

winning the boys and girls 4A championship, and the boys totaling the highest team score across all classes.

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"We hosted four meets this week, so the big thing we had to focus on was just competing hard and putting in solid efforts," St. Clairsville head coach Darin Wilson said. "We didn't have to do anything special, just do what we've been doing all year. After Monday, Tuesday, junior high on Wednesday, it's just a testament to the athletes to come back today prepared to do what they need to do to sweep the titles."

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Please see **OVAC MEET**,
Page 10



Photo by Nick Henthorn

ABOVE: The St. Clairsville Red Devil boys track team, pictured, are the OVAC 4A and overall champions after their performance Saturday at their home track for the OVAC championships. The Red Devils totaled 186 points as a team, more than 60 points ahead of overall second-place Morgantown. BELOW: The St. Clairsville Red Devil girls track team, pictured, are the OVAC 4A and champions after their performance Saturday at their home track for the OVAC championships. The Red Devils totaled 120 points as a team.



Photo Provided



Photo by Kim North

St. Clairsville's Brody Saunders, right, and Braylen Blomquist embrace after the Red Devils won their second consecutive OVAC Class 4A baseball championship, 9-4, on Saturday over Indian Creek at Edison High School's Unified Sports Complex in Richmond. Looking on is teammate Mikey Balgo (7).

St. C. Bests Creek For OVAC Title

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

RICHMOND — The old myth that beating a team three times in the same season is hard was just a myth Saturday.

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Not only did the Red Devils go back-to-back, but they did it against the Redskins, as well.

"We played Creek here last year and, fortunately, we were able to come out on top again," veteran St. Clairsville head coach Tom Sliva said. "They have a really

good team and they didn't make it as easy as it looked at times.

"The conditions were far from ideal," Sliva pointed out. "They were bad for both teams. The balls were slick, as was the field. I thought both teams fought through it pretty well."

Game MVP Brody Saunders shined both on the mound and at the plate. The lanky junior went the distance on the hill, striking out just four and walking only one. He scattered five hits, three going to Indian Creek's Ty Householder. Saunders, who no-hit the Redskins earlier this season, threw 122 pitches — three shy of the limit — with 78 being strikes.

"You can't say enough about the job he did on the mound," Sliva praised. "The conditions

were not good but he did a good job of adapting to them and pitching his game. I'm very proud of him, as I am with the entire team."

Saunders also keyed a six-run bottom of the third with a bases-clearing double to the gap in left-center that gave the Red Devils a 6-1 lead after Householder tripled in Caleb Bodo with two outs in the top of the inning.

"That was obviously the biggest hit of the game," Sliva said.

Saunders said he wasn't really looking for a certain pitch.

"I was just looking for something middle in, trying to get on base," he explained. "I got the pitch I wanted and took it to left-center."

Please see **ST. C.**, Page 10

Cruz's Homer Leads Pirates Past Rockies

By **WES CROSBY**
Associated Press

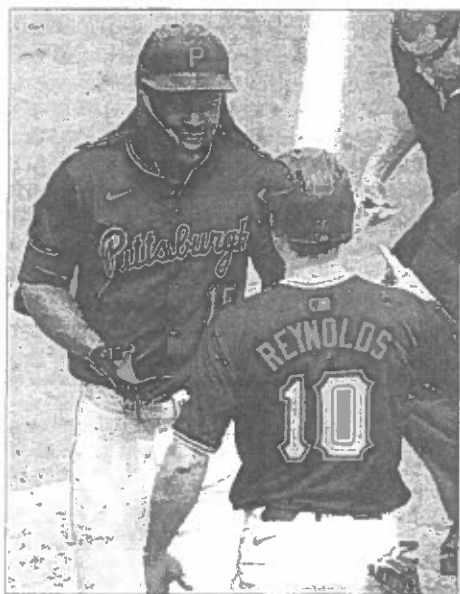
PITTSBURGH — Oneil Cruz hit a two-run homer to highlight a four-run sixth inning, powering the Pittsburgh Pirates past the Colorado Rockies 5-3 on Sunday for a series win.

Cruz sent a slider from Ryan Feltner (1-3) 429 feet to right-center, bouncing his fifth of the season off the roof of a bar beyond the stands to put Pittsburgh ahead 4-3.

He also had a double for his first game with multiple extra-base hits in 35 games this season.

Before hitting a ball into the Allegheny River in the ninth inning of a 3-2 series-opening loss Friday, Cruz had two doubles in 17 games between homers.

"I think the one thing we have to realize with Oneil is he does a lot of things that look easy," Pirates manager Derek Shelton said. "So, at times, he gets the moniker of, like, 'The body language is bad.' He cares, I mean, he's locked in. But I do think getting a couple of hits, having a couple of good



AP Photo

Pittsburgh Pirates' Oneil Cruz, left, is greeted by Bryan Reynolds after they scored on Cruz's two-run home run during the sixth inning against the Colorado Rockies in Pittsburgh on Sunday.

games, your confidence will definitely tick back up."

After the homer, Rowdy Tellez hit a double to right before scoring on a single from Jack Suwinski.

Please see **PIRATES**, Page 10

TOP GIRLS' HOOPS STARS HONORED



Cameron's Ashlynn Van Tassell was a co-recipient of the Mary Ostrowski Award as the Best Girls Basketball Player in the state of West Virginia. Van Tassell received her award during Sunday's 77th annual Victory Awards Dinner at River City Restaurant in downtown Wheeling. The other co-recipient, Wheeling Park's Alexis Bordas, was unable to attend due to a prior commitment.

Photo by Kim North

Then Holds Off Rally To Defeat UL

MORRISTOWN — Visiting Monroe Central tallied three times in the top of the seventh and then held off a late rally by Union Local in the bottom of the inning for a 10-9 high school baseball victory on Saturday.

Max Demchak earned the win in relief with one K and a walk. He also tripled in two runs, while Caleb Griffith singled in a pair. Landen Lydick had two one-base raps.

Logan Hess drove in four runs with three singles for the Jets. Peyton Causby, Hayden Jenkins and Braylen Akers all singled in runs.

SOFTBALL Toronto 11, Shadyside 4

SHADYSIDE — The visiting Red Knights broke open a 3-2 game with six runs in the top of the fifth inning in defeating the Tigers.

Isabella

Cattrell

knocked in four runs with a pair of singles for Toronto. Ashton Thomas belted a two-run homer and Callie Anderson and Michelle Anderson evenly divided four RBI, with Callie having a single and double.

Taylor Fulton doubled twice and drove in two runs for Shadyside. Kara Zeroski drove in a run with two singles and Abby Gorrell singled and doubled.

Feltner, who gave up five runs on eight hits in 5 2/3 innings, began the inning by allowing a single to Connor Joe and a double to Bryan Reynolds in the first four pitches. Joe scored on a grounder from Ke'Bryan Hayes.

The Pirates took the final two of the three-game set, their first series victory since winning two of three against Baltimore from April 5-7. The Rockies, have yet to win a series.

"Unable to get the big hit throughout the course of the game a couple of times," Colorado manager Bud Black said. "That's been a killer for our offense. Somewhere along the line, we've got to get a couple of guys hot."

Luis Ortiz (2-1) was perfect in 1 2/3 innings after replacing Pittsburgh

starter Bailey Falter with one out in the sixth. David Bednar picked up his sixth save, allowing a two-out double from Sean Bouchard before striking out Jake Cave in the ninth.

Jacob Stallings and Bouchard put Colorado ahead 3-0 on back-to-back home runs off Falter in the second inning.

Falter gave up three runs on six hits.

"Would like to have a couple pitches back," Falter said. "These guys are good hitters. They're all here for a reason, just like us. ... After the third, settled down pretty well and felt like we did a pretty good job."

Cruz doubled off the Clemente Wall in right with one out in the fourth and Hayes scored the Pirates' first run when Tellez grounded back to Feltner.

OVAC MEET

(Continued from Page 9)

The St. C. girls totaled 120 points. While the Red Devils swept 4A, Steubenville Catholic Central won the girls 1A/2A title with 88 team points, while Shadyside won the boys side with 86 team points. Trinity Christian and Shadyside were co-runners up in girls competition with 72 points each, while Caldwell was boys runner-up with 70 points.

Barnesville's girls were triumphant in 3A with 84 points, while the Linsly boys won with 102 team points.

Shenandoah was the 3A girls runner up with 82 points, and the Barnesville boys were runner-up with 66 points.

St. Clairsville was duel champions in 4A, and Weir was duel runner up, the boys tallying 86 points and the girls 90 points.

Morgantown swept 5A, the boys scoring 120 points and the girls 122. 122 points was tops for all classes in girls competition. Dover's girls were runner up with 86 team points, while Steubenville boys were runner up

with 94 points.

Local athletes threw, ran and jumped their way to the top of the many of the events at the meet, which ran from 10 a.m. to just before 3 p.m. In field events, Union Local's Johnny Sabinski placed first in the boys discus throw and shot put, Steubenville's Sabria Jones placed first in the girls long jump, and St. Clairsville's Ava Crum placed first in the girls pole vault.

In the individual races, Wheeling Central's JJ White came in first in the boys 400-meter dash, Steubenville's Savier Faulks came in first in the boys 300-meter hurdles, Valley's Gavin Derby finished first in the boys' 200-meter dash, and Steubenville Catholic Central's Andrew Rohde took the gold in the boys 3200-meter run.

In the relay races, Steubenville did well for themselves, winning the girls and the boys 4x200-meter relays, as well as the 4x400-meter relay.

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the 100-meter dash with an 11.88.

The hosting Red Devils got stand-out performances from multiple athletes to help them to 4A titles.

"On the boys side, Harison Kazmirski and Colton Westlake were in four events and they both were winners in multiple events," Wilson said. "Colton Westlake in particular, he finished first in class in all his events. When your seniors step up like that, it's big for us."

"On the girls side, Emma Henry, senior for us, she stepped up in both the 100 and 200, she did what we needed her to do as a senior leader."

Westlake finished first among all 4A boys in the 300 and 110-meter hurdles.

Kazmirski finished first in 4A in the boys 400-meter dash. Emma Henry placed second overall and first in 4A in both the girls 200 and 100-meter dash, and placed third in 4A in the girls long jump.

The OVAC meet will be the last stop for many of the attending teams before the postseason. The WVS-SAC State Track Meet is set for May 17 and 18, while the OHSAA State Track Meet is set for May 30-June 1.

ST. C.

(Continued from Page 9)

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The Redskins cut into the deficit with a pair of

runs in the fifth as Householder singled in one and the other crossed on a throwing error. However, the Red Devils answered back with two of their own in the bottom when Bush singled to center with two outs that scored Jacob and Blomquist, bumping the count to 8-3. After Indian Creek made it 8-4 in the sixth, St. Clairsville got that run back, as well.

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Saunders was also involved in a pair of defensive gems. In the first inning after yielding a leadoff single to Householder, he caught an attempted sacrifice bunt for an out and then flipped to Hoffman at first for an

inning-changing double play. He then whirled and picked a runner off second to end the sixth.

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"I feel very happy for my seniors to be able to cap their careers like this," Sliva said. "Most of them have been four-year players for us and they have put in a lot of time and hard work. They deserve it, but they also know we've got a lot of baseball to play yet."

St. Clairsville hosts Barnesville today for Senior Night before traveling to Steubenville Tuesday.



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Monday,
May 6, 2024

SPORTS

St C. boys win back-to-back OVAC championships

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

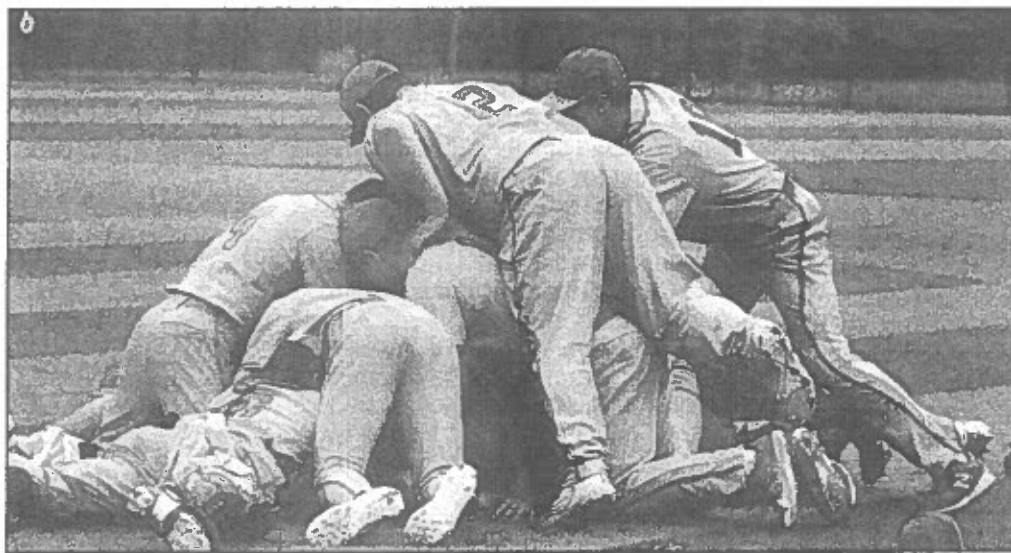
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See BOYS, Page B2



MEMBERS OF the St. Clairsville baseball team dogpile Saturday after their 9-4 victory over Indian Creek that allowed it to win back-to-back OVAC Class 4A championships.

Photo by KIM NORTH



Photo by NICK HENTHORN

THE ST. Clairsville Red Devil boys track team, pictured, are the OVAC 4A and overall champions after their performance Saturday at their home track for the OVAC championships. The Red Devils totalled 186 points as a team, more than 60 points ahead of overall second-place Morgantown.

St. C. boys and girls track comes out on top

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Saturday was the culmination of days-long competition as the OVAC crowned its champions on the St. Clairsville track, the hosting Red Devils winning the boys and girls 4A championship, and the boys totalling the highest team score across all classes.

After OVAC qualifying meets on Monday and Tuesday, Saturday's championship meet was as much a test of endurance as it was a test of performance.

"We hosted four meets this week, so the big thing we had to focus on was just competing hard and putting in solid efforts," St. Clairsville head coach Darin Wilson said. "We didn't have to do anything special, just do what we've been doing all year. After Monday, Tuesday, junior high on Wednesday, it's just a testament to the athletes to come back today prepared to do what they need to do to sweep the titles."

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See TRACK, Page B2



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Max Demchak earned the win in relief with one K and a walk. He also tripled in two runs, while Caleb Griffith singled in a pair. Landen Lydick had two one-base raps.

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Walleye hold serve in Toledo

TOLEDO — The Wheeling Nailers will return to WesBanco Arena in the coming week and hope to match what the Toledo Walleye did at Huntington Center — hold serve on home ice in the Central Division Final Series.

Mitchell Lewandowski notched a goal and an assist for the Walleye, who held off a late push by the Nailers to secure a 5-3 win and a 2-0 lead in the best-of-7 set. All three Nailers goals came from defensemen, including Justin Lee, who lit the lamp twice.

The first period was filled with momentum swings, and when the buzzer sounded, Toledo found itself ahead 2-1. The Walleye got the first successful penalty kill of the night, and led that into the opening goal just 13 seconds after the mi-

Boys

Continued from Page B1

"The conditions were far from ideal," Sliva pointed out. "They were bad for both teams. The balls were slick, as was the field. I thought both teams fought through it pretty well."

Game MVP Brody Saunders shined both on the mound and plate. The lanky junior went the distance on the hill, striking out just four and walking only one. He scattered five hits, three going to Indian Creek's Ty Householder. Saunders, who no-hit the Redskins earlier this season, threw 122 pitches - three shy of the limit - with 78 being strikes.

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Track

Continued from Page B1

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Walleye

Continued from Page B1

Wheeling temporarily pulled within one, thanks to a hard-working shift in the offensive zone. The goal was ultimately created by Louie Roehl's low right point shot, which kicked out to defensive partner Isaac Belliveau for a slam dunk from the left side. Orrin Centazzo put the Walleye back on top by two with 4:13 to go, when he crashed the net and poked in a lead pass from Brandon Kruse.

Wheeling pushed hard to come back in the third period, and pulled within a goal with 1:03 left on the clock. Davis Bunz patiently held the puck along the right wing wall, then connected with Lee, who made a gorgeous dangle move in the right circle and roofed his second tally of the night. Unfortunately, the Nailers

were unable to find an equalizer, and Riley Sawchuk's empty netter iced the 5-3 Toledo win.

Jan Bednar picked up the victory in goal for the Walleye, as he thwarted 30 of the 33 shots he faced. Jaxon Castor had a busy night in the Wheeling crease, as he came away with 37 saves on 41 shots.

The Nailers and Walleye will have a few days off before the Central Division Final Series resumes with Game 3 at WesBanco Arena on Wednesday night at 7:10. Game 4 will be in Wheeling on Friday night at 7:10, followed by Game 5 on Saturday night at 7:10.

To purchase tickets for the playoffs or for any questions or concerns about ticketing, please visit wheelingnailers.com or call (304) 234-GOAL.

LOCAL CARD

(all games at 5 p.m. unless noted)
Monday, May 6
BASEBALL
W.Va. Class A Section I Tournament
 No. 5 Magnolia at No. 4 Paden City
 No. 6 Valley at No. 3 Cameron
 No. 7 Hundred at No. 2 Madonna
W.Va. Class AA Section I Tournament
Region I, Section 1
 Game 1 - No. 5 Oak Glen at No. 4 North Marion
Regular Season
 Barnesville at St. Clairsville
 Union Local at Shadyside
SOFTBALL
W.Va. Class A Section I Final Series
 (at Ben's Field, I-470 Ballfields, Elm Grove)
 Magnolia vs. Wheeling Central, 5:30 p.m.
Ohio Sectional Tournaments (Higher Seed is Home Team)
Division II
 Minerva at Beaver Local
 Maysville at W. Muskingum
 Philo at Martins Ferry
 River View at Cambridge
Division III
 Buckeye Trail at Claymont
 Garaway at Fort Frye
 Bellaire at Sandy Valley
 Tusky Valley at Barnesville
 Buckeye Local at Ridgewood
 Coshocton at Union Local
 St. C. at Meadowbrook
TRACK
 Indian Valley League Meet at Edison, 4 p.m.

SPORTS ON TV

Monday, May 6
MLB BASEBALL
 6 p.m.
 FS1 - Detroit at Cleveland 9:30 p.m.
 MLBN - Regional Coverage: Texas at Oakland OR Miami at LA Dodgers (10:10 p.m.)
NBA BASKETBALL
 7:30 p.m.
 TNT - Eastern Conference Semifinal: Indiana at New York, Game 1
 TRUTV - Eastern Conference Semifinal: Indiana at New York, Game 1 (BetCast) 10 p.m.
 TNT - Western Conference Semifinal: Minnesota at Denver, Game 2
 TRUTV - Western Conference Semifinal: Minnesota at Denver, Game 2 (BetCast)
NHL HOCKEY
 8 p.m.
 ESPN - Eastern Conference Semifinal: Boston at Florida, Game 1
SOCCER (MEN'S)
Noon
 CBSN - Serie A: Atalanta at Salernitana 3 p.m.
 USA - Premier League: Manchester United at Crystal Palace

MLB STANDINGS

| AMERICAN LEAGUE | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|----|------|-----|-----|------|------|--|
| East Division | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB | WCGB | L10 | Str | Home | Away | |
| Baltimore | 23 | 11 | .676 | — | — | 7-3 | W-4 | 12-7 | 11-4 | |
| New York | 23 | 13 | .639 | 1 | +2½ | 6-4 | W-3 | 11-5 | 12-8 | |
| Boston | 19 | 16 | .543 | 4½ | 1 | 5-5 | W-1 | 7-9 | 12-7 | |
| Tampa Bay | 17 | 18 | .486 | 6½ | 3 | 5-5 | W-3 | 11-9 | 6-9 | |
| Toronto | 16 | 19 | .457 | 7½ | 4 | 3-7 | L-1 | 8-7 | 8-12 | |
| Central Division | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB | WCGB | L10 | Str | Home | Away | |
| Cleveland | 22 | 12 | .647 | — | — | 5-5 | W-2 | 10-5 | 12-7 | |
| Minnesota | 19 | 14 | .576 | 2½ | — | 9-1 | L-1 | 8-7 | 11-7 | |
| Kansas City | 20 | 15 | .571 | 2½ | — | 5-5 | L-2 | 13-7 | 7-8 | |
| Detroit | 18 | 16 | .529 | 4 | 1½ | 4-6 | L-3 | 8-9 | 10-7 | |
| Chicago | 8 | 26 | .235 | 14 | 11½ | 5-5 | W-2 | 5-12 | 3-14 | |
| West Division | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB | WCGB | L10 | Str | Home | Away | |
| Seattle | 19 | 15 | .559 | — | — | 7-3 | W-2 | 11-8 | 8-7 | |
| Texas | 19 | 16 | .543 | ½ | 1 | 6-4 | W-2 | 10-9 | 9-7 | |
| Oakland | 17 | 18 | .486 | 2½ | 3 | 8-2 | L-1 | 9-10 | 8-8 | |
| Houston | 12 | 22 | .353 | 7 | 7½ | 5-5 | L-2 | 7-12 | 5-10 | |
| Los Ang. | 12 | 22 | .353 | 7 | 7½ | 2-8 | L-2 | 4-11 | 8-11 | |
| NATIONAL LEAGUE | | | | | | | | | | |
| East Division | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB | WCGB | L10 | Str | Home | Away | |
| Philadel. | 23 | 11 | .676 | — | — | 8-2 | W-4 | 12-6 | 11-5 | |
| Atlanta | 20 | 12 | .625 | 2 | +4 | 4-6 | L-3 | 11-4 | 9-8 | |
| Washing. | 17 | 17 | .500 | 6 | — | 7-3 | W-1 | 6-9 | 11-8 | |
| New York | 16 | 18 | .471 | 7 | 1 | 3-7 | L-3 | 9-10 | 7-8 | |
| Miami | 10 | 26 | .278 | 14 | 8 | 4-6 | W-1 | 5-15 | 5-11 | |
| Central Division | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB | WCGB | L10 | Str | Home | Away | |
| Milwaukee | 20 | 13 | .606 | — | — | 5-5 | L-2 | 7-7 | 13-6 | |
| Chicago | 21 | 14 | .600 | — | +3½ | 5-5 | W-2 | 12-4 | 9-10 | |
| Cincinnati | 16 | 18 | .471 | 4½ | 1 | 2-8 | L-5 | 9-10 | 7-8 | |
| Pittsburgh | 16 | 19 | .457 | 5 | 1½ | 3-7 | W-2 | 7-8 | 9-11 | |
| St. Louis | 15 | 19 | .441 | 5½ | 2 | 5-5 | L-2 | 6-9 | 9-10 | |
| West Division | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB | WCGB | L10 | Str | Home | Away | |
| Los Ang. | 23 | 13 | .639 | — | — | 8-2 | W-4 | 12-8 | 11-5 | |
| San Diego | 18 | 19 | .486 | 5½ | ½ | 4-6 | L-1 | 8-12 | 10-7 | |
| San Fran. | 15 | 19 | .441 | 7 | 2 | 4-6 | L-2 | 9-7 | 6-12 | |
| Arizona | 15 | 20 | .429 | 7½ | 2½ | 3-7 | W-1 | 9-10 | 6-10 | |
| Colorado | 8 | 26 | .235 | 14 | 9 | 2-8 | L-2 | 5-10 | 3-16 | |

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Saturday's Games
 N.Y. Yankees 5, Detroit 3
 Minnesota 3, Boston 1
 Chicago White Sox 6, St. Louis 5, 10 innings
 Oakland 20, Miami 4
 Toronto 6, Washington 3
 Cleveland 7, L.A. Angels 1
 Baltimore 2, Cincinnati 1
 Seattle 5, Houston 0
 Texas 15, Kansas City 4
 Tampa Bay 3, N.Y. Mets 1
Sunday's Games
 Cleveland 4, L.A. Angels 1
 N.Y. Yankees 5, Detroit 2, 8 inn.
 Washington 11, Toronto 8
 Texas 3, Kansas City 2, 10 inn.
 Chicago WS 5, St. Louis 1
 Boston 9, Minnesota 2
 Seattle 5, Houston 4
 Tampa Bay 7, N.Y. Mets 6, 10 inn.
 Baltimore 11, Cincinnati 1
 Miami 12, Oakland 3
Monday's Games
 Detroit (Flaherty 0-1) at Cleveland (McKenzie 2-2), 6:10 p.m.
 L.A. Angels (Anderson 2-3) at Pittsburgh (Keller 2-3), 6:40 p.m.
 Chicago White Sox (Soroka 0-3) at Tampa Bay (Alexander 1-1), 6:50 p.m.
 Milwaukee (Wilson 2-1) at Kansas City (Ragans 2-2), 7:40 p.m.
 Seattle (Castillo 3-4) at Minnesota (Woods Richardson 1-0), 7:40 p.m.
 Texas (Heaney 0-4) at Oakland (Wood 1-2), 9:40 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Saturday's Games
 Chicago Cubs 6, Milwaukee 5
 Chicago White Sox 6, St. Louis 5, 10 innings
 Pittsburgh 1, Colorado 0
 Oakland 20, Miami 4
 Toronto 6, Washington 3
 Baltimore 2, Cincinnati 1
 Philadelphia 14, San Francisco 3
 Tampa Bay 3, N.Y. Mets 1
 San Diego 13, Arizona 1
 L.A. Dodgers 11, Atlanta 2
Sunday's Games
 Pittsburgh 5, Colorado 3
 Washington 11, Toronto 8
 Chicago Cubs 5, Milwaukee 0
 Chicago WS 5, St. Louis 1
 Tampa Bay 7, N.Y. Mets 6, 10 innings
 L.A. Dodgers 5, Atlanta 1
 Baltimore 11, Cincinnati 1
 Arizona 11, San Diego 4
 Miami 12, Oakland 3
 San Francisco at Philadelphia, 7:10 p.m.
Monday's Games
 San Francisco (Black 0-0) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 3-3), 4:05 p.m.
 Milwaukee (Wilson 2-1) at Kansas City (Ragans 2-2), 7:40 p.m.
 San Diego (Darvish 1-1) at Chicago Cubs (Steele 0-0), 7:40 p.m.
 N.Y. Mets (Manaea 1-1) at St. Louis (Gibson 2-2), 7:45 p.m.
 Miami (Munoz 1-0) at L.A. Dodgers (Buehler 0-0), 10:10 p.m.

PREP LINESCORES

BASEBALL
OVAC Class 4A
Championship (at Edison Unified Sports Complex, Richmond)
St. Clairsville 9, Indian Creek 4
 I. Creek 001 021 0 - 4 5 1
 St. C. 006 021 x - 9 8 2
 IC-Hyde Ip (4K, 3BB), Barcalow (3), (2K, 4BB) and Rusnak; Householder 2S, T, 2rbi; L. Pownall D
 StC-Saunders wp (4K, 2BB) and Bush; Myers 2S, rbi; Saunders D, 3rbi; Keenan D, rbi; Florence sac, rbi; Jacob S, rbi
Regular Season
Monroe Central 10, Union Local 9
 M.Central 000 043 3 - 10 7 3
 U.Local 001 421 1 - 9 11 4
 MC-Bettinger (2K, 4BB), M. Demchak wp (5), (1K, 1BB) and Lydick; Lydick 2S; Griffith S, 2rbi; M. Demchak T, 2rbi
 UL-Jeffers (4K, 4BB), Causby (5), (1K, 2BB), Akers Ip (7), (1K, 1BB) and White; Hess 3S, 4rbi; Carpenter 2S; Causby S, rbi; Jenkins S, rbi; Akers S, rbi
SOFTBALL
Toronto 11, Shadyside 4
 Toronto 102 062 0 - 11 11 3
 Shady 001 120 0 - 4 8 4
 T-L. Anderson wp (6K, 2BB) and M. Anderson; Danko D; Reeves S, rbi; M. Anderson 2S, 2rbi; C. Anderson S, D, 2rbi; L. Anderson D; Cattrell 2S, 4rbi; Thomas HR, 2rbi
 S-Fulton Ip (6K, 4BB) and Saxton; A. Gorrell S, D; Fulton 2D, 2rbi; Zerowski 2S, rbi

ECHL PLAYOFFS

DIVISION FINALS
(Best-of-7; x-if necessary)
NORTH DIVISION
Norfolk 2, Adirondack 0
 Friday, May 3: Norfolk 7, Adirondack 4
 Saturday, May 4: Norfolk 5, Adirondack 2
 Wednesday, May 8: Adirondack at Norfolk, 7:05 p.m.
 Friday, May 10: Adirondack at Norfolk, 7:05 p.m.
 x-Saturday, May 11: Adirondack at Norfolk, 7:05 p.m.
 x-Tuesday, May 14: Norfolk at Adirondack, 7 p.m.
 x-Wednesday, May 15: Norfolk at Adirondack, 7 p.m.
SOUTH DIVISION
Florida 2, Orlando 0
 Friday, May 3: Florida 5, Orlando 1
 Saturday, May 4: Florida 6, Orlando 3
 Tuesday, May 7: Florida at Orlando, 7 p.m.
 Thursday, May 9: Florida at Orlando, 7 p.m.
 x-Sunday, May 12: Florida at Orlando, 3 p.m.
 x-Tuesday, May 14: Orlando at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
 x-Wednesday, May 15: Orlando at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
CENTRAL DIVISION
Toledo 2, Wheeling 0
 Friday, May 3: Toledo 2, Wheeling 1, OT
 Saturday, May 4: Toledo 5, Wheeling 3
 Wednesday, May 8: Toledo at Wheeling, 7:10 p.m.
 Friday, May 10: Toledo at Wheeling, 7:10 p.m.
 x-Saturday, May 11: Toledo at Wheeling, 7:10 p.m.
 x-Monday, May 13: Wheeling at Toledo, 7:10 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball American League
HOUSTON ASTROS - Assigned SS Grae Kessinger to Sugar Land (PCL) on a rehab assignment.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS - Assigned RHP Alec Marsh to Omaha (IL) on a rehab assignment. Optioned RHP Colin Selby to Omaha. Recalled LHP Daniel Lynch IV from Omaha.
NEW YORK YANKEES - Assigned RHP Nick Burdi to Somerset (EL) on a rehab assignment.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS - Reinstated RHP Alek Manoah from the 15-day IL. Optioned LHP Brendon Little to Buffalo (IL).
National League
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS - Reinstated RHP Ryne Nelson from the 15-day IL. Optioned LHP Brandon Hughes to Reno (PCL).
LOS ANGELES DODGERS - Assigned RHP Connor Brogdon to Oklahoma City (PCL) on a rehab assignment. Reinstated RHP Blake Treinen from the 15-day IL. Placed RHP Evan Phillips on the 15-day IL.
MIAMI MARLINS - Designated RHP Darren McCaughan for assignment. Assigned LHP Jesus Luzardo to Jupiter (FSL) on a rehab assignment. Selected the contract of RHP Eli Villalobos from Jacksonville (IL).
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS - Reinstated OF Dylan Carlson from the 10-day IL. Optioned C Pedro Pagan to Memphis

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colt and jockey Victor Espinoza surged to the lead with a furlong to go and thundered across the finish line a length ahead in the 2015 Kentucky Derby.

"There's nothing like winning the Kentucky Derby," recalled Espinoza, a three-time winner. "To me it's the most important thing in horse racing."

Derby has survived two world wars, the Depression and pandemics, including COVID-19 in 2020, when it ran in virtual silence without the usual crowd of 150,000.

The first Saturday in May is Derby Day with all its accompanying pageantry, including fancy hats, fans dressed in

winner. The Derby was the second-most watched sporting event of 2023 behind the Super Bowl.

"I've heard a lot of people say it's on their bucket list to attend and the one horse race that they watch every year," said trainer Todd Pletcher, a two-time Derby winner who has this year's early

since only 3-year-olds are eligible. It's also the only race in America with a 20-horse field. Since 2013, horses have to accumulate points in qualifying races to earn their way in. Previously, money won in graded stakes races decided the field.

Please see DERBY, Page 12

OVAC BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wheeling Central Defeats Linsly For Class 3A Title



Photo by Nick Henthorn

The Wheeling Central Maroon Knights, pictured after defeating the Linsly Cadets 5-1 to win the OVAC 3A championship on Thursday at Edison High School. The title is the fourth for the Wheeling Central squad.

Rosnick, Cover Help Maroon Knights To Fourth OVAC Baseball Crown

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor

RICHMOND - Thursday evening at Edison High School was a rubber match, a rivalry game, and a title bout all rolled into one.

The Wheeling Central Maroon Knights took on the Linsly Cadets on neutral ground Thursday in the OVAC 3A Championship, the Knights using a big day on the mound from Brayden Cover and a big day at the dish from Zayne Rosnick to secure a 5-1 victory.

"It's very sweet," Wheeling Central head coach Todd Cover said. "[Linsly's] a very good team, their pitcher threw really well. I thought our pitcher threw really well. We just had a freshman of all

things - you come to these games with a bunch of upperclassmen, and a freshman comes through with a couple big hits.

Central and Linsly had previously split a doubleheader on March 23.

Freshman Zayne Rosnick earned championship game MVP honors, the first baseman crushing a solo home run to lead off the second inning, and coming through with the biggest swing of the game in the bottom of the sixth, a two-out, bases-loaded triple to the right-center gap which opened up the Knights' advantage to 5-1.

Brayden Cover and the Central defense limited the Cadets, Cover striking out seven and allowing two hits.

"He threw well," Todd Cover said.

"He probably didn't have his sharpest stuff, he'd be the first one to tell you that. He usually spots the fastball pretty well, I thought he was a little bit off, pulling to the glove side. But he battled against a very good hitting team, he got through it. Very proud of him."

Linsly senior pitcher Dillon Wilson K'd 11 batters over six innings of work in an impressive outing in his own right, striking out the side in the third and fifth innings.

The Knights and Rosnick finally broke through in the sixth to flip the script on what'd been largely a pitchers duel to that point.

Please see CENTRAL, Page 12

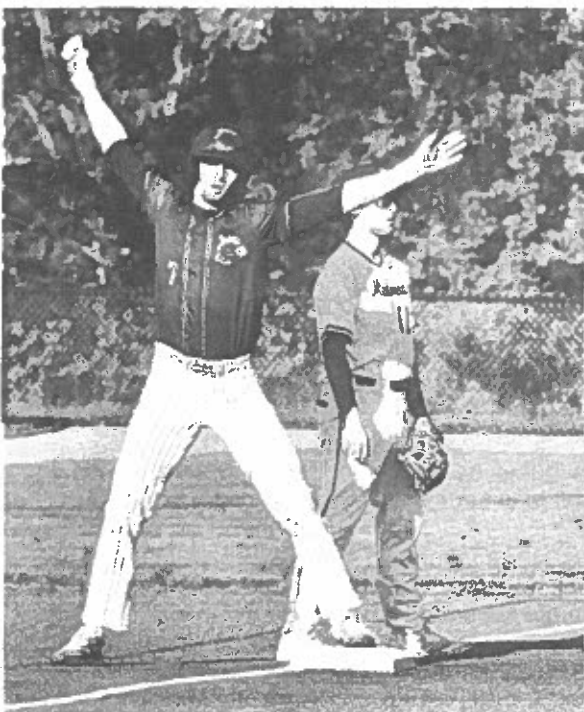


Photo by Kim North

Cameron's Lance Hartley reacts after smacking a three-run triple in the top of the fourth inning Thursday night that put the Dragons ahead of Madonna 4-3 in their OVAC Class 1A championship game at the Red Knight Baseball Complex in Toronto. However, the Blue Dons scored the final seven runs for a 10-4 victory and their second title in four years.

Madonna Tops Cameron In Class 1A Title Game

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

TORONTO - The third time was definitely not a charm for Cameron Thursday night as it committed more errors than runs scored in a 10-4 loss to top-seeded Madonna in the OVAC Class 1A championship baseball game at the Red Knight Baseball Complex in the Gem City.

For the Blue Dons (20-5) it is their second title in four years as they defeated the Dragons in 2021. The second-seeded Dragons (17-6) saw their bid for a three-peat go by the wayside as five errors and a like number of walks did them in.

"I just told the kids. We had five errors, walked five batters and they scored 10 runs," Cameron head coach Adam Angel said. "They had some timely hits, but our defense wasn't there today at all.

"Offensively, we couldn't get that timely hit when we needed it except by Lance," Angel noted. "We had our chances. We just couldn't capitalize."

The Dragons walked 10 times but left 10 runners on base, with seven of those in scoring position.

The two teams will likely meet again next week in the double-elimination W.Va. Class A Section I Tournament.

"Cameron is a really good, tough team, but my guys came ready to play today," Madonna head coach T.J. Miller said. "We played a great game yesterday and followed it up with another one today. I will go to war with these guys any day of the week. I love them.

"We executed on their mistakes. That's what good teams do," Miller added.

Cameron took the early lead at 1-0 thanks to the wildness of Madonna starter Jacob Lazear who walked four Dragons in the second, with Wes Starcher recording an RBI. However, the righty struck out the next batter to end the inning and leave the bases loaded.

Please see MADONNA, Page 12

WVU Adds Okla. State Transfer PG Javon Small

By BOB HERTZEL
WV News

MORGANTOWN - Unless you have been out hunting elk in Montana for the past few years, you might have noticed a dramatic change in college basketball.

The Xs and Os once were the most important items in the game but they have been replaced by the \$s of NIL money and the hardest working, most important person in the basketball office is no longer the coach but, instead, the coordinator of recruiting.

Recruiting has become the name of the game ... a year-round endeavor in which you quite likely are remaking your roster on a yearly basis.

The point was driven home in West Virginia last year when the Mountaineers parted company with coach Bob Huggins and had to rebuild their roster twice in one season, while they had to try to negotiate their way through injuries and suspensions that turned the season into an Abbott and Costello routine of slapstick basketball.

Now they have a new coach in Drake's successful mid-major leader Darian DeVries and he started completely over, with only one returning player, Ofri Naveh, a late addition from Israel and with the transfer portal having just closed, he and DeVries have found a way to add some important parts.

Turned out for one of those parts he only had to look across the dinner table to bring in his son, Tucker, who averaged 21.6 points per game for his father at Drake last year and carries an 18.0 career average with one year left to play.

That took care of the scoring guard, but who would get him the ball?

Problem solved this week with the addition of Javon Small, a skilled point guard from Oklahoma State to distribute the ball. It was such a big addition that WVU jumped its recruiting class out of the portal to No. 5 in the nation with still a lot of work to do.

Please see WVU, Page 12



JAVON SMALL

Cavs, Mavs Trying To Close Out 1st-Round NBA Playoff Series Tonight

By FRED GOODALL
AP Sports Writer

land is on the brink of advancing to face Boston in the Eastern Conference semifinals after taking Games 1.

same way you did then," Mosley added. "You have to change a little bit of the energy."

expects Los Angeles to play better Friday night.

"We've got to find a way to protect home, understanding in this series both teams have been able to win on the road, so we can't take anything for granted," Kidd said.

The Cavs and Magic have spent five games exchanging elbows, trash talk and bad vibes.

Game 6 — or in this case Round 6 — should be no different.

"Just getting ready for a fist fight," Cavs coach J.B. Bickerstaff said. "That's what it's going to come down to. It's going to be a physical game. We expect that, but it's one of those things where mentally you got to be prepared from the start

Allen, who is dealing with a painful rib injury and may not be ready.

Allen, who did not practice Thursday, has been Cleveland's best player in these playoffs and in many ways is their most indispensable piece.

Allen's absence forced Bickerstaff to alter his rotation and dip deeper into his bench, something he had been reluctant to do and was widely criticized for not doing.

Mobley was shifted from power forward to center. Bickerstaff started Isaac Okoro. He also benched the ineffective Georges Niang, giving most of those minutes to veteran Marcus Morris Sr., who came through in a big way with 12 points and provided toughness.

who are last in the AL West at 11-20, consecutive series wins for the first time this season.

Houston trailed 2-1 with one out in the sixth inning when Jeremy Pena tripled on a ball that deflected off the glove of center fielder Gabriel Arias. There were two outs when Singleton knocked a ball from Logan Allen (3-2) into the front row in right field to put the Astros up 3-2.

Singleton has started the last three games at first base because slumping veteran Jose Abreu has been optioned to Houston's spring training facility to help the 2020 AL MVP get back on track.

Singleton has homered twice this week. The lefty hit his only two homers of 2023 in the same game on Aug. 11. He also shined in the bottom of the sixth when Pena

the Astros added a run when Tyler Beebe plunked Pena with the bases loaded. Yainer Diaz hit a two-run single with one out in the inning and Singleton made it 8-2 when he drove one in with a sacrifice fly.

Houston's Spencer Arrighetti allowed four hits and two runs in a career-long 5 2/3 innings in his fourth major league start. Tayler Scott (1-1) went 1 1/3 scoreless innings for his first career win.

Andres Gimenez hit an RBI double and Will Brennan added two hits for the AL Central-leading Guardians, who dropped their second straight series after losing two of three to Atlanta.

Gimenez gave the Guardians an early lead with his RBI double in the third. Steven Kwan made a great slide to avoid the tag at home

day to extend his slump to 0 for 17 since homering twice last Saturday against the Rockies in Mexico City.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Astros: RHP Cristian Javier (neck soreness) will make a minor league rehabilitation start this weekend. Manager Joe Espada said they haven't yet decided where he will start. ... RHP Jose Urquidy, who hasn't pitched this season because of an elbow injury, will throw a second live batting practice session Sunday before beginning a rehabilitation assignment.

UP NEXT

Guardians: RHP Tanner Bibee (2-0, 3.45 ERA) will start the opener of a three-game series against the Angels on Friday night against Jose Soriano (0-4, 4.76).

Astros: RHP Ronel Blanco (3-0, 1.65) opposes Seattle.

WVU

(Continued from Page 11)

But a roster is taking shape and Small is a big part of it.

Last season, West Virginia only faced Oklahoma State and Small once, which was probably not a scheduling gift to the Mountaineers as the Cowboys finished tied for last place in the Big 12 with an identical 4-14 conference record.

The tiebreaker went to the Cowboys, however, as they won that lone game played in Stillwater against WVU, 70-66, and it was Small who made the difference in the game. Small's bordered upon classic ash, he scored 15 points on 5 of 6 shooting from the floor, 2 of 3 from 3-point range, while adding an expected 7 assists as he is a point guard.

But 12 rebounds, too.

This, in and of itself, would tend to create euphoria among the Mountaineer faithful, but one would expect that DeVries studied more than just that game film.

See, the reality is that there was no defense for the way West Virginia played defense last season.

The Mountaineers ranked 303rd in the nation in points allowed, giving up 76.8 per game, including 81 or more in the last five games and 90 or more in four of those final five games.

Individual players feasted on openings in the defense, be it from outside the 3-point line or inside the paint.

Seven different players scored 29 or more points against West Virginia and it was capped off in the Big 12 Tournament loss to Cincinnati when Day Day Thomas had 29 and Simas Lukosius 31 in the same game.

So it is best that you not expect 25 points a night from Small when he wears the WVU jersey but know that he can score and led Oklahoma State with 15.9 points a game this season.

More important, though, is that Small is known as a solid defender, something the man he replaces, Kerr Kriisa, could not claim and that they will find out in Kentucky, where he has signed for his final season of play.

Small may not be like the second coming of Jevon Carter, but he can do the job and as a point guard, he is smart and crafty at his task.

He comes out of basketball territory in Indiana. He was in South Bend until he was a high school sophomore and then moved to Indianapolis. Indiana produced both Oscar Robertson and Larry Bird, so he understands what the sport means in the state.

"He's very, very cerebral," Oklahoma State Mike Boynton told the Oklahoman last season in a profile of their point guard. "He wants to lead. He wants his teammates to learn from him as much as possible."

And, Boynton said, he has much they can learn from him.

"You look at his assist-turnover ratio for his career, it's always been pretty good. (After two years at East Carolina and a year at Oklahoma State he has 244 assists and 167 turnovers)," Boynton said.

"Always shot a pretty good percentage, mostly because he takes good shots," he continued, the figures showing him shooting 41.4% from the floor and 34.7% from 3.

"He plays with a great sense of pride in having his team be successful, and those are earmarks of a really good point guard, and also a lot of kids from that state.

"When you talk about basketball meaning something in a state — like Texas, football is king — in Indiana, basketball is king," Boynton told the Oklahoman. "There's an element to having guys from there that learned that basketball's really important and if you play, you play a certain way. You don't turn the ball over, you take good shots, be a good teammate. And all those things still ring true.

"It's a basketball state," Small said. "You just don't have a lot of cameras around like other states like North Carolina or California. But in my opinion, most of the best hoopsters come out of Indiana."

MADONNA

(Continued from Page 11)

Madonna grabbed the lead in the bottom of the third, with a little help. Left-handed hitting Grant Wilharm popped up to shallow left but the ball was lost in the sun for a one-out single.

He promptly stole second — one of six steals in the game — and after the second out was recorded he went to third on a high-chopper to short that T.J. Decapio legged out for an infield single. Lazear sent a sinking line drive to center that skipped past Colson Wichterman as Lazear slid safely into third, and when the relay throw got away, he raced home to make it 3-1.

Cameron came right back, though. Zayde Long opened the fourth with a single to right-center and Colton Winters drew a walk that ended Lazear's day on the mound. Matt Geer came on and recorded an out on a fielder's choice, but

walked Starcher to load the bases. With two out, Lance Hartley jumped on the first pitch he saw and found the gap in deep left-center that cleared the bases and put the Dragons on top, 4-3.

Prior to Hartley's three-bagger, Madonna right fielder Chase Littleton robbed Wichterman of extra bases with a fully extended diving backhanded grab in right-center. That was just one of several defensive gems turned in by the Blue Dons. They turned an inning-ended double play in the first when second baseman Decapio gloved a liner and flipped to shortstop Grishkevich at second. They also threw Hartley out at third to end the sixth with a nifty relay from centerfielder Leland Nagy to Grishkevich to David Connors at third.

The Blue Dons had an answer again. Littleton drew a leadoff walk and was bunted to second by

Cory Gontas. Hartley got a strikeout for the second out but walked Kolten Grishkevich before Wilharm sent a fly ball to left. Starcher got his feet tangled and fell down as two runs scored and Wilharm had a double, making it 5-4. Geer dropped a single into shallow center as Wilharm scored. Geer went to third when the relay throw got away and he scored on Decapio's double to right-center for a 7-4 advantage they would never relinquish.

Wilharm, a Washington & Jefferson recruit, singled in two runs to highlight a three-run fifth.

"He's been a very good No. 3 hitter for us all season," Miller said of Wilharm. "I have all the confidence in the world when Grant comes up to bat."

Hartley, who will play collegiately at Potomac State, finished with a double and triple, while Long singled twice. Hartley also struck out nine

and walked five. Wright State University signee Coy Angel fanned three and allowed two hits in two innings in his first appearance after injuring his right knee a couple of weeks ago.

"I thought we pitched well enough to win," Adam Angel said. "Some of those hits were balls that we should've caught. They don't go down as errors, but they really are."

Wilharm (2 singles, double) and Lazear (2 singles, triple) combined for six of Madonna's 10 hits. Decapio singled and doubled.

Geer earned the win in relief. He struck out four, walked three and gave up five hits.

"Matt is like a bulldog for us," Miller said. "When he comes in, he goes right at the hitters."

The championship was the eighth in program history for the Blue Dons. They also won in 1992, 2004, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2019 and 2021.

CENTRAL

(Continued from Page 11)

"Just two good pitchers going at it," Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright said. "Both teams were playing solid defense. They got a couple more knocks than us, and sometimes that's just baseball. We hit some balls hard right at them, our guy battled out of some jams, their guy battled out of some jams, we just came up a little short.

"They got some big hits when they needed them. That's just the way it goes sometimes. It's a tough one because I have a bunch of seniors on this team and they've all given a lot to this program, so I was hoping we could pull this one off. We just came up a little bit short."

Wheeling Central opened up the day's scoring in the bottom of the first, Braxton Billick scoring from third on a groundout RBI by Eli Tucker.

Rosnick's shot over the right field fence made it 2-0 Knights in the bottom of the second, but Linsly halved the deficit in the fourth. Evan Zido lofting a sac fly to right field to plate Jaxon Murray. The Cadets had the bases loaded when Murray came to score,

and still had runners on the corners with two outs, but the runner at first was caught in a rundown to end the inning during the next at-bat.

Both teams combined for one baserunner between the top of the fourth and the bottom of the sixth, but the bats heated up in that penultimate inning, Central juicing the bases for Rosnick on, in order, a base hit to right by Luke Tiu, a base hit to left by Eli Tucker, and a walk issued to Seth Cover.

A sacrifice bunt and a strikeout amidst that had Linsly one out from an escape, but Rosnick drove in three with a rip to right center, and the Cadets were sat down in-order in the top of the seventh.

The victory marks the fourth OVAC championship for Wheeling Central.

"It was awesome, the kids were fired up about it," Cover said. "Kudos to Linsly, they're a great program, it's a rival for us so beating them kind of adds a little bit to it. I'm very proud of our kids, we're excited, we've got a lot of underclassmen who expect to be here next year. We'll enjoy this one tonight."

DERBY

(Continued from Page 11)

"It's very tough to keep them on the path to get to the Derby, get into the Derby and then, hopefully, it all goes well, and you get a good, clean trip," said trainer Brad Cox, a Louisville native who will saddle Catching Freedom, Encino and Just a Touch on Saturday.

Louisvillians take pride in their city's tradition that dates to 1875, whipping up at-home versions of such high-calorie delicacies as Benedictine dip (grated cucumber, cream cheese, sour cream and mayo), Derby pie (chocolate chips and nuts) and cocktails if they're not going to the track.

Diversity struggles

Thirteen of the 15 jockeys in the first Derby were Black, including Oliver Lewis, who rode Aristides to victory in front of 10,000 cheering fans in 1875.

Black riders won 15 of the first 28 Derbies, and then there were none from 1920-2000. As Jim

Protestors demanding racial justice and an end to police brutality demonstrated outside Churchill Downs in 2020 and 2021 after Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old Black EMT, was killed by police in a botched drug raid at her Louisville home.

Women have been a sporadic presence in the Derby, too. Only six have ridden in the race, the last being Rosie Napravnik in 2014. Seven women have trained Derby runners, with Vicki Oliver last doing so in 2021.

"It's an incredibly hard race just to get into, let alone win," Cox said.

Horse safety

Cox was declared the 2021 winner, nine months after the race when Medina Spirit was disqualified for a failed drug test — only the second such DQ in race history — and Mandaloun was elevated to first

cord-tying six victories isn't in Louisville for the third straight year. Bob Baffert has been banned by Churchill Downs Inc. ever since Medina Spirit's failed drug test upended the 2021 results.

Baffert fought his original two-year suspension in court, but lost a year ago. Last summer, the track said it was extending the suspension through 2024. It cited "continued concerns regarding the threat to the safety and integrity of racing he poses."

Sparkling showcase

Churchill Downs Inc., the track's publicly traded parent company with shareholders to satisfy, has spent \$500 million renovating and modernizing over the last decade. Its newest showpiece is the \$200 million paddock, where fans who don't mind dropping up to \$12,000 can dine and watch the horses being saddled before the races.

In its 150th year, the Derby's

Hawkins
HAWKINS

FRED RAY

...can shade the OHSAA play-offs the last two seasons, losing in the first round each year. "There is no perfect time

endent Brian Ripley said nobody within the school district was interested in the position, which also includes supervisor

football coach at one school. He built the program from the ground up and has us moving in the right direction."

grow up into young men. Ray has also coached at Fairview (Ky.) and River Valley High School in Bidwell, Ohio.



Photo by KIM NORTH

ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Hunter Hoffman follows through after delivering a pitch to the plate Tuesday against East Liverpool in the OVAC Class 4A semifinal on the Memorial Park diamond. The top-seeded Red Devils rolled to a 10-0 victory in five innings as Hoffman allowed just two hits.

Hoffman leads St. C. past Potters

By **BUBBA KAPRAL**
For The Times Leader

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — It was a mismatch on paper... and it was a mismatch on the playing field.

Top-seeded and reigning conference champion St. Clairsville rolled past outmanned and fourth-seeded East Liverpool in five innings, 10-0, in an OVAC 4A semifinal contest at Memorial Park Tuesday afternoon.

The Red Devils' 18th win in 20 starts propels them into Saturday's championship game against Indian Creek which defeated Cambridge. It will be a rematch of last year's championship tilt.

St. C.'s latest diamond triumph came to fruition as a result of a host of factors — the biggest being Hunter Hoffman.

The senior dandy tossed a two — hit gem while also unloading three hits himself. The southpaw ace needed only 55 pitches in recording the shutout. He fanned seven and didn't issue a walk.

East Liverpool fell to 8-10. "Hunter was exception-

al today," Red Devils' Hall of Fame manager Tom Sliva said. "He had total command of all three of his pitches. Hunter also came up big at the plate."

Hoffman, a Walsh University recruit, is now rounding back into top form. He incurred a major elbow injury in his pitching arm this past summer.

Sliva's well — drilled charges had their hitting shoes on, producing 15 safeties. Nine different Devils recorded a hit.

Hoffman's hurling heroics and the St. C. hitting explosion were complemented by solid defense play, featuring web gems from D — I shortstop recruit Braylen Blomquist, third baseman Nico Jacob and Hoffman.

"We played with an attitude today. That hasn't always been the case this year," Sliva said. "The guys were focused and really came to play today. We need to continue to play this way."

"Making the OVAC finals is always one of our goals. So we have accomplished that part of it," he added. "Now I

just want to compete very well and let the chips fall where they may. We will obviously be playing a good team in the championship game."

St. C. pays a visit to Barnesville today in a regular season contest.

"I have always had a soft spot for pitching but the hits were nice, too," Hoffman said when asked what was more satisfying, his pitching performance or his hitting. "I am getting stronger and my elbow feels fine. I think this was my best outing of the year."

Hoffman received the only run he would need in the first inning.

Blomquist, headed to Wright State this fall, opened the home-half of the first with a double to right. He scored on Hoffman's double to left center.

St. C. opened unnecessary breathing room by plating four runs in the third.

Blomquist was beamed before Hoffman delivered a one-out single. Mason Myers singled in Blomquist followed by an RBI single from Brody Saunders. Colten Florence capped the frame with a sin-

gle, knocking in two more Devils for a 5-0 reading.

The hosts added two more tallies in the fourth.

With two outs, Blomquist was beamed again. Standout catcher Marcus Bush tripled him in. Bush subsequently scored on a Hoffman double which nearly cleared the right-center fence.

St. C. put the finishing touches on its stellar effort with three runs in the fifth to enact the OHSAA mercy rule.

Caleb Keenan walked and Rowan Mellott followed with a single. Balgo doubled in Keenan before Jacob singled in Mellott. Bush delivered the game-ender with an RBI single.

Hoffman and Balgo led the Red Devils' hitting onslaught with three safeties each. Bush and Jacob each had a pair of hits.

Jake Smith took the mound loss for the Potters. He struck out three and walked two. Smith (double) and Malachi Reed (Single) had the lone EL hits.

St. C. has pocketed two wins over Indian Creek this season.

Caratini's 2-run homer, Hader's 2-inning outing lift Astros over Guardians, 10-9

HOUSTON (AP) — Pinch-hitter Victor Caratini's two-run homer with two outs in the 10th inning and Josh Hader's first two-inning outing since 2019 lifted the Houston Astros over the Cleveland Guardians 10-9 on Tuesday night.

Houston trailed by 1 after pinch-hitter David Fry's RBI double off Josh Hader (1-2) with two outs in the top of the inning.

Caratini homered to right-center field off Hunter Gaddis (1-1) to give the Astros a season-high three-game winning streak. They swept a two-game series over the Rockies in Mexico City this weekend.

Hader pitched a scoreless ninth before returning for the 10th. It was the first time he had gotten more than three outs in a regular-season game since getting four on Aug. 14, 2020, and his first two-inning appearance in five years.

Josh Naylor hit a three-run homer and Andres Gimenez hit his first homer this season with a two-run shot for Cleveland before Estevan Florial tied it with a three-run homer in the Guardians' five-run sixth.

Alex Bregman hit his first homer of the season with a three-run shot. Jon Singleton added a three-run home run and Joey Loperfido singled with two RBIs in his major league debut as the Astros built an 8-3 lead before Cleveland's comeback.

The Guardians trailed by 5 when Steven Kwan tripled to start the sixth before the home run by Gimenez cut the lead to 8-5. There was one out in the inning when Naylor walked to end Hunter Brown's night and bring on Rafael Montero.

There were two outs in the inning when Florial knocked his homer into the seats in right field to tie it.

Kwan and Gimenez hit consecutive singles with no outs in the first before Naylor put the Guardians up 3-0 with his one-out homer to left field.

Bregman sent an off-speed pitch from Carlos Carrasco off the wall in left-center field with two outs in the third to tie it at 3-all.

The bases were loaded with no outs in the fourth when Loperfido drove in two when he lined a single to center field for his first major league hit to put the Astros on top 5-3.

Singleton sent the next pitch into the second deck in right field, punctuating the hit with a mighty bat flip, to push the lead to 8-3.

River's Wohnhas pitches perfect game against Bellaire Big Reds

SARDIS — River's Ava Wohnhas fired a perfect game as the Pilots navigated past visiting Bellaire, 10-0, in five innings in high school softball action. The freshman struck out five and slugged a solo home run.

Kelsey Harlan singled and doubled for River (10-9), while Reese Hobbs, Presley Kilburn and Lynn Jones all singled twice, with Kilburn and Jones knocking in two runs each.

**Martins Ferry 6,
Cambridge 0
Martins Ferry 9,
Cambridge 3**

MARTINS FERRY — The Purple Riders clinched a berth in the Buckeye 8 championship game with a doubleheader sweep of the Bobcats.

In the opener, Abby Snedeker scattered five hits in picking up the win inside the circle. Giana Chirpas continued her torrid hitting with a double and home run that produced a pair of runs. Laci Zinn doubled in a

run and Danielle Lude singled in another.

In the second game, Chirpas singled twice and homered to knock in two runs. Snedeker slugged a solo homer and winning pitcher Maddie Lucas singled twice. She also fanned five, walked two and spaced out five hits.

The game was called after five innings due to darkness.

Shadyside 11, Bridgeport 1
BRIDGEPORT — The visiting Tigers broke open a 2-1 game with three runs in the fourth and five in the sixth against the Bulldogs on Irene Ehni Field.

Taylor Fulton singled three times and drove in a trio of runs, while Makayla Faulkner singled twice and tripled to account for three more runs. Kaylie Warnock singled twice and doubled, while Macy Hendershot had two singles and a like number of runs batted in.

Brooke Stewart singled and

tripled for Bridgeport.

BASEBALL

**OVAC Class 2A Semifinal
Caldwell 5, Shadyside 3**

CALDWELL — Either team confined their scoring to one inning apiece Tuesday as the Tigers took on Caldwell, the hometown stacking up enough offense in a five-run fifth inning to defend their homefield.

Alex Herlan launched a three-run home run for Caldwell while Carter Wheelin drove in two in the victory.

Shadyside's Wyatt Parr had two RBI of his own, while Ben Wach had one ribbic, doubled and stole a bag. The Tigers got out to a 3-0 lead after a three-run third inning.

Caldwell only had two hits on the day to Shadyside's six, but walked six times to Shadyside's two.

Toronto 16, River 2

TORONTO — The Red Knights baseball team took care of business against the Pi-

lots.

Toronto - the No. 1 seed - shook off a shaky start, and the Red Knights scored in all four innings they batted en route to a 16-2 victory against the fourth-seeded Pilots in five innings.

With the win, Toronto will now play No. 2 seed Caldwell in the tournament final at noon Saturday out at Edison at the Edison Unified Sports Complex.

Blake Close started the game for Toronto, and he picked up the win.

Kaden Hunt started and took the loss for River.

Eight of Toronto's nine batters had at least one hit.

Individually, Barcus recorded two singles, a double and three RBI, Michael Henry tallied a single, a triple and three RBI and Nate Brownfield delivered a two-run single. Dom Bouscher contributed a single and two RBI, and Russ Dickinson and Aiden Filby each fin-

ished with a single and an RBI. Finally, Nolan Dickinson added a single.

Edison 7, Heartland Christian 4

RICHMOND — The Wildcats bookended their game Tuesday with three-run innings in a victory over the Lions.

Chase Freeman and Kayden Russell each had two hits and two RBI. Nathan Haught had a pair of hits for Edison as well.

Jefferson County Christian 7, Cornerstone Prep 7

WEST MIFFLIN, PA. — Jefferson County Christian rallied from a 7-4 deficit to earn a hard-fought tie due to time restrictions.

Wyatt Hervey, Rob Henderson and Ben Adams combined for nine strikeouts and only gave up two earned runs.

On offense, Noah Kostelny was 2-3 with a homer and Ben Adams chipped in two singles. The Royals now stand at 11-6-1.

John Marshall Lights Up Scoreboard To Start State Playoff Title Defense

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor
MOUNDSVILLE

The WVSSAC state softball postseason began Tuesday, and for the John Marshall Monarchs, their game against the Brooke Bruins was the beginning of their state title defense as well.

So far so good for the Monarchs, who defeated the Bruins 15-0 in the Region 1, Section 1 semis in five innings.

"John Marshall is a formidable opponent," Brooke coach Tom Diserio said. "They have been for years and they will continue to be one. We knew that coming into this game, and you try to plan but when you don't execute the plan you have in-place, we don't give ourselves a fighting chance."

John Marshall led 4-0 after the first inning and 10-0 after the second inning.

"We put Ava Blake on twice to try and take the homerun ball out, but even that wasn't effective, they still put runs on the board," Diserio said.

"We had contact today, which has been better than in some of our other games, but when you hit it right to their player - their centerfielder had five or six outs, she's a great ballplayer, but we didn't even make her move for the ball, we hit it directly to her."

"Coach Robbie Blake's got a heck of a defense, an even better offense, they're a good, solid team all-around."

It was a big day for AC Cumberledge, who doubled at the plate while being one of three Monarchs with three RBI, all while starting out inside the circle and pitching three clean innings with three strikeouts.

Reese Ward and Kaylee White also each knocked three runners in. Ward finishing with a second-inning triple. Cumberledge led the way with three hits, while White and Nora Shock each had two knocks.

Cumberledge teamed with Shelby Crow for the shutout.

Emma Hayman smacked a double for



Photo by Nick Henthorn

John Marshall's AC Cumberledge throws a pitch Tuesday during the Monarch's sectional playoff game against the Brooke Bruins.

Brooke. Emilee McKinney had a pair of hits.

The Monarchs rebounded with a win to start their playoff push

after falling in the OVAC Championship to Morgantown last week. Please see STATE, Page 10



Photo by Kim North

Magnolia's Jessa Anderson slides head first into second base Tuesday as Wheeling Central shortstop Bella Rine (23) awaits the throw during the sixth inning. Looking on are Maroon Knights second baseman Jensen Rine and umpire Donnie Martin. Wheeling Central scored five times in the bottom of the sixth for a 5-1 victory.

Wheeling Central Sparks In Sixth To Defeat Blue Eagles

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

ELM GROVE - Call it a case of the OVAC championship hangover. Whatever it was, Wheeling Central head softball coach Buck Davidson wasn't pleased and knows his team will have to perform better moving forward.

The Maroon Knights (17-4) tallied five runs in the bottom of the sixth inning Tuesday to rally past a stubborn Magnolia squad, 5-1, in West Virginia Class A Section I Tournament action on Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Ballfields.

"We came out kind of flat with our hitting, but we started to pick it up later," Davidson said. "Taking nothing away from their pitcher, she kept us off balance with her changeup that fooled some of them. Usually, with some of the girls I had at the plate with runners in scoring position, they usually come through, but not tonight."

"We've got to play seven innings and take nothing for granted," Davidson continued. "I'm glad the girls kept plugging away and never gave up."

The Maroon Knights will now play Madonna in the winner's bracket final Thursday on Ben's Field. The first pitch is set for 5:30 p.m. The Blue

Dons defeated Cameron on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the Blue Eagles (10-11) host Valley tonight in an elimination game.

Magnolia grabbed a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Haidyn Bland ripped a double down the third base line leading off. A wild pitch moved her to third and she scored on a groundout by Madeline Delancy.

That would be all the damage Wheeling Central's Josie Frizzell would allow. The junior struck out 11, walked one and gave up five hits - three coming in the seventh when Magnolia loaded the bases with two outs but couldn't cash in.

With time running out, Wheeling Central bunched three of its five hits in the sixth and coupled them with four of the seven Magnolia errors.

Frizzell started the rally with a solid single to center. Aleah McCordle was inserted as the courtesy runner. Trina Baker reached on an error as McCordle raced around to third.

Jensen Rine's ground-er to short was thrown wide of the bag at second as Baker scored the eventual winning run. Ava Hanson laced a single through the left side of the infield that made it 3-1.

Please see SIXTH, Page 10

Hoffman, Red Devils Roll Through Potters

By BUBBA KAPRAL
For The Intelligencer
ST. CLAIRSVILLE

It was a mismatch on paper...and it was a mismatch on the playing field.

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The Red Devils' 18th win in 20 starts propels them into Saturday's championship game against Indian Creek which defeated Cambridge. It will be a rematch of last year's championship tilt.

St. C.'s latest diamond triumph came to fruition as a result of a host of factors - the biggest being Hunter Hoffman.

The senior dandy tossed a two-hit gem while also unloading three hits himself. The southpaw ace needed only 55 pitches in



Photo by Kim North

St. Clairsville's Mikey Balgo (7) dives for home plate Tuesday against East Liverpool in the OVAC Class 4A semifinal on the Memorial Park diamond. The top-seeded Red Devils rolled to a 10-0 victory in five innings despite Balgo being tagged out.

recording the shutout. He fanned seven and didn't issue a walk.

East Liverpool fell to 8-10.

"Hunter was exceptional today," Red Devils' Hall of Fame man-

ager Tom Sliva said. "He had total command of all three of his pitches. Hunter also came up big at the plate."

Hoffman, a Walsh University recruit, is now rounding back into top

form. He incurred a major elbow injury in his pitching arm this past summer.

Sliva's well-drilled charges had their hitting shoes on, producing 15 safeties.

Please see ROLL, Page 10

Wheeling Park Falls To Hot-Hitting Morgantown To Open Sectionals

By MARK SCHRAF
For The Intelligencer

The giggles at church. The sniffles at daycare. Your coworker's huge yawn during an afternoon budget meeting.

Well, last night at ISS Field at Mylan Park, the Morgantown softball team identified something else that belongs on this highly contagious list:

Hitting, as the Mohigans batted around - twice - in the second inning on their way to an overwhelming 18-2 win against Wheeling Park in their Sectional tournament round-robin opener.

MHS (17-7) actually pulled out of the gate a little sluggishly against the Patriots (12-17).

who defeated the homestanding Mohigans 2-1 a few weeks ago. An infield error and a two-out single put WP up, 1-0 at the end of one, and Park had a runner in scoring position in the second before MHS pitcher Maddie Wisman struck out a pair to squelch the rally.

Then the Mohigans offense got busy.

Wisman started things off with a sharp single, followed by battery-mate Kira Smith's base knock. An infield error pushed across the tying run, then three straight patient at bats led to three walks and two more runs.

The MHS bats cranked up the power next, as Emily Peterson pounded a bases-clearing double, followed by three

straight RBI doubles from Liz Alsop, Micah Wilson, and Wisman. A comfortable 9-1 lead and two quick outs didn't slow the momentum, as Beth and Grace Robinson stroked RBI singles. Anne Robinson walked, and Peterson collected her second hit and fourth RBI of the inning.

The scoring surge continued as Alsop pounded a three-run home run to left, and Wilson follow with a back-to-back jack way out to deep dead center.

That's 19 to the plate, and 16 across, a deficit that would not be shrunk enough to prolong the game beyond five innings. Alsop's RBI single and Wisman's second double of the day closed out the home team

scoring in the fourth, and Wisman capped her day after surrendering a meaningless run in the fifth, closing out Park on a complete game three-hitter.

After the game, Morgantown coach Lorri Lipscomb grinned when asked if that low scoring loss to Park was discussed before this one.

"Yeah, we might've mentioned it," she laughed. "Of course, you never want a rival to beat you in your house, and our bats were so quiet that day, so it was great to see them really get after it tonight. They made good adjustments and started swinging at strikes. That second inning had a little bit of everything, didn't it? Patience, line drives, and a lot of power.

Very nice to see. "We've had a different attitude and have been playing well in all parts of our game since coming back from Myrtle Beach," she explained. "We got together, worked through some things, and realized that we had a chance to do some special things. We have an OVAC championship over John Marshall in our pocket - and I know that they're thinking about that loss just like we were tonight - but we aren't satisfied. We just want to keep the momentum, the energy, and the confidence going."

The Mohigans are back in action on the road at John Marshall today in game two of the Sectional tournament.

Of Homegrown Receiver History

By **BOB HERTZEL**
WV News

MORGANTOWN - While the state of West Virginia has produced perhaps one of the five greatest wide receivers in football history in Randy Moss, it has not produced a particularly fruitful crop of homebred receivers for its state university.

WVU, of course, has over the years had to import its most exciting and productive receivers, from Stedman Bailey and Tavon Austin to Kevin White, David Saunders, Shawn Foreman, Gary Jennings, David Sills V, Khory Ivy and Chris Henry.

While watching Saturday's Blue/Gold Spring Game, the thought crossed an idle mind that this year that may be changing and for what may be the first time in nearly a century, WVU could actually line up a pair of wide receivers capable of running 1-2 in receptions for a team that is willing to throw the ball around.

That, of course, would be Preston Fox and Hudson Clement, two players that despite coming from different sides of the state have followed strikingly similar paths to the position they find themselves in entering this season.

Fox played his football in Morgantown, Clement in Martinsburg. Neither drew much recruiting attention at the Division I level, walked on at West Virginia, were surprised when awarded scholarships and now have become key cogs in what figures to be a dangerous passing game on the receiving end of Garrett Greene passes.

Fox famously earned his scholarship two years ago after a spectacular performance in the spring game as he put on display his ability to make acrobatic catches downfield. A diving catch at the sideline from Goose Crowder was the play of the day, leading to a post-game celebration of his promotion to scholarship.

"That was probably one of the best feelings in the world," Fox said as he thought about it last year. "Seeing my family walk in, I just knew that was the moment. I almost had tears come out of my eyes; that was the best feeling ever."

Fox took advantage of the scholarship and fought his way into the receiver rotation and into a punt returning role.

"As a walk-on, you really have to put yourself into any position to get playing time," Fox said. "Through punt returns, that helped me get on the field first. If you want to get on the field, you play special teams."

"It's been a hard journey, but it's always going to be hard as a walk-on," Fox added. "Being a role player now is big-time. A lot of it was hard work and now they can just plug me in at any spot."

Clement found himself in the right spot at the right time last year when, after the Penn State game, a couple of injuries got him on the field in place of Devin Carter and his receiving debut as a Mountaineer will go down in history.

Granted the opponent was Duquesne, but you play whoever lines up on the other side of the

ball and Clement latched onto three touchdown passes among the five he caught for 177 yards - the third most yards gained in a single game by a West Virginia native at WVU.

After the game he was awarded his scholarship.

"That was the greatest day of my life, definitely. It was life-changing, literally. I was a walk on and no one knew my name. I got an opportunity and ... yep, life-changing," he remembered.

Only Oscar Patrick, a dude before his time when he caught 10 passes for 190 yards and a touchdown against Penn State in 1968 and Zach Abraham, who caught 6 for 180 yard, including an 81-yard pass, in 1994 against Pitt.

After Saturday's spring game in which he made a difficult catch for a touchdown from Nicco Marchiol, Clement reflected upon his breakout moment.

"It's been a long time coming and I was blessed with the opportunity last year, made the best out of it. We had a few guys go down last year and needed a few of our young guys to step up and I just had to do what I had to do," he said.

"Now we are trying to build moving forward."

The stories of Fox and Clement will be passed on from year to year to high school kids who are disappointed with their recruiting status and used as proof that a walk-on can make it, just as undrafted free agents prove over and over they can do the same in the NFL.

Veteran Center Brian Allen

CLEVELAND (AP) - The Cleveland Browns added depth to their solid offensive line on Tuesday, agreeing on a contract with free agent center Brian Allen, his agency announced on social media.

Allen, who started 36 games and a Super Bowl for the Rams, is getting a one-year contract.

The Browns have not yet confirmed the deal.

The 28-year-old Allen was slowed by injuries the past few seasons and was a backup in 2023. The Rams released him in February.

Former NFL center LeCharles Bentley, who was briefly with the Browns and founded AMDG Sports, posted Allen's agreement on X.

"I've known BA since he was a high schooler," Bentley wrote. "When he's healthy, one of the baddest dudes in the NFL. My personal favorite C (center) to

watch play. Really hoping he reclaims old form and help the Land keep dominating upfront. A real dawg."

Allen, who played at Michigan State, will likely compete with 2023 draft pick Luke Wypler to back up starter Ethan Pocic.

The Browns have wanted to bulk up their interior. Last week, they selected Michigan guard Zak Zinter in the third round.

The Browns also picked up the fifth-year option on cornerback Greg Newsome II's rookie contract. A first-round pick in 2021, Newsome is scheduled to make \$13.3 million in 2025.

Newsome has started 39 games in three seasons. He didn't get an interception in his first two years before picking off a deflected pass and returning it 34 yards for a touchdown to key Cleveland's comeback win at Baltimore on Nov. 12.

STATE

(Continued from Page 9)

"I liked the way they responded from Friday's loss," John Marshall coach Rob Blake said. "We had a couple good days of practice, we were more disciplined at the plate, and if we stay disciplined at the plate, we're going to go a long way. We hit the ball a lot better today, we'd been doing that in practice, we fixed a

few things and we played really good defense. That's what's going to carry us through."

A rematch with the Monarchs is up next for the Monarchs, who will host Morgantown at home Wednesday at 5 p.m. in the winner's bracket final. Morgantown defeated Wheeling Park in their own sectional semi, 18-2.

ROLL

(Continued from Page 9)

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Hoffman's hurling heroics and the St. C. hitting explosion were complemented by solid defense play, featuring web gems from D-I shortstop recruit Braylen Blomquist, third baseman Nico Jacob and Hoffman.

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SIXTH

(Continued from Page 9)

Bella Rine's flyball to left was dropped for an error and Maddie Miehle singled to right to drive in courtesy runner Olivia Stephens. Bella Rine came around to score when the ball was mis-played in right.

"One bad inning," Magnolia head coach Dave Anderson said. "Wheeling Central is a good team and they put pressure on us to make the plays, and we didn't. The first five innings we made the defensive plays."

Magnolia didn't let the poor defense get it down as it threatened in the seventh. With one out, losing pitcher Mallory McDiffitt doubled down the right field line. Caroline Heil singled sharply to left

where Baker fielded the ball and threw a strike to Erin Maxwell at third to nail McDiffitt for the second out. Sophia Alexander singled to left and Sidney Knight walked on a 13-pitch at bat to load the bases. However, Frizzell recorded her 11th punch out of the game to end things.

Bland singled and doubled for Magnolia. Hanson had two singles for Wheeling Central.

"We went down fighting. I'm proud of them," Anderson added.

McDiffitt struck out four, walked one and allowed just five hits.

"She was out for two weeks with an injury and then took another week to get back in shape," Anderson said of his pitcher.

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OVAC BASEBALL SEMIFINALS



Photo by Kim North

Linsly first baseman Andrew Skadra eyes a pickoff throw as Barnesville's Taison Starr dives back safely during action from Monday's OVAC Class 3A baseball tournament semifinal on the sun-drenched Memorial Park diamond in western Belmont County. The fourth-seeded Cadets upset the error-prone top seeds, 9-3.

Cadets Advance To 3A Championship Over Top-Seeded Barnesville

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

BARNESVILLE - As the days were winding down the cut-off mark for the OVAC Class 3A baseball tournament, all veteran Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright wanted to do was get into the four-team playoffs.

His fourth-seeded Cadets (13-7) accomplished that, finishing fourth and pairing up with No. 1 Barnesville in semifinal action on Monday. Now, they will play for the 24th championship against city rival Wheeling Central after stunning top-seeded Barnesville, 9-3, on the sun-drenched Memorial Park diamond in western Belmont County. Should they win and defend their title, they would tie Steubenville for the most OVAC baseball crowns.

Although not set in stone,

according to OVAC Baseball Commissioner Bill Beattie, the Wheeling Central-Linsly game is tentatively set for Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Edison Unified Sports Complex in Richmond.

"Our goal was always to just get a shot. We just wanted to get in the tournament and get a chance," Cartwright said. "I think our guys appreciated that tonight. They threw a good arm at us. They are a good team and to come out here and beat them on their own field. They make you earn it and our kids did that tonight."

Linsly took advantage of four Barnesville errors for five unearned runs, including three in the top of the fifth on no hits. With the Cadets clinging to a 1-0 lead, Nathan Berhalter singled to start the inning. He was bunted to second by Chris Upton and, after Carson

Gessler walked, Berhalter raced home when a grounder to the right side by Rocco Paolina was thrown wildly to first with Gessler advancing to third and Paolina taking second.

With two out, Murray reached on an error to load the bases. Andrew Skadra's screamer to third was bobbled then thrown off the mark to first as Gessler and Paolina both scored for a 4-0 reading.

Barnesville, which entered the game ranked No. 7 in the Ohio Baseball Coaches Association Division III poll, cut the deficit in half in the bottom of the inning as Duker Castello coaxed bases-loaded walk from winning pitcher Dillon Wilson to end the senior's night on the mound as Ayden VanHorn scored.

Please see CADETS, Page 18

Park Falls In Extras To Morgantown

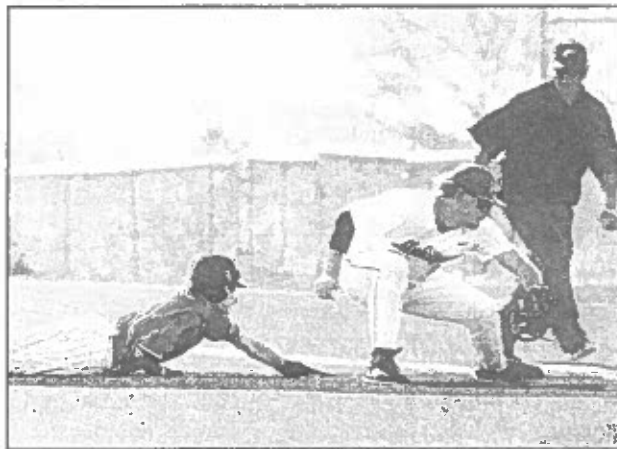


Photo by Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Wheeling Park's Jared Marsh dives back to first base as Morgantown's Nate Wolfe makes the catch

Mohigans Walk-Off 5A Semifinals On Ninth-Inning Sacrifice Fly

By MICHAEL
GRIFFITH

For The Intelligencer
MORGANTOWN - The Morgantown High baseball team earned its 20th victory of the season on Monday evening by way of an OVAC Class 5A semifinal win over the visiting Wheeling Park Patriots at Dale Miller Field.

The Mohigans (20-7) advanced to Thursday's title game with a 4-3 victory in the bottom of the ninth inning as junior Weston Mazey scored the winning run on a sacrifice fly by sophomore Koa Silvers.

"We had some players step up for up in today's game," MHS assistant coach Tim Bradley said. "Dylan Travinski was great today and his approach on the mound was amazing. We made the plays in the situations when we needed to. A lot of energy was shown today and that's where we want to be right now."

Both starting pitchers, Travinski for MHS and Braden Kupsky for Wheeling Park, opened the first few innings strong on the mound.

It wasn't until the bottom of the third inning that the first run of the game was scored as the Mohigans got the bats going.

Mazey led off with a double to right field and was followed by Mason Bowers with a double of his own that scored the opening run of the contest and gave MHS a 1-0 lead. Three straight walks from Kupsky yielded another run as the third came with the bases full and doubled the lead to 2-0 for MHS still with no outs.

After a fielder's choice at home plate, MHS senior Eli Boggs hit a one-out double, the third of the inning for MHS, to bring home Travinski and extend the lead further to 3-0.

The Patriots eventually got out of the third inning and responded well in the top of the fourth with their first three hits.

Two singles and an error in the MHS infield allowed the visitors to cut into the lead 3-1, then sophomore Nate Yanchak singled with two outs to shrink the lead again to just one run 3-2.

Please see PARK, Page 18

Wheeling Central Dominates 3A Semis vs. Purple Riders

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor

WHEELING - A first-inning surge set the tone for the Wheeling Central Maroon Knights OVAC 3A semifinals victory over the Martins Ferry Purple Riders, the No. 2-seeded Knights blazing past the No. 3-seeded Riders 11-1 on Monday.

Central scored five runs in the first inning to grab hold of a lead they would only build upon.

"We knew they had a rough pitcher, a kid who

had to face a pretty good pitcher and so it was huge for us to come out and jump on them early, get a couple runs early and be able to relax our guys a little bit. I thought we had quality at-bats all day long against them, and that's what's going to win games."

Central sent 10 to the plate in the bottom of the first. Seth Cover was the first to drive in a runner by slapping a ground ball to an awkward spot between first and second with the bases loaded, and beating



Photo by Nick Henthorn

Blue Dons Defeat Beallsville

By AARON PETCHAL
For The Intelligencer

WEIRTON - The Madonna baseball took the first step to adding another trophy to its collection. Top-seeded Madonna pounded out 12 runs on 13 hits en route to a 12-1 victory against fourth-seeded Beallsville in an OVAC Class 1A Tournament Semifinal Monday evening at Bowman Field.

The Blue Dons scored at least one run in all four innings they batted.

"We did overswing at times, but our approach has gotten better the last couple of weeks," first-year Madonna (18-5) head coach T.J. Miller

We were looking lackluster at the plate, but our approach has gotten better.

"We are seeing the ball better. We're hitting with two strikes. We're doing a better job."

The boys from Hancock County used two pitchers in the game, and the two combined for a no-hitter.

Jacob Lazear started on the mound and picked up the win for the hosts. Lazear retired all nine batters he faced.

He recorded six strikeouts, while throwing less than 50 pitches. Logan Fedak came on to start the fourth. Fedak struck out one, walked one and

De La Cruz Homers, Lodolo Strikes Out 11 In Reds Win

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Elly De La Cruz's 443-foot home run into the bullpen sent a few Padres relievers scrambling out of the way, and Nick Lodolo combined with two relievers on a four-hitter and struck out 11 as the Cincinnati Reds beat San Diego 5-2 on Monday night.

Lodolo (3-0) retired his final 18 batters after issuing consecutive walks to open the second inning. Fernando Cruz pitched a perfect eighth and Alex Diaz retired the first two batters of the ninth before Jake Cronenworth dou-

bled and scored on Manny Machado's single.

De La Cruz got this series going with an impressive homer with one out in the first. Knuckleballer Matt Waldron (1-3) got ahead of De La Cruz at 0-2. Batting lefty against the righty, the 22-year-old star drove a 91 mph sinker to left-center out the back of the ballpark.

With eight homers and 17 stolen bases in April, he became the sixth player since at least 1901 to record seven homers and 15 steals in a calendar month.

PARK

(Continued from Page 17)

After scoreless innings for both sides, the Patriots opened the top of the sixth with a double by Kupsky who advanced to third on a sacrifice bunt in the next at-bat and then scored the tying run on a sacrifice fly by Ryland Robb to knot the game at three runs apiece.

MHS senior Caleb Nutter hit a two-out triple in the bottom of the sixth and after a pitch hit Mazey, the Mohigans tried to get tricky with runners on the corners.

Mazey broke for second and tried to allow pinch-runner Ryan Nipper to steal home in the confusion, but the Park defense was all over the plan and caught Nipper out at the plate.

After a scoreless seventh inning, the game headed to extras. The Patriots managed to load the bases in the top of the ninth but MHS reliever Judd Messerly kept the Park offense at bay and opened the door for his offense to close the deal.

"Judd stepped up big for us today and gave us two strong innings to keep us in it," Bradley said.

Mazey led off the bottom of the ninth with a single that a sacrifice bunt by Mason Bowers followed. During the play, however, the Patriots left third base uncovered and Mazey was able to advance without a challenge.

That made way for Silvers to send his team to the OVAC 5A title game when he sent the second pitch of the at-bat into right field, allowing Mazey to score from third.

"We really have a double leadoff situation with Weston batting ninth and then Mason coming up for us," Bradley said. "Having a player like him at the nine spot is an advantage. We just need him to get on base and he will usually make the right play and it showed there to end the game."

The Mohigans will play for the OVAC 5A title on Thursday at Edison High School in Richmond, Oh.

CENTRAL

(Continued from Page 17)

Brayden Cover and Hunter Mueller each came through for two-RBI hits as Central twice loaded the bases in the frame.

"A bad first inning and it snowballed from there," Martins Ferry head coach Anthony Reasbeck said. "I thought we showed a little bit of fight, but when you're down 5-0 to a good team like this, you're fighting - not an uphill battle, you're fighting up a mountain. That's where we found ourselves and that's how it went. It kind of was what it was at that point."

Mueller was the designated hitter Monday, and took the duties to heart by driving in five runs on a pair of hits, one a double, out of the eight-hole.

Brayden Cover and Luke Tiu each had two RBI, Tiu's coming from a two-run double.

Cover was the seven hitter and Tiu the nine hitter Monday as Central got nine of their 11 RBI from the bottom third of their lineup.

"We balance it," Cover said. "It's not like our ninth hitter is the ninth-

Brodegard pitched the full six innings in a win for Central, racking up 11 strikeouts in a sparkling showing.

"He's a kid who throws hard, he's got a curveball and he mixed in a changeup today," Cover said. "When you can throw three pitches for strikes it's hard for hitters to adjust or sit on one. When you can do that, pitching's pretty easy sometimes."

Koy Lipinski also had an RBI for the Maroon Knights, and the home team had a clean bill on defense with no errors.

"Our M.O. is going to be pitching and defense," Cover said. "I have kind of an internal calculation where if you add our walks and errors and it's less than five, we're probably going to be in good shape at the end of the game."

"I thought that was the case today. Steven threw ball really well, threw all three pitches for strikes. When you do that, it's easy to call a game."

Ludolph drove in a run for Ferry, while Baron Lucey had two hits and a

Williams, Gilgeous-Alexander Lead OKC To A Sweep Of The Pelicans

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Jalen Williams highlighted a 24-point performance with a back-breaking 3 with three minutes left, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New Orleans Pelicans 97-89 on Monday night to complete a four-game sweep of their first-round playoff series.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 24 points and 10 rebounds for Oklahoma City, which trailed by five in the fourth quarter before suddenly seizing control with a combination of stifling defense and opportunistic shooting.

New Orleans led 80-75 and had a chance to take what would have been the biggest lead for either team when Jose Alvarado blocked Gilgeous-Alexander and sent CJ McCollum the other way on a two-on-one break.

McCollum could not convert at the rim, however. Soon after, Chet Holmgren's putback and Josh Giddey's 3 tied it at 80 and ignited a decisive 18-2 run, capped by Williams' second-chance 3, that put the Thunder up 93-82 with 3:08 left.

New Orleans, which played the entire series without star power forward Zion Williamson, never recov-

ered.

Giddey and Holmgren each scored 14 points. Holmgren also had nine rebounds.

McCollum scored 20 for New Orleans, which continued to be plagued by poor 3-point shooting. The Pelicans hit just eight of 34 shots from deep (23.5%).

Jonas Valanciunas had 19 point and 13 rebounds but might have produced more had he not been limited by foul trouble to 26 minutes on the court. Naji Marshall hit half of the Pelicans' 3s and finished with 16 points.

The Thunder held a 44-43 halftime lead in a game that was highly competitive through three quarters, with 18 lead changes and neither team leading by more than five.

New Orleans stayed close despite Brandon Ingram missing nine of his first 10 shots and 12 of 14 for the game.

Ingram's free throws with 3 seconds left in the third quarter that gave the Pelicans a 71-70 lead at the end of the period, but he finished with just eight points when more was needed of him with Williamson out of the lineup.

Derrick White Scores 38, Celtics Take 3-1 Lead vs. Heat

MIAMI (AP) — The good news for the Miami Heat is that the Boston Celtics might not be back in South Florida for a few months.

And that's also the bad news for the Heat.

Boston now has full control of this Eastern Conference series, with Derrick White scoring a career-high 38 points on Monday night and leading the top-seeded Celtics past the eighth-seeded Heat 102-88 to take a 3-1 lead in their opening-round NBA playoff series.

"I made a couple shots early," said White, who was 15 of 26 from the field and 8 of 15 from 3-point range. "That always helps. Once you make a couple, the basket looks huge."

The Celtics won at Miami for the sixth straight time and improved to 14-3 in their last 17 games on the Heat's home floor. But it was a costly win, with Kristaps Porzingis going down in the first half with what the team said was a right calf injury. He left the arena in a walking boot,

often used as a precaution.

Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said he had not gotten a postgame update on Porzingis' condition.

"I didn't see what happened," Mazzulla said.

Jayson Tatum added 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Celtics, who got 17 points from Jaylen Brown and 11 from Jrue Holiday.

"We had to keep fighting," Tatum said, "and play desperate in a way."

Bam Adebayo finished with 25 points, 17 rebounds and five assists for Miami, which had a sellout crowd — including Lionel Messi — but played again without injured starters Jimmy Butler (knee) and Terry Rozier (neck). The Heat managed only 84 points in Game 3 and struggled again on offense in Game 4.

Tyler Herro scored 19 points and Caleb Martin had 18 for the eighth-seeded Heat. Miami lost rookie starter Jaime Jaquez Jr. in the second half with leg tightness; he will be evaluated Tuesday.

"Offensively, we struggled again."

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We had some decent looks early on, weren't able to knock those down, and Derrick White was very good tonight — obviously. ... He was just very efficient, very good."

The Celtics can advance to the second round on Wednesday when they host Game 5. The Boston-Miami winner will meet the Cleveland-Orlando winner in the East semifinals; that Cavaliers-Magic series won't end until at least Friday.

"We're going into the lion's den," Adebayo said. "Everybody knows what's at stake. It's 3-1."

But the Celtics now have an injury concern, with Porzingis lifting his jersey over his face in exasperation after getting hurt late in the first half.

"Worried," said Celtics center Al Horford, who started after halftime in Porzingis' place. "Just concerned. ... Definitely concerning for me. He's in good spirits, but we don't know what it's going to be. I'm just hoping that it's nothing serious and he can get back to us quick."

CADETS

(Continued from Page 17)

Paolina came on in relief and promptly walked Max Miller to make it 4-2 as Casey Carpenter touched the plate.

Paolina induced a fielder's choice to end the rally.

A pair of sparkling defensive plays by the Shamrocks in the sixth kept them in the game. Second baseman Reese Stephen fielded a grounder that glanced

off of pitcher Jaxon Wiley's glove and threw the runner out at first. Then, left fielder Taison Starr made a diving catch of

a sinking liner in left to end the inning.

Linsly recorded one-third of its nine hits in the seventh inning, and combined with another Barnesville error, tacked on five insurance tallies. Skadra had a sacrifice fly that chased in a run, while Berhalter walked with the bases loaded and Upton singled to center to score a pair.

"Our pitchers have had our backs all year and I told the guys that we needed to help our pitchers out," the Linsly coach added. "They

have bailed us a lot this year."

Barnesville scored an unearned run in the bottom of the seventh for the final.

Wilson struck out five, walked three and gave up two hits. He threw 67 pitches, but only 38 for strikes, and pitched into the fifth before giving way to Paolina.

"Dillon got a little tired there so we got him out after he gave up a couple of runs," Cartwright noted.

"He has caught his whole career, but we had

a couple arm injuries and were looking for a pitcher, and we found one. He's been great for us. He understands pitching because he has caught so much."

Barnesville head coach D.J. Butler, like most coaches, accepted the blame for his team's lackluster effort.

"The kids worked so hard all season to get the No. 1 seed and I didn't have us ready to play. That's on me," he said. "You can't fault the kids. They played their butts off."

DONS

(Continued from Page 17)

"Our pitchers did great," Miller said. "Jacob and Logan did very well. Defensively, we did a good job behind them. Our offense put them in a good spot early in the game."

The victors did not commit an error.

"It is nice to have a combined no-hitter," Miller said. "I wanted Jacob to go longer, but it is late in the season and I'm trying to preserve arms with injuries. Hats off to him. He pitched great."

With the win, Madonna will play in the tournament final Thursday out at Edison against the winner of the game between Cameron - the No. 2 seed - and

ous meetings this season.

The boys from Monroe County also used two pitchers in the semifinal. Garrett Perkins started and took the loss. Perkins struck out three without walking a batter in his three innings of work on the mound. Reed Smith came on and pitched the fourth. He did record a strikeout or walk a batter.

Smith contributed the lone RBI for the boys in blue.

Eight batters had at least one hit for the Blue Dons, while another tallied an RBI.

Individually, Noah Kimberland collected two singles, a triple and two RBI, Grant Wilharm and David Connors each contrib-

pitch to start the inning, and he stole second. David Connors followed with a single, and he also stole second. Then, Littleton and Connors scored on a single by Kimberland to make the score 6-0. Nagy followed with another hit, and Kimberland scored on an errant pick off throw to make it 7-0.

The visitors got on the scoreboard in the fourth. Tryson English walked to start the inning, and he stole second. Smith followed with a bunt and was thrown out at first, however, the catcher hustled all the way around and ended up scoring on the play to make it a 7-1 ballgame.

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"We balance it," Cover said. "It's not like our ninth hitter is the ninth-best hitter on our team, he's a good RBI guy. That's what we have him there for. Same with the seven-eight guys, we try to balance our lineup where we have no easy outs. They came through today, and really they've been coming through all season so it was no surprise to me."

Ayden Ludolph took the loss on the mound for Ferry, striking out four over five and one-third innings, while Steven

two strong innings to keep us in it," Bradley said.

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REGIONAL

(Continued from Page 17)

Linsly's next opponent is yet to be set in stone with the standing still being cemented, though the Cadets are expecting to play Park once again after beating them 11-10 on April 18.

"Honestly this is the best group of young men I've ever been around, hands-down," Wilkinson said. "They keep

one another accountable. Things weren't going right at the beginning of the game, they stayed positive, they played for one another. It makes my job really easy, because they've got it.

"We've got leaders, they work with each other and they're able to execute and they got the game in-hand."

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With the win, Madonna will play in the tournament final Thursday out at Edison against the winner of the game between Cameron - the No. 2 seed - and No. 3 seed Paden City.

"We will be rested and ready to go," Miller said. "I am confident in our boys that they can get the job done."

The Dragons have won the past two tournament titles.

"Cameron has a couple of really good arms that are going Division I," Miller said. "They have the older Angel kid and the older Hartley kid. They have been playing good baseball. I don't know a lot about Paden City. We are going to be ready to go. We are going to have a practice tomorrow."

The boys in white tallied four doubles in the game.

"No matter where you pitch it, they are going to hit it," Beallsville (10-10) head coach Ty English said. "Madonna is a tremendous hitting team."

The Blue Devils made four errors in the loss.

"We did better than we did the last couple of times we played them," English said. "We did not score against them in those games. Being here is big for the program."

Madonna shut out Beallsville, 12-0 and 17-0, in the two previ-

ous meetings this season.

The boys from Monroe County also used two pitchers in the semifinal. Garrett Perkins started and took the loss. Perkins struck out three without walking a batter in his three innings of work on the mound. Reed Smith came on and pitched the fourth. He did record a strikeout or walk a batter.

Smith contributed the lone RBI for the boys in blue.

Eight batters had at least one hit for the Blue Dons, while another tallied an RBI.

Individually, Noah Kimberland collected two singles, a triple and two RBI, Grant Wilharm and David Connors each contributed a single, a double and two RBI and Leyland Nagy tallied three singles and an RBI. Also, Lazear recorded a double and an RBI, Mathew Geer and Fedak each finished with a single and an RBI and Cory Gontas recorded an RBI.

The Blue Dons plated three runs in the bottom of the first before an out was recorded. Nagy singled, stole second and score on a double by Lazear to give the home team an early 1-0 advantage. Lazear scored on a double by Wilharm to make the score 2-0, and Wilharm scored on a single by Geer to extend Madonna's advantage to 3-0.

The next batter reached on an error to put two runners on base, however, Perkins retired the next to three batters to end the threat and the inning.

Kimberland led off the second with a single, and he scored on a two-out single by Wilharm to extend Madonna's advantage to 4-0. Wilharm stole second, but he ended up being stranded there.

Madonna added three more runs in the third.

Chase Littleton was hit by a

pitch to start the inning, and he stole second. David Connors followed with a single, and he also stole second. Then, Littleton and Connors scored on a single by Kimberland to make the score 6-0. Nagy followed with another hit, and Kimberland scored on an errant pick off throw to make it 7-0.

The visitors got on the scoreboard in the fourth. Tryson English walked to start the inning, and he stole second. Smith followed with a bunt and was thrown out at first, however, the catcher hustled all the way around and ended up scoring on the play to make it a 7-1 ballgame.

The Blue Dons answered back in the home half of the inning as they scored five more runs to build an 11-run advantage. Nagy and Fedak each singled home a run, Connors recorded a two-run double and Gontas plated a run with a sacrifice fly.

Fedak struck out the first batter in the fifth before hitting the next one to give Beallsville another base runner, however, a 4-6-3 double play ended the game.

"Making the OVACs will help build the program," Coach English said. "The last couple of years, we have won about three games a year, so winning 10 is a big improvement. We have some younger guys and this was a great experience for them. You can only go up from playing good teams."

The Blue Dons are the Class 1A regular season champions, and they are also city champions. Madonna defeated Weir this season at home.

Madonna is scheduled to play East Liverpool at 5 p.m. Wednesday at home.

Beallsville is slated to play Belpre at 5 p.m. Thursday at home.

Tuesday,
April 30, 2024

Linsly upsets Barnesville boys

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

BARNESVILLE — As the days were winding down the cut-off mark for the OVAC Class 3A baseball tournament, all veteran Linsly head coach Jay Cartwright wanted to do was get into the 4 four-team playoffs.

His fourth-seeded Cadets (13-7) accomplished that, finishing fourth and pairing up with No. 1 Barnesville in semifinal action on Monday. Now, they will play for the 24th championship against city rival Wheeling Central after stunning top-seeded Barnesville, 9-3, on the sun-drenched Memorial Park diamond in western Belmont County. Should they

win and defend their title, they would tie Steubenville for the most OVAC baseball crowns.

Although not set in stone, according to OVAC Baseball Commissioner Bill Beattie, the Wheeling Central-Linsly game is tentatively set for Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Edison Unified Sports Complex in Richmond.

"Our goal was always to just get a shot. We just wanted to get in the tournament and get a chance," Cartwright said. "I think our guys appreciated that tonight. They threw a good arm at us. They are a good team and to come out here and beat them on their own field. They make you earn it and our kids did that tonight."

Linsly took advantage of four Barnesville errors for five

unearned runs, including three in the top of the fifth on no hits. With the Cadets clinging to a 1-0 lead, Nathan Berhalter singled to start the inning. He was bunted to second by Chris Upton and, after Carson Gessler walked, Berhalter raced home when a grounder to the right side by Rocco Paolina was thrown wildly to first with Gessler advancing to third and Paolina taking second. With two out, Murray reached on an error to load the bases. Andrew Skadra's screamer to third was bobbled then thrown off the mark to first as Gessler and Paolina both scored for a 4-0 reading.

See BARNESVILLE,
Page B2



Photo by KIM NORTH

LINSLY SECOND baseman Nathan Berhalter looks to complete a double play during the seventh inning of Monday's OVAC Class 3A baseball tournament semifinal against Barnesville after forcing out the Shamrocks' Taison Starr (1).

Ferry boys downed by Wheeling Central

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor

WHEELING — A first-inning surge set the tone for the Wheeling Central Maroon Knights' OVAC 3A Semifinals victory over the Martins Ferry Purple Riders, the No. 2-seeded Knights blazing past the No. 3-seeded Riders 11-1 on Monday.

Central scored five runs in the first inning to grab hold of a lead they would only build upon.

"We knew they had a tough pitcher, a kid who I coached in travel ball growing up," Wheeling Central head coach Todd Cover said. "We knew we had to face a pretty good pitcher and so it was huge for us to come out and jump on them early, get a couple runs early and be able to relax our guys a little bit. I thought we had quality at-bats all day long against them, and that's what's going to win games."

Central sent 10 to the plate in the bottom of the first. Seth Cover was the first to drive in a runner by slapping a ground ball to an awkward spot between first and second with the bases loaded, and beating out the throw to first.

Brayden Cover and Hunter Mueller each came through for two-RBI hits as Central twice loaded the bases in the frame.

"A bad first inning and it snowballed from there," Martins Ferry head coach Anthony Reasbeck said. "I thought we showed a little bit of fight, but when you're down 5-0 to a good team like this, you're fighting — not an uphill battle, you're fighting up a mountain. That's where we found ourselves and that's how it went. It kind of was what it was at that point."

Mueller was the designated hitter Monday, and took the duties to heart by driving in five runs on a pair of hits, one a double, out of the eight-hole.

Brayden Cover and Luke Tiu each had two RBI, Tiu's coming from a two-run double.

Cover was the seven hitter and Tiu the nine hitter Monday as Central got nine of their 11 RBI from the bottom



Photo by NICK HENTHORN

MARTINS FERRY'S Ayden Ludolph throws a pitch against Wheeling Central on Monday, April 29 in an OVAC Semifinals match inside the

third of their lineup.

"We balance it," Cover said. "It's not like our ninth hitter is the ninth-best hitter on our team, he's a good RBI guy. That's what we have him there for. Same with the seven-eight guys, we try to balance our lineup where we have no easy outs. They came through today, and really they've been coming through all season so it was no surprise to me."

Ayden Ludolph took the loss on the mound for Ferry, striking out four over five and one-third innings, while Steven Brodegard pitched the full six innings in a win for Central, racking up 11 strikeouts in a sparkling showing.

"He's a kid who throws hard, he's got a curveball and he mixed in a changeup today," Cover said. "When you can throw three pitches for strikes it's hard for hitters to adjust or sit on one. When you can do that, pitching's pretty easy sometimes."

Koy Lipinski also had an RBI for the Maroon Knights, and the home team

had a clean bill on defense with no errors.

"Our M.O. is going to be pitching and defense," Cover said. "I have kind of an internal calculation where if you add our walks and errors and it's less than five, we're probably going to be in good shape at the end of the game. I thought that was the case today, Steven threw ball really well, threw all three pitches for strikes. When you do that, it's easy to call a game."

Ludolph drove in a run for Ferry, while Baron Lucey had two hits and a stolen base.

Wheeling Central is set to play Linsly in the OVAC 3A Championship, tentatively set for Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Edison Unified Sports Complex in Richmond.

"Anytime you can get a chance to win a championship it's exciting for you," Cover said. "These kids have worked hard at it so we'll see who comes out of the Linsly-Barnesville game and we'll be ready for them."

Hamlin holds off Larson late to win NASCAR Cup race

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Denny Hamlin called his shot ahead of Dover, guaranteeing a win on his podcast, then followed through on his bold boast that would have made the Bambino proud and held off Kyle Larson down the stretch to park his Toyota in victory lane.

Hamlin wiggled past lapped traffic and never let Larson squeak by him over the final laps in a showdown between two of NASCAR's elite drivers and won the Cup race by about a quarter of a second Sunday at Dover Motor Speedway.

"You better win if you're going to open your mouth, that's for sure," Hamlin said.

Hamlin has the victory lane celebration down pat this season. He celebrated last week at Talladega Superspeedway in his role as co-owner of 23XI Racing when Tyler Reddick took the checkered flag.

Hamlin's contribution was a bit overshadowed by his fellow team owner — Michael Jordan. For the first time since he became a NASCAR Cup team owner, Jordan was at the track to savor in person a victory by one of his drivers.

Hamlin took his turn in the spotlight this week with the Monster trophy as a driver for Joe Gibbs Racing at Dover.

"It is a little bit different when you win it yourself versus as a car owner," Hamlin said.

Hamlin knew the win was coming. Or at least, publicly he was willing to say he did, going so far as to call his shot — he even referenced Babe Ruth on the podcast — that he would master the Monster Mile.

"I'm going to call it now. We're going to win Dover," Hamlin said last week on "Actions Detrimental." "Got it?"

Got it.
"Hopefully some listeners of 'Actions Detrimental' maybe cashed in today," Hamlin said.

See HAMLIN, Page B2

Barnesville

Continued from Page B1

Barnesville, which entered the game ranked No. 7 in the Ohio Baseball Coaches Association Division III poll, cut the deficit in half in the bottom of the inning as Duker Castello coaxed bases-loaded walk from winning pitcher Dillon Wilson to end the senior's night on the mound as Ayden VanHorn scored. Paolina came on in relief and promptly walked Max Miller to make it 4-2 as Casey Carpenter touched the plate. Paolina induced a fielder's choice to end the rally.

A pair of sparkling defensive plays by the Shamrocks in the sixth kept them in the game. Second baseman Reese Stephen fielded a grounder that glanced off of pitcher Jaxon Wiley's glove and threw the runner out at first. Then, left fielder Taison Starr made a diving catch of a sinking liner in left to end the inning.

Linsly recorded one-third of its nine hits in the seventh inning, and combined with another Barnesville error, tacked on five insurance tallies. Skadra had a sacrifice fly that chased in a run, while Berhalter walked with the bases loaded and Upton singled to

center to score a pair.

"Our pitchers have had our backs all year and I told the guys that we needed to help our pitchers out," the Linsly coach added. "They have bailed us a lot this year."

Barnesville scored an unearned run in the bottom of the seventh for the final.

Wilson struck out five, walked three and gave up two hits. He threw 67 pitches, but only 38 for strikes, and pitched into the fifth before giving way to Paolina.

"Dillon got a little tired there so we got him out after he gave up a couple of runs," Cartwright noted. "He has caught his whole career, but we had a couple arm injuries and were looking for a pitcher, and we found one. He's been great for us. He understands pitching because he has caught so much."

Barnesville head coach D.J. Butler, like most coaches, accepted the blame for his team's lackluster effort.

"The kids worked so hard all season to get the No. 1 seed and I didn't have us ready to play. That's on me," he said. "You can't fault the kids. They played their butts off."

Hamlin

Continued from Page B1

Hamlin led 136 of the 400 laps and won at Dover for the second time in his career.

Perhaps fittingly, the Babe wore No. 3 for the New York Yankees — and there was Hamlin and the rest of his No. 11 team flashing three fingers in tribute to the team's third win of the season.

Hamlin's three wins tie him with William Byron for most this season in the series. Hamlin also picked up his 54th career Cup win, all with Joe Gibbs Racing. He's tied with Lee Petty for 12th on

the career Cup list.

"I couldn't hold Lee Petty's helmet," Hamlin said.

The tone for the season was set from the opener when Hamlin also won the Clash at the Coliseum exhibition race.

Larson finished second and nipped at Hamlin's bumper for most of the final 25 laps and seemed on the brink of passing the Toyota. Larson's No. 5 Chevrolet just couldn't close the deal on the mile concrete track. Hamlin took the lead off a restart with 81 laps left and never let it go, repeatedly choking off Larson's Chevy at the top of the track.

Nadal

Continued from Page B1

Nadal didn't look as loose in the final set, but did look tired. He wasn't as consistent with his shots but picked up three breaks to seal the victory to the delight of the local crowd in the Caja Magica.

"I took more risks in the third set, but it's hard after so many months without competing," Nadal said. "I hadn't played a match like this in a long time. Let's see how it goes tomorrow. I don't know how I'm going to wake up. But I'm already happy for having won three matches in a row."

Cachin asked for Nadal's shirt after congratulating him at the net, and received the gift moments later.

Top-seeded Jannik Sinner was not at his best but had enough to defeat Pavel Kotov 6-2, 7-5. Sinner, who has been dealing with a hip issue, will face 16th-seeded Karen Khachanov.

"I have been struggling a little bit with my right hip," Sinner said. "We're trying to find a solution and I don't think it's anything serious. Sometimes I feel it more like today and some days are a little bit better."

LOCAL CARD

(all games at 5 p.m. unless noted)
Tuesday, April 30
BASEBALL
OVAC Semifinals
Class 4A:
#4 East Liverpool @ #1 St. Clairsville
#3 Cambridge @ #2 Indian Creek
Class 2A:
#4 River @ #2 Toronto
#3 Shadyside @ #2 Caldwell
Regular Season
Kiski at Linsly
Bellaire at River
Buckeye Local at Steubenville
Monroe Central at Martins Ferry
SOFTBALL
Sectionals
Wheeling Park @ Morgantown
Brooke @ John Marshall
Regular Season
Bellaire at River
Martins Ferry at Monroe Central
Linsly at Buckeye Local, 5:30 p.m.

TRACK
OVAC Class 3A Qualifying at St. Clairsville, 2:30 p.m. field; 3:30 p.m. track

SPORTS ON TV

Tuesday, April 30
COLLEGE BASEBALL
7 p.m.
ACCN — Charlotte at North Carolina
ESPN2 — West Virginia at Pittsburgh
SECN — Lindenwood at Missouri
9 p.m.
PAC-12N — Oregon St. at Oregon

GOLF
5 p.m.
PGA Professional Championship: Second Round, Fields Ranch at PGA Frisco, Frisco, Texas
IIHF HOCKEY (MEN'S)
8 a.m.
NHLN — IIHF U-18 World Championship Group Stage: Switzerland vs Sweden, Group B, Vantaa, Finland
11 a.m.
NHLN — IIHF U-18 World Championship Group Stage: Finland vs. U.S., Group A, Espoo, Finland

MLB BASEBALL
7 p.m.
MLBN — Regional Coverage: Chicago Cubs at NY Mets OR San Francisco at Boston
10 p.m.
MLBN — Regional Coverage: Atlanta at Seattle (9:40 p.m.) OR LA Dodgers at Arizona (9:40 p.m.)

NBA BASKETBALL
7 p.m.
TNT — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: Philadelphia at New York, Game 5
TRUTV — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: Philadelphia at New York, Game 5 (BetCast)
8 p.m.
NBATV — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: Orlando at Cleveland, Game 5
9:30 p.m.
TNT — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: Indiana at Milwaukee, Game 5
TRUTV — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: Indiana at Milwaukee, Game 5 (BetCast)

NHL HOCKEY
7 p.m.
ESPN — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: Toronto at Boston, Game 5
7:30 p.m.
TBS — Eastern Conference First Round Playoff: NY Islanders at Carolina, Game 5
9:30 p.m.
ESPN — Western Conference First Round Playoff: Colorado at Winnipeg, Game 5
10 p.m.
TBS — Western Conference First Round Playoff: Nashville at Vancouver, Game 5

SOCCER (MEN'S)
1:45 p.m.
FS2 — King Cup: Al-Hilal at Al Ittihad, Semifinal
3 p.m.
CBS — UEFA Champions League: Real Madrid at Bayern Munich, Semifinal - Leg 1
9 p.m.
FS1 — CONCACAF Champions Cup: Club America at Pachuca, Semifinal - Leg 2

MLB STANDINGS

Table with columns for American League and National League, including East and West Divisions. Rows list teams like Baltimore, New York, Boston, Toronto, Tampa Bay, Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Minnesota, Chicago, Seattle, Texas, Oakland, Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York, Washington, Miami, Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Fran., San Diego, Arizona, Colorado.

Table with columns for American League and National League Monday's Games. Rows list matchups like Baltimore 2, N.Y. Yankees 0; Toronto 6, Kansas City 5; Tampa Bay 1, Milwaukee 0; Philadelphia 1, L.A. Angels, 9:38 p.m.; Atlanta at Seattle, 9:40 p.m.; Cincinnati at San Diego, 9:40 p.m.; L.A. Dodgers at Arizona, 9:40 p.m.; Pittsburgh at Oakland, 9:40 p.m.; St. Louis at Detroit, ppd.; Tuesday's Games: St. Louis (Gibson 2-2) at Detroit (Flaherty 0-1), 3:40 p.m., 1st game; N.Y. Yankees (Cortes 1-2) at Baltimore (Kremer 1-2), 6:35 p.m.; St. Louis (TBD) at Detroit (KBD), 6:40 p.m., 2nd game; Kansas City (Ragans 1-2) at Toronto (Berr os 4-1), 7:07 p.m.; San Francisco (Webb 3-1) at Boston (Criswell 1-1), 7:10 p.m.; Minnesota (Woods Richardson 1-0) at Chicago White Sox (Soroka 0-3), 7:40 p.m.; Tampa Bay (Alexander 1-0) at Milwaukee (Peralta 2-0), 7:40 p.m.; Washington (Gore 2-2) at Texas (Gray 0-1), 8:05 p.m.; Cleveland (Carrasco 1-2) at Houston (Brown 0-4), 8:10 p.m.; Philadelphia (Turnbull 2-0) at L.A. Angels (Anderson 2-3), 9:38 p.m.; Atlanta (Lopez 2-0) at Seattle (Castillo 2-4), 9:40 p.m.; Cincinnati (Martinez 0-1) at San Diego (TBD), 9:40 p.m.; L.A. Dodgers (Knack 1-1) at Arizona (Montgomery 1-1), 9:40 p.m.; Pittsburgh (Keller 2-2) at Oakland (Wood 1-2), 9:40 p.m.

PREP LINESCORES

Table with columns for Baseball, Soccer, and Softball. Rows list scores for teams like Linsly 9, Barnesville 3; U. Local 005 100 0 - 6 6 3; M. Central 000 000 1 - 1 4 0; U.L.-Schumacher wp (4K, OBB) and White; Schumacher 2S; Hess S, HR, 3rbi; Toohey HR, 3rbi; MC-Fogle lp (2K, 3BB), Muntz (3), (5K, 3BB), Henthorn (6), (3K, 2BB) and Lydick; M. Demchak 2S; M. Landefeld rbi; River 7, Frontier 0; Frontier 000 000 0 - 0 2 3; River 510 010 x - 7 7 1; F-Rinard lp (7K, 3BB) and King; R-Blue wp (6K, OBB) and Dennis; Dennis D, Nething D, 3rbi; Simon 3S, Hunt S, Makris S, rbi; SOFTBALL; Martins Ferry 19, Union Local 4; M. Ferry 140 012 (11) - 19 23 2; U. Local 021 000 1 - 4 4 2; MF-M. Lucas wp (8K, OBB) and Chirpas; M. Lucas S, T, rbi; Chirpas 2S, D, 2T, HR, 9rbi; Lude 2S, rbi; Snedeker 3S, D, 3rbi; Hughes 2S, 2rbi; Koller D, rbi; Zinn S, D, rbi; G. Lucas S, rbi; K. Brandon 2S; UL-Stidd lp (6K, 4BB) and Poziviak; Kellaway D; Martin D, rbi; Stidd rbi; Beaver Local 6, Bellaire 5; Beaver 011 002 2 - 6 8 1; Bellaire 030 101 0 - 5 6 5; BL-Call wp (12K, 1BB) and Duncan; Reeder 2S, rbi; Call S, 3rbi; Eels D; Druschel D; B-Pacifico (2K, 2BB), Jackson lp (6), (3K, 1BB) and Jackson, Pacifico (6); Vingia S, D, rbi; ...

NHL PLAYOFFS

FIRST ROUND
(Best-of-7; x-if necessary)
Monday, April 29
Florida 6, Tampa Bay 1
Dallas at Vegas, late
Tuesday, April 30
Toronto at Boston, 7

