



RIVER shortstop Tiffany Armann attempts to catch a line drive during the OVAC All-Star Game Monday at Lisa's Field at the Chambers I-470 Complex. The West Virginia All-Stars won, 11-9. AP PHOTO

## W. Va. dims Ohio stars

• Mountaineers' two runs in the ninth lead to OVAC All-Star game victory

By BRIAN COOK  
Times Leader Sports Writer

Many coaches across the valley have the difficulty of just fielding a team, let alone a team with quality athletes. Monday evening the tables were turned for Ohio OVAC All-Star coach Barb Sleek and West Virginia OVAC All-Star co-coaches Rick Magruder and Ambrose Bober.

Both squads had 25 talented girls from across the valley that had recognition such as All-Ohio or were members of a West Virginia Class A title team, but somehow they had to fit all of these athletes into two separate lineups to compete against one another.

In this case, all a coach can do is line them up the entire team and go one through however many, knowing that they have the best in the valley at each spot on the lineup card.

And West Virginia's best were just a little bit better than Ohio's, as the Mountaineers captured an 11-9 victory.

"We tried to split them up a little bit, make it even through the lineup," Magruder said about the Blue and Gold.

*'We told the girls to smile and have fun, that's what we were there for.'*

*— West Virginia manager Rick Magruder*

"That's basically all we did. I'll tell you what, there are some good hitters on this team. A lot of girls you don't see all year, but a lot of girls can hit the ball."

Ambrose commented that the coaching staff tried to look at all the players and what talents they brought to the squad so they could keep players fresh and into the game.

"We tried to rotate them every couple innings so they didn't have to sit too long and that was the key. They got the excitement, and once they got that, it carried over."

In an all star game, any of one of those girls can make the key play and

Monday night it was Tyler Consolidated catcher Myriah Hisam. After drawing a leadoff walk in the top of the ninth frame of off Edison Caitlyn Williamson. Hisam was then replaced on the bases by Bishop Donahue's Shalynn Crockard, who stole second and came around on two wild pitches to score the winning run to top the Ohio squad, 11-9, at the I-470 Complex.

The pinch runner was questioned by multiple Ohio coaches, as Crockard was actually West Virginia's catcher at the time and there were 14 other players

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who weren't playing defense.

"But they said there was no rules except getting everybody in," Magruder replied.

Early on in the contest, it began to look like the Mountaineers were putting on hitting clinic for the Buckeyes as the bats were a rocking as the Blue and Gold tallied eight runs after the first two innings of play. The Mountaineers notched 12 hits in the contest which would lead them to victory.

Leading the way for the West Virginia All-Stars was Magnolia's Paige DeMarco who was 2-for-2 with pair of triples that drove in a run. Fellow Blue Eagle teammate Ashley McSweeney also chimed in with two hits of her own. However, a set of five Buckeye errors which ended up in four unearned runs aided in the Mountaineers success.

Away from the plate, another Magnolia athlete shined as Brooke Keene took the mound to start the game. Keene set the tempo in the first two innings before handing over the reign to Paden City's Lezlie Grimes.

Grimes faired well in the third frame, but came to some rocky territory in the fourth allowing four walks and two hits.

With a lack of options only having two pitchers on the squad, Keene reentered the contest at the mound and went the rest of the way totaling 7 2/3 innings pitched. She recorded five strikeouts for the game.

"We didn't want to pitch her that much," Magruder noted, "but she said she'd do it."

Grimes short period in the limelight was the Buckeyes big offensive series. Harrison Central's Annie Yarish and St. Clairsville's Beth Schroeder found themselves on the base paths after being walked.

St. John Central's Ashley Marinacci followed next cracking a RBI single up the middle. After a wild pitch that brought in Schroeder and walk, Irish teammate Laraine Skorich aided in the Ohio scoring with a single of her own that drove in Marinacci.

Now down 8-5 the Buckeyes continued to find offense at multiple parts of the lineup. At the number seven spot Jennifer Stehly slapped a single down the third base line to get the Red and White jump started. Cambridge's Rachel Wright, who was next at bat, followed with a double to deep left-center having Stehly cross the plate.

Following an infield fly, Buckeye Local's Erica Stuart doubled to right field for an RBI before advancing around the bases herself off a walk and two wild pitches bringing the game within one, 9-8.

Hitting is usually contagious, but it wasn't quite there for the Buckeyes in the next frame, but a walk and a Janelle Windsheimer double resulted in a tie ball game, 9-9, setting up the finale for the ninth.

How in the world did Sleek design such a versatile lineup to have a lineup produce at anytime?

"I asked them, if I asked you to bunt, would you call yourself a bunter? If I asked you to steal, would you call yourself a stealer," she commented. "They told me what they did and I lined it up as bunter, power, bunter, power."

Not knowing all the athletes, Sleek said this was the best way to spread out all the talent and make it fair.

No matter the outcome on the scoreboard, the game appeared to have served its purpose allowing the senior athletes one last time to strap up the spiked and play ball.

"We told the girls to smile and have fun, that's what we were here for," Magruder said.

"We wanted to win," Bober added. "You're not competitors if you don't. We want to get everybody to play. It's just a good atmosphere."

Also, throughout the game the OVAC honored their outstanding senior in each division.

John Marshall senior first baseman Vanessa Ilovar was named OVAC Class AAAA Player of the Year.

The lefty slugger hit .468 with five homers and scored 28 runs to lead the potent Monarch offense.

Magnolia senior shortstop McSweeney was named Class AAA Player of the Year.

The slick-fielding middle infielder hit .511 with 39 RBIs in leading the Blue Eagles to OVAC Class AAA regular-season and tournament crowns.

Wheeling Central junior shortstop Kayla Gray was named OVAC Class AA player of the year.

Gray slammed out 42 hits and batted .477 in leading the Maroon Knights to OVAC Class AA regular-season and tournament titles along with a West Virginia Class A state championship.

St. John Central shortstop Marinacci was chosen as the OVAC Class A player of the year.

A four-year starter for coach Jerry Magistro's Fighting Irish, Marinacci led St. John Central in nearly every offensive category. She was a major factor in St. John's OVAC Class A regular season and tournament championships and led the Irish to an Ohio Division IV sectional title and a berth in the district championship game.

Cook can be reached via email at [timesleader@timesleaderonline.com](mailto:timesleader@timesleaderonline.com).

West Virginia 440 001 002 - 11 9 2  
Ohio 020 300 310 - 9 5 5

BATTERIES: Keene, Grimes (3), Keene (4) and Morris, Hisam (3), Crockard (6); Decker, Stehly (2), Williamson and Nealey, Ketelsen (2), Givens (7).



## OVAC Softball All-Stars vie Monday in Elm Grove, W.Va.



Jeff Harrison/The Daily Jeffersonian

Representing Ohio in the OVAC Softball All-Star Game slated Monday at 7 p.m. at the I-470 Complex in Elm Grove, W.Va. are, l to r, front row, Kayla Ralston of Barnesville, Andrea Sindeldecker of Bridgeport, Erica Stuart and Janelle Windsheimer of Buckeye Local, Heather Nealey of Buckeye Trail, Allanna Decker and Rachel Wright of Cambridge, Katelyn Givens of Edison and Jennifer Stehly of Fort Frye. In back are Coach Bob Shepard of Cambridge, Annie Yarish of Harrison Central, Tiffany Armann of River, Beth Schroeder of St. Clairsville, Ashley Marinacci and Laraine Skorich of St. John Central, Alaina Augustine, Kimmy Straker and Mia Zamana of Steubenville Catholic, Jessica Bates of Toronto, Erin Mick of Wellsville, Abbey Winland of Zanesville and Coach Barb Sleek of Fort Frye. Absent were players Alexa Smith of Beaver Local, Megan Palicka of Bellaire, Kayla Barborak of East Liverpool, Caitlin Williamson of Edison, Carrie Ketelsen of Fort Frye, Tori Taylor of Frontier and Jewell Jones of Monroe Central and coaches Jerry Magistro of St. John Central and Jess Cordery of Martins Ferry.



Jeff Harrison/The Daily Jeffersonian

The West Virginia squad for the OVAC Softball All-Star Game slated Monday at 7 p.m. at the I-470 Complex in Elm Grove, W.Va. includes, l to r, front row, Coach Ambrose Bober of Wheeling Central, Jen Hill, Lindsay Yurisko, Sarah Edge and Shaylynn Crockard of Bishop Donahue, Jolene Morris of Cameron, Natalie George of Linsly, Alisha Merico, Francesca Biondillo and Michelle Gianni of Weirton Madonna, Lezlie Grimes and Rachel Lemasters of Paden City. In back are Coach James Cicchirillo of Brooke, Ashley McSweeney, Behtany Howell and Paide DeMarco of Magnolia, Elissa Dray of Oak Glen, Lindsey Palmer and Myriah Hisam of Tyler Consolidated, Courtney McGilton, Marcy Dunn and Vanessa Ilovar of John Marshall, Coach Rick Magruder of Wheeling Central and Coach Miki Maxwell of Bishop Donahue. Absent were players Lauren Cook of Bishop Donahue, Andi Burke and Nicole Fekete of Wheeling Central, Brooke Keene of Magnolia and Mandi Szerszen of Wheeling Park and Coach Charlie Howell of Magnolia.

### OVAC SOFTBALL

#### OVAC All-Star Softball Game Rosters WEST VIRGINIA

Coaches: Ambrose Bober/Rick Magruder, Wheeling Central; James Cicchirillo, Brooke; Charlie Howell, Magnolia; Miki Maxwell, Bishop Donahue  
Bishop Donahue: Jen Hill, Lauren Cook, Lindsey Yurisko, Sarah Edge, Shaylynn Crockard  
Magnolia: Ashley McSweeney, Behtany Howell, Brooke Keene, Paige DeMarco  
John Marshall: Courtney McGilton, Marcy Dunn, Vanessa Ilovar  
Madonna: Alisha Merico, Francesca Biondillo, Michelle Gianni  
Wheeling Central: Andi Burke, Nicole Fekete  
Paden City: Lezlie Grimes, Rachel Lemasters  
Tyler Consolidated: Lindsey Palmer, Myriah Hisam  
Wheeling Park: Mandi Szerszen  
Cameron: Jolene Morris  
Linsly: Natalie George  
Oak Glen: Elissa Dray

#### OHIO

Coaches: Barb Sleek, Fort Frye; Jerry Magistro, St. John Central; Jess Cordery, Martins Ferry; Cambridge: Bob Shepard  
Staub, Central: Alaina Augustine, Kimmy Straker, Mia Zamana  
St. John Central: Ashley Marinacci, Laraine Skorich  
Buckeye Local: Erica Stuart, Janelle Windsheimer  
Cambridge: Allanna Decker, Rachel Wright  
Edison: Caitlin Williamson, Katelyn Givens  
Fort Frye: Carrie Ketelsen, Jennifer Stehly  
Bridgeport: Andrea Sindeldecker  
Buckeye Trail: Heather Nealey  
East Liverpool: Kayla Barborak  
Frontier: Tori Taylor  
Harrison Central: Annie Yarish  
Monroe Central: Jewell Jones  
River: Tiffany Armann  
St. Clairsville: Beth Schroeder  
Toronto: Jessica Bates  
Wellsville: Erin Mick  
Zanesville: Abbey Winland

## OVAC

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Magnolia also won West Virginia Class AA sectional and regional championships to earn its third straight state tournament trip.

Joining McSweeney on the All-OVAC Class AAA first-team unit were senior teammates Brooke Keene and Bethany Howell. Martins Ferry, which lost to the Blue Eagles in the OVAC triple-A final, was represented by junior first baseman Sarah Burch, sophomore catcher Kayla Lewis and freshman shortstop Karlen Vinci.

Wheeling Central junior shortstop Kayla Gray was named OVAC Class AA Player of the Year.

Gray slammed out 42 hits and batted .477 in leading the Maroon Knights to OVAC Class AA regular-season and tournament titles along with a West Virginia Class A state championship.

She was joined on the All-OVAC Class AA first team by senior outfielder Angela Petros and sophomore pitcher/third baseman Jen Sparachane.

Steubenville Catholic Central, which lost to Wheeling Central in the OVAC Class AA final, also had three first-team selections: junior pitcher Alexis Ferrera, senior sec-

ond baseman Alaina Augustine and senior outfielder Mia Zamana.

Bellaire St. John Central shortstop Ashley Marinacci was chosen as the OVAC Class A Player of the Year.

A four-year starter for Coach Jerry Magistro's Fighting Irish, the hard-hitting Marinacci led St. John Central in nearly every offensive category. She was a major factor in St. John's OVAC Class A regular season and tournament championships and also led the Irish to an Ohio Division IV sectional title and a berth in the district championship game.

Marinacci, McSweeney and Ilovar will be back at Lisa's Field Monday for the annual OVAC All-Star Softball Classic.

Wheeling Central co-coaches Ambrose Bober and Rick Magruder will be the co-head coaches for West Virginia with assistance from Brooke's James Cicchirillo, Magnolia's Charlie Howell and Bishop Donahue's Miki Maxwell.

Fort Frye's Barb Sleek is the head coach for Ohio. Assistant coaches include Jerry Magistro of Bellaire St. John Central, Jess Cordery of Martins Ferry and Bob Shepard of Cambridge.





Photos by Alex Kozlowski

Top: Magnolia's Brooke Keene (5) steals second base as shortstop Tiffany Armann of River covers on the play during the OVAC All-Star Game Monday at Lisa's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Complex. Bottom: Keene prepares to pitch.

# Night of Stars

West Virginia scores two in ninth. to win OVAC All-Star game, 11-9

By JIM ELLIOTT  
Assistant Sports Editor

In the OVAC All-Star softball game, everybody gets a turn at the plate.

You just line them up 1-through-whatever and hope for the best -- there simply is no precedent for someone being a great No. 17 hitter.

That's where West Virginia was in the lineup in the top of the ninth with the game tied at 9 Monday night at Lisa's Field.

That hitter, Tyler Consolidated's Myriah Hisam, drew a leadoff walk, which eventually turned into the winning run as the West Virginia squad topped Ohio, 11-9.

Did they know something?

"We tried to split them up a little bit, make it even through the lineup," West Virginia co-head coach Rick Magruder said. "And that's basically all we did. I'll tell you what, there are some good hitters on this team. A lot of girls you don't see all year, but a lot of girls can hit the ball."

West Virginia had 12 hits.

"We tried to get a list of where they played and what they could do," said co-head coach Ambrose Bober. "And we tried to rotate them every couple innings so they didn't have to sit too long. And that was the key. They got the excitement, and once they got that, it carried over."

Yes, it did.

Hisam was replaced on the basepaths by

Bishop Donahue's Shalynn Crockard, who stole second and came around to score two outs and two wild pitches later.

The move was questioned by some of the Ohio coaches, as Crockard was actually West Virginia's catcher at the time and there were 14 other players who weren't playing defense.

"But they said there was no rules except getting everybody in," Magruder replied.

West Virginia looked like it might turn the game into a laughter early, scoring four runs in each of the first two innings.

Among the highlights was an RBI triple by Magnolia's Paige DeMarco, who was 2-for-2, an RBI single by Ashley McSweeney, who also had two hits in two trips to the plate, and five Ohio errors that led to four West Virginia runs.

Another Magnolia all-star, pitcher Brooke Keene, was holding Ohio at bay on the other end.

West Virginia had 23 players, but only two of them were pitchers.

Because of that, Keene started, was replaced by Paden City's Lezlie Grimes for an inning and a third, then came back in the fourth and finished off the game, totaling 7 2/3 innings pitched.

"We didn't want to pitch her that much," Magruder said, "but she said she'd do it."

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Grimes, who worked a perfect third, was touched up for three runs in the fourth before handing the ball back over to Keene.

It was during that period that the Ohio offense caught fire -- beginning with the No. 14 hitter. Like West Virginia, it was a walk that got that going, as both Harrison Central's Annie Yarish and St. Clairsville's Beth Schroeder drew walks ahead of OVAC Class A Player of the Year, Ashley Marinacci of Bellaire St. John, Ohio's No. 17 hitter. She ripped an RBI single, ahead of another walk and an RBI sin-

gle by Irish teammate Laraine Skorich. In between, Schroeder scored on a wild pitch, bringing the Ohio team back to within three at 8-5.

So how did Ohio coach Barb Sleek figure that out?

"Do you want to know my secret?" she asked.

"I asked them, if I asked you to bunt, would you call yourself a bunter? If I asked you to steal, would you call yourself a stealer? They told me what they did and I lined it up as bunter, bunter, power, power, bunter, bunter, power power."

"That's the only thing I could do. I don't know a lot of these girls, but they're all good play-

ers."

West Virginia upped its lead to 9-5 in the fifth with an RBI single by John Marshall's Marcy Dunn.

Then Ohio got two back in the seventh on run-producing doubles by Cambridge's Rachel Wright and Buckeye Local's Erica Stuart. The Buckeyes tied it in the eighth on an RBI double by the Panthers' Janelle Windsheimer, setting the stage for the ninth.

Keene struck out a total of five to earn the victory.

No matter the outcome on the scoreboard, the game appeared to have served its purpose.

"We told the girls to smile

and have fun, that's what we were here for," Magruder said.

But the fact that they won sure helped.

"We wanted to win," Bober added. "You're not competitors if you don't. We want to get everybody to play. It's just a good atmosphere."

OVAC All-Star Softball Game  
(at Lisa's Field)  
West Virginia 11, Ohio 9  
West Virginia 440 001 002 - 11 12 1  
Ohio 020 300 310 - 9 7 7  
W - Keene (2SO, 1W), Grimes (3) (OSO, 5W), Keene wp (4) (3SO, 4W) and Crockard, Hisam. George 2S; Hill D; McSweeney 2S, rbi; Ilovor S, rbi; Szczerzan S, rbi; DeMarco T, D, rbi; Dun S, rbi; Howell S, D.  
O - Decker (OSO, OW), Stehly (3) (1SO, OW), Williamson 1p (3SO, 3W) and Nealy, Ketelaen, Givens. Nealy S; Decker rbi; Stehly S; Wright D, rbi; Stuart D, rbi; Marinacci S, rbi; Windsheimer D, rbi; Skorich S, rbi.



Photo by Alex Kozlowski

**THE MEMBERS** of the 2006 Ohio OVAC All-Stars are front row, from left: Kayla Ralston (Barnesville), Andrea Sindeldecker (Bridgeport), Erica Stuart (Buckeye Local), Janelle Windsheimer (Buckeye Local), Heather Nealey (Buckeye Trail), Allanna Decker (Cambridge), Rachel Wright (Cambridge), Katelyn Givens (Edison) and Jennifer Stehly (Fort Frye). Back row, from left: Cambridge coach Bob Shepard, Annie Yarish (Harrison Central), Tiffany Armann (River), Beth Schroeder (St. Clairsville), Ashley Marinacci (Bellaire St. John), Laraine Skorich (Bellaire St. John), Alaina Augustine (Steubenville Central), Kimmy Straker (Steubenville Central), Mia Zamana (Steubenville Central), Jessica Bates (Toronto), Erica Mick (Wellsville) and Abbey Winland (Zanesville), and Fort Frye coach Barb Sleek. Not pictured: Alexa Smith (Beaver Local), Megan Palicka (Bellaire), Kayla Barborak (East Liverpool), Caitlin Williamson (Edison), Carrie Ketelsen (Fort Frye), Tori Taylor (Frontier), Jewell Jones (Monroe Central), Bellaire St. John coach Jerry Magistro and Martins Ferry coach Jess Cordery.

## OVAC All-Star rosters set

### FOR THE TIMES LEADER

John Marshall's Pancho Flores has been named Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Softball Coach of the Year in voting by the OVAC softball coaches.

The announcement was made Monday evening at the annual OVAC All-Star Media Night held at Lisa's Field in the Chambers I-470 Complex.

The OVAC softball coaches also used the occasion to reveal this year's OVAC Players of the Year in all four divisions along with the 2006 All-OVAC Softball Teams.

The committee also introduced the players and coaches who will be participating in next week's annual OVAC Softball All-Star Game.

That All-Star Game, which pits West Virginia's top seniors against the top seniors from Ohio, is set for a 7 p.m. start on Monday at Lisa's Field.

Flores led the Lady Monarchs to a sparkling 23-5 record this spring.

John Marshall won the OVAC Class AAAA regular season championship and avenged an OVAC Tournament loss to eventual Class AAAA playoff champion Brooke by beating the Bruins in the West Virginia Class AAA sectional championship game.

The Monarchs went on to down University in the Class AAA Region I semifinal before having their tournament trail cut short with a 5-1 loss to eventual state runnerup East Fairmont in the Region One championship game.

John Marshall senior first baseman Vanessa Ilovar was named OVAC Class AAAA Player of the Year.

The lefty slugger hit .468 with five homers and scored 28 runs to lead the potent Monarch offense.

She was joined on the All-OVAC Class AAAA first team by teammate Sarah Swoger, a junior pitcher.

Brooke and Cambridge, who met in the OVAC Class AAAA playoff title tilt, placed three players each on the squad.

The Bruins' representatives were sophomore pitcher Caitlin Kocher, junior outfielder Alicia Wayne and junior shortstop Marissa Reardon.

The Bobcats' first-team selections were junior outfielder Samantha Roller, senior pitcher Allana Decker and senior outfielder Rachel Wright.

Magnolia senior shortstop Ashley McSweeney was named Class AAA Player of the Year.

The slick-fielding middle infielder hit .511 with 39 RBIs in leading the Blue Eagles to OVAC Class AAA regular-season and tournament crowns.

Magnolia also won West Virginia Class AA sectional and regional championships to earn its third straight state tournament trip.

Joining McSweeney on the All-OVAC Class AAA first-team unit were senior teammates Brooke Keene and Bethany Howell. Martins Ferry, which lost to the Blue Eagles in the OVAC triple-A final, was represented by junior first baseman Sarah Burch, sophomore catcher Kayla Lewis and freshman shortstop Karlen Vinci.

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## OVAC West Virginia All-Stars



Photos by Alex Kozlowski

The members of the 2006 West Virginia OVAC All-Stars are front row, from left: Wheeling Central coach Ambrose Bober, Jen Hill (Bishop Donahue), Lindsay Yurisko (Bishop Donahue), Sarah Edge (Bishop Donahue), Shalynn Crockard (Bishop Donahue), Jolene Morris (Cameron), Natalie George (Linsly), Alicia Merico (Weirton Madonna), Francesca Blondillo (Weirton Madonna), Michelle Gianni (Weirton Madonna), Lezlie Grimes (Paden City) and Rachel Lemasters (Paden City). Back Row, from left: Brooke coach James Cocchirillo, Ashley McSweeney (Magnolia), Bethany Howell (Magnolia), Paige DeMarco (Magnolia), Ellisa Dray (Oak Glen), Lindsey Palmer (Tyler Consolidated), Myriah Hisam (Tyler Consolidated), Courtney McGilton (John Marshall), Marcy Dorn (John Marshall), and Vanessa Ilovar (John Marshall), Wheeling Central coach Rick Magruder, and Bishop Donahue coach Miki Maxwell. Not pictured: Lauren Cook (Bishop Donahue), Andi Burke (Wheeling Central), Nicole Fekete (Wheeling Central), Brooke Keene (Magnolia), Mandy Szerszen (Wheeling Park) and Magnolia coach Charlie Howell.

# OVAC Rosters Named

## Monarch's Flores Coach of the Year

### Staff Reports

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## OVAC Ohio All-Stars



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