Shadyside evened the count with one swing of the bat in the third as Macy Hendershot lined a 2-out double to left-center.

The score remained that way until the fifth when the Tigers plated four runs for a 6-2 advantage. Gentry Brown curved a 2-run homer around the foul pole in left and Hendershot singled in a run. The fourth tally scored on an error.

Anderson singled in Laney Danko in the fifth and scored on an error, making it 6-4. Losing pitcher Andrea Reeves raced home on a wild pitch for a 6-5 reading.

Anderson tied the game in the sixth with her second roundtripper.

Taylor Fulton singled twice and rapped a pair of doublers to pace the Tigers' 13-hit attack. Honeywell drove in two runs with two singles and a double. Gorrell singled twice and knocked in a pair.

Reeves struck out four and walked six. She threw 155 pitches.

HITS

(Continued from Page 9)

What also helped was the fact that Josie Frizzell struck out 14 and only walked one while scattering five singles, of which four were infield hits.

"She pitched a great game. She kept them off balance," Davidson added. "It was just an all-around game by everybody."

Wheeling Central plated four runs in the bottom of the first on six hits. Edge drove in one with a single and Shaw made it 3-0 with a 2-run double to right. Frizzell's groundout chased in Shaw.

Frizzell picked up another RBI with a groundout in the third and Peyton Smith singled to bump the count to 6-0. A seventh run crossed on an error.

Ashlee Baker grounded out in the fourth as Edge scored.

Edge doubled twice and singled, while Shaw had two singles and a double. Miehle singled thrice. All nine starters had at least one hit.

When asked if it mattered who his team plays in the finals, Davidson said, "they are both really good teams. We split with Toronto but we didn't play Shadyside. It doesn't matter who we play because we still have to play a good game."

Monroe Central head coach Michael Brock knew his team would probably struggle hitting the ball.

"We've been in a hitting slump of late. In our last game we had to go to Caldwell and face the Mumaw girl. The Frizzell girl pitched a great game today," he said. "Defensively we played really well, but offensively we are struggling."

The Seminoles threw two runners out at the plate and one at third.

Wheeling Central plays No. 4 Shadyside Saturday at 3 p.m. for the title on Ben's Field.

Press on the condition of anonymity because the teams had not officially announced the deal.

Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst said at a pre-draft news conference that the deal hasn't been finalized, but should be completed before the draft begins Thursday. "We were expecting it to be done very quickly, hopefully soon," Gutekunst said. "A lot of things have been agreed upon. Some things to go through."

The Jets will receive Rodgers, the No. 15 over-

spent a few days in February contemplating his life and playing future during an isolation retreat in Oregon — while fans and reporters speculated about what he would decide.

He emerged and deliberated some more before deciding on March 10 he intended to play again — and for the Jets. Rodgers made his intentions official during an appearance on "The Pat McAfee Show" on YouTube and Sirius XM on March 15. That came after New York had sent a contingent that included owner Woody

— and the teams — wondering when or if the trade would be completed.

"We're anxious," Johnson told reporters at the league's annual meetings on March 28. "I guess, as we look forward, we're optimistic. But we have a plan, so we're willing to stick with our plan. And I don't think anybody is hyperventilating at this point."

It took a while, but the sides were finally able to agree on compensation. And the deal puts the one-time Super Bowl champion in New York

brother of Matt, Rodgers' coach in Green Bay the past four years.

Rodgers joins some promising young playmakers on offense, such as wide receiver Garrett Wilson, the AP Offensive Rookie of the Year, and running back Breece Hall.

"There's a lot of reasons why the Jets are attractive," Rodgers said during his appearance on "The Pat McAfee Show." "But there's one coach that has meant as much to me as any coach I've ever had. And he happens to be the coordinator there."

4A

(Continued from Page 9)

While the Red Devils are making plans to play Indian Creek, which knocked off defending conference champion Cambridge in the other semifinal, Harrison Central and head coach Mike Valesko are left to wonder what might have been.

"It was best on best and that's what you want in these situations," Valesko said. "It was a big moment and those usually work out in our favor, but it didn't this time around. This one is going to sting for a little bit, but credit to St. Clairsville."

Harrison Central had other scoring chances, including the sixth when Nemeth and Tucker Snyder produced back-to-back singles to start the frame. Hoffman, however, was unfazed. He proceeded to get the next three Huskies in order to escape the jam.

That followed up the Red Devils' biggest offensive uprising of the game when they had the heart of the order up against Harrison Central's Kaden Jurosko, who pitched well in defeat.

Braylen Blomquist led off the inning with a hustling double into no man's land in shallow left center. Junior Mason Myers followed by coming up just a foot or so shy of hitting a two-run home run to right. The speedster settled for a triple af-

ter the ball hit off the fence.

He then scored when junior Marcus Bush, who was brilliant once again defensively at third including turning a double play, singled into center. The ball was mishandled in the outfield and Bush alertly scampered to second.

"Those guys really came through (in the fifth)," Sliva said. "When you string hits together, it usually leads to runs. We were fortunate."

That extra 90 feet proved to be important. Bush got to third on a fly out to center. It looked like the Huskies had escaped the inning without further damage, but the throw to first after a ground ball was air mailed up the hillside behind first base for the game's lone unearned run.

As it turned out, that add-on run changed the entire Huskies' offensive approach in the seventh.

"We have to make a play with two outs and worst-case scenario it's 3-2 and then we had two guys on and with our style of play, we probably bunt and then squeeze again," Valesko said. "Those kinds of plays happen though. That's high school baseball and it (stinks) sometimes."

The Huskies led, 2-1, for a bulk of the game. They scored a single

run in both the second and third after St. C. struck for one in the first.

Jurosko sliced a triple down the right-field line and Kaden Dunkle dropped down a beautiful bunt to perfectly execute a squeeze play to put Harrison on top.

Anthony Pelegreen scored the first run of the game for the Huskies when he raced home on a wild pitch.

St. Clairsville, which got all five of its hits from the second through fifth spots in its order, got on the board first when Hoffman helped his own cause with a RBI single to score Myers, who had drawn a two-out walk.

Jurosko fanned seven, but he did issue six walks.

The Huskies' ace — senior Tre Rex — wasn't available to pitch because "he's hurt," according to Valesko.

St. Clairsville, which takes on OVAC 5A finalist Wheeling Park for the second time on the turf in Ohio County today, will be seeking its 13th OVAC baseball title.

"It's exciting for the kids to have the chance to play for an OVAC title," Sliva said. "We were able to (win it) a couple of years ago, but came up short last year, so it's nice to be back. We're really excited."

FUN

(Continued from Page 9)

The Mountaineers themselves, perhaps, are leading their own revival with a mix of talented players oozing personality, having as much fun as the fans themselves ... and the fans are eating it up like Joey Chestnut eats hot dogs.

During the sweep of TCU, more than 9,000 fans attended the games, some of it despite unseasonable weather, and they rocked and rolled in the stands, at one point in the sold out second game of the series creating a paper cup snake that is the 2023 equivalent of the old wave.

The players themselves, as Kevin Kinder of Blue-GoldNews.com noted a day ago, have picked up on it all, symbolized best by a rather unique gimmick that came out of the idle mind of pitcher Ben Hampton, who may just have had too much time on his hands between starts.

While other teams in the sports world had something to give to their heroes after a job well done, be it a touchdown or a turnover, a homer or a great catch, a slam dunk or blocked shot, WVU needed something more to connect with each other and its fans than just the traditional singing of "Country Roads" after victories.

Hampton put together — literally — a Pretzel Chain to be awarded on big hits or plays.

"You have to be as gentle as possible. Ben Hamp-

ton spent I don't know how long making that thing. You have to not break it. That's the only rule," said Sam White after wearing it following a home run. "It's super impressive. He would break the pretzel, lick it and put it back together."

"I just started putting it together and pretty soon it was a chain," Hampton told Kinder. "It wasn't something I had done before, but it turned out pretty well, and then it came out for the Kansas game. I'm surprised it lasted this long. It did get a little break (on Saturday) but I fixed that."

The glee is that this creates ripples out of the dugout into the stands, just as it does after home runs when they bring the team together for a photo.

In Pittsburgh, the Pirates offer a similar honor to those who deliver big moments, although nothing quite so fragile as a pretzel chain. They have a sword that they swashbuckle — if indeed that is a verb — through the dugout.

The sword comes compliments of a fan who calls herself "Pirates Queen Banshee", who explained on a Pittsburgh radio show that she talked with pitcher Mitch Keller and told him about her sword at a local brewery during an event.

They kept in touch via social media and she got it to Keller before a game to be awarded on home runs.

This has caught on so well that already there are Pirates sword T-shirts on the market.

One certainly can foresee in this NIL era, an inventive player/entrepreneur, getting someone to put on Mountaineer Pretzel T-shirts, or, even better, a Pirate Pretzel in a kit with instructions on making a chain.

Certainly, there's a history in such items, perhaps the prototype and most successful in all the world of sports was sportscaster Myron Cope's "Terrible Towel" from the Golden Age of the Super Bowl Steelers.

It was truly the first rally towel and sold for charity, the "Terrible Towel" raising more than \$6 million for the Allegheny Valley School, which cares for people with mental disabilities and physical disabilities.

"The Terrible Towel" was introduced at a playoff game in 1975 against the Baltimore Colts. Steelers linebacker Andy Russell in that game picked up a fumble as part of the "Steel Curtain" defense and rambled 93 yards for a touchdown, leading to a poem written by fan Lisa Benz that was sent to Cope, which read in part:

"He ran ninety-three like a bat out of hell."



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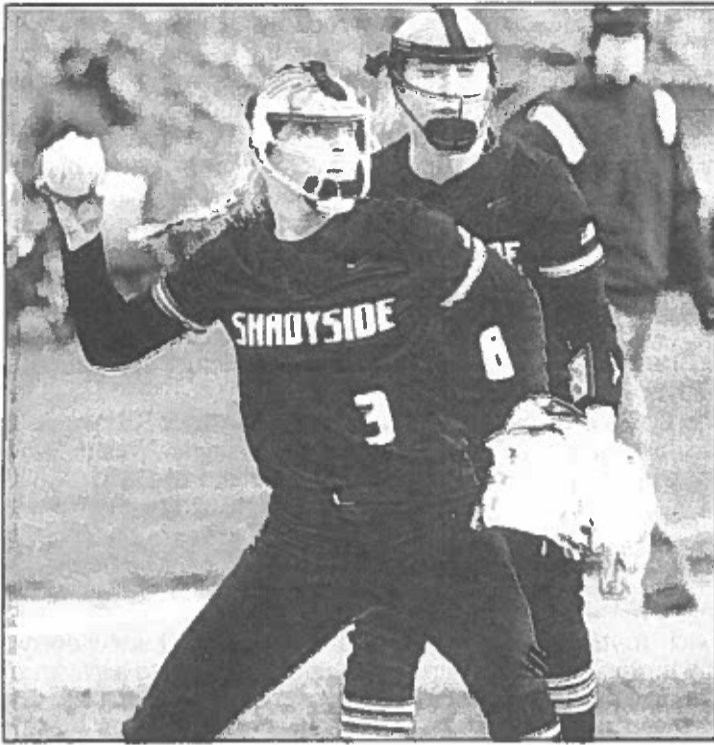
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Photo/KIM NORTH

SHADYSIDE PITCHER Taylor Fulton throws to first after fielding a ground ball during Monday's OVAC Class 2A semifinal against Toronto. The Tigers won in eight innings, 10-6.

Shadyside softball advances

By KIM NORTH
For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE - Shadyside exploded for four runs in the top of the eighth inning late Monday night to outlast Toronto, 10-6, in an OVAC Class 2A semifinal on chill-filled Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

The third-seeded Tigers (15-6) will now play top-seeded Wheeling Central at 2 p.m. Saturday for the championship. The Maroon Knights blanked Monroe Central, 8-0, in the other semifinal.

"That was a huge win," said a relieved Shadyside head coach Robert Gorrell Jr. "We came through when we had to in the eighth."

Deadlocked at 6, Shadyside received a pair of 2-run singles from Abby Gorrell and Bella Honeywell in the top of the ex-

tra frame as eight Tigers went to the plate. Gorrell's game-winner came with no outs, while Honeywell's was with two outs and gave Arianna Saxton some breathing room.

Saxton came in on the fifth to relieve starter Taylor Fulton. After giving up three runs in the fifth and a solo shot to Michelle Anderson in the sixth that drew the Red Knights even at 6, Saxton retired seven of the final eight hitters she faced, with five going down on strikes.

"Arianna was awesome," Coach Gorrell praised. "She settled down and got into a groove." Saxton finished with nine punch outs in earning the win.

Toronto led 2-0 after two on the first of Michelle Anderson's two solo shots and an RBI groundout by Isabella Cattrell.

However, Shadyside evened the count with one swing of the bat in the third as Macy Hen-

dershot lined a 2-out double to left-center.

The score remained that way until the fifth when the Tigers plated four runs for a 6-2 advantage.

Gentry Brown curved a 2-run homer around the foul pole in left and Hendershot singled in a run. The fourth tally scored on an error.

Anderson singled in Laney Danko in the fifth and scored on an error, making it 6-4. Losing pitcher Andrea Reeves raced home on a wild pitch for a 6-5 reading.

Anderson tied the game in the sixth with her second roundtripper.

Taylor Fulton singled twice and rapped a pair of doublers to pace the Tigers' 13-hit attack. Honeywell drove in two runs with two singles and a double. Gorrell singled twice and knocked in a pair.



AT LEFT: St. Clairsville's Zach Vickers (3) high fives Mason Myers after he scored the game's first run in the first inning. Also pictured is St. Clairsville bat boy Austin Fillipovich. The Red Devils posted a 4-2 victory against Harrison Central to advance to the Class 4A championship game. BELOW: ST. Clairsville first baseman Mickey Balgo records an out to complete a 5-3 double play as Harrison Central's Reed Arbaugh hustles down the baseline.

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

Bellaire baffles Linsly

By BUBBA KAPRAL
For the Times Leader

NEFFS - Bellaire was stymied by Linsly's Rocco Paolina Monday afternoon at John Blacker Field. The savvy sophomore pitched brilliantly in his first varsity start, holding the Big Reds to a single run.

One run, however, is often times enough when Jake Heatherington is toeing the rubber for Bellaire. The senior phenom turned in another brilliant effort as the hosts slipped past the Cadets, 1-0, in a 90-minute pitching special.

Heatherington, who intends to continue his career at Baldwin-Wallace, yielded just three hits while fanning 11 and walking only one.

"I couldn't find the zone in the first inning. I was struggling a little bit early," Heatherington said. "I talked to my dad and he said I was leaning back a little too much and throwing too much sidearm. I felt better as the game went on."

Paolina pitched like a season vet, holding Bellaire scoreless over the first five innings. The Reds' lone run was of the unearned variety, coming home on a throwing miscue with two outs. Paolina allowed just six hits while striking out three and walking one. He gave way to Jack Selmon with one out in the sixth.

"That kid (Paolina) pitched a whale of a game, especially when you consider it was his first varsity start. He really brought it to us," Bellaire head coach Bailey McGrath noted. "But what more can you ask of Jake. He is on a pitching roll like I have never seen before,

St. C. outlasts Harrison in 4A semi

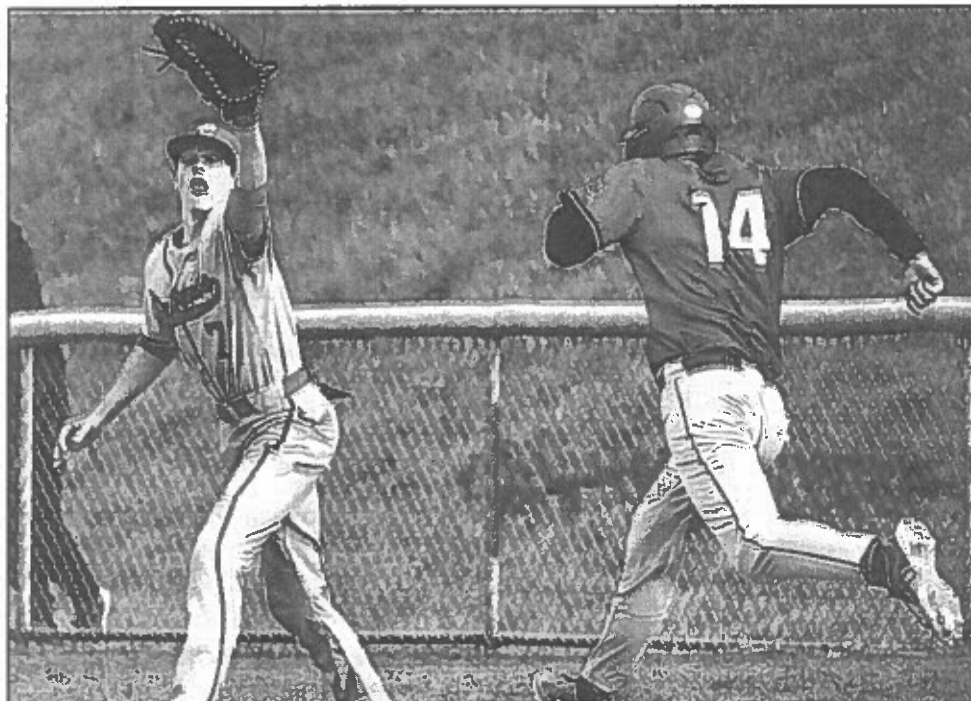
By SETH STASKEY
Times Leader Sports Editor

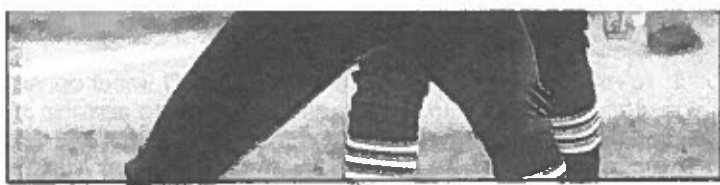
ST. CLAIRSVILLE - Ohio Valley baseball fans couldn't have asked for more Monday afternoon inside Memorial Park.

A nip-and-tuck game in which the Red Devils led, 4-2, in the top of the seventh with two outs.

They had their ace - junior Hunter Hoffman - on the mound. Harrison Central, meanwhile, countered with the leading run at the plate in the form of multiple-time All-Ohioan Treston Nemeth.

The cliché that good pitching shuts down good hitting proved true once again. Hoffman, who got ahead in the count, got Nemeth, who had singled twice and drove a ball to the fence in the notch in left center in the first, out in front of an offering and he grounded weakly to second where Brody Saunders fielded it and threw on to Mickey Balgo at first, sending the Red Devils to another OVAC title game by the





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Photo/KIM NORTH

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"Our bats weren't at their best today but Paolina had a lot to do with that. But with Jake, one run was enough," added the former Bridgeport High and West Liberty diamond standout. "I like how competitive we

St. C. outlasts Harrison in 4A semi

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

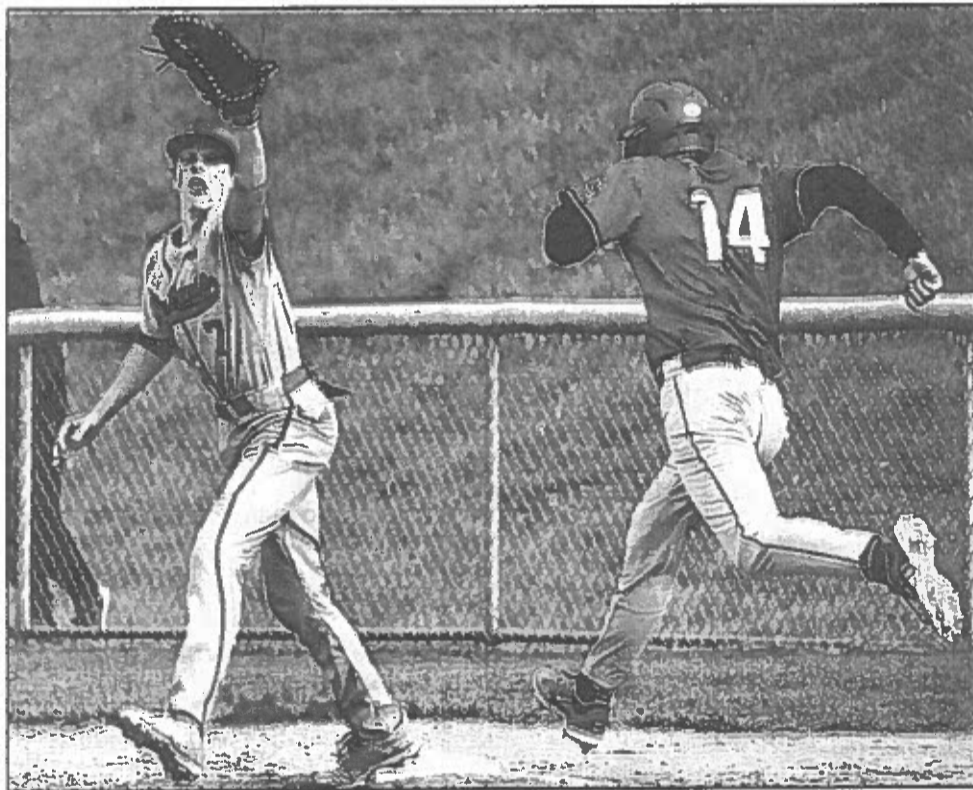
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"Hunter really bulled his neck and made a great pitch to get (Nemeth) out front a little bit and we were able to hang on," St. C. head coach Tom Sliva said. "I can't say enough about what Hunter did because he was up in pitch count, but he didn't want to come out and wasn't coming out. We made plays defensively and we got some key hits."



While the Red Devils are making plans to play Indian Creek, which knocked off defending conference champion Cambridge in the other semifinal, Harrison Central and head coach Mike Valesko are left to wonder what might have been.

"It was best on best and that's what you want in these situations," Valesko said. "It was a big moment and those usually work out in our favor, but it didn't this time around. This one is going to sting for a

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

See, **BELLAIRE**, Page B2

Wheeling Central too much for Monroe Central in 2A softball

By **KIM NORTH**
For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE - Top-seeded Wheeling Central wore its hitting shoes Monday night as it amassed 18 hits in an 8-0 blanking of No. 4 Monroe Central in an OVAC Class 2A semifinal on windy Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Sports Complex.

Leadoff hitter Jensen Rine had four singles to lead the Maroon Knights (15-3). Brook Edge, Jocelyn Shaw and Maddie Miehle each had a trio of safeties.

"I was really proud of the girls today. The last few games we've really started hitting, but today was nice because we did it with runners on

base," Wheeling Central head coach Buck Davidson said. "That really, really helped."

What also helped was the fact that Josie Frizzell struck out 14 and only walked one while scattering five singles, of which four were infield hits.

"She pitched a great game. She kept them off balance," Davidson added. "It was just an all-around game by everybody."

Wheeling Central plated four runs in the bottom of the first on six hits. Edge drove in one with a single and Shaw made it 3-0 with a 2-run double to right. Frizzell's groundout chased in Shaw.

Frizzell picked up another RBI with a groundout in the third and

See, **WHEELING**, Page B2



WHEELING CENTRAL'S Josie Frizzell is tagged out by Monroe Central's Juanna McElroy during Monday's OVAC Class 2A semifinal on Ben's Field at the I-470 Complex in Elm Grove.

Photo/KIM NORTH

un and Izzy Basnime each had two singles and a RBI.

Roawn Herman had a single, double and four RBI for the Bulldogs, while Hanna Brewer had two singles and a RBI.

River 10, Paden City 0

SARDIS — River's Ava Wohnhas did it with her arm and bat Monday afternoon in a five-inning blanking of Paden City.

In the circle, Wohnhas spun a no hitter with nine strikeouts. She also had a single, double and drove in two runs.

• Wheeling

Continued from Page B1

Peyton Smith singled to bump the count to 6-0. A seventh run crossed on an error.

Ashlee Baker grounded out in the fourth as Edge scored.

Edge doubled twice and singled, while Shaw had two singles and a double. Miehle singled thrice. All nine starters had at least one hit.

When asked if it mattered who his team plays in the finals, Davidson said, "they are both really good teams. We split with Toronto but we didn't play Shadyside. It doesn't matter who we play because we still have to play a good game."

Wood each had a RBI single.

Brooke Heavilin had a double and a single.

Lizzie McAninch led the Big Reds with a triple, single and RBI.

Martins Ferry 18, St. Clairsville 5
MARTINS FERRY — The Purple Riders completed the season sweep of the Red Devils by utilizing a pair of eight-run innings.

Ella McFarland got the win in the circle and she had a single and two RBI. Kaylynn Zinn had a double, single and two RBI, while Abby Snedeker had a

Monroe Central head coach Michael Brock knew his team would probably struggle hitting the ball.

"We've been in a hitting slump of late. In our last game we had to go to Caldwell and face the Mumaw girl. The Frizzell girl pitched a great game today," he said. "Defensively we played really well, but offensively we are struggling."

The Seminoles threw two runners out at the plate and one at third.

Wheeling Central plays No. 4 Shadyside Saturday at 3 p.m. for the title on Ben's Field.

Knights avenged a loss from last week by knocking off the Tigers at Fleming Field Monday afternoon.

Central received solid pitching from Brett Cover, who went the distance with eight strikeouts.

Shadyside received two singles from junior Ben Wach.

River 8, Frontier 4

HANNIBAL — River, which plays next Monday for the OVAC Class 2A title at Toronto against Steubenville Central, picked up a win against Frontier.

Guardians blanked by Rockies

CLEVELAND (AP) — Austin Gomber bounced back from a hideous start to get his first win, Jurickson Proffar drove in three runs and the Colorado Rockies won for just the second time in 13 games, beating the Cleveland Guardians 6-0 on Monday night.

Gomber (1-4) held the Guardians to three singles — all by Steven Kwan — in five scoreless innings. The left-hander was pounded for nine runs and nine hits in just two innings in a loss to

Brooke's Aiden Florenzano had two singles and drove in three to spark the Bruins.

Union Local received a double and two RBI from Dylan Higgenbotham.

Monroe Central 13, Belpre 0

WOODSFIELD — The Seminoles scored early and often en route to claiming a five-inning victory for their fifth win.

Jake Winland had three RBI thanks to a home run and a single. Westin Swallow had a double and two RBI. Xavier Kinney had a single and two RBI.

Pittsburgh on April 19.

Following that game, Gomber opened up about feeling pressure to perform after coming over from St. Louis last year as part of the trade that sent All-Star third baseman Nolan Arenado from the Rockies to the Cardinals.

Gomber was disappointed in himself, and let it affect him on the mound.

But after talking to some teammates over the past few days, the left-hander felt much more at ease.

• St.C.

Continued from Page B1

little bit, but credit to St. Clairsville."

Harrison Central had other scoring chances, including the sixth when Nemeth and Tucker Snyder produced back-to-back singles to start the frame. Hoffman, however, was unfazed. He proceeded to get the next three Huskies in order to escape the jam.

That followed up the Red Devils' biggest offensive uprising of the game when they had the heart of the order up against Harrison Central's Kaden Jurosko, who pitched well in defeat.

Braylen Blomquist led off the inning with a hustling double into no man's land in shallow left center. Junior Mason Myers followed by coming up just a foot or so shy of hitting a two-run home run to right. The speedster settled for a triple after the ball hit off the fence.

He then scored when junior Marcus Bush, who was brilliant once again defensively at third including turning a double play, singled into center. The ball was mishandled in the outfield and Bush alertly scampered to second.

"Those guys really came through (in the fifth)," Sliva said. "When you string hits together, it usually leads to runs. We were fortunate."

That extra 90 feet proved to be important. Bush got to third on a fly out to center. It looked like the Huskies had escaped the inning without further damage, but the throw to first after a ground ball was air mailed up the hillside behind first base for the game's lone unearned run.

As it turned out, that add-on run changed the entire Huskies' offensive approach in the seventh.

"We have to make a play with two outs and worst-case scenario it's 3-2 and then we had two guys on and with our style of play, we probably bunt and then squeeze again," Valesko said. "Those kinds of plays happen though. That's high school baseball and it (stinks) sometimes."

The Huskies led, 2-1, for a bulk of the game. They scored a single run in both the second and third after St. C. struck for one in the first.

Jurosko sliced a triple down the right-field line and Kaden Dunkle dropped down a beautiful bunt to perfectly execute a squeeze play to put Harrison on top. Anthony Pelegreen scored the first run of the game for the Huskies when he raced home on a wild pitch.

St. Clairsville, which got all five of its hits from the second through fifth spots in its order, got on the board first when Hoffman helped his own cause with a RBI single to score Myers, who had drawn a two-out walk.

Jurosko fanned seven, but he did issue six walks. The Huskies' ace — senior Tre Rex — wasn't available to pitch because "he's hurt," according to Valesko.

St. Clairsville, which takes on OVAC 5A finalist Wheeling Park for the second time on the turf in Ohio County today, will be seeking its 13th OVAC baseball title.

"It's exciting for the kids to have the chance to play for an OVAC title," Sliva said. "We were able to (win it) a couple of years ago, but came up short last year, so it's nice to be back. We're really excited."

Reds rally

CINCINNATI (AP)

— TJ Friedl drove in the game-winning run with a ninth-inning single and the Cincinnati Reds snapped a six-game losing streak with a 7-6 come-from-behind win over the Texas Rangers on Monday night.

Jose Leclerc (0-1) walked Jonathan India to lead off the ninth. India went to second on a passed ball and scored on Friedl's sharp single to right off left-hander Will Smith.

The Reds came back from a 5-1 third-inning deficit and tied the game.

• Bellaire

Continued from Page B1

were and how the guys were rallying around each other. It is a nice win over a team playing for an OVAC title."

The win moved Bellaire over the .500 mark at 7-6. The Big Reds host Barnesville Wednesday.

Linsly, meanwhile, has bigger fish to fry as the Cadets host Martins Ferry today in the OVAC 3A semifinals. Coach Anthony Reasbeck's Riders are the defending conference kingpins.

"Rocco pitched super in his first varsity start. He handled himself very well," said acting Linsly head coach Eric Petho, filling in for Jay Cartwright who had a family commitment. "Heatherington is tough to beat. He pitched an excellent game."

"Give Bellaire credit. They do the little things right that add up to big things," added the former St. John Central and WVU catching star. "Bellaire is doing things the right way. Bailey is building a very nice program."

Bellaire's senior ace Brayden Roth opened the decisive sixth inning with a single. He was forced out on a fielder's choice off the bat of Chance Maffe.

Sophomore Landon Preston then coaxed a walk. Selmon induced a flyball for the second out of the inning. The throw of an infield grounder off the bat of Kaden Banal sailed over the first baseman's head, enabling Maffe to scoot home for the game-winner.

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Ferry grad Brinker settling into new role with Titans

When Roger Goodell steps to the podium Thursday evening at the NFL Draft and proclaims the Tennessee Titans are on the clock, an Ohio Valley native will be directly involved with the pick.

Martins Ferry graduate Chad Brinker was hired in February as the team's new assistant general manager after spending 13 seasons as part of the Green Bay Packers organization.

"You always have to be prepared for when an opportunity comes," Brinker said during a recent phone interview.

The thing about this opportunity is the fact that Brinker didn't necessarily see it coming whatsoever.

"This (job in Tennessee) happened really fast and I wasn't expecting it," Brinker said. "I had been preparing myself for when an opportunity did come and now it's come to fruition, and I couldn't be more excited."

Though driven and highly motivated, Brinker was quite happy — other than in the crux of winter time — in Green Bay. But, certain opportunities only come around so often.

"Working for the Green Bay Packers allows you to be picky (about other jobs) because it's such a great place and you don't leave there for just a 'little' promotion," Brinker said. "This is a huge promotion for me and one of the ones you can't turn down. We made Green Bay our home for 13 years and all three of our daughters were born there, so it's tough to leave, but I was ready for the next step and opportunity."

Tennessee fired its general manager in December despite the team having a 7-5 record at the time and leading the AFC South.

On Jan. 18, the Titans formally announced Ran Carthon, who had been with the 49ers organization as their new GM.

Carthon and Brinker had never worked together before or, according to Brinker, known each other very well at all. Brinker's first memory of Carthon goes back to his playing days at Ohio University when the Bobcats played against the University of Florida where Carthon was a member of the team, too.

"It was 2002 and (Carthon) was a running back at Florida," Brinker recalled. "I was playing, so I knew of Ran all the way back then and our paths crossed a few times on the road in scouting and we may have talked here and there, but we never like sat down and had dinner together or anything. We just had a mutual respect."

So Carthon was looking for certain traits in an assistant general manager. Experience in scouting, salary cap and even analytics were some of the bigger ones. Brinker checked all of those boxes.

"I had the right skill set for what he was trying to do," Brinker said. "Pro football is a very connected world and everyone really knows everyone, so if you do good work, treat people the right way and bring value to an organization, other clubs see that and take note."

Brinker showed up for work at Lambeau Field in Green Bay when his now former boss — Packers GM Brian Gutekunst came into tell him that he approved a request through the league for another organization to talk with him about a job.

"I had no idea when I walked into work that morning that it was going to be the last time I walked in there as an employee," Brinker said.

Brinker got a call shortly after finding out the permission had been granted from Carthon who basically offered him the job.

"It happened that quickly," Brinker said. "I really didn't even interview. It was kind of a straight hire, which I was even a little surprised by. And the next thing you know, I am looking for flights to Nashville."

Brinker, who broke into the NFL as a scouting assistant in 2010, has steadily climbed the ladder. He spent six seasons as a pro scout then three seasons as assistant director of pro scouting and salary cap analyst before landing his final promotion with the Packers.

"I can't thank the Packers organization enough for what they have done for me and how they've supported me over the years," Brinker said. "Green Bay gave me the chance to have experiences in so many areas that it really helped me grow from



AT LEFT: River rightfielder Carson Makris races in to catch a fly ball during the first inning of Friday's OVAC Class 2A semifinal at Toronto. BELOW: RIVER'S Peyton Blue (right) and Brody Lollathin celebrate the final out of River's 9-3 win over the Red Knights Friday. River will meet Steubenville Central for the conference title next week.

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

River to play for OVAC 2A title

By SETH STASKEY
Times Leader Sports Editor

TORONTO — River wasted no time in showing perennial OVAC 2A power and top-seeded Toronto that it had come to the Knights Baseball Complex to play Friday afternoon.

Lead-off hitter Lucas Dennis greeted Toronto ace Dom Bouscher with a lined single to left. He stole second, moved to third on a passed ball and then scored on a ground out by Pilot sophomore Peyton Blue.

The tone was officially set and River didn't take its foot off the gas en route to a 9-3 victory. The Pilots denied the Red Knights a

chance at a repeat and will play for their first title since 2003 against Steubenville Catholic Central, which took out Wheeling Central in the other 2A semifinal.

"We got off to a good start offensively and we were very aggressive on the bases," a satisfied River head coach Tim Blue said. "We put a lot of pressure on them, which was our game plan coming. We wanted to make them make plays."

The Pilots (9-8) plan worked quite well. Toronto, which is ranked No. 1 in the Division IV state poll, committed six errors. On top of that, the Red Knights pitching staff walked three

See, RIVER, Page C2



Bellaire routs River in softball, 15-5

By TRACY WATSON
For The Times Leader

ST. JOE - Bellaire softball coach Dave Menendez has been waiting all season for his Lady Big Reds to play a complete game and his team did just that Friday afternoon against visiting River.

Taking advantage of nine hits, 10 walks and seven Pilot errors, Bellaire scored early and often in rolling to a five-inning victory.

Freshman No. 9 hitter Marissa Pacifico collected a triple and home

run while chasing home three runs and Riley Porter pitched three innings in relief to pick up the win in the circle as the Big Reds routed River by a 15-5 margin at Bellaire Middle School.

"That is the first complete game we have played all season," Menendez said with a smile. "And the fact that we did not commit an error is absolutely huge for us."

The Big Reds (6-9) got things started with four runs in the home-half of the first, thanks in large part to River (7-9) mistakes. Allie Ault led off with a base hit, stole second and went

to third on a wild pitch. After Sophia Porter walked Bellaire used a double steal to plate the first run of the game with Porter being thrown out at second.

Riley Porter walked to keep things going before Gianna Schmidt reached on an error. Both of them scored on an error before MJ Jackson walked and eventually came around on the Pilots' third miscue of the frame to make it 4-0 after one.

Sophia Porter made it 5-0 in the second when she doubled, went to third See, BELLAIRE, Page C2



Photo/KIM NORTH

WHEELING UNIVERSITY senior Emily Holzopf tracks her chip shot during a match against Point Park at Wheeling Country Club on Thursday.

Holzopf puts finishing touches on brilliant golf career at Wheeling

By KIM NORTH
For The Times Leader

WHEELING - Thursday was a bittersweet for Emily Holzopf.

The Wheeling University senior had just finished her last round of golf at the sun-baked Wheeling Country Club course during a match-play event against Point Park College. It was the first home match of her career.

"It was like you're playing at home, but then it's over," she said of her collegiate career.

The most-decorated female golfer in program history since Kasey Frazier in 2018, Holzopf has been a staple of the program for four years.

A two-time first team all-MEC selection, Holzopf, who attended Wheeling University on a basketball scholarship after scoring more than 2,000 career points - a school-record no matter the gender - at Buckeye Local High School.

The highlight of her career came as a junior when she won the Mountain East Conference championship. She finished second this year after shooting a 74 to lead after the first day.

"That was nice but I'm striving for more," she said.

Holzopf is an exercise science major who is on track to graduate this spring.

"I'm not sure about a job yet," she admitted. "I think I'm going to try and pursue golf first, and then see what happens. I'm going to practice a lot this summer and see where that leads me," she said when asked about the possibilities of turning pro some day.

"Lots of good friendships. Lots of good play, bad play and having fun," she said of her college golf memories.

"Emily is an awesome leader. She is the first to practice, the last to leave and the one that ends up

See, HOLZOPFEL, Page C2

Dodaers place RHP Grove on 15-day IL

ians scheduled for Friday night was postponed by wet weather.

The game was rescheduled for Saturday as part of a doubleheader beginning at 3:10 p.m. EDT. The postponement may have put a matchup of Cy Young Award winners in

der (1-0, 3.58 ERA) in the first game. Right-hander Sandy Alcantara (1-2, 5.47 ERA) are scheduled to start the second game after their appearances Friday night were washed out. The tarp was placed on the field around 5 p.m., bringing an early end

3.58 ERA) and Cleveland right-hander Zach Plesac (1-0, 6.92 ERA) are scheduled to start the second game after their appearances Friday night were washed out.

The tarp was placed on the field around 5 p.m., bringing an early end

Cleveland had 11 games postponed by weather issues last season and played 11 double-headers. The Guardians played a doubleheader in Detroit on Tuesday after Monday's game was rained out.

Both teams are 10-9. The Marlins won four of six on a homestand against Arizona and San Francisco. The Guard-

scored in two of 27 in- games and he's one of them." **ON HIS WAY** The Guardians plan for LHP Logan Allen to make his major league debut Sunday against the Marlins. Allen, one of Cleveland's top pitching prospects, has allowed two earned runs and struck out 20 over 14 1/3 innings in three starts at Triple-A Columbus this season.

PRaise FOR TITO Miami's first-year manager Skip Schumaker thinks the Guardians' Terry Francona is the "best manager in the game."

"Players relate to him," Schumaker said. "They can't wait to go to the field. Guys that love baseball love to play for guys like Tito. He's great not

• Holzopfel

Continued from Page C1

cleaning out the van," Wheeling University golf coach and Wheeling Country Club professional Rich Conwell said.

"I've told Emily, her mom and her aunt who have followed her every step of the way, if anyone can make a career out of this, it is Emily," Conwell added.

When asked what

makes her so good at the sport, he said, "she hits it (the ball) very, very far and her mental strength is overwhelming. If something goes wrong, she doesn't even remember it. She has a very selective memory, which is very good for a golfer. She has the right mindset to continually improve her game and she has a deep

belief, not conceit, in herself. She would never blame anybody for not achieving something because it is completely in control.

"It's been a pleasure to coach a player of her caliber.

"She knows when to turn it on and she will be the first to help anyone."

• Bellaire

Continued from Page C1

on a wild pitch and scored on another River error.

Coach David Wright's Pilots came to life in the third thanks to the long ball. Losing pitcher Addison Kovach began the inning with a home run to straight away center field. After Ava Wohnhas walked Rylee Knight followed with a two-run blast with Hannah Raper going back-to-back to cut the deficit to 5-4.

The Reds, who had five runs but only two hits through two frames, got the bats going in the third as well with Lizzie McAninch blasting a one-out solo home run to make it 6-4. Following a walk Ashlyn Rose doubled and Pacifico brought both of them home with a triple down the right field line. Ault then tripled to the same spot and later scored on an error to push the margin to 10-4.

Knight's second homer of the game, a solo-shot with one out in the fifth was her eighth of the season, setting a new River school record.

Bellaire capped things off with five in the bottom of the inning with three walks

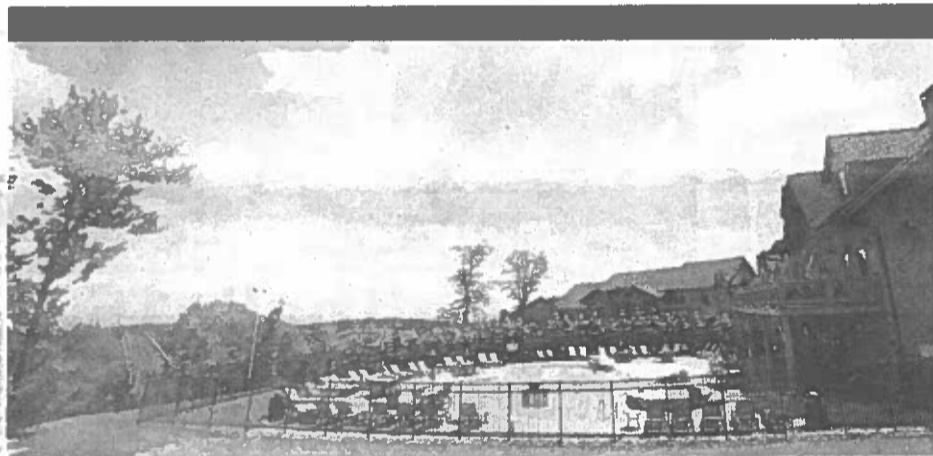
and an error lending a hand. Pacifico led off with a home run while Schmidt had a two-run single in the frame and Rose chased home the game-winning run with a two-out base hit to center.

In all, the Big Reds had seven runs score by hitters that either walked or reached on an error.

"We are usually on the other side of things like that," Menendez added. "It was nice seeing Pacifico have a good game, she is only a freshman and doesn't start every game for us. Overall, everyone contributed (Friday) and that is what we preach, even though it is usually just one or two girls doing the hitting on any given night."

Pacifico, Rose and Ault each had a pair of hits for Bellaire while Kovach and Knight had two hits each for River.

"You can't have that many walks and errors," Wright said. "Their bats got hot and when you put the ball in play you put stress on the defense and we just didn't react well. We couldn't hold them down at all."



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• Brinker

Continued from Page C1

"Two ways you get prepared for these types of roles is to have a mentor and someone champion and train you," Brinker said. "I had that in Russ Ball. I feel well-prepared for this role (in Tennessee) and obviously there are things you come across that you'd never expect, but there isn't anything that I don't feel like I don't know where to look to find the answer. Green Bay has given me the tools to succeed. Now I have to go do it."

At the encouragement of the Packers, Brinker owns an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

"I was taking classes and was peers with people who were preparing to be CEOs of companies and are some of the brightest students in the country," Brinker recalled. "Green Bay supports me not only to take the classes, but during the 25 hours outside of the classroom doing the work and assignments."

Add all of this up and it's not difficult to see why Carthon didn't need to spend a lot of time getting to know Brinker enough to hire him.

"It's similar to being a player (in the NFL)," Brinker said. "You can have all of the skills and talent in the world, but it means nothing unless you perform. I have been a role player, so to speak, but now I am a starter and I have to produce. I have to do everything I can to support Ran, (Titans head coach) Mike Vrabel and this team with the direction we're heading."

Brinker, who calls his first few months on a job a whirlwind, is still getting to know people inside the orga-

"Ran gave me an opportunity to see that side, meet other club owners and be in that environment," Brinker said. "It was a big deal and very special to me and my wife (Rochelle), who was able to attend as well. It was just another opportunity for growth."

Brinker, who admitted he's a work-a-holic to a degree, has been burning the midnight oil since arriving in Nashville. He's at the office by 5 a.m. and not leaving until 10 p.m. or so.

"My father spent 40-plus years working in the coal mine and I probably got a little bit of that work-a-holic gene from him," Brinker said. "I know I am not going into a coal mine, but I am still working to support my family and trying to best use the talents and opportunities I've been given. I want to maximize those things to the fullest. It just so happens that I get to do it in the NFL."

Brinker, a strong family man, has made sure to continually be in touch with his wife and daughters, who will re-locate to Middle Tennessee once the current school year is completed.

"I am definitely looking forward to my family getting down here," Brinker said. "It's been tough being away. It's actually the first time ever of being a part like this."

Brinker said he still tries to make sure he gets back to Ohio Valley to visit family and friends every summer. He will never forget where he came from and he's proud to be a Purple Rider.

"I will always cherish those moments I had in Martins Ferry and the opportunity to play for Coach Dave," Brinker said. "I am still really close with a lot of people like Coach Dave, Dirk Fitch, Tom Brainerd, Justin Kunkle, Tommy

■ 2 p.m. — Notre Dame Spring Game, South Bend, Ind., Peacock
 ■ 4 p.m. — Wisconsin Spring Game, Madison, Wis., BTN

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

■ 1 p.m. — Toronto at N.Y. Yankees, MLB
 ■ 4 p.m. — Regional Coverage: Chicago White Sox at Tampa Bay or N.Y. Mets at San Francisco, FOX
 ■ 6:30 p.m. — Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, ATSN
 ■ 10 p.m. — Regional Coverage: St. Louis at Seattle or Kansas City at L.A. Angels, MLB

NBA PLAYOFFS

■ 1 p.m. — Eastern Conference First Round: Philadelphia at Brooklyn, Game 4, TNT
 ■ 3:30 p.m. — Western Conference First Round: Phoenix at L.A. Clippers, Game 4, TNT
 ■ 7:40 p.m. — Eastern Conference First Round: Milwaukee at Miami, Game 3, ESPN
 ■ 10 p.m. — Western Conference First Round: Memphis at L.A. Lakers, ESPN

NHL PLAYOFFS

■ 4 p.m. — Western Conference First Round: Vegas at Winnipeg, Game 3, TBS
 ■ 7 p.m. — Eastern Conference First Round: Toronto at Tampa Bay, Game 3, TBS
 ■ 8 p.m. — Eastern Conference First Round: New Jersey at N.Y. Rangers, Game 3, ABC
 ■ 10 p.m. — Western Conference First Round: Colorado at Seattle, Game 3, TBS

PRO GOLF

■ 3 p.m. — PGA Tour: The Zurich Classic of New Orleans, Third Round, TPC Louisiana, Avondale, La., CBS

SUNDAY'S BEST AUTO RACING

■ 3 p.m. — NASCAR Cup Series: The GEICO 500, Talladega Superspeedway, Talladega, Ala., FOX

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

■ 1:35 p.m. — Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, ATSN
 ■ 7 p.m. — N.Y. Mets at San Francisco at Houston, ESPN

NBA PLAYOFFS

■ 1 p.m. — Eastern Conference First Round: Cleveland at New York, Game 4, ABC
 ■ 3:30 p.m. — Western Conference First Round: Sacramento at Golden State, Game 4, ABC
 ■ 7 p.m. — Eastern Conference First Round: Boston at Atlanta, Game 4, TNT
 ■ 9:30 p.m. — Western Conference First Round: Denver at Minnesota, TNT

PRO GOLF

■ 3 p.m. — PGA Tour: The Zurich Classic of New Orleans, Final Round, TPC Louisiana, Avondale, La., CBS

USFL FOOTBALL

■ 1 p.m. — New Jersey vs. Pittsburgh in Canton, Ohio, NBC
 ■ 7 p.m. — Michigan vs. Philadelphia at Canton, Ohio

XFL FOOTBALL

■ 3 p.m. — Houston at Arlington, ESPN
 ■ 7 p.m. — Vegas at Seattle, ESPN2

Saturday At Milan Puskar Stadium

By **BOB HERTZEL**
 WV News

MORGANTOWN — This one's for the kids.

We're talking about Saturday's West Virginia football Gold-Blue Spring Game at Milan Puskar Field that kicks off at noon.

On the surface, it is a game for the players, the end of spring drills, one last chance to compete ... but they are not the real beneficiaries of this game.

They have all summer and fall to state their case for starting jobs and playing time, time to be evaluated and developed.

No, this one's for the kids. It's a day that benefits that

beautiful new Children's Hospital that sits there in the Blue Parking lot, where there are a thousand stories being written every day, stories far more meaningful than anything a sportswriter such as myself can write in a lifetime.

And, to a lesser degree, it is for the healthy children of the community of the North Central area of West Virginia. It is for the children of the state and for the neighboring states.

Any place that heals the sick, eases the pain, cares for the infirmed ... those who are too young to understand what



Photo Provided
 West Virginia players wave at WVU Medicine Children's hospital prior to entering Milan Puskar Stadium in November.

has hit them and too young to this special connection, a have to suffer is a place that bond that echoes throughout deserves a special day, a special history. weekend.

Athletes and children have Please see Game, Page C2

OVAC BASEBALL SEMIFINALS

Wheeling Park Baseball Opens New Field With 5-2 Victory

Patriots Top Brooke In Class 5A Semis; Will Face University For Championship

By **KIM NORTH**
 Staff Writer

WHEELING — What a better way to christen your new \$1.5 million baseball field than to win an OVAC Class 5A semifinal game against your arch-rival.

Wheeling Park's road warriors, who have played their home games at West Liberty University's Kovalick Field this season while work on their home field took place, made their home debut on the all-turf facility one to remember with a 5-2 victory over Brooke on Friday before a large gathering on a beautiful day for baseball.

"This was a really nice way to break in this new facility," Wheeling Park head coach Steve Myers said. "That's a good ball team over there. This win means a lot to our seniors. We've got seven of them that have been with us for a while.

Please see Field, Page C2

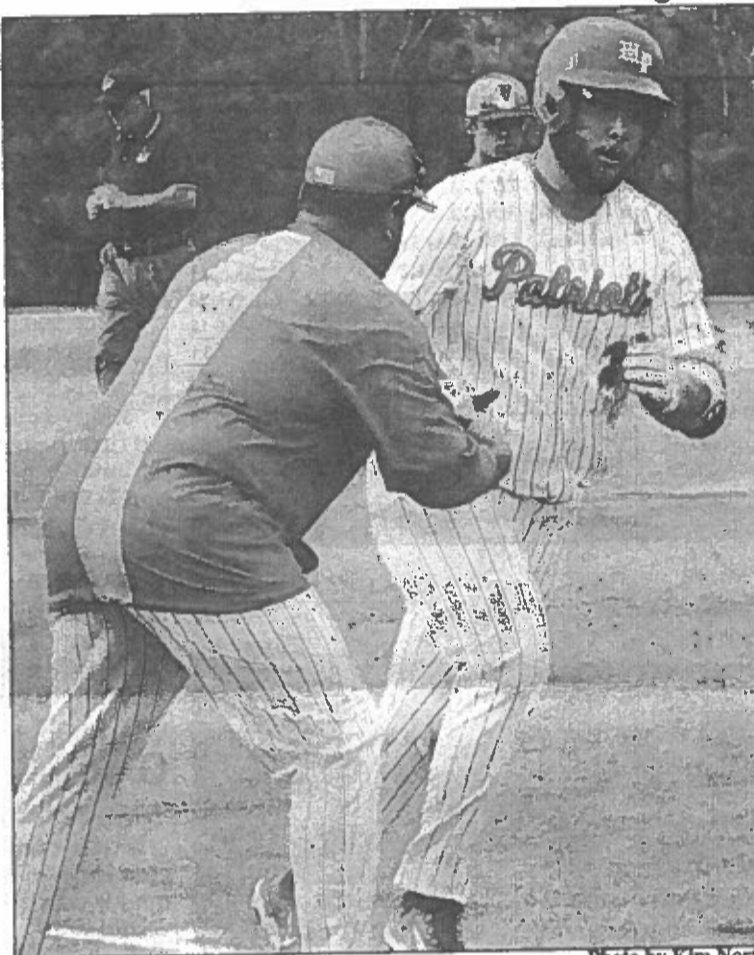


Photo by Kim North
 Wheeling Park's Gian Degenova receives congratulations from head coach Steve Myers after Degenova hit a solo home run to deep left-center in the third inning to give the Patriots a 1-0 lead Friday against Brooke in an OVAC Class 5A semifinal. Wheeling Park won, 5-2.



Photo by Andrew Grimm
 Wheeling Central starting pitcher Seth Cover delivers to the plate Friday against Steubenville Catholic.

Central Falls In 2A To SCC, 5-4

By **ANDREW GRIMM**

For the Sunday News-Register STEUBENVILLE — Catholic Central rode a high-powered offense to the top seed in the OVAC Class 2A tournament, but that offense was slowed down for nearly five innings in Friday evening's conference semifinal at Vaccaro Field.

Please see 2A, Page C2

Holzopfel Completes College Golfing Career at Wheeling U.

By **KIM NORTH**
 Staff Writer

WHEELING — Thursday was a bittersweet day for Emily Holzopfel. The Wheeling University senior had just finished her last round of golf at the sun-baked Wheeling Country Club course during a match-play event against Point Park College. It was the first home match of her career.

"It was like you're playing at home, but then it's over," she said of her collegiate career.

The most-decorated female golfer in program history since Kasey Frazier in 2018, Holzopfel has been a staple of the program for four years.

A two-time first team all-MEC selection, Holzopfel, who attended Wheeling University on a basketball scholarship after scoring more than 2,000 career points - a school-record no matter gender - at Buckeye Local High School.

The highlight of her career came as a junior when she won the Mountain East Conference championship. She finished second this year after shooting a 74 to lead after the first day.

"That was nice but I'm striving for more," she said. Holzopfel is an exercise science major who is on track to graduate this spring. "I'm not sure about a job yet," she admitted. "I think I'm going to try and pursue golf first, and then see what happens. I'm going to practice a lot this summer and see where that leads me," she said when asked about the possibilities of turning pro some day.

Please see Holzopfel, Page C2



EMILY HOLZOPFEL

Pirates Beat Reds For 5th Straight Win

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Connor Joe had three hits and reached base four times to back a strong start by

running the bases really hard and that type of baseball puts a lot of pressure on the other team."

"I think he gets overlooked," Shelton said. "He was a guy we targeted in the offseason because of the way he controls at bats, and



FIELD

(Continued from Page C1)

"Gian has hit some balls like that this year, but you could just see from his vibe that he really wanted to win this game," Myer said Degenova. "He had two big hits for us and then came in and closed it out."

With the win, their second over the Bruins this season, sends the Patriots to their third consecutive Class 5A final where they will meet University, a 10-4 victor over city rival Morgantown, last night. Wheeling Park had been 1-1 against the Mohigans in the past two OVAC finals, winning in 2021 before losing last spring.

Wheeling Park's Luke Doyle and Brooke's Garrett Hornick were hooked up in a pitcher's duel until one swing of the bat in the bottom of the third.

However, Hornick left a 2-2 curveball up in the zone with two outs and Wheeling Park senior Gian Degenova blasted it well over the fence in deep left-center for a 1-0 lead.

Two innings later, Degenova blistered a two-out single through the left side of the infield as Nate Bittinger hustled around from second to make it 2-0.

A three-run sixth gave Doyle some breathing room at 5-0. Grant Simons lined a double over the centerfielder's head leading off and came around to score on Quinn Jamison's single to center. Jamison advanced to second when Nate Simon bunted for a hit. Tino Nardone sacrificed both runners up 90 feet before a wild pitch allowed Jamison to race home and Simon advanced to third. He would score on Nate Bittinger's groundout.

Doyle got the win with three punch outs and just two walks. He allowed four singles among his 94 pitches, of which 55 were strikes.

"Luke has had a good effort every time he has taken the mound for us," Myers said. "I'm sure that he wanted to finish the game, but sometimes you give the ball to someone else and let them do their job."

Brooke plated a pair of runs in the seventh as Raymond DeFranco drew a two-out walk. Anthony Bachinski's sinking liner to left dropped and allowed DeFranco to take third with Bachinski pulling into second. Degenova took over on the mound for Doyle and DeFranco sped home on a wild pitch and Bachinski took third where he raced home when on an errant pickoff attempt.



LUKE DOYLE

"If you would have told me yesterday (Thursday) that we'd be down 2-0 in the sixth inning, I would've been really happy with that," Brooke head coach C.J. Besece said. "Garrett pitched a heck of a game for us. He really stepped it up today. He pitched great and all the guys in the dugout feel for him right now. They feel like they should've done more for him, but we couldn't get the clutch hit when we needed it."

"Their pitcher pitched great. We didn't quit. We battled back and scored a couple of runs there in the seventh with two outs," he added. "I just told them that we've got more goals ahead of us. Sure, making the OVAC finals was one of our goals, but the season isn't over. We've got a lot of baseball ahead of us."

Bachinski struck out five, walked two and yielded six hits. He was relieved by Charlie Fuscardo in the seventh.

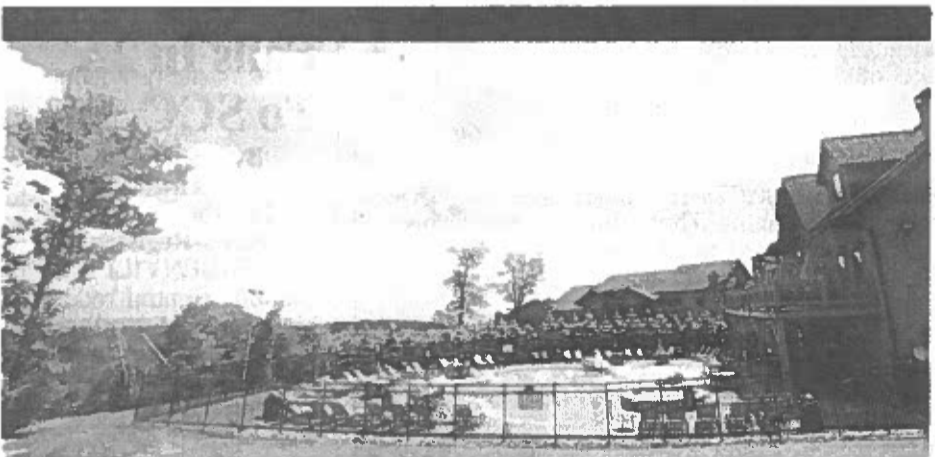
"Charlie is our only senior, so we will be back here next year."

Simons added a single to his double. Bachinski had two singles.

The time and date for the Class 5A final will be announced sometime Sunday.

GAME NOTES

- The start of the game was delayed 45 minutes due to Brooke having a problem getting a bus.
- The game took 1-hour, 38-minutes.



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From cozy slopeside condos to

2A

(Continued from Page C1)

However, once the offensive prowess of the Crusaders finally emerged, it did so in a big way.

After being held without a hit through 4 2/3 by Wheeling Central's Seth Cover, Don Young's club scored four runs with two outs to turn a two-run hole into a two-run lead, then fended off a rally by the Maroon Knights for a 5-4 victory to advance to the conference title game next weekend.

"That game was our whole season in a microcosm," Young, the Crusaders head coach, said.

"We just stuck with it and stayed the course. Their pitcher is really good, we felt like we could get some good swings on him if we just stayed with it - and we did."

"We talk about competing the whole game, we believe we can win any game until the last out. Our kids just believe. We were aggressive on the bases, we hit the ball hard at the right times."

"Last year was the first year I've been here we didn't make the OVACs, so getting to the final this year means a lot. It's all on these guys, they've put in a lot of hard work and improved so much. I'm just extremely proud of this group."

Catholic Central, which improves to 12-1 on the season, will meet No. 3 seed River in the championship. The Pilots topped No. 2 Toronto, 9-3, on Fri-

day.

Eli Fayak broke up the no-hitter, breaking through with a two-out single in the bottom of the fifth, then Andrew Dorsey singled in the next at bat to put two on for Alex Solema, who ripped a two-out triple into right field to tie the game.

Ben Urbanczyk then singled up the middle to give the Crusaders the lead by plating Solema, and he scored on an error by the Maroon Knights (8-11) infield on a steal attempt to make it 4-2.

An inning later, again with two outs, Jacob Kissinger ripped an RBI double to left to tally what proved to be the winning run.

Kody Carver was working towards a complete game, and would have gotten it had Wheeling Central's Cole Supthin not reached first on a dropped third strike, getting to two outs in the top of the seventh inning when Wheeling Central took advantage of the miscue and loaded the bases, prompting Young to turn to Dorsey.

A Crusaders error then allowed two Maroon Knights to score and left the tying run standing on third to make things very nerve-wracking for the home crowd, but Cover popped up behind the plate and Urbanczyk, who had only just moved to catcher when Dorsey went to the mound, made a remarkable catch against the backstop fence to seal the Crusaders

victory.

"Kody pitched a heckuva game," Young said. "That catch at the end was unbelievable. We were in trouble there, and that was a heckuva catch by Ben to end it."

"Kody did a great job, he's been getting better every game and Andrew is used to coming in and helping us at the end, that was big."

The Maroon Knights took a 2-0 lead in the fourth when Koy Lipinski, who doubled, scored when Payton Hildebrand put a ball in play and the Crusaders committed an error, then Hildebrand came around on Carson Kuhns' double.

He, though, was stranded at third and the visitors did not score again until the seventh.

"It was a battle all the way to the last out, I did think we played well," Wheeling Central head coach Jason Rowe said.

"I challenged the guys after our 15-4 loss to Madonna (Thursday) and they responded, we just didn't get the hits we needed when we needed them and Steubenville Central did."

"It was a great game, both pitchers threw very well. It was the kind of game you expect in the OVACs. Their catcher made one of the best plays I've seen there at the end in that situation."

"Don does a great job with his team, good luck to Steubenville Central in the final."

HOLZOPFEL

(Continued from Page C1)

"Lots of good friendships. Lots of good play, bad play and having fun," she said of her college golf memories.

"Emily is an awesome leader. She is the first to practice, the last to leave and the one that ends up cleaning out the van," Wheeling University golf coach and Wheeling Country Club professional Rich Conwell said.

"I've told Emily, her mom and her aunt who have followed her every step of the way, if anyone can make a career out of this, it is Emily," Conwell added.

When asked what makes her so good at the sport, he said, "she hits it

(the ball) very, very far and her mental strength is overwhelming. If something goes wrong, she doesn't even remember it. She has a very selective memory, which is very good for a golfer. She has the right mindset to continually improve her game and she has a deep belief, not conceit, in herself. She would never blame anybody for not achieving something because it is completely in control."

"It's been a pleasure to coach a player of her caliber. She knows when to turn it on and she will be the first to help anyone."

GAME

(Continued from Page C1)

It runs from Babe Ruth promising to hit a home run for young Johnny Sylvester, an 11-year-old who suffered a serious head injury and was hospitalized. Ruth, about to enter the 1926 World Series with his New York Yankees playing the St. Louis Cardinals, received a request from the family informing him of the situation.

Ruth sent a package to Johnny Sylvester that included a couple of baseballs, one autographed by the Yankees, the other by the Cardinals, and a note in which Ruth wrote: "I'll knock a homer for you on Wednesday," which was Game 4 of the Series.

You know the story. He did and Sylvester recovered.

There are so many of those stories, big ones

that made the movies and others where no one knew about them but one child's day was made, where he escaped from the illness or injury cage in which he or she had been imprisoned, if only for a few moments.

The gift that is always of hope and a memory to bring forward.

What isn't written about is what it does for the athletes themselves. You do not hear of any of them backing away from a commitment that involves sick children and seldom do they let any children down.

For many it is better than the roar of a sellout crowd, the response they get from the children they have visited or contacted.

Want to see what it's like yourself. Watch at

the end of the WVU game as the players head for the locker room, how much a high five from a player means, how cherished a wrist band tossed their way becomes. An autograph? It's like a signed check when you are 8 or 10 years old, healthy or not.

It all started here in Morgantown when Don Nehlen was named West Virginia coach, more than four decades ago.

He took a trip to the hospital to visit the children and establish a relationship. When he was there he noticed a lack of toys in the hospital's playroom. He went to athletic director Fred Schaus and pushed for instead of charging admission for the spring game that they should get donations for toys.

And so it began

River Knocks Off Perennial OVAC Class 2A Power Toronto

By SETH STASKEY

For the Sunday News-Register

TORONTO — River wasted no time in showing perennial OVAC 2A power and top-seeded Toronto that it had come to the Knights Baseball Complex to play Friday afternoon.

Lead-off hitter Lucas Dennis greeted Toronto ace Dom Bouscher with a lined single to left. He stole second, moved to third on a passed ball and then scored on a ground out by Pilot sophomore Peyton Blue.

The tone was officially set and River didn't take its foot off the gas en route to a 9-3 victory. The Pilots denied the Red Knights a chance at a repeat and will play for their first title since 2003 against Steubenville Catholic Central, which took out Wheeling Central in the other 2A semifinal.

"We got off to a good start offensively and we were very aggressive on the bases," a satisfied River head coach Tim Blue said. "We put a lot of pressure on them, which was our game plan coming. We wanted to make them make plays."

The Pilots (9-8) plan worked quite well. Toronto, which is ranked No. 1 in the Division IV state poll, committed six errors. On top of that, the Red Knights pitching staff walked three and plunked a guy.

"Give credit to River because they came ready to play," Toronto head coach Brian Perkins said. "We had as many hits as we did errors, which is not a good recipe. They capitalized on our mistakes and they just beat us."

With a 1-0 lead, River seemed to become even more aggressive on the base paths and in its approach at the plate.

In the second, River struck for three more runs. Colton Cisar produced a one-out single and then came around to score on a fielder's choice in which nary an out was recorded and compounding matters for Toronto the ball was thrown away.

Hunter Nething and River Thompson made it a 4-0 reading when they scored a laced single to left center



Photo by Seth Staskey

River pitcher Colton Cisar works to the plate Friday against Toronto in an OVAC Class 2A semifinal contest at the Knights Baseball Complex in Toronto. The Pilots upset the Red Knights, 9-3.

by senior Brody Lollathin.

The Pilots then added another three spot in the fourth to take full control of the game. Dennis led off with his second single of the game and Lollathin induced a walk before Blue ripped a single to center, scoring Dennis and chasing Bouscher.

Aiden Filby recorded a ground out to calm matters down. Max Castro then singled and Cisar grounded into a fielder's choice, but beat the throw to keep the inning alive.

The aggressive base running paid dividends once again. Cisar broke for second base, while Filby was on the rubber. He stepped off and threw to second, but the throw was high and sailed into the outfield, allowing Blue to score.

"We kept our nose to the grindstone throughout the game," Blue said. "Our base coaches were very aggressive, which I think helped us with three or four plays to move runners up and allowed us to score a couple of extra runs because of it."

Toronto wasn't finished just yet. The Red Knights struck for three runs against Cisar, who came on in relief of freshman Kaden Hunt in the third.

The first four hitters of the inning reached against Cisar. Filby led off with a single before Blake Close singled to center and the ball was misplayed, allowing both runners to move up an additional 90 feet. Nate Brownfield followed with a RBI hit and Andy Silverton followed with a two-run double.

However, Cisar settled down. He proceeded to get a pop up on the field and then back-to-back fly outs to center to thwart the rally. All told, Dennis — the Pilot centerfielder — recorded seven putouts in the game.

"I don't want to take away the credit from Coach Blue and his team because they showed up and out-performed us," Perkins said.

"We stunk today and they played really well. The bottom line is we had too many fly balls and too many errors."

After escaping that jam, Cisar proceeded to allow just one base runner the rest of the game, which was a harmless single.

"Colton Cisar threw one heck of a ball game and looked like Mariano Rivera," Blue smiled. "He did a great job pitching."

River added two more insurance tallies in the sixth. Cisar drove in Blue, who had singled to lead off the frame, and Hunter Nething drove in Castro, who had also singled on a groundout to short.

We took a long batting practice (on Thursday) and working on mechanics and the kids obviously took it to heart and did a heck of a job," Blue said.

River will play host to Frontier on Monday.

Toronto, which is now 13-4, plays host to Indian Creek on Monday.

Opportunistic Bellaire Rolls By Visiting River In Softball

ST. JOE - Opportunistic Bellaire took advantage of 10 walks and seven errors in posting a 15-5 decision over visiting River Friday in high school softball action on the Bellaire Middle School diamond. The game was stopped in the bottom of the fifth due to the 10-run mercy rule.

The Big Reds (6-9) were led by Marissa Pacifico who knocked in three runs with a triple and home run. Allie Ault singled and tripled to produce a run while Ashlyn Rose drove in another with a single and double. Lizzie McAninch added a solo homer.

The Pilots' Rylee Knight belted a pair of home runs and finished with three RBI. Her second roundtripper - her eighth of the season - set a new single-season school record. Hannah Raper and Addison Kovach had solo shots for the Pilots (7-9).

Wheeling Central 17, Union Local 0

MORRISTOWN — The Maroon Knights picked up their 14th win in 17 tries Friday afternoon by routing Union Local in five innings.

Central's Josie Frizzell was once again brilliant in the circle with 13 strikeouts and nary a walk. She allowed just one hit.

Offensively, Brooke Edge had two singles, a triple and drove in a run. Jocelyn Shaw had a double, single and two RBI. Frizzell and Ava Hanson each had a double, while Taylor Knollinger had a pair of singles and drove in a run.

Bridgeport 9, East Liverpool 6

WOLFURST — Bridgeport's softball team won its fourth straight game Friday, outslugging East Liverpool, 9-6.

Sophomore Vanesse Mullen had a two-run home run, while Brooke Stewart had a single and two RBI.

Hanna Brewer picked up the win in the circle with 11 strikeouts.

Barnesville 11, St. Clairsville 0

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — The Shamrocks improved to 11-7 on the season Friday afternoon thanks to a five-inning, repeat victory against the Red Devils.

Morgan Richardson led Buckeye Local with two singles, while Melissa Smith had two singles and a RBI. Kaydence Kinyo singled twice.

Parkersburg South 4, Wheeling Park 3, 8 inn. Wheeling Park 11, Parkersburg South 5

PARKERSBURG — The Ohio County Patriots and Wood County Patriots split a two-night doubleheader Friday.

In the opener, the hosts pushed a run across in the bottom of the eighth to outlast the visitors.

Delaney Randolph and Lauren Nolte had RBI singles for Wheeling Park.

In the nightcap, a 6-run fourth powered the locals to the split.

Randolph was the winning pitcher and helped herself at the plate with a 2-run single.

BASEBALL

Tyler Consolidated 5, Doddridge County 2

MIDDLEBOURNE — The Silver Knights improved to 20-5 with their win over the visiting Bulldogs (15-4) on Senior Night.

Hayden Brown was a one-man wrecking crew for Tyler Consolidated as he singled, doubled twice and drove in two runs.

On the mound, he fanned nine, walked one and yielded a trio of harmless singles.

Jayden Helmick and Ty Walton each singled in a run. Carson Gorby had a pair of singles.

Paden City 10, Hundred 4

PADEN CITY — The Wildcats moved to 15-7 with the win over the visiting Hornets.

Joey Baker and Ashton Little combined on a 1-hitter and struck out 15 for Paden City.

Brayden Neff singled and tripled to drive in a pair of runs while Aleks Lazarev singled twice and drove in one. Baker, Little and Garrett Parrish all singled in a run.

Mason Goddard singled in two runs for Hundred.

Barnesville 16, Monroe Central 4

Union Local Baseball Explodes In 11-6 Victory Over Buckeye

By BUBBA KAPRAL

For the Sunday News-Register

CONNORVILLE - The Union Local offense has been dormant as of late. Quite dormant.

That all changed Friday afternoon as the Jets exploded for an 11-6 win over Buckeye Local. In its four previous games, UL had mustered just two total runs.

"It feels good to win," UL rookie head coach Jim Hess said after his team's fifth victory of the campaign. "The last few games have been tough. We've had a rough time scoring."

"But that really changed tonight. They guys looked like they were in great frames of mind going into the game," he added. "We had people hitting up and down the lineup. Hitting is contagious."

The Jets pounded out 12 hits.

UL never trailed as it scored three runs in the first inning. Those runs came after what appeared to be a one-two-three inning for Buckeye starter Gavyn Romanyak.

With two outs, Romanyak recorded a strikeout. But the third strike, however, was mishandled allowing the Jets to extend the frame...and they made the most of the opportunity.

Logan Hess followed with a single before Evan White delivered a run-scoring single. Peyton Causby made it 3-0 on the strength of a two-run double.

UL added two more runs in the second via a Bill Schumacher single, a Panther error, a wild pitch and a RBI single from Hess.

Buckeye responded with a pair of tallies in the second. Kaleb Stang and Wyatt Luyster both drew walks. Stang scored on a wild pitch while Luyster came home on a RBI groundout from Garret Devore.

The Jets stretched their edge to 6-2 in the fourth. Isaac Nicot singled and was plated by Clay Akers.

Buckeye put itself within striking dis-

tance with two runs in the fifth. Alex McDiffitt walked before Tyler Ebright reached on an error. Jake Berry knocked both in with a ringing double.

UL, however, put the game away with two runs in the sixth and three more in the seventh. The two Jet tallies in the sixth came home on a sac fly from Dylan Higgenbotham and a Buckeye error.

The three-run seventh was fueled by two walks, a Panther miscue and a Schumacher single.

Braylon Akers went the distance for UL to pocket the mound win. The gummy sophomore struck out nine and walked four.

"Braylon pitched a whale of a game. It was nice to get a complete game from him," Hess said. "He pitched better than what six runs would indicate. He is a bulldog out there."

"This win will do a lot for our confidence. The guys have continued to work hard for us," he added. "I got a great coaching staff. They really relate well with our kids."

Logan Hess, Causby and Schumacher paced the Jet attack with three hits each.

Buckeye bats produced eight hits. Luyster and Ebright each had two safeties.

"We cannot make the routine play. We did earlier in the year but not as of late." Buckeye Local coach Jeffery Patrick said. "Five of Union Local's first six runs were unearned. We made it too easy for them."

"Our pitchers aren't doing a bad job. We need to give them better support," added the classy mentor. "I do give our guys credit. They kept battling. We were still in the game going into the sixth."

Romanyak took the mound loss. He struck out three and did not issue a walk before giving way to Grant Dombroski in the fourth. The promising frosh fanned four and walked six.

West Liberty Black And Gold Game To Be Held Saturday At High Noon

WEST LIBERTY - series but all are expected noted that more help is on