

# OVAC Pairings Announced

Softball tournament  
resumes today

By **TONY VIOLA**  
Staff Writer

**WHEELING** — The Ohio Valley Athletic Conference has announced its pairings for its 2013 baseball tournament. All games will be played Saturday, April 27, however, times have not yet been released.

In Class 5A, No. 4-seeded Cambridge will have to start its mission for back-to-back pennants at Wheeling Park as it faces the No. 1-seeded Patriots, while Buckeye 8 rivals Indian Creek and Edison will duke it out on the Wildcat's home diamond in the other semifinal.

A new 4A champion will emerge as No. 4 Martins Ferry heads to Harrison Central to take on the top ranked Huskies. No. 2 Steubenville will host No. 3 Buckeye Local for the right to advance to the championship game.

Linsly will also be looking for a second straight title as the Cadets captured the 2A banner a year ago before making the move to 3A. The No. 2-seeded Cadets will host No. 3 Fort Frye in the semifinals, while No. 4 Shenandoah will travel to take on top seeded Magnolia.

2A features three teams returning to the tournament in Shadyside, Steubenville Catholic and Toronto. The No. 4 Crusaders will battle with the No. 1-seeded Red Knights, while the No. 3 Tigers will travel to Bridgeport to square off with the No. 2 Bulldogs.

Bishop Donahue will be the third team in the tournament looking for back-to-back titles. The defending champion and top seeded Bishops will host No. 4 Paden City, with No. 3 Connoton Valley taking on No. 2 Madonna.

## Softball Changes

After rain washed out all of Wednesday's OVAC softball tournament action, games and times had to change accordingly.

Tonight at 5 p.m. at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex, the Class 2A semifinal between No. 1 seed Steubenville Catholic and No. 4 Cameron will be played on Field 3.

Please See **OVAC**, Page 18

## OVAC

(Continued from Page 17)

The 4A duel between top-ranked Martins Ferry and No. 4 Buckeye Local has been moved to 6:45 and will also take place on Field 3.

The other 4A battle with No. 3 St. Clairsville and

No. 4 Harrison Central will be played at 5 on Field 4, while No. 4 Paden City and No. 1 St. John will face off in a 1A semi at 6:45.

On Friday, the 5A championship game between No. 2 Wheeling Park and No. 1

John Marshall will be decided on Lisa's Field (Field 3).

Following the title match, No. 3 Madonna and No. 2 Bishop Donahue will compete in the second 1A semifinal.

## OVAC Softball

Tournament Pairings  
(all games at J.B. Chambers  
I-470 Complex in Elm Grove)

Class 1A

(Today on Ben's Field)

St. John vs. Paden City, 5 p.m.  
Bishop Donahue vs. Madonna, 6:45 p.m.

Class 2A

(Tuesday on Lisa's Field)

Wheeling Central 10, Shadyside 0, 6 inn.

(Today on Lisa's Field)

Steubenville Catholic Central vs. Cameron, 4 p.m.

Class 3A

(Tuesday on Ben's Field)

Fort Frye 6, River 0

Bellaire 6, Shenandoah 5, 8 inn.

Class 4A

(Today on Lisa's Field)

Harrison Central vs. St. Clairsville, 5:45 p.m.

Martins Ferry vs. Buckeye Local, 7:30 p.m.

Class 5A

(Tuesday on Lisa's Field)

John Marshall 5, Morgantown 4

Wheeling Park 4, Indian Creek 3

Saturday

Championship Finals

(All games to be played on Lisa's Field)

2A—10:30 a.m., Wheeling Central vs.

Steubenville Central-Cameron winner

3A—Bellaire vs. Fort Frye

4A—2 p.m., TBD

5A—John Marshall vs. Wheeling Park

1A—5:30 p.m., TBD

Note: Finals times are subject to change.

**Softball  
OVAC Tournament  
CLASS 3A**

**Fort Frye 6, River 0**

WHEELING — Lexi Huck (two RBI) and Abby Baker (three RBI) hit home runs and Fort Frye advanced to the title game by blanking River at Ben's Field.

The homers helped make a winner of Tori Mimken who struck out seven, scattered three hits and walked one for the Caets (17-0).

Monica Curtis doubled for the Pilots (13-8).

**Bellaire 6, Shenandoah 5**

WHEELING — Dallas Messenger reached on a bunt single in the eighth and scored on a Megan Ging hit as Bellaire (17-2), making its first tournament appearance since 2003, edged Shenandoah (9-9).

Ging struck out two and went the route to earn a victory. Megan Maffe doubled in two and Elisha Gillespie plated another for the Big Reds.

Justine Mallette had a single and two RBI for the Zeps.

## KNIGHTS

(Continued from Page 13)

The Maroon Knights certainly had a lot of fun and what they saw happen was Shadyside commit seven errors, amass only four innocent singles and really never truly threaten to score against pitcher Sarah Henry.

"Sarah pitched well and we stressed that we wanted to jump on them early because they did that to us last year," Magruder said. "We wanted to keep the pressure on and we did because we hit the ball pretty hard."

The Knights made it 5-0 in the third and then tacked

on three more in the fourth when first baseman Ashley Gast took a belt-high Heagney offering over the fence for a three-run home run.

"Something wasn't in line for us because we just didn't play like ourselves," Ongley said. "We played great two games against Martins Ferry on Saturday, but we just couldn't get it going (here). It wasn't for lack of effort and the girls were ready to play. It just didn't go our way."

That wasn't the last time the Knights played long ball. Two batters after Allie Cook's lead-off triple, shortstop Sydney

Bennington deposited a Heagney pitch over the left-center fence for a walk-off home run.

"When we're hitting the ball, we're pretty tough," Magruder said. "The key for us is the top three hitters getting on base for our big bats in the middle. Lately, we've been doing a good job of that."

All told, the Knights pounded out 10 hits. Vanessa Saseen had a double, Henry helped her own cause with a RBI double in the first. Bennington also had a double and Gast drove in a run with a single in the first.

# Steubenville CC stuns Wheeling Central for OVAC 2A softball title

By SHAWN RINE  
For The Times Leader

WHEELING — The Cardiac Crusaders have done it again.

Trailing 6-2 after four innings during Saturday's OVAC Class 2A Championship against Wheeling Central on Lisa's Field, and needing two to tie heading into the bottom of the seventh, Steubenville Catholic received some help in the form of two errors and went on to score three times for an 8-7 victory.

Micca Mirabella's bunt was overthrown to second and the ball rolled all the way to the center-field wall, allowing both Tori Knight and Mirabella to score and tie the game at 7-7 with two outs. Sammi Giannamore followed with a double and scored the winner as Maddy Gulan laced an 0-2 pitch into center, setting off a wild celebration at home plate.

It's the second consecutive come-from-behind victory in tournament play for the Crusaders (16-3), and this one denied the Maroon Knights (16-8), the No. 1-ranked Class A team in West Virginia, their third straight OVAC crown.

"We haven't lost a close game all year long," Steubenville Catholic coach Jim DiCarlo said. "The three games we lost were not close and we've won about five or six really close games.

"Our kids believe. They believe we'll find a way whether it's 1-0, 10-9 or 8-7."

Wheeling Central had freshman Crusaders pitcher Alex McComb's number early as back-to-back, first-inning triples by Cara Stahl and Allie Cook made it 1-0. The Knights tacked on two more before the inning ended on consecutive RBI singles off the bats of Sydney Bennington and Sarah Henry.

The Crusaders got two back in their half of the first as Gulan tripled home a run and McComb drove another in with a single. But Wheeling Central made it 5-2 in the top of the second thanks to two of the Crusaders' four errors in the initial two innings. Ashley Gast made them pay with a two-run single.

"They could have folded up early because we were hitting the ball very hard and shutting them down," Knights coach Rick Magruder said of the Crusaders. "But they keep battling.

"They're well-coached, they're disciplined and they also have a group of girls that don't know how to quit."

Consecutive two-out singles and a walk by Bennington had the sacks full of Knights in the fourth. Henry came through again with a single into left-center for a 6-2 advantage, but Central left the bases loaded.

But the tide changed dramatically in the top of the fifth. With one on and two out Mirabella ripped a ball over the head of Wheeling Central's left fielder, who was playing in. Mirabella quickly circled the bases for a two-run, inside-the-park homer to cut the deficit to two, 6-4.

After McComb set the Maroon Knights down in order, Steubenville Catholic went back to work. Ashlyne Daley dropped a 2-2 pitch into right field to score courtesy runner Maddy Metcalf, who had taken over for McComb who reached on a fielder's choice.

The Maroon Knights, it seemed, delivered the knockout blow in the top of the seventh when with two outs, No. 9 hitter Cassidy McCord dropped down a bunt and beat the throw to first, allowing courtesy runner Megan Griffin, who went in for Henry after she collected her third hit — a double — to score.

# OVAC softball tournament opens today

The annual Ohio Valley Athletic Conference softball tournament gets under way today on Ben's Field and Lisa's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Complex in the Elm Grove section of Wheeling.

Four of last season's champions are back to defend their titles. They include St. John Central (1A), Wheeling Central (2A), Buckeye Local (4A) and John Marshall (5A). Only Magnolia (3A) failed to make this year's field.



**KIM NORTH**  
**Kim's Korner:**

All championship contests will be played Saturday on Lisa's Field.

The immediate area is assured of at least one champion as all four entrants in the 4A field reside in the local coverage area. They are Martins Ferry, Harrison Central, St. Clairsville and

Buckeye Local.

The Purple Riders finished as the top seed and will meet No. 4 Buckeye Local in the second semifinal at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday on Lisa's Field. The two Buckeye 8 rivals will be meeting for the third time this season, with each winning on the others home field.

Buckeye Local blanked Edison (3-0) and outscored Meadowbrook (8-6) in winning its title. Martins Ferry was eliminated in 3A semifinal action by Fort Frye, 2-0.

Harrison Central was ousted, 3-2, by Meadowbrook in last year's 4A semifinals.

In the opener Wednesday, another pair of Buckeye 8 rivals - No. 2 Harrison Central faces No. 3 St. Clairsville - meet in the other semi, which begins at approximately 5:45 p.m. The Huskies and Red Devils have already split their regular-season series, with each prevailing on its home diamond.

Of the quartet, Martins Ferry leads with three titles (2000, 2005 and 2011), all coming in 3A. Buckeye Local (1999 and 2012) and St. Clairsville (1992 and 1995) each have two. The Panthers titles came in 4A, while the Red Devils were in 2A and 3A, respectively. Harrison Central (2009) has one, also in 3A.

The two winners will collide Saturday at 2 p.m. for the championship.

Today's schedule has the Class 3A semifinals slated for Ben's Field at 5 p.m. and 6:45, respectively.

In the first game, undefeated and top-seed Fort Frye will meet No. 4 River, while No. 2 Bellaire and No. 3 Shenandoah square off in the second contest.

Both semifinals will be rematches of early-season doubleheaders won by the Cadets and Big Reds.

The Pilots and Zeps have never won softball titles, while the Big Reds (1994, 1996-96, 1999 and 2003) have five and

y, April 27, 2013 - D3

## Monarchs claim 5A OVAC title

By SHAWN RINE  
For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE - The whole thing is not lost on Ed West. As his John Marshall softball team's trophy case continues to bulge, West understands what he's witnessing.

"This is a special group - a very special group," West said Friday night at Lisa's Field.

He made the comment after watching the Monarchs (27-3) easily handle rival Wheeling Park, 6-0, to claim the OVAC Class 5A championship for the second straight season. In addition, it's the 21st straight victory for John Marshall, which hasn't been beaten by a team from either West Virginia or Ohio this season.

"You don't get these kind of talented players on your team every year," West said. "This group has been very good for a really long time, and now we're seeing the results of a lot of hard work they've put in over the years."

The recent additions to the trophy case include not only the two OVAC titles, but hardware representing sectional, regional and state championships. If this senior class has its way, three more pieces of hardware will soon be on the way.

The Monarchs relied on senior ace Amy Rotriga in the circle, as she struck out eight and was in control throughout. Classmates Kristin Lewicki (two doubles, RBI), Kylie Howard (double, triple, RBI) and Morgan Watson (two singles) brought the big sticks, while junior center fielder Sissy George ripped a pair of deep doubles and drove in a pair to lead a 10-hit attack.

"They always hit the ball," Wheeling Park (16-5) coach Dee Davis said. "I tried to tell Carly (Greer)

long time, and now we're seeing the results of a lot of hard work they've put in over the years."

The recent additions to the trophy case include not only the two OVAC titles, but hardware representing sectional, regional and state championships. If this senior class has its way, three more pieces of hardware will soon be on the way.

The Monarchs relied on senior ace Amy Rotriga in the circle, as she struck out eight and was in control throughout. Classmates Kristin Lewicki (two doubles, RBI), Kylie Howard (double, triple, RBI) and Morgan Watson (two singles) brought the big sticks, while junior center fielder Sissy George ripped a pair of deep doubles and drove in a pair to lead a 10-hit attack.

"They always hit the ball," Wheeling Park (16-5) coach Dee Davis said. "I tried to tell Carly (Greer) location is more important than the curve ball.

"They tee off on you."

That they did.

The Monarchs struck for two in the first and added a third run in the third as Watson led off with a walk and was plated two outs later by a Howard double.

"The defense was solid, the pitching was great and I thought we hit the ball real well," West said. "That's what I preach to the girls, is it doesn't matter what our lineup is (because) we can hit from top to bottom.

"That's what we've been doing for a long time. Just because we have 7-8-9 coming up doesn't mean we can't score."

John Marshall made it 4-0 in the fourth as Watson got on with an infield single and scored as Lewicki hit one off the wall — narrowly missing a home run — in dead center. The Monarchs finished the scoring an inning later as Howard tripled leading off and scored on George's second RBI double. George then came home on a 2-2 single by Rotriga.

That was more than enough for the southpaw in the circle. Rotriga allowed two hits — a first-inning double by Kelsi Johnson and a sixth-inning single by Marissa Tucker, and no Patriot reached third base.

Of the quarter, marlins petty leads with three titles (2000, 2005 and 2011), all coming in 3A. Buckeye Local (1999 and 2012) and St. Clairsville (1992 and 1995) each have two. The Panthers titles came in 4A, while the Red Devils were in 2A and 3A, respectively. Harrison Central (2009) has one, also in 3A.

The two winners will collide Saturday at 2 p.m. for the championship.

Today's schedule has the Class 3A semifinals slated for Ben's Field at 5 p.m. and 6:45, respectively.

In the first game, undefeated and top-seed Fort Frye will meet No. 4 River, while No. 2 Bellaire and No. 3 Shenandoah square off in the second contest.

Both semifinals will be rematches of early-season doubleheaders won by the Cadets and Big Reds.

The Pilots and Zeps have never won softball titles, while the Big Reds (1994, 1996-96, 1999 and 2003) have five and the Cadets (2010) one, that coming in 2A.

The 3A championship game starts at 12:15 p.m. Saturday.

Also today, one Class 2A semifinal will be contest. Second-seeded Wheeling Central will entertain No. 3 Shadyside at 4 p.m. on Lisa's Field.

The other 2A semi is set for Wednesday at 4 p.m. when No. 1 seed Steubenville Central and No. 4 Cameron square off on Lisa's Field.

The Maroon Knights are a perennial power, be it in Class 2A or 3A, which they used to play in. They have claimed a dozen titles, including six in the last seven years.

The Tigers (1992-94) have won three titles, but were knocked off by Wheeling Central, 9-4, in last year's semifinals.

The 2A championship gets the ball rolling Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Also on Wednesday, top-seeded and once-beaten St. John Central will be seeking its ninth title when the Irish meet No. 4 Paden City at 5 p.m. on Ben's Field. That winner will meet the survivor of the 6:45 semi between No. 2 Bishop Donahue and No. 3 Madonna, also on Ben's Field.

SJC, which has already swept the Bishops this season, recorded back-to-back 6-0 victories over Conotton Valley and Bishop Donahue, respectively, to win its title last spring.

The Irish have ruled the smallest division, winning championships in 1999, 2001-02, 04-07 and 2012. However, the Bishops own the most titles — 13 (1980-82, 84-87, 89-90 and 1995-98).

The Class A title tilt will wrap up Saturday's festivities at 5:30.

Other action today has the largest classification — Class 5A hitting the diamond at Lisa's Field. Top-seeded John Marshall meets No. 4 Morgantown at 5:45 p.m., with No. 2 Wheeling Park and fourth-seeded Indian Creek tangling at 7:30.

The 5A title game is set for 3:45 Saturday afternoon.

All semifinal games are subject to Mother Nature's schedule.

Saturday's schedule could be re-done depending upon who wins semifinal games and if any schools have prom that day.

*North can be reached at  
knorth@timesleaderonline.com*

**INSIDE**

Counsel / B4  
Comics / B5  
Classifieds / B6-10

The Times Leader

# SPORTS

## OVAC SOFTBALL SEMIFINAL ACTION

### Bellaire advances to 3A finals

• Ging's RBI single in 8th eliminates Shenandoah

By **KIM NORTH**  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE -- Bellaire hadn't been to the OVAC Softball Tournament since winning the title in 2003, Melissa Lahna's first year as head coach.

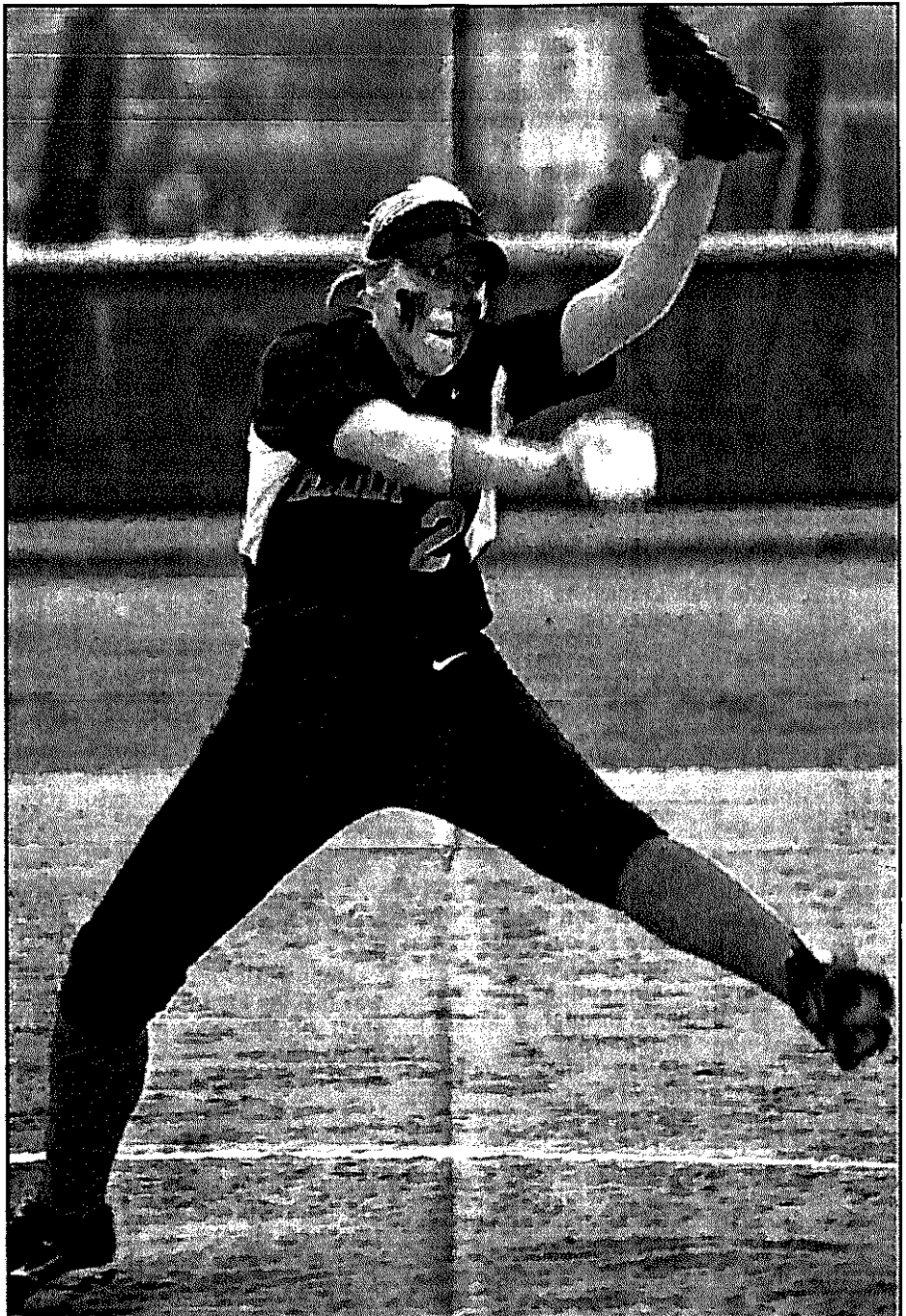
Ten long years later, the No. 2 seed Big Reds enjoyed qualifying for the 2013 tournament so much that they played a little longer than usual Tuesday night in knocking off third-seeded Shenandoah, 6-5, in an 8-inning thriller on Ben's Field in a Class 3A semifinal under the lights at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Complex.

"We made a goal at the beginning of the season to get into the top 4," Lahna explained after a wild celebration. "Then, after we got into the top 4, we made the goal of winning it (the championship)."

"Yesterday (Monday) we didn't play very well, but we won," she added, "and it came back and haunted us a little today. But I'll tell you what, those 11 girls over there have more heart than anyone I've seen."

The victory propels Bellaire into the championship game Saturday at 12:15 p.m. against undefeated Fort Frye (17-0), which blanked River, 6-0, in the other semi Tuesday, once again at the I-470 Complex.

With one out and the score deadlocked at five in the bottom of the eighth, Dallas Messenger laid down a perfect bunt that she legged out for a single. After she stole second, Megan Ging ripped an 0-1 pitch to left. Lahna wasn't hesitating in sending the speedy Messenger as her left arm looked like a windmill on a windy day. Messenger rounded third and headed for the plate, but the throw never came. Instead, for some unexplainable reason, the leftfielder came up firing to second base as



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ALTHOUGH BELLAIRE'S** Megan Ging wasn't her sharpest on the mound Tuesday night, she delivered the game-winning hit in the bottom of the eighth

# eliminates Shenandoah

By KIM NORTH

Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — Bellaire hadn't been to the OVAC Softball Tournament since winning the title in 2003, Melissa Lahna's first year as head coach.

Ten long years later, the No. 2 seed Big Reds enjoyed qualifying for the 2013 tournament so much that they played a little longer than usual Tuesday night in knocking off third-seeded Shenandoah, 6-5, in an 8-inning thriller on Ben's Field in a Class 3A semifinal under the lights at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Complex.

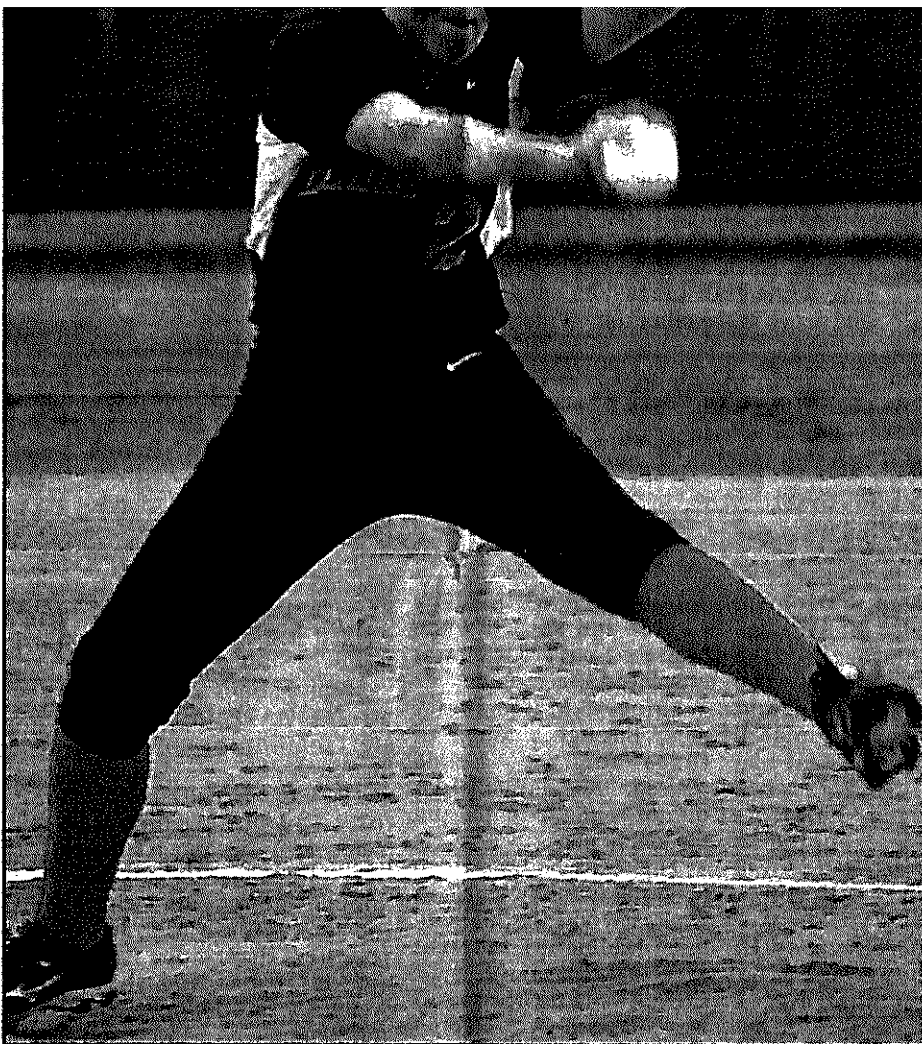
"We made a goal at the beginning of the season to get into the top 4," Lahna explained after a wild celebration. "Then, after we got into the top 4, we made the goal of winning it (the championship)."

"Yesterday (Monday) we didn't play very well, but we won," she added, "and it came back and haunted us a little today. But I'll tell you what, those 11 girls over there have more heart than anyone I've seen."

The victory propels Bellaire into the championship game Saturday at 12:15 p.m. against undefeated Fort Frye (17-0), which blanked River, 6-0, in the other semi Tuesday, once again at the I-470 Complex.

With one out and the score deadlocked at five in the bottom of the eighth, Dallas Messenger laid down a perfect bunt that she legged out for a single. After she stole second, Megan Ging ripped an 0-1 pitch to left. Lahna wasn't hesitating in sending the speedy Messenger as her left arm looked like a windmill on a windy day. Messenger rounded third and headed for the plate, but the throw never came. Instead, for some unexplainable reason, the leftfielder came up firing to second base as Messenger slid in safely to win the game.

See, BELLAIRE, Page B2



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ALTHOUGH BELLAIRE'S** Megan Ging wasn't her sharpest on the mound Tuesday night, she delivered the game-winning hit in the bottom of the eighth inning as the Big Reds rallied to defeat Shenandoah, 6-5, in OVAC Class 3A semifinal action. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**RIVER'S RACHEL** Hutchison takes a strike during Tuesday's OVAC Class 3A semifinal against Fort Frye. The Pilots fell, 6-0. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

## River shut out by Fort Frye, 6-0

By KIM NORTH

Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — It's been said time and time again that it's hard to beat a team three times in one season.

Fort Frye remained unbeaten in 17 starts as it blanked River 6-0 Tuesday afternoon in an OVAC Class 3A semifinal on Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Complex.

The victory was the third for the Cadets over the Pilots (13-8).

"They're a really good team. We played with them for awhile, but you've got to puts runs on the board," River head coach Dave Wright noted.

"If you don't score runs, you don't win."

Fort Frye scored five of its half-a-dozen runs on two swings of the bat. Lexie Huck unloaded a 2-shot to

dead center with one out in the first inning, and Abby Baker sealed the deal with a towering 3-run shot to left in the sixth.

"After losing in the championship finals the last two seasons, these girls are a little hungry," Fort Frye head coach Barb Sleek said. "Hopefully, we can get one Saturday."

With the win, top-seeded Fort Frye will meet No. 2 Bellaire, which squeaked out an 8-inning, 6-5, nod over Shenandoah, earlier Tuesday.

River had runners on base in every inning except the fifth and sixth, but couldn't move them around the basepaths. The best shot came in the first when Monica Curtis doubled over the left fielder's head with one out. She moved to third on a wild pitch, but an infield popup and strikeout swinging ended that threat.

See, RIVER, Page B2

S  
C  
T  
g  
w  
C  
ir  
Z  
H  
5  
w  
a  
.l  
er  
O  
2  
C  
w  
pl  
k  
th  
w  
it  
ev  
u:  
I  
S  
aj  
p.  
St  
C  
w  
C  
M  
ru  
pl  
S  
H  
th  
C  
V  
w  
//  
c

# SPORTS

Wednesday,  
April 24, 2013

## OVAC SOFTBALL SEMIFINAL ACTION



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ALTHOUGH BELLAIRE'S** Megan Ging wasn't her sharpest on the mound Tuesday night, she delivered the game-winning hit in the bottom of the eighth

## Shadyside blanked in Class A

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**ELM GROVE** -- It didn't take Shadyside head coach Jillian Ongley long to realize that Tuesday just wasn't going to be a good day for her Lady Tigers.

Ace pitcher Megan Heagney walked the first two Wheeling Central hitters of the game, including lead-off hitter Joni Zavolta on four pitches.

The Lady Knights made Heagney and the Lady Tigers (9-5) pay, not only in that inning with four runs, but time and time again en route to a convincing 10-0, victory in a 6-inning shortened mercy-rule game during the OVAC Softball Tournament Class 2A semifinals at the J.B. Chambers' I-470 Complex.

"I don't know that she's ever walked the lead-off batter on four pitches," Ongley confessed. "We kind of knew at that point that things weren't going to go our way. Give Wheeling Central credit because they took advantage of every opportunity and really made us pay."

The Lady Knights, who are now 16-7, will return to I-470 for Saturday's 10 a.m. title game against the winner of today's 4 p.m. encounter, pitting top-seeded Steubenville Central against No. 4 Cameron.

"This (championship) game is where we want to be," said Central head coach Rick Magruder. "For us, this starts our run. We put it all in line to be playing our best ball at this time

See, **SHADYSIDE**, Page B2

**S**  
**als**  
in 8th  
loah

been to the  
winning the  
year as head

ed Big Reds  
rument so  
r than usual  
ird-seeded  
thriller on  
al under the  
mplex.  
g of the sea-  
plained after  
got into the  
ing it (the

t play very  
nd it came  
But I'll tell  
: have more

the champi-  
m. against  
ich blanked  
sday, once

adlocked at  
th, Dallas  
nt that she  
tole second,  
left. Lahna  
he speedy  
like a wind-  
ounded third  
throw never  
able reason,  
ond base as



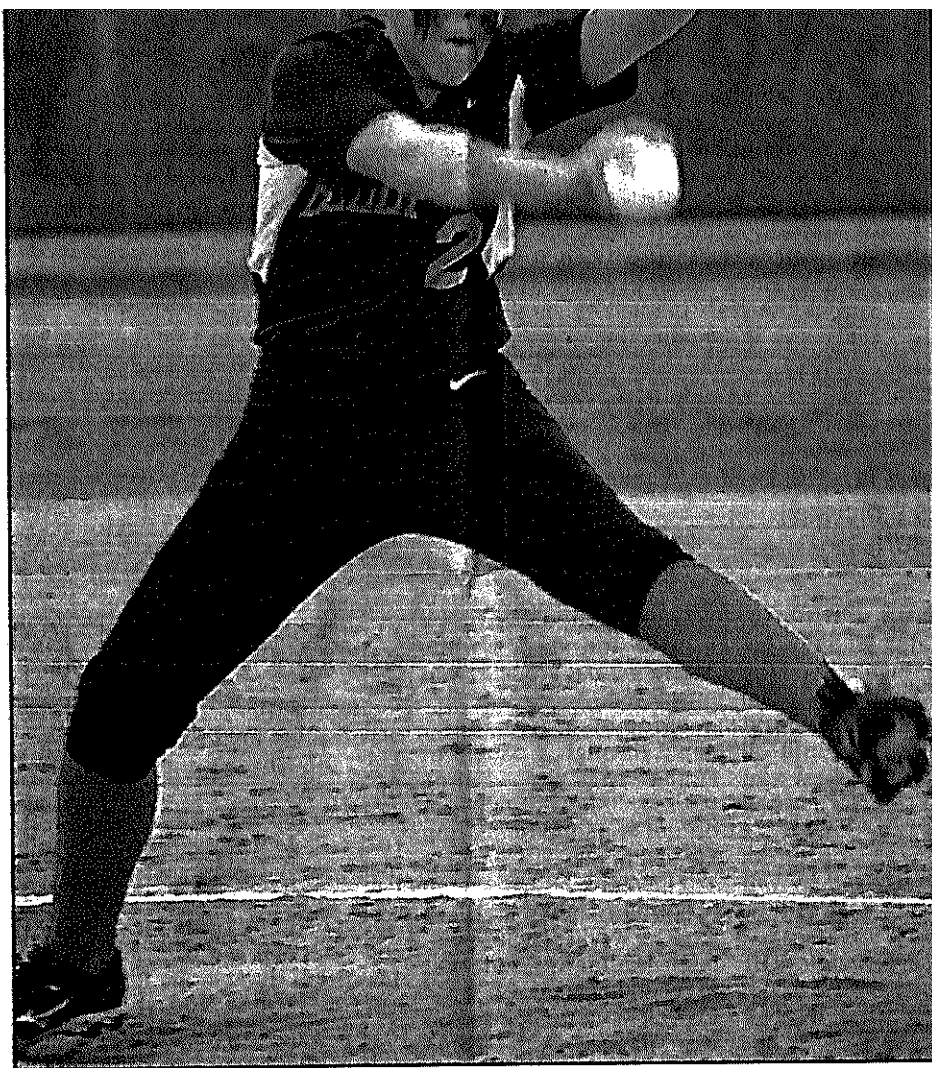
een to the  
nning the  
ar as head

Big Reds  
ament so  
han usual  
d-seeded  
hriller on  
under the  
plex.  
of the sea-  
ained after  
t into the  
ag it (the

play very  
d it came  
ut I'll tell  
ave more

the champi-  
n. against  
h blanked  
day, once

llocked at  
n, Dallas  
t that she  
le second,  
eft. Lahna  
e speedy  
ce a wind-  
nded third  
row never  
le reason,  
nd base as  
me.



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ALTHOUGH BELLAIRE'S** Megan Ging wasn't her sharpest on the mound Tuesday night, she delivered the game-winning hit in the bottom of the eighth inning as the Big Reds rallied to defeat Shenandoah, 6-5, in OVAC Class 3A semifinal action. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

ELM GROVE — It didn't take Shadyside head coach Jillian Ongley long to realize that Tuesday just wasn't going to be a good day for her Lady Tigers.

Ace pitcher Megan Heagney walked the first two Wheeling Central hitters of the game, including lead-off hitter Joni Zavolta on four pitches.

The Lady Knights made Heagney and the Lady Tigers (9-5) pay, not only in that inning with four runs, but time and time again en route to a convincing, 10-0, victory in a 6-inning shortened mercy-rule game during the OVAC Softball Tournament Class 2A semifinals at the J.B. Chambers' I-470 Complex.

"I don't know that she's ever walked the lead-off batter on four pitches," Ongley confessed. "We kind of knew at that point that things weren't going to go our way. Give Wheeling Central credit because they took advantage of every opportunity and really made us pay."

The Lady Knights, who are now 16-7, will return to I-470 for Saturday's 10 a.m. title game against the winner of today's 4 p.m. encounter, pitting top-seeded Steubenville Central against No. 4 Cameron.

"This (championship) game is where we want to be," said Central head coach Rick Magruder. "For us, this starts our run. We put it all in line to be playing our best ball at this time

See, SHADYSIDE, Page B2

# River shut out by Fort Frye, 6-0

By KIM NORTH  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — It's been said time and time again that it's hard to beat a team three times in one season.

Fort Frye remained unbeaten in 17 starts as it blanked River 6-0 Tuesday afternoon in an OVAC Class 3A semifinal on Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Complex.

The victory was the third for the Cadets over the Pilots (13-8).

"They're a really good team. We played with them for awhile, but you've got to put runs on the board," River head coach Dave Wright noted.

"If you don't score runs, you don't win."

Fort Frye scored five of its half-dozen runs on two swings of the bat. Lexie Huck unloaded a 2-shot to

dead center with one out in the first inning, and Abby Baker sealed the deal with a towering 3-run shot to left in the sixth.

"After losing in the championship finals the last two seasons, these girls are a little hungry," Fort Frye head coach Barb Sleek said. "Hopefully, we can get one Saturday."

With the win, top-seeded Fort Frye will meet No. 2 Bellaire, which squeaked out an 8-inning, 6-5, nod over Shenandoah, earlier Tuesday.

River had runners on base in every inning except the fifth and sixth, but couldn't move them around the basepaths. The best shot came in the first when Monica Curtis doubled over the left fielder's head with one out. She moved to third on a wild pitch, but an infield popup and strikeout swinging ended that threat.



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY  
takes a strike during  
final against Fort  
onal images can be



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**SHADYSIDE'S HAYLEY** Holenka (3) stretches for a throw during Tuesday's OVAC Class A semifinal against Wheeling Central. The Tigers were beaten, 10-0. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

## ● River

Continued from Page B1

"If we could've gotten that run in, it might've been a different game," Wright added. "You just never know."

The Pilots had runners on first and second with one out in their second at-bat, but a line drive on a hit-and-run turned into an inning-ending double play. In the seventh, Haylee Bowers reached third on an error leading off, but she would be stranded.

"We just couldn't get that clutch hit when we needed it," Wright lamented.

Senior Gabby Goudy was splendid inside the circle, with the exception of a couple of pitches. She struck out 10 and walked just one before giving way to

Curtis in the sixth because of a blister.

"Gabby pitched pretty well today before the blister started bothering her," Wright said. "I give her a lot of credit for even trying to pitch with it."

Victoria Mimken struck out seven and allowed just three hits in tossing the shutout. Huck added a double to her home run, while Hali Lemasters singled twice and drove in the other run.

River 000 000 0 - 0 3 0

Fort Frye 201 003 x - 6 7 2

Batteries: Goudy, Curtis (6) and Marshall. Mimken and Smith.

North can be reached at [knorth@timesleaderonline.com](mailto:knorth@timesleaderonline.com)

## ● Bellaire

Continued from Page B1

"I was just looking to make contact," Ging explained of her game-winning hit. "Anything to win. We want this more than anything."

The hit capped a rally that saw the Big Reds trail 3-0 and 4-2 before tying it at 4-4 in the sixth. They also trailed 5-4 entering the bottom of the seventh before pulling even.

"We're not a team to give up," Ging added. "Not at all."

The Zeps (9-9) lost a doubleheader at Bellaire early in the season, but they held their own Tuesday.

"Congratulations to Bellaire. They never gave up and battled to the end," was all Shenandoah head coach Tracey Trenner could say.

After being retired in order in the first three frames, Shenandoah tallied

three runs in the fourth, only to watch Bellaire get two of them back in the bottom of the inning when Elisha Gillespie's 2-out double to center plated Mary Garloch, who had reached on an error leading off. Megan Maffe's grounder was booted as Gillespie, who had moved to third on a wild pitch, raced home.

Kelsey McKenzie's RBI single with two outs in the sixth put the Noble Countians ahead, 4-2, but the Belmont County nine used Maffe's 2-run double to center scored Tylar Canter and Gillespie, whom both had walked, to tie the game once again.

Shenandoah went back on top in the seventh when Blair Brown laced a leadoff double to right-center. With runners on second and third with one out, Justine Mallett's fielder's choice grounder scored Brown for a 5-4 lead.

However, displaying a never-say-die attitude, Mackenzie Conroy doubled to left field leading off the bottom of the seventh. She

was bunted to third by Canter and scored when Maffe's 2-out grounder was misplayed.

"Megan Maffe really came through a couple of times for us," Lahna praised. "She's usually our bunter, but today she put the ball in play."

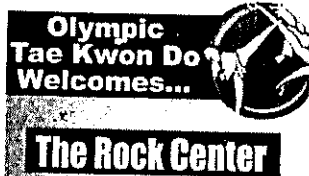
The Zeps had a golden opportunity in the eighth as Andrea Wood was hit-by-a-pitch leading off and went to second on an error. Jenna Cowgill's soft liner to left was snagged by a leaping Canter for the first out. Ging retired the side with a pair of comebackers to set the stage for her extra-inning heroics.

Messenger was the lone Bellaire player with multiple hits as she singled twice.

Ging only fanned one Zep, but she didn't walk a batter and scattered nine hits.

Shenan000 301 10 - 5 9 4  
Bellaire 000 202 11 - 6 8 4  
Batteries: Cowgill, Long (6) and Mallett. Ging and Messenger

North can be reached at [knorth@timesleaderonline.com](mailto:knorth@timesleaderonline.com)



## ● Shadyside

Continued from Page B1

of the year. We just tell the girls to come out and play hard, have some fun and see what happens."

The Lady Knights certainly had a lot of fun and what they saw happen was Shadyside commit seven errors, amass only four innocent singles and really never truly threaten to score against Lady Knights' pitcher Sarah Henry.

"Sarah pitched well and we stressed that we wanted to jump on them early because they did that to us last year," Magruder said.

"We wanted to keep the pressure on and we did because we hit the ball pretty hard today."

The Knights made it 5-0 in the third and then tacked on three more in the fourth when first baseman Ashley Gast took a Heagney belt-high offering deep into the afternoon for a 3-run home run.

"Something wasn't in line for us today because we just didn't play like ourselves," Ongley admitted. "We played great two games against Martins Ferry on Saturday, but we just couldn't get it going today. It wasn't for lack of effort and the girls were ready to play. It just didn't go our way."

That wasn't the last time the Lady Knights played long ball. Two batters following Allie Cook's lead-off triple, shortstop Sydney Bennington deposited a Heagney pitch over the left-center fence for a walk-off home run.

"When we're hitting the ball, we're pretty tough," Magruder said. "The key for us is the top three hitters getting on base for our big bats in the middle. Lately, we've been doing a good job of that."

All told, the Lady Knights pounded out 10 hits. Vanessa Saseen had a double, Henry helped her own cause with a RBI double in the first. Bennington also had a double and Gast drove in a run with a single in the first.

Shadyside 000 000 — 0 4 7

Wheeling Central 401 302 — 10 10 2

Batteries: Heagney and Dunn. Henry and Visnick.

Staskey can be reached at  
sstaskey@timesleaderonline.com



Photo by Seth Staskey

Wheeling Central's Sydney Bennington is congratulated by Rick Magruder after hitting a walk-off, two-run homer in the sixth inning of Tuesday night's game.

# Knights Blank Tigers in Six Innings

Henry throws four-hitter; Central improves to 16-7

By **SETH STASKEY**  
For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — It didn't take Shadyside coach Jillian Ongley long to realize that Tuesday just wasn't going to be a good day for her club. Ace pitcher Megan Heagney walked the first two Wheeling Central hitters, including leadoff hitter Joni Zavolta on four pitches.

The Maroon Knights made Heagney and the Tigers (9-5) pay not only in that inning with four runs, but time and time again en route to a 10-0 victory in a six-inning shortened game during the OVAC Class 2S Softball Tournament semifinals at the Chambers I-470 Complex.

"I don't know that she's ever walked the leadoff batter on four pitches," Ongley said. "We kind of knew at that point that things weren't going to go our way. Give Wheeling Central credit because they took advantage of every opportunity and really made us pay."

The Knights (16-7) will return to I-470 for Saturday's 10 a.m. title game against the winner of today's 4 p.m. encounter, pitting top-seeded Steubenville Catholic against Cameron.

"This (championship) game is where we want to be," Central coach Rick Magruder said. "For us, this starts our run. We put it all in line to be playing our best ball at this time of the year. We just tell the girls to come out and play hard, have some fun and see what happens."

Please See **CENTRAL**, Page 15

# Monarchs Advance To Title Game

Rotriga fans nine Mohigans in victory

By **SHAWN RINE**  
Sports Editor

WHEELING — The John Marshall softball team hasn't often had to concern itself with innings six and seven this season. But for the second consecutive night the Monarchs were taken to the wire, this time in an OVAC Class 5A semifinal on Lisa's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex.

Senior ace Amy Rotriga fanned nine in a complete-game effort and Sissy George plated the winning run with a fourth-inning double as top-seed John Marshall (26-3) edged No. 4 Morgantown (19-8) by a 5-4 score. The Monarchs, also ranked No. 1 in West Virginia, will meet Wheeling Park, which they have beaten twice already, in Saturday's 3:45 p.m. final.

"It was a very good game," John Marshall coach Ed West said. "We started off hot and I thought it was going to be a little bit easier than it was."

"As it turned out, we had to fight and scrape for everything we got."

In the end though, the Monarchs picked up their 20th straight victory, marking the second straight season they have accomplished that feat. They won their first 29 in 2012 before finally falling in a sectional, but rebounded to capture a state title.

"It's hard to fathom," West said. "To do it day, after day, after day is tough. Usually you have a tough game here or there, and sometimes just one bad inning can do you in."

"We're not playing any slouches." JM jumped on Mohigans starter Tara Hanson for four runs in the first inning, sending 10 batters to the plate. Kristin Lewicki beat a rundown between third and home to score the first, then Hannah Rogerson brought one home with a single. Alyssa Blake brought another in on a fielder's choice and Morgan Watson walked with the bases loaded to force in the fourth.

Please See **TITLE**, Page 15



# Park Victorious in Semis

Greer hits two-run homer in 4-3 final

By **TONY VIOLA**  
Staff Writer

Skylar (Carrington)," Davis said. "Either one of them could have pitched. I'm still satisfied with the outcome."

As well she should be, as Carrington had a solid performance in the single to go with a two-run home run in



Photo by Seth Staskey

Wheeling Central's Sydney Bennington is congratulated by Rick Magruder after hitting a walk-off, two-run homer in the sixth inning of Tuesday night's game.

# Knights Blank Tigers in Six Innings

## Henry throws four-hitter; Central improves to 16-7

By **SETH STASKEY**  
For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — It didn't take Shadyside coach Jillian Ongley long to realize that Tuesday just wasn't going to be a good day for her club. Ace pitcher Megan Heagney walked the first two Wheeling Central hitters, including leadoff hitter Joni Zavolta on four pitches.

The Maroon Knights made Heagney and the Tigers (9-5) pay not only in that inning with four runs, but time and time again en route to a 10-0 victory in a six-inning shortened game during the OVAC Class 2S Softball Tournament semifinals at the Chambers I-470 Complex.

"I don't know that she's ever walked the leadoff batter on four pitches," Ongley said. "We kind of knew at that point that things weren't going to go our way. Give Wheeling Central credit because they took advantage of every opportunity and really made us pay."

The Knights (16-7) will return to I-470 for Saturday's 10 a.m. title game against the winner of today's 4 p.m. encounter, pitting top-seeded Steubenville Catholic against Cameron.

"This (championship) game is where we want to be," Central coach Rick Magruder said. "For us, this starts our run. We put it all in line to be playing our best ball at this time of the year. We just tell the girls to come out and play hard, have some fun and see what happens."

Please See **CENTRAL**, Page 15

## Mohigans in victory

By **SHAWN RINE**  
Sports Editor

WHEELING — The John Marshall softball team hasn't often had to concern itself with innings six and seven this season. But for the second consecutive night the Monarchs were taken to the wire, this time in an OVAC Class 5A semifinal on Lisa's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex.

Senior ace Amy Rotriga fanned nine in a complete-game effort and Sissy George plated the winning run with a fourth-inning double as top-seed John Marshall (26-3) edged No. 4 Morgantown (19-8) by a 5-4 score. The Monarchs, also ranked No. 1 in West Virginia, will meet Wheeling Park, which they have beaten twice already, in Saturday's 3:45 p.m. final.

"It was a very good game," John Marshall coach Ed West said. "We started off hot and I thought it was going to be a little bit easier than it was."

"As it turned out, we had to fight and scrape for everything we got."

In the end though, the Monarchs picked up their 20th straight victory, marking the second straight season they have accomplished that feat. They won their first 29 in 2012 before finally falling in a sectional, but rebounded to capture a state title.

"It's hard to fathom," West said. "To do it day, after day, after day is tough. Usually you have a tough game here or there, and sometimes just one bad inning can do you in."

"We're not playing any slouches."

JM jumped on Mohigans starter Tara Hanson for four runs in the first inning, sending 10 batters to the plate. Kristin Lewicki beat a rundown between third and home to score the first, then Hannah Rogerson brought one home with a single. Alyssa Blake brought another in on a fielder's choice and Morgan Watson walked with the bases loaded to force in the fourth.

Please See **TITLE**, Page 15

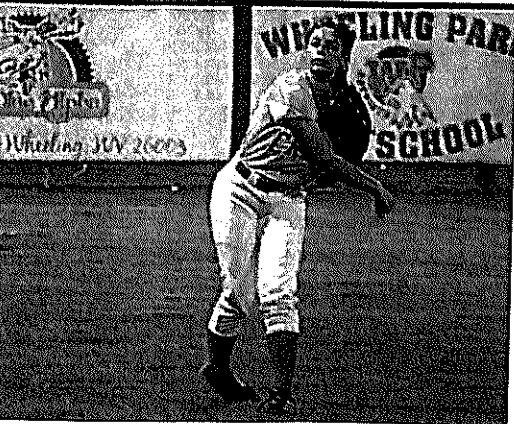


Photo by Tony Viola

Indian Creek's Marissa DeFalfo throws to the infield during warmup Tuesday night.

# Park Victorious in Semis

## Greer hits two-run homer in 4-3 final

By **TONY VIOLA**  
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The OVAC Class 5A semifinal, which pitted Wheeling Park against Indian Creek, seemed like it would become a pitching duel between the Redskins' Paige Geanangel and the Patriots' Carly Greer.

Park coach Dee Davis, however, had a change of plans.

"I was going to start (Greer) pitching, but I decided to go with

Skylar (Carrington)," Davis said. "Either one of them could have pitched. I'm still satisfied with the outcome."

As well she should be, as Carrington had a solid performance in the circle to go with a two-run homer by Greer that gave Park (17-2) a 4-3 victory against the Redskins at Lisa's Field.

"(Indian Creek) didn't really tee off on Skylar," Davis noted. "They had a couple of hard hits, but no consecutive ones that could hurt us. I thought she did a nice job."

Please See **PARK**, Page 15

## TITLE

(Continued from Page 13)

"If we would have settled down on our rundown there in the first inning it might have been a different outcome," Morgantown coach Lorri Lipscomb said. "We have executed the rundown, I don't want to say flawlessly because that's a big word, but we usually execute it a lot better than we did that time."

After Rotriga set down the side on strikes in the first, Morgantown began to chip away. The Mohigans' first hit cleared the left-field fence off the bat of Nicole Walker in the second. An inning later an error allowed Lynsi Bean to reach with two outs and Megan DeBastiani brought her home with a ringing double into left-center to cut it to 4-2.

John Marshall though, scratched through for the winner in the fourth. Lewicki led off with an infield single and swiped second before Hanson

retired two in a row. George found herself in an 0-2 hole but fouled off a couple pitches and eventually got it to a full count before ripping a double into the gap in left-center field to make it 5-2.

Morgantown rebounded for a pair in the sixth inning. An error allowed one to score and an RBI single off the bat of Kelcy Shreves cut it to 5-4. But Rotriga, who hasn't had to work this late in contests much but was involved in a nail-biter for

the second night in a row, allowed a two-out single before striking out Heidi Hornell to end it.

"I told my girls a long time ago that good teams find a way to win, and we're a good team and have been finding ways to win," West said. "We've had a lot of games this year when we've had a pretty easy time of it.

"It's a tribute to our entire team and especially Amy for her grittiness and for hanging in there."

**OAK LEAF**  
**FOREST PRODUCTS**



**Sell Your Timber Direct**  
(to an Amish owned sawmill)  
10 acres or more  
We Also Buy Land  
**WE PAY IN ADVANCE**

**724-866-3906**

## PARK

(Continued from Page 13)

The game went scoreless for the first three innings before Creek (11-3) got its first run off a Geanangle sac fly that drove in Marissa DeFallo.

The Patriots answered back in the fourth as Greer, who started the inning with a leadoff double, crossed home plate after a hit from Kelly Albers. Park got its first lead two batters later as Ashleigh Sidon's fielder's choice gave time for Morgan Karnell to give the Patriots a 2-1 advantage.

After Carrington walked DeFallo to start the fifth, the Park pitcher couldn't field a bunt by Bre Mays and then couldn't get the throw to first, which bought time for DeFallo to score and just enough for Mays to make it around to third.

The next batter, Megan Markja, hit a sac fly into right field as Mays made it 3-2 Redskins.

Kristin Slater reached on a Creek error to start the bottom of the inning for Park before Greer smacked the eventual game-winner over the left-field fence.

"We needed that," Davis pointed out. "We needed someone to spark us and that was good that she

did that. The last about six or seven games, she's been hitting the ball well."

After Park went in order in the sixth, the Redskins had one last chance to try to get the better of the Carrington. The sophomore, however, was cooler than ever.

Carrington ended the inning striking out two, including Geanangel swinging, to pick up a victory.

"I think she pitched a good game," Redskins coach Angie Penner said. "We thought we had a chance because we had the top of our order coming up (in the seventh), but, like I said, give their pitcher a lot of credit. She held us off and we couldn't hit the ball when we needed to."

The victory gives Park a rematch with rival John Marshall for the OVAC 5A title.

"The whole thing is in their heads," Davis said of the Patriots. "You've got to hit (Amy) Rotriga. If you can hit Rotriga, you can win the game. She strikes out 20-some a game, so that's the whole thing. Hopefully her arm will be sore because she had to pitch nine innings then she had to pitch a tough game (Tuesday against Morgantown).

# Crusaders Rally Past Dragons

Cameron will face Central Saturday in title game

By SHAWN RINE  
Sports Editor

WHEELING — Knowing how hard Cameron had to battle just to make the OVAC Tournament, Steubenville Catholic coach Jim DiCarlo wasn't surprised the Dragons took his team to the wire Thursday at Lisa's Field. Battling some initial nerves, the Crusaders rallied with two runs in the bottom of the sixth inning of the Class 2A semifinal for a 3-2 victory.

The Crusaders return at 10:30 on Saturday morning to face Wheeling Central in the title game.

"I think the OVACs always brings the best out of teams," DiCarlo said. "You've got to give Cameron credit.

"That's a program that is used to winning at this level."



Photo by Shawn Rine

Steubenville's Micca Mirabella slides into second while Cameron shortstop Lexi Aston attempts to tag.

After the Dragons (14-6) had struck for two runs in the top of the sixth, the bottom half began with Taylor Clark, playing with a torn ACL, reaching on a single and being replaced by Fran Capaldi.

Please See CRUSADERS, Page 19

# St. John Blanks Paden City, 7-0

Irish's Absalom pitches fourth no-hitter, 17 Ks

By TONY VIOLA  
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Sometimes it's hard to get high school kids to focus. Just ask their teachers.

It might be even harder to get a group of high school girls who have won 16 of their 18 games this season to focus on a team that has won only eight of its 25.

So when No. 1-seeded St. John went into its OVAC Class 1A semifinal with No. 4 Paden City, Fighting Irish coach Jerry Magistro was faced with that conundrum.

"Sometimes you've got to watch going into games like (this)," he said. "You tell your kids don't take anybody lightly, but sometimes, you know how it is with kids — they're kids. It's hard to get kids up for every game.



Photo by Tony Viola

Paden City's Kelsey Loy delivers a pitch during Thursday's game.

You try to do that as a coach, and that's what we try to do."

The Irish coaching staff succeeded as Hannah Absalom pitched her fourth no-hitter of the season as St. John beat Paden City, 7-0, on Ben's Field.

Please See ST. JOHN, Page 19

# Buckeye Local Looking to Repeat

Harrison Central edges St. C., 4-3

WHEELING — Buckeye Local will be looking to repeat Saturday afternoon when it meets Harrison Central for the OVAC Class 4A softball championship.

The No. 4 seed Panthers (8-10) advanced with a 7-5, semifinal triumph

against top-seeded Martins Ferry (13-5) on Thursday evening on Lisa's Field, while Harrison Central survived, 4-3, against St. Clairsville earlier in the evening on Ben's Field.

Buckeye Local scored five runs in the fourth, highlighted by a home run

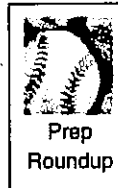
by Kierstyn Czuchran. She was the only Panthers player to have more than one hit as she also singled and finished with two RBL.

Krissy Hotlosz singled and drove in two runs for the Purple Riders.

**Harrison Central 4  
St. Clairsville 3**

WHEELING — Katie Ellzy ultimately worked out of a bases-loaded,

See REPEAT, Page 19



Prep Roundup

# ST. JOHN

(Continued from Page 17)

"Unfortunately, we don't get to see a lot of pitchers that are quite that good in the regular season," Paden City coach Jeanne Fox. "Our bats needed to come around. We needed to be a little tougher out in the field in that one inning. We had our breakdown inning (the third)."

It was a different feeling on the other side.

"We did what we had to do to win," Magistro noted. "Hannah Absalom does what she does all the time, pitched her game. We didn't hit like we wanted to hit; we're used to hitting. Sometimes that happens."

Absalom fanned eight of the first nine batters she faced as the game was still scoreless as it went into the bottom of the third, but that's when the junior showed off her talents behind the plate as well.

With two on, Absalom reached on an error that scored Kylie Falcone and

Kaydie Coppa as St. John took a 2-0 lead.

Abbey Adams went in as a courtesy runner for Absalom and was brought in on a Morgan DeLuca hit into left field.

DeLuca then crossed the plate as the Wildcats were distracted with trying to tag out Caitlin Sliva.

After Absalom added three more strikeouts to her total, Amber LaMotte came home in the bottom of the fourth on a Cheyenne Harris groundout to make it 5-0.

Absalom then drove in Falcone and Coppa for a second time on a double into left field to arrive at the final score.

The junior carried a perfect game into sixth, but walked Graeson Baker to lose her chance at her third perfect game of the year.

"We wanted to get everyone (into the game)," Magistro said. "It wasn't about trying to win the game in five innings. These kids come to practice every day, and I think it's good for them to get

into an OVAC game to get that experience. It wasn't about how much you win by or this and that. As long as everybody got to play, that was our goal (Thursday)."

The Fighting Irish accomplished that goal as they sent 11 different players up to the plate, including Adams, a quite little freshman, who ended St. Johns' hitting as she doubled into right field in the bottom of the sixth.

"This girl here doesn't say two words," Magistro noted. "She comes to the gym, works hard. I don't know where that came from. That was one of the best hits of the day. She shot one out there that I didn't think she had it in her to do it. Again, these kids work hard. It's a great group of kids."

The Fighting Irish will try to capture back-to-back 1A titles, but will have to wait until Saturday after Madonna and Bishop Doanhue face off to see who they will face.

## CRUSADERS

(Continued from Page 17)

One out later, Ashlyne Daley ripped the first pitch she saw from Linda Hall into deep left-center, scoring Capaldi with the tying run. Hall struck out the next batter, but Megan Lloyd slammed an 0-2 pitch between shortstop and third to score what turned out to be the winning run.

That rally was made possible by Steubenville Catholic (15-3) second baseman Kelsey Grandinetti. Cameron had already scored twice and was threatening to tally another, but Grandinetti made a diving catch on a Janis Williams liner and fired to third from her knees to complete a double play and end the sixth.

"That was really key. I went out and talked to them and told them 'if we hold them we are going to win,'" DiCarlo recalled. "We've been down many times and our kids have not panicked.

"They have confidence that we can hit the ball and come back. That's what we did. We hit the ball hard in that sixth inning."

It was a tough-to-swallow defeat for Coach Mark Witzberger's young Dragons. They hadn't had much success against Crusaders freshman hurler Alex McComb, who fanned 10 - all in the first five innings.

However, Hall, who struck out eight and did not issue a walk, kept Cameron in it until the bats came alive. Natalie Trowbridge led off the sixth with the game's lone walk but was erased on Hall's fielder's choice grounder. Audrey Bryan followed with her second single of the game

and Marissa Meintel brought them both home by ripping a 2-2 pitch into deep right for a double.

"This is probably the best game we've played this year with a lot of very inexperienced players," Witzberger said. "I couldn't be prouder of them."

"I think at the beginning of the year if you would have asked anyone, with what we lost (to graduation) and the players we've had to move into positions they've never played before, to get to this point and play this well speaks very highly of the girls and the effort they put in every day."

McComb helped her own cause with an RBI single in the fourth.



JOHN DEERE





Counsel / B6  
 Comics / B7  
 Classifieds / B8-12

# SPORTS

## OVAC SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT SEMIFINAL ACTION



# Buckeye is back to defend 4A crown

• No. 4 Panthers oust top-seed Martins Ferry

By **KIM NORTH**  
 Times Leader Sports Writer

**ELM GROVE** — Seeking a repeat.

That's what Buckeye Local will be looking to do Saturday afternoon when it meets Harrison Central for the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference's Class 4A softball championship.

The No. 4 seed Panthers (8-10) advanced with a hard-earned, 7-5, semifinal triumph over top-seeded Martins Ferry (13-5) on a cool Thursday evening on Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex.

"It feels great. It really does feel great because that was one of our goals," Buckeye Local head coach Joe Soos said of reaching the title tilt. "We've had a lot of adversity lately, and we've been without our top pitcher for seven games, which didn't help matters, but our kids have grown through it and learned from it.

"We came in here (today) with the approach that we were zero-and-zero," Soos added. "Just like Martins Ferry ... zero-and-zero."

The Purple Riders struck first when Addie Suriano ledoff the bottom of the first with a walk. After stealing second, she scooted to third on a wild pitch. With one out, she raced home on Tyrah King's groundout.

T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

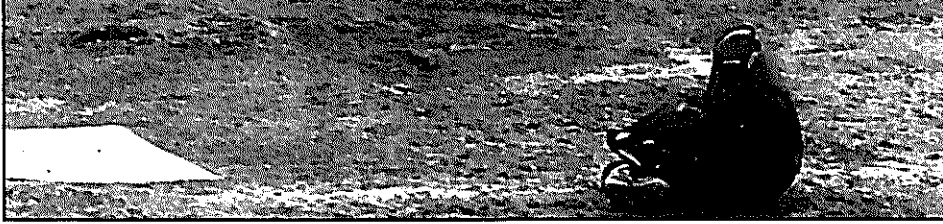
**BUCKEYE LOCAL'S** Morgan Staten (9) avoids Martins Ferry catcher Krissy Hotlosz to score during the fourth inning of Thursday night's Class 4A game on Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex. The Panthers won, 7-5, to earn a right at defending their title on Saturday. Looking on is Buckeye Local head coach Joe Soos. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

See, **BUCKEYE**, Page B2

## Harrison Central holds off St. Clairsville, 4-3

By **KIM NORTH**





T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

**BUCKEYE LOCAL'S** Morgan Staten (9) avoids Martins Ferry catcher Krissy Hotlosz to score during the fourth inning of Thursday night's Class 4A game on Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex. The Panthers won, 7-5, to earn a right at defending their title on Saturday. Looking on is Buckeye Local head coach Joe Soos. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

the title tilt. "We've had a lot of adversity lately, and we've been without our top pitcher for seven games, which didn't help matters, but our kids have grown through it and learned from it."

"We came in here (today) with the approach that we were zero-and-zero," Soos added. "Just like Martins Ferry ... zero-and-zero."

The Purple Riders struck first when Addie Suriano ledoff the bottom of the first with a walk. After stealing second, she scooted to third on a wild pitch. With one out, she raced home on Tyrah King's groundout.

See, **BUCKEYE**, Page B2

## Harrison Central holds off St. Clairsville, 4-3

By **KIM NORTH**  
Times Leader Sports Writer

**ELM GROVE** — Harrison Central and St. Clairsville split a pair of regular-season games this season.

When the two Buckeye 8 rivals met Thursday afternoon at the I-470 J. B. Chambers Complex, a berth in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class 4A championship game was at stake.

The second-seeded Huskies (12-4) earned the coveted spot with a 4-3 nod over the No. 3 Red Devils (9-8) on Ben's Field.

"It was a great game by both teams," Harrison Central head coach Donnie Bethel said. "I don't think either team played its best. I know we can play better than we did today, and I know St. Clairsville can play better than they did."

"In the end, we did just enough and sometimes that's all it takes ... just a little more."

Lauren Figura's bloop single to shallow center with two outs in the first inning scored Beanz Hummel, who had singled and went to second on a groundout, to give St. Clairsville an early 1-0 lead.



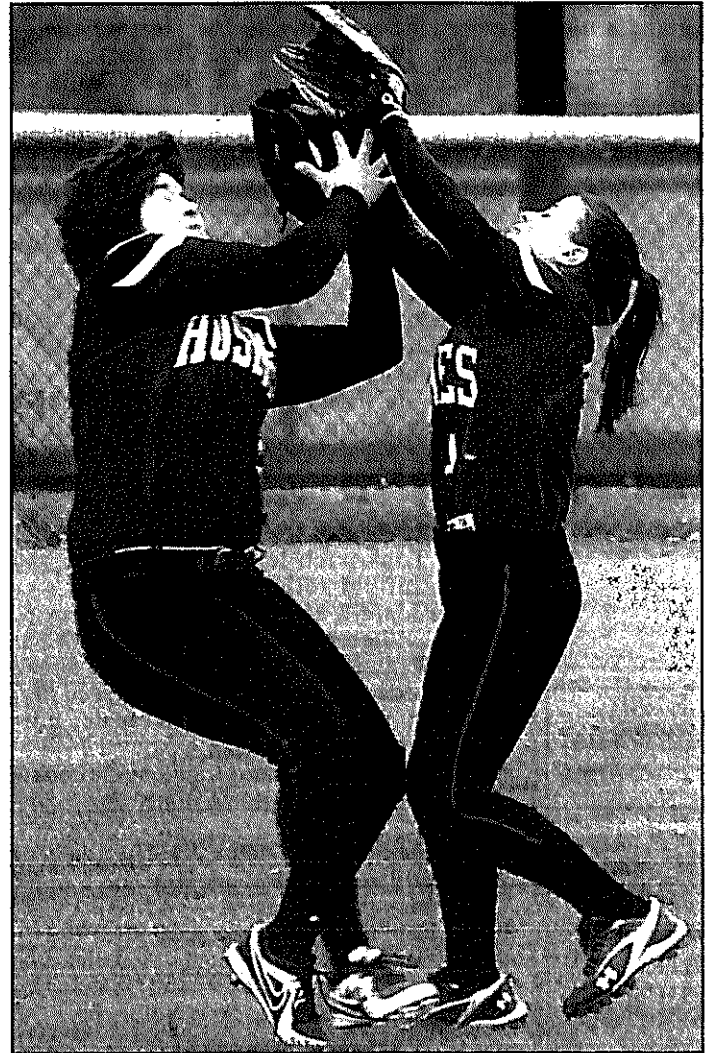
It remained that way until Harrison Central bunched half of its six hits in the bottom of the third, scoring three times for a 3-1 advantage.

Roni Caldwell, the No. 9 batter, drew a one-out walk and Paige Dunlap singled sharply to left. Kiley Staley followed with a single up the middle that loaded the bases. Kara Dunfee's base rap, to left scored Caldwell and kept the bases juiced. An infield grounder was misplayed, allowing Dunlap and Staley to cross the plate.

The two pitchers — Figura and Katie Ellzy — dominated the middle innings until Harrison Central got a run in the bottom of the sixth. Jessica Custer laced a leadoff single down the rightfield line and Shianne Nameth followed with a solid base knock to left. A groundout left runners on the corners, but another costly error allowed Custer to score what turned out to be the decisive tally.

Down to their last at-bats, the Red Devils quickly displayed that never-say-die approach as Alicia Avila singled to left leading off. After Krista Morrison was hit with a pitch, Summer Gallentine's roller to third resulted in a force out. Mikayla Otto's bloop single to

See, **HARRISON**, Page B2



T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

**HARRISON CENTRAL** leftfielder Roni Caldwell, left, holds onto the softball despite colliding with shortstop Hannah Edwards during the second inning Thursday afternoon at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex. The Huskies prevailed, 4-3, over St. Clairsville. *Additional images can be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

## Absalom no-hits Paden City as SJC seeks 'A' repeat

By **TONY VIOLA**  
For The Times Leader

**ELM GROVE** — Sometimes it's hard to get high school kids to focus. Just ask their teachers.

It might be even harder to get a group of high school girls

who have won 16 of their 18 games this season to focus on a team that has won only eight of its 25.

So when No. 1-seeded St. John went into its OVAC Class 1A semifinal with No. 4 Paden City, Fighting Irish coach Jerry

Magistro was faced with that conundrum.

"Sometimes you've got to watch going into games like (this)," he said. "You tell your kids don't take anybody lightly, but sometimes, you know how it is with kids — they're kids."

It's hard to get kids up for every game. You try to do that as a coach, and that's what we try to do."

The Irish coaching staff succeeded as Hannah Absalom

See, **SJC**, Page B2

Continued from Page B1

pitched her fourth no-hitter of the season as St. John beat Paden City, 7-0, on Ben's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex.

"Unfortunately, we don't get to see a lot of pitchers that are quite that good in the regular season," Paden City coach Jeanne Fox. "Our bats needed to come around. We needed to be a little tougher out in the field in that one inning. We had our breakdown inning (the third)."

It was a different feeling on the other side.

"We did what we had to do to win," Magistro noted. "Hannah Absalom does what she does all the time, pitched her game. We didn't hit like we wanted to hit; we're used to hitting. Sometimes that happens."

Absalom fanned eight of the first nine batters she faced as the game was still scoreless as it went into the bottom of the third, but that's when the junior showed off her talents behind the plate as well.

With two on, Absalom reached on an error that scored Kylie Falcone and Kaydie Coppa as St. John took a 2-0 lead.

Abbey Adams went in as a courtesy runner for Absalom and was brought in on a Morgan DeLuca hit into left field.

DeLuca then crossed the plate as the Wildcats were distracted with trying to tag out Caitlin Sliva.

After Absalom added three more strikeouts to her total, Amber LaMotte came home in the bottom of the fourth on a Cheyenne Harris groundout to make it 5-0.

Absalom then drove in Falcone and



Photo/TONY VIOLA

**ST. JOHN** Central's Hannah Absalom fires a pitch plateward Thursday night during the OVAC Class A semifinal against Paden City. The Irish won, 7-0.

Coppa for a second time on a double into left field to arrive at the final score.

The junior carried a perfect game into sixth, but walked Graeson Baker to lose her chance at her third perfect game of the year.

"We wanted to get everyone (into the game)," Magistro said. "It wasn't about trying to win the game in five

innings. These kids come to practice every day, and I think it's good for them to get into an OVAC game to get that experience. It wasn't about how much you win by or this and that. As long as everybody got to play, that was our goal (Thursday)."

The Fighting Irish accomplished that goal as they sent 11 different players up to the plate, including Adams, a quite little freshman, who ended St. Johns' hitting as she doubled into right field in the bottom of the sixth.

"This girl here doesn't say two words," Magistro noted. "She comes to the gym, works hard. I don't know where that came from. That was one of the best hits of the day. She shot one out there that I didn't think she had it in her to do it. Again, these kids work hard. It's a great group of kids."

The Fighting Irish will try to capture back-to-back 1A titles, but will have to wait until Saturday after Madonna and Bishop Donahue tonight face off to see who they will face

## SPORTS

### ● Harrison

Continued from Page B1

**"NORMALLY WE** close really strong, but for some reason today, we couldn't do that."

- Donnie Bethel  
Harrison Central Head Coach

left loaded the bases and Michaela Miller drove in Morrison.

Gallentine scored on an error to make it 4-2, but Ellzy got a comebacker to end the game.

"Normally we close really strong, but for some reason today,

we couldn't do that," Bethel noted.

"We closed well enough. I'll take that.

"This is the third time we've played each other. The girls know one another. They know where we hit, and we know where they

hit," he added. "They (St.C.) played tough, but at the end of the day, we had one bigger inning than they did."

Hummel had a pair of base knocks for the Red Devils.

Figura struck out just one and walked two. Ellzy fanned seven

and didn't walk a batter.

St. Clairsville will host Buckeye Local in regular-season action today. Harrison Central will welcome Martins Ferry in a key Buckeye 8 matchup.

North can be reached at [knorth@timesleaderonline.com](mailto:knorth@timesleaderonline.com)

THE TIMES LEADER - Friday, April 26, 2013 - B2

# ● Buckeye

Continued from Page B1

Buckeye Local broke the game open with a 5-spot in the fourth. With one out, Karlee Leonard doubled off the centerfielder's glove in deep center and Kierstyn Czuchran sent the next pitch from Shaye DeLeonardis well over the 225-sign in dead center for a 2-1 edge. Lauren Swiger followed with a laser down the third base line that resulted in a double and Rachel Hoagland's bloop single moved Swiger to

third. A groundout by Amy Balk made it 3-1 and Kaylee DeCesare's single chased home pinch runner Morgan Staten. Becky Zeroski's RBI single capped the outburst.

"Our bats finally came alive," Soos allowed. "Offensively, we probably had a little more than Martins Ferry, but they are an outstanding defensive team. Their defense is second to none. They made plays that kept them in the game, and they had a chance to win it."

Martins Ferry got one of those runs back in the bottom of the frame as King scored on a two-out error, making it 5-2.

A two-run fifth by Buckeye Local proved to be the difference in the end. Taryn Tonkovich legged out an infield roller and Aliyah Marelli singled to right. When the ball skipped away from the rightfielder, Tonkovich rounded the bases and Marelli sped to third. She raced home on Leonard's sacrifice fly to center for a 7-2 bulge.

The Purple Riders didn't go quietly as they tallied three times in their last at-bat and had the tying run at the plate.

Brooklyn Monroe and Kylie Stalder coaxed back-

to-back lead off walks from Buckeye Local's Ivy Starcher. Morgan Stalder beat out an infield grounder on a bang-bang play to load the bases before Krissy Hotlosz lined a single to center that scored Monroe and Kylie Stalder to make it 7-4. Hotlosz stole second uncontested and Suriano's groundout plated Morgan Stalder for a 7-5 reading. An infield popout and grounder to short ended the threat, and the game.

"I knew that one run wasn't going to stand very long against a team like Buckeye Local that hits the ball like they do," Martins Ferry head coach Paige Williams offered. "We didn't give up and we had a good fight in the seventh. We just couldn't get the hit out of the infield in the end."

Czuchran was the lone player with more than one hit as she also singled.

Starcher struck out three and walked four, but only allowed four harmless singles. DeLeonardis fanned three and didn't issue a free pass. She gave up nine hits.

The Panthers and Huskies will meet at 2 p.m. on Lisa's Field Saturday for the title.

North can be reached at [knorth@timesleader-online.com](mailto:knorth@timesleader-online.com)



The Times Leader

**EXAMPLES:**

<p><b>HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY</b> <b>(MOTHER'S NAME)</b></p> <p>Thank you for being there for us!</p> <p>Love, All Your Family</p>	<p><b>HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY</b> <b>(MOTHER'S NAME)</b></p> <p>Thank you for being there for us!</p> <p>Love, All Your Family</p>	<p><b>HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY</b> <b>(MOTHER'S NAME)</b></p> <p>Thank you for being there for us!</p> <p>Love, All Your Family</p>
---	---	---



Photo by Tony Viola

The John Marshall softball team celebrate their Class 5A championship victory on Friday. The Monarchs defeated rival Wheeling Park, 6-0.

# JM Repeats As Class 5A Champs

**Rotrigo, big bats lead the way**

By SHAWN RINE  
Sports Editor

WHEELING — The whole thing is not lost on Ed West. As his John Marshall softball team's trophy case continues to bulge, West understands what he's witnessing.

"This is a special group — a very special group,"

West said Friday night at Lisa's Field.

He made the comment after watching the Monarchs (27-3) easily handle rival Wheeling Park, 6-0, to claim the OVAC Class 5A championship for the second straight season. In addition, it's the 21st straight victory for John Marshall, which hasn't been beaten by a team from either West Virginia or Ohio this season.

"You don't get these

kind of talented players on your team every year," West said. "This group has been very good for a really long time, and now we're seeing the results of a lot of hard work they've put in over the years."

The recent additions to the trophy case include not only the two OVAC titles, but hardware representing sectional, regional and state championships.

Please See JM, Page 10

## Bishops Rout Blue Dons, 10-1

**Guzek throws one-hitter**

By JIM ELLIOTT  
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Madonna coach Chris Conti shook his head and said it just wasn't his team's night.

No, Friday night belonged to Bishop Donahue's Andrea Guzek.

Though she continued her week-long struggle with her control, Guzek tossed a one-hitter and helped herself with three hits, including a mammoth three-run

homer on her way to a five-RBI outing, as she led the Bishops to a 10-1 victory against the Blue Dons in an OVAC Class 1A semifinal at Lisa's Field.

Bishop Donahue wound up with 11 hits in the game, but if you put them end over end, they might not have gone as far as Guzek's homer — save for her two other extra base hits.

"She crushed it," Bishops coach Curt Mele said of the blast, which came in the bottom of the seventh and accounted

Please See BISHOPS, Page 10



Photo by Jim Elliott

BD's Selena Ghaphery is tagged by Madonna's Brianna Fierri as she slides into third. Making the call is umpire Dan Delande.

## BISHOPS

(Continued from Page 9) for the game's final three runs. "As soon as it hit the bat, I knew it was gone. That was one of the hardest hit balls that anyone on our team has hit all season."

Trailing 7-1 at that point, with Guzek swinging a hot bat all night, Conti didn't consider walking her.

"I told my pitching coach let's pitch to her and we'll see what happens," he said.

The ball landed 25 feet beyond the fence in left-center, scoring Megan Rush and Katie Scott.

The one-hitter was a bit misleading in that Guzek

walked nine and Madonna had at least one baserunner in six of the seven innings.

The only time it scored was in the fifth when Amanda Paul walked and came around to score on a groundout by Madison Burchill.

The rest was all Bishops.

"They were the better team," Conti said. "We didn't play well. We didn't field it well (four errors). We didn't do a lot of things well."

That was part of Mele's plan, as he had his runners stealing at nearly every chance. When they stayed put for the moment, his hitters moved them over

— and sometimes in — with bunts.

"I thought we played a pretty good small ball game advancing the runners," Mele said. "We did take advantage of some of their errors. We were aggressive on the basepaths. We put a lot of pressure on them that, in turn, led to their errors"

The Bishops scored two in the first thanks to a walk and a pair of Blue Dons miscues. The only hit in the frame was a single by Scott.

They added another in the third on Guzek's RBI double and three more in

the fifth, with Guzek hitting an RBI triple, another run crossing the plate via error, and a bunt single by freshman Abbey Mele. She and fellow freshman Sommer South combined for three hits and two runs.

"I think it's starting to come together for them," Mele said. "They're starting to play like sophomores now."

The final three runs crossed on Guzek's blast.

Bishop Donahue will face St. John in a rematch of last year's final today at 3:45 p.m.

"We're going to have our hands full," Mele said.

## JM

(Continued from Page 9)

If this senior class has its way, three more pieces of hardware will soon be on the way.

The Monarchs relied on senior ace Amy Rotriga in the circle, as she struck out eight and was in control throughout. Classmates Kristin Lewicki (two doubles, RBI), Kylie Howard (double, triple, RBI) and Morgan Watson (two singles) brought the big sticks, while junior center fielder Sissy George ripped a pair of deep doubles and drove in a pair to lead a 10-hit attack.

"They always hit the ball," Wheeling Park (16-5) coach Dee Davis said. "I tried to tell Carly (Greer) location is more important than the curve ball.

"They tee off on you." That they did.

The Monarchs struck for two in the first and added a third run in the third as Watson led off with a walk and was plated two outs later by a Howard double.

"The defense was solid, the pitching was great and I thought we hit the ball real well," West said. "That's what I preach to the girls, is it doesn't matter what our

lineup is (because) we can hit from top to bottom.

"That's what we've been doing for a long time. Just because we have 7-8-9 coming up doesn't mean we can't score."

John Marshall made it 4-0 in the fourth as Watson got on with an infield single and scored as Lewicki hit one off the wall — narrowly missing a home run — in dead center. The Monarchs finished the scoring an inning later as Howard tripled leading off and scored on George's second RBI double. George then came home on a 2-2 single by Rotriga.

That was more than enough for the southpaw in the circle. Rotriga allowed two hits — a first-inning double by Kelsi Johnson and a sixth-inning single by Marissa Tucker, and no

Patriot reached third base.

"She's been really good since she got here as a freshman," West said of Rotriga. "She's been unreal, throwing the best that she's ever thrown.

"Park's always a big game, and to put them away like we did is a little sweet."

Friday marked the third straight victory this season for the Monarchs against the Patriots.

"Last year they beat us every game and then we split with them in the sectional — everything was close," Davis recalled. "But we haven't been close to them (this year). It's been 10-1, 8-3 and now 6-0.

"I'm going to regroup Monday and there might be a whole different team out there. Players, attitude and everything."



# SPORTS

## OVAC Softball Championships

### Buckeye Local edges Harrison to repeat in 4A

By KIM NORTH  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — Prior to the 2012 softball season, Buckeye Local hadn't won an OVAC title since 1999.

Well, the Panthers are celebrating back-to-back championships after their gut-check, 4-3, nod over Buckeye 8 rival Harrison Central in the Class 3A title tilt Saturday afternoon on sun-splattered Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex.

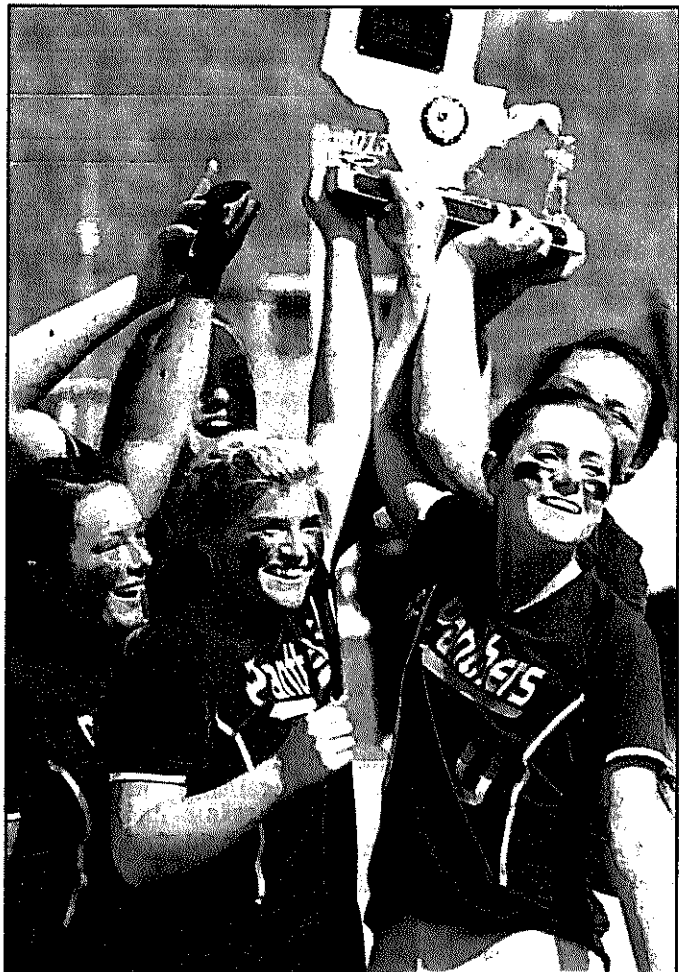


"We've faced a lot of adversity this season, but these girls have battled through it as a team," Buckeye Local (10-9) head coach Joe Soos said after winning his second title in as many seasons. "When Ivy (Starcher) came back, we've gotten good play out of all of them for the last 6 or 7 days now. Who knows what is going to happen?"

"You just have to get it going at the right time," he added. "I like where we are at right now."

Leading 3-2 in the bottom of the sixth, the fourth-seeded Panthers, who didn't even qualify for the playoffs until the final day, watched as the second-seeded Huskies (13-5) rallied to draw even when pinch runner Paige Richards raced home on a wild pitch with two outs.

See, **BUCKEYE**, Page C4



**BUCKEYE LOCAL** seniors Taryn Tonkovich, Aliyah Marelli, Kaylee DeCesare, Amy Balk and Rachel Hoagland hoist the Class 4A championship trophy after edging Harrison Central, 4-3 Saturday afternoon. *Additional images may be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)*

T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER



### SJC on top of 1A again

• Absalom hurls second no hitter of the tourney

By KIM NORTH  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — Hannah Absalom wasn't perfect, but she was darn close to it Saturday afternoon.

The hard-throwing righthander tossed her second consecutive no-hitter as No. 1 seed St. John Central (18-2) defended its OVAC Class A championship with an 8-0 whitewashing of second-seeded Bishop Donahue on

turned into a double play. Megan Rush popped up the attempt and Morgan DeLuca sprung out from behind the plate to snag the ball. She then spun and fired a strike to Sydney Helms at first to complete the twin-killing.

"What can you say about Hannah?" veteran St. John Central skipper Jerry Magistro said of his ace. "She deserves everything she gets because she's a nice kid who works very hard."

Absalom, who now has four no-



ELM GROVE — Prior to the 2012 softball season, Buckeye Local hadn't won an OVAC title since 1999.

Well, the Panthers are celebrating back-to-back championships after their gut-check, 4-3, nod over Buckeye 8 rival Harrison Central in the Class 3A title tilt Saturday afternoon on sun-splattered Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex.



"We've faced a lot of adversity this season, but these girls have battled through it as a team," Buckeye Local (10-9) head coach Joe Soos said after winning his second title in as many seasons. "When Ivy (Starcher) came back, we've gotten good play out of all of them for the last 6 or 7 days now. Who knows what is going to happen?"

"You just have to get it going at the right time," he added. "I like where we are at right now."

Leading 3-2 in the bottom of the sixth, the fourth-seeded Panthers, who didn't even qualify for the playoffs until the final day, watched as the second-seeded Huskies (13-5) rallied to draw even when pinch runner Paige Richards raced home on a wild pitch with two outs.

See, **BUCKEYE**, Page C4



DeCesare, Amy Balk and Rachel Hoagland hoist the Class 4A championship trophy after edging Harrison Central, 4-3 Saturday afternoon. Additional images may be found at [cu.timesleadersonline.com](http://cu.timesleadersonline.com)

T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER



T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER

**ST. JOHN'S** Kaydie Coppa tries to avoid Bishop Donahue's Salena Ghaphery during a play at shortstop Saturday afternoon in the OVAC Class 1A final. The Lady Irish prevailed, 8-0.

## SJC on top of 1A again

• Absalom hurls second no hitter of the tourney

By **KIM NORTH**  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — Hannah Absalom wasn't perfect, but she was darn close to it Saturday afternoon.

The hard-throwing righthander tossed her second consecutive no-hitter as No. 1 seed St. John Central (18-2) defended its OVAC Class A championship with an 8-0 whitewashing of second-seeded Bishop Donahue on sun-baked Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex.

She whiffed 10 and missed a perfect game with a fourth-inning leadoff walk to Tess Fallova, who was erased when a bunt attempt

turned into a double play. Megan Rush popped up the attempt and Morgan DeLuca sprung out from behind the plate to snag the ball. She then spun and fired a strike to Sydney Helms at first to complete the twin-killing.

"What can you say about Hannah?" veteran St. John Central skipper Jerry Magistro said of his ace. "She deserves everything she gets because she's a nice kid who works very hard."

Absalom, who now has four no-hitters this season and seven for her career, seemed unphased by all of the attention she's been receiving.

According to most softball  
See, **SJC**, Page C2

## Bellaire denied by Fort Frye

By **KIM NORTH**  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ELM GROVE — Bellaire took undefeated Fort Frye to the limit Saturday afternoon, but the Cadets scored the lone run of the game to remain perfect in 18 decisions.

Victoria Mimken struck out 16 and singled in the only run she would need with two outs in the bottom of the fourth as the top-seeded Cadets blanked the No. 2 Lady Reds (17-3) by a 1-0 count to capture the OVAC Class 3A Championship on sun-splashed Lisa's Field at the I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex.

"Our bats let us down today," Bellaire head coach Melissa Lahna said. "That was our one fault today, but I'll tell you what, these girls played hard. They have nothing to be disappointed in. It was a hard-fought battle here. It wasn't an easy game for either side."

*"THIS DOESN'T define us. There is a lot of season left for us. This game should show some people that we are legit. There are a lot of people out there that don't think we're legit, and we are."*

- *Melissa Lahna*  
Bellaire Head Coach

"They (Fort Frye) came to play and hit the ball better than we did today," Lahna added.

Mimken was nearly untouchable as she only permitted a 2-out bloop single to Mary Garloch in the first inning and an infield single to Megan Ging in the sixth, also with two outs. She fanned 10 in a row from the last out of the first through the fourth.



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**BELLAIRE** shortstop Taylor Canter throws to first during the fifth inning of the Class 3A title game. Bellaire fell, 1-0.

See, **BELLAIRE**, Page C2

## ● Buckeye

Continued from Page C1

Instead of hanging its heads and getting down, Buckeye Local rallied back to score the game-winner in the top of the seventh. With one out, senior Aliyah Marelli, who was celebrating her birthday, doubled to left-center as Paige Dunlap failed to come up with the ball after a valiant diving effort. Karlee Leonard followed with a double down the left field line that easily scored Marelli.

The first two Harrison Central batters in the bottom of the seventh watched as the count went to 3-0, but Ivy Starcher fought back to retire both on strikes — the first swinging and the second looking. She then induced a comebacker to seal the deal.

"This is her first complete game in three weeks," Soos said of his ace in the circle. "She's had a pulled muscle in her back. She plays angry. She gets the eye of the tiger and she's tough."

Harrison Central took an early 2-0

lead as Katie Ellzy blasted a run-scoring triple to deep right-center with two outs in the first frame. Dunlap, who had walked leading off, raced home on the hit. Ellzy scored when Starcher was called for an illegal pitch.

The Huskies wouldn't dent home plate again until Richards scored in the sixth.

During that stretch, Starcher, who struck out 10, had set down 14 straight Harrison Central hitters.

Trailing 2-0, Buckeye Local cut the deficit in half in the second when Amy Balk's sacrifice fly to left plated Lauren Swiger, who had walked. A wild pitch advanced her to second and she moved to third on a ground-out.

The Panthers took the lead in the fifth as Taryn Tonkovich reached on an error with one out. Marelli launched an 0-2 pitch for a triple to the fence in right-center to make it 2-

2. With the count 1-1 on Leonard, Ellzy uncorked a wild pitch that Marelli scored on for a 3-2 edge.

"Buckeye has been playing well of late, and they played well today," Harrison Central head coach Donnie Bethel allowed. "They gave us a few of the runs that we got, so we can't complain about anything.

"Both teams played hard. I can't fault my team's effort," he added. "The bottom line today was the best team didn't win, but the team that played the best won. No doubt about that today."

Marelli finished a home run shy of the cycle as the Panthers managed eight hits.

Jessica Custer had a pair of singles and a run batted in for Harrison Central.

Buckeye Local visits East Liverpool Tuesday night, while Harrison Central entertains Barnesville Thursday.

## ● SJC

Continued from Page C1

guru's Saturday, Absalom might have become the first pitcher to author back-to-back no-nos in an OVAC semifinal and championship game in the same season.

"Awesome," she said when informed of that. "It feels really good. All of my pitches were working today."

Bishop Donahue head coach Curt Mele was also impressed with Absalom's performance.

"What can I say about her? She's a fabulous pitcher and had everything going for her today," he said. "We just ran into a buzzsaw."

With the win, St. John Central recorded its ninth OVAC softball crown. John Marshall also has nine, while the Bishops total 13, one more than Wheeling Central.

"It never gets old when you win championships," Magistro said with a smile. "The valley is big on OVACs and it's nice when your kids can put themselves in place to win an OVAC championship."

"Winning an OVAC title is always one of our goals, but it's not our only goal," Magistro stressed. "It's one of them. Getting to play against teams from West Virginia makes it even more special to win an OVAC title."

With Absalom working her magic inside the circle, the Irish led 1-0 before posting five runs in the bottom of the fourth to take a commanding 6-0 advantage.

Kylee Falcone, the Irish's No. 9 hitter, was hit-by-a-pitch with one out and Kaydie Coppa walked.

## ● Bellaire

Continued from Page C1

The hard-throwing senior needed just 76 pitches – 61 strikes – and threw a first-pitch strike to 18 of the 24 batters she faced.

## ● Bellaire

Continued from Page C1

The hard-throwing senior needed just 76 pitches – 61 strikes – and threw a first-pitch strike to 18 of the 24 batters she faced.

"Victoria has been this for us for four years now," Fort Frye head coach Barb Sleek praised. "She won an OVAC championship as a freshman, and now she's won one as a senior."

It appeared as though Fort Frye had scored a run in the second when Hali Lemasters was ruled out for leaving third base early on a fly ball to Garloch in left.

The Cadets finally broke through against Ging when Natalie Smith ripped a double to deep center. Courtesy runner Tori Hendershot scored on Mimken's single to right one pitch later.

"This doesn't define us," Lahna admitted. "There's a lot of season left for us. This game should show some people that we are legit. There are a lot of people out there that don't think we're legit, and we are."

"They (Fort Frye) are one of the best teams in the state, and we held them to one run," Lahna continued. "I thought (Megan) Ging pitched well today, our bats just let us down a little bit."

Ging fanned two and scattered five hits. She didn't walk a batter, but hit one.

"I thought we were a little dead at the plate today, but, fortunately, that's not our bread and butter," Sleek said. "We make sure that we don't give up a lot of runs, so we don't have to score a lot."

"Pitching and defense won this championship for us."

Bellaire is back in action Tuesday when it travels to Martins Ferry in Buckeye 8 action

# Panthers Nip Huskies In Class 4A

By KIM NORTH

For the News-Register

WHEELING — Prior to the 2012 softball season, Buckeye Local hadn't won an OVAC title since 1999.

Well, the Panthers are celebrating back-to-back championships after their gut-check, 4-3, nod against Buckeye 8 rival Harrison Central in the Class 3A title tilt Saturday afternoon on Lisa's Field.

"We've faced a lot of adversity this season, but these girls have battled through it as a team," Buckeye Local coach Joe Soos said. "When Ivy (Starcher) came back, we've gotten good play out of all of them for the last six or seven days now. Who knows what is going to happen?"

"You just have to get it going at the right time. I like where we are right now."

Leading 3-2 in the bottom of the sixth, the fourth-seeded Panthers (10-9), who didn't even qualify for the playoffs until the final day, watched as the second-seeded Huskies (13-5) rallied to draw even when pinch runner Paige Richards raced home on a wild pitch with two outs.

Instead of hanging its heads and getting down, Buckeye Local rallied back to score the game-winner in the top of the seventh. With one out, senior Aliyah Marelli, who was celebrating her birthday, doubled to left-center as Paige Dunlap failed to come up with the ball after a valiant diving effort. Karlee Leonard followed with a double down the left-field line that easily scored Marelli.

The first two Harrison Central batters in the bottom of the seventh watched as the count went to 3-0, but Ivy Starcher fought back to retire both on strikes — the first swinging and the second looking. She then induced a comebacker to seal the deal.

"This is her first complete

See, Panthers, Page B4

## PANTHERS

Continued from page B1

game in three weeks," Soos said of his ace. "She's had a pulled muscle in her back. She plays angry. She gets the eye of the tiger and she's tough."

Harrison Central took an early 2-0 lead as Katie Ellzy blasted a run-scoring triple to deep right-center with two outs in the first inning. Dunlap, who had walked leading off, raced home on the hit. Ellzy scored when Starcher was called for an illegal pitch.

The Huskies didn't dent home plate again until Richards scored in the sixth.

During that stretch, Starcher, who struck out 10, had set down 14 straight Harrison Central hitters.

Trailing 2-0, Buckeye Local cut the deficit in half in the second when

Amy Balk's sacrifice fly to left plated Lauren Swiger, who had walked.

The Panthers took the lead in the fifth as Marelli launched an 0-2 pitch for an RBI triple to the fence in right-center to make it 2-2. With the count 1-1 on Leonard, Ellzy uncorked a wild pitch that Marelli scored on for a 3-2 edge.

"Buckeye has been playing well of late, and they played well (Saturday)," Harrison Central coach Donnie Bethel said. "They gave us a few of the runs that we got, so we can't complain about anything."

Marelli finished a home run shy of the cycle as the Panthers managed eight hits.

Jessica Custer had a pair of singles and a run batted in for Harrison Central.

B

Sunday News-Register

APRIL 28, 2013

# SPORTS

**INSIDE:**

OVAC Baseball/Page 2

Major League Baseball/Page 4

Saturday's Scoreboard/Page 6

Outdoors/Page 7

## OVAC Crowns Softball Champions

### Mimken, Fort Frye Edge Bellaire in Class 3A Tilt



Photo by Seth Staskey

Bellaire's Megan Ging comes out of the circle to field a ball and fire to first base Saturday.

By KIM NORTH  
For the News-Register

WHEELING — Bellaire took undefeated Fort Frye to the limit Saturday afternoon, but the Cadets scored the lone run of the game to remain perfect in 18 decisions.

Victoria Mimken struck out 16 and singled in the only run she needed with two outs in the bottom of the fourth as the top-seeded Cadets blanked the No. 2 Big Reds (17-3) by a 1-0 count to capture the OVAC Class 3A Championship on Lisa's Field.

"Our bats let us down," Bellaire coach Melissa Lahna said. "That was our one fault, but I'll tell you what, these girls played hard. They have nothing to be disappointed in. It was a hard-fought battle here. It wasn't an easy game for either side.

"They (Fort Frye) came to play and hit the ball better than we did."

Mimken was nearly untouchable as she permitted only a two-out bloop single to Mary Garloch in the first inning and an infield single to Megan

Ging in the sixth, also with two outs. She fanned 10 in a row from the last out of the first through the fourth.

The hard-throwing senior needed just 76 pitches — 61 strikes — and threw a first-pitch strike to 18 of the 24 batters she faced.

"Victoria has been doing this for us for four years now," Fort Frye coach Barb Sleek praised. "She won an OVAC championship as a freshman, and now she's won one as a senior."

It appeared as though Fort Frye had scored a run in the second before Hali Lemasters was ruled out for leaving third base early on a fly ball to Garloch in left.

The Cadets finally broke through against Ging when Natalie Smith ripped a double to deep center. Courtesy runner Tori Hendershot scored on Mimken's single to right one pitch later.

"This doesn't define us," Lahna admitted.

See, Bellaire, Page B3

# Absalom No-Hits Bishops in Class 1A Final

By KIM NORTH  
For the News-Register

WHEELING — Hannah Absalom wasn't perfect, but she was darn close to it Saturday afternoon.

The hard-throwing right-hander tossed her second consecutive no-hitter as No. 1 seed St. John Central (18-2) defended its OVAC Class A championship with an 8-0 beating of second-seeded Bishop Donahue on Lisa's Field.

She whiffed 10 and missed a perfect game with a fourth-inning leadoff walk to Tess Fallova, who was erased when a bunt attempt turned into a double play. Megan

Rush popped up the attempt and Morgan DeLuca sprung out from behind the plate to snag the ball. She then spun and fired a strike to Sydney Helms at first to complete the twin-killing.

"What can you say about Hannah?" veteran St. John Central skipper Jerry Magistro asked. "She deserves everything she gets because she's a nice kid who works very hard."

Absalom, who now has four no-hitters this season and seven for her career, seemed unphased by all of the attention she's been receiving.

According to most softball

guru's Saturday, Absalom might have become the first pitcher to author back-to-back no-nos in an OVAC semifinal and championship game in the same season.

"Awesome," she said when informed of that. "It feels really good. All of my pitches were working."

Bishop Donahue coach Curt Mele was also impressed with Absalom's performance.

"She's a fabulous pitcher and had everything going for her," he said. "We just ran into a buzz-saw."

See, Absalom, Page B3



Photo by Mike Palmer

St. John pitcher Hannah Absalom works against Bishop Donahue.

## ABSALOM

Continued from page B1

With the victory, St. John Central recorded its ninth OVAC softball crown. John Marshall also has nine, while the Bishops total 13, one more than Wheeling Central.

"It never gets old when you win championships," Magistro said with a smile. "The valley is big on OVACs and it's nice when your kids can put themselves in place to win an OVAC championship."

"Winning an OVAC title is always one of our goals, but it's not our only goal," stressed Magistro, who won his 250th game earlier in the season. "It's one of them. Getting to play against teams from West Virginia makes it even more special to win an OVAC title."

With Absalom working her magic inside the circle, the Irish led 1-0 before posting five runs in the bottom of the fourth to take a commanding 6-0 advantage.

Kylee Falcone, the Irish's No. 9 hitter, was hit-by-a-pitch with one out and Kaydie Coppa walked. Absalom's bloop single to shallow right-center plated Falcone to make it 2-0. Morgan DeLuca reached on an error as Coppa raced home. Caitlin Sliva's infield pop was mishandled as the fourth run crossed the plate. Sydney Helms' shot up the middle was too hot to handle as the fifth run of the inning scored. Kristen Russell's bouncer to third was thrown late to the plate, making it 6-0.

"That one inning cost us," Mele said. "I think we gave up four or five runs and they (St. John) only had one ball hit out of the infield."

Absalom and DeLuca had back-to-back RBI doubles in the fifth to conclude the scoring. They each finished with a single, double and two RBI. Coppa laced a trio of singles.

## BELLAIRE

Continued from page B1

"There's a lot of season left for us. This game should show some people that we are legit. There are a lot of people out there that don't think we're legit, and we are."

"They (Fort Frye) are one

of the best teams in the state, and we held them to one run. I thought (Megan) Ging pitched well; our bats just let us down a little bit."

Ging fanned two and scattered five hits. She didn't walk a batter, but hit one.

# Softball champs saluted

Softball junkies had a field day Saturday at the sun-baked I-470 J.B. Chambers Complex in Elm Grove.

Four OVAC titles were decided on the well-groomed Lisa's Field as Steubenville Catholic rallied for a thrill-packed, 8-7, decision over Wheeling Central for the 2A crown; Fort Frye blanked Bellaire, 1-0, in 3A action; Buckeye Local retained its title with a hard-earned, 4-3, nod over Harrison Central in a 4A thriller; and St. John Central closed out the day with an 8-0 verdict over Bishop

Donahue to defend its 1A crown.

Having been at the complex for nearly the entire day, I can say that nobody can demand a refund for lack of action.

I want to congratulate the aforementioned winners, and also

John Marshall which whitewashed rival Wheeling Park for the 5A championship Friday night.

In addition to the action on the field being well-above average, the crowds were tremendous, both in size and enthusiasm.

I would especially like to take time to give well-deserved kudos to the Panthers and Irish, may be a little more to the Connorville-based squad.

It's no secret that Buckeye Local has struggled for the majority of the season, but Joe Soos and his coaching staff should be commended for the job they did last week.

Not qualifying for the Final Four until the last day, the Panthers made a statement as the No. 4 seed. They knocked off top-seeded Martins Ferry in a Thursday night semifinal before taking down the second-seeded Huskies Saturday.

Harrison Central had already beaten Buckeye Local twice during the regular season, but the Panthers wouldn't be denied as they rallied for a run in the top of the seventh to prevail.

Senior Aliyah Marelli couldn't have celebrated her birthday any better as she singled, doubled, tripled and knocked in a run. Oh, by the way, she also scored the game-winner on Karlee Leonard's double.



**KIM NORTH**  
**Kim's Korner:**

## OVAC Softball

Tournament Pairings  
(all games at J.B. Chambers  
I-470 Complex in Elm Grove)

### Class 1A

(Wednesday on Field 4)

St. John vs. Paden City, 5 p.m.

Bishop Donahue vs. Madonna, 6:45 p.m.

### Class 2A

Tuesday on Field 3

Wheeling Central vs. Shadyside, 4 p.m.

Wednesday on Field 3

Steubenville Catholic Central vs. Cameron, 4 p.m.

### Class 3A

(Tuesday on Field 4)

Fort Frye vs. River, 5 p.m.

Bellaire vs. Shenandoah, 6:45 p.m.

### Class 4A

(Wednesday on Field 3)

Harrison Central vs. St. Clairsville, 5:45 p.m.

Martins Ferry vs. Buckeye Local, 7:30 p.m.

### Class 5A

(Tuesday on Field 3)

John Marshall vs. Morgantown, 5:45 p.m.

Wheeling Park vs. Indian Creek, 7:30 p.m.

Not qualifying for the Final Four until the last day, the Panthers made a statement as the No. 4 seed. They knocked off top-seeded Martins Ferry in a Thursday night semifinal before taking down the second-seeded Huskies Saturday.

Harrison Central had already beaten Buckeye Local twice during the regular season, but the Panthers wouldn't be denied as they rallied for a run in the top of the seventh to prevail.

Senior Aliyah Marelli couldn't have celebrated her birthday any better as she singled, doubled, tripled and knocked in a run. Oh, by the way, she also scored the game-winner on Karlee Leonard's double.

"These girls have been so much adversity this season, but they battle and battle and never quit," Soos praised. "They are a great bunch of girls and this second title feels really good because of what we've been through."

Ironically, the Panthers, who are now 10-9, are a mere 1-5 in Buckeye 8 competition.

The beat continued for St. John Central as it won the Class 1A title for the ninth time, all under veteran head coach Jerry Magistro.

The victory also marked the first time the Irish have won back-to-back titles since capturing four in a row from 2004-07.

When you mention St. John Central softball this season, you have to start with dominating pitcher Hannah Absalom. The fireballing junior hurled her fourth no-hitter of the season Saturday against the outmanned Bishops.

It was her second consecutive no-no as she did the trick against Paden City in the semifinals on Thursday. According to many softball gurus, she may have become the first pitcher in OVAC Softball Tournament history to accomplish that feat.

I understand that the 1A field isn't as tough as the other four, but credit has to go where credit is due. In my many, many years of covering the sport, Absalom is one of the most dominating pitcher's I've ever covered.

She also knocked in a pair of runs with a single and double. Senior Kaydie Coppa served as a great lead-off hitter as she reached base all four times she went to the plate. She rapped a trio of singles and walked. She also scored twice.

With only Coppa and Kristen Russell graduating after this season, Magistro and his coaching staff can look forward to being in the winner's circle for some time to come.

Bellaire ran into a buzz-saw in Fort Frye pitcher Victoria Mimken, who fanned 16 Lady Reds in tossing a 2-hit shutout.

*North can be reached at  
knorth@timesleaderonline.com*





Photo by Shawn Rine

Wheeling Central's Joni Zavolta eyes a pitch in front of Steubenville Catholic catcher Maddy Gulan during their game Saturday.

# Crusaders Stun Knights to Win Class 2A Title

By SHAWN RINE  
Sports Editor

WHEELING — The Cardiac Crusaders have done it again.

Trailing 6-2 after four innings during Saturday's OVAC Class 2A Championship against Wheeling Central on Lisa's Field, and needing two to tie heading into the bottom of the seventh, Steubenville Catholic received some help in the form of two errors and a bunt for an 8-7 victory.

Micca Mirabella's bunt was overthrown to second and the ball rolled all the way to the center-field wall, allowing both Tori Knight and Mirabella to score and tie the game at 7-7 with two outs. Sammi Giannamore followed with a double and scored the winner as Maddy Gulan laced an 0-2 pitch into center, setting off a wild

celebration at home plate.

It's the second consecutive come-from-behind victory in tournament play for the Crusaders (16-3), and this one denied the Maroon Knights (16-8), the No. 1-ranked Class A team in West Virginia, their third straight OVAC crown.

"We haven't lost a close game all year long," Steubenville Catholic coach Jim DiCarlo said. "The three games we lost were not close and we've won about five or six really close games.

"Our kids believe. They believe we'll find a way whether it's 1-0, 10-9 or 8-7."

Wheeling Central had freshman Crusaders pitcher Alex McComb's number early as back-to-back, first-inning triples by Cara Stahl and Allie Cook

See, Crusaders, Page B3

# CRUSADERS

*Continued from page B1*

made it 1-0. The Knights tacked on two more before the inning ended on consecutive RBI singles off the bats of Sydney Bennington and Sarah Henry.

The Crusaders got two back in their half of the first as Gulan tripled home a run and McComb drove another in with a single. But Wheeling Central made it 5-2 in the top of the second thanks to two of the Crusaders' four errors in the initial two innings. Ashley Gast made them pay with a two-run single.

"They could have folded up early because we were hitting the ball very hard and shutting them down," Knights coach Rick Magruder said of the Crusaders. "But they keep battling.

"They're well-coached, they're disciplined and they also have a group of girls that don't know how to quit."

Consecutive two-out singles and a walk by Bennington had the sacks full of Knights in the fourth. Henry came through again with a single into left-center for a 6-2 advantage, but Central left the bases loaded.

"We had a lot of runners on and if we score some more runs you don't have to worry about it," Magrud-

er said.

But the tide changed dramatically in the top of the fifth. With one on and two out Mirabella ripped a ball over the head of Wheeling Central's left fielder, who was playing in on. Mirabella quickly circled the bases for a two-run, inside-the-park homer to cut the deficit to two, 6-4.

"Micca's speed is unbelievable," DiCarlo said. "That ball she hit over the outfielder's head sparked us."

After McComb set the Maroon Knights down in order, Steubenville Catholic went back to work. Ashlynn Daley dropped a 2-2 pitch into right field to score courtesy runner Maddy Metcalf, who had taken over for McComb who reached on a fielder's choice.

The Maroon Knights, it seemed, delivered the knockout blow in the top of the seventh when with two outs, No. 9 hitter Cassidy McCord dropped down a bunt and beat the throw to first, allowing courtesy runner Megan Griffin, who went in for Henry after she collected her third hit — a double — to score.

"She had a couple big hits, she pitched well," Magruder said of Henry.

Not to be denied, the

Crusaders made the Knights pay for two of their three errors on the day in the bottom of the inning, to win it.

"That's one of the best-hitting teams in the valley," DiCarlo said of the Maroon

Knights. "But I thought we hit the ball well and I knew sooner or later we would find some holes and get a break or two, and we did.

"We both made a lot of mistakes.

"Our kids just battle all the time. If we would have lost I would have still been proud of our kids for coming back and battling to have a shot there at the end of the game."