

SPORTS

Thursday,
June 24, 2021

OVAC BILL VAN HORNE COACH OF THE YEAR



ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Ernie Banks (right) was announced as the OVAC Bill Van Horne Coach of the Year during Wednesday's OVAC Banquet of Champions, which was held virtually. He was presented the award by OVAC Executive Director Dirk Decoy.

Photo/SETH STASKEY

St. C.'s Banks named OVAC Coach of the Year

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE – Ernie Banks couldn't believe what he was hearing.

The St. Clairsville swimming coach actually had to do a double take.

But, the news was true and accurate.

Banks, who led his Red Devils girls team to a season of many firsts in program history, was named the 2021 OVAC Bill Van Horne Coach of the Year, becoming the 57th recipient of the conference's highest coaching accolade.

"This is a complete surprise," Banks said. "When I got the call, it just caught me totally off guard and I didn't believe it. It's just so hard to fathom that I still can't

believe it."

Banks – who was also a finalist for the award in 2019 – becomes the first swimming coach in conference history to receive the award. He's also the fourth St. Clairsville winner, joining football coaches George Strager (1979, 1987) and Brett McLean (2013).

"I think part of what makes this is hard to believe is that swimming isn't one of the 'big' sports that gets a lot of the top recognition normally," Banks admitted. "The OVAC definitely treats swimming well, and we're grateful for that."

Banks guided the Red Devil girls to a myriad of accomplishments that had never been achieved by a Belmont County school.

However, he quickly passed

the credit to his athletes, their families and his wife, Katie, who is also his chief assistant coach.

"This award means a lot to me, but it also means that a lot of people around me have done so much (more) to allow me to receive this type of honor," Banks said, fighting back emotion. "The girls are simply amazing, their parents are great and supportive and my wife, Katie, is so important to all of this. I couldn't do it without her."

The Red Devils overcame all sorts of odds, most of which stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic which reared its ugly head numerous times during the course of the winter sports season.

Whether it was having to find

See, **BANKS**, Page B2

Grandal, White Sox end 5-game skid, beat Pirates

PITTSBURGH (AP) – Yasmani Grandal hit a two-run double and the Chicago White Sox stopped a five-game losing streak, beating the Pittsburgh Pirates 4-3 Wednesday.

Leury Garcia added a home run as the AL Central leaders ended their longest skid of the season.

Chicago starter Dylan Cease (6-3) bounced back from a rough outing to work 5 2/3 innings, allowing one earned run while striking out seven.

"I did an Ozzie Smith somersault when we got that last out," manager Tony La Russa joked. "You take it too serious, because this what you do for a living, but you know, it's been kind of miserable. Five straight days, so we'd have taken a win anytime in there to ease the misery. ... If you had to pick one of the five to win, you'd pick this one."

Cease was tagged for seven runs in 3 1/3 innings in his previous start at Houston. That game was the first of Chicago's slump, and Cease was happy to be one to help end it on Wednesday.

"Anytime you can help the team get a win, it's why I'm here," he said. "It's not just all me, though. Between our defense and our offense, I'm just happy to be able to do my part."

Liam Hendricks pitched a perfect ninth for his 19th save of the season.

Grandal's tiebreaking hit came with two outs in the fifth inning and finished Pirates starter Chase De Jong (0-2).

Garcia led off the second with his first home run of the season, a first-pitch drive to right center.

Pittsburgh scored twice in the second after Cease made two errors in attempting to field a bunt by De Jong with Michael Perez on first base. Cease first dropped the ball and then threw it away, giving the Pirates runners at second and third.

"We've all seen that inning get away because the pitcher just loses concentration and doesn't realize he's been good," La Russa said. "Just get the next hitter out and go from there. That's a really good example of his growth and his potential."

Chicago outfielder Luis Gonzalez got his first big league hit with a second-inning double and scored on Tim Anderson's double.

Gonzalez made his first start as the White Sox navigate the absence of outfielder Adam Engel, who was placed on the injured list on Tuesday.

Adam Frazier had an RBI grounder and Ke'Bryan Hayes singled home a run that made it 2-all.

Frazier doubled and scored on a single by Hayes in the seventh.

Hayes, who had gone 2 for 13 over the first four games of the Pittsburgh homestand, finished 2 for 4 with a walk and two RBIs.

"We talk about slow heartbeats with a bunch of guys. This guy definitely has one," Pittsburgh manager Derek Shelton said. "He stays under control, doesn't let it affect him on the other side of the ball. Obviously there's going to be some highs and lows, but no thought that he's not going to grind through it."

Maynard fends off Moundsville

By **KIM NORTH**
Times Leader Sports Writer

GLENDALE – The Ohio Valley Baseball League race suddenly got a little tighter Wednesday night thanks to the right arm of Mackenzie Koehler and the bat of Eric Banal.

Koehler needed just 90 pitches in hurling a three-hitter as surging Maynard (9-4) made quick work of first-place Moundsville, 3-1, in a game that took just 1-hour, 35-minutes to play on Bob Montgomery Field at John Marshall High School. Banal had two hits and a pair of runs batted in.

"My legs felt a lot better than my last start. I think the heat had something to do

with that against Barton the other night," Koehler said of his win over the Braves last week. "Moundsville is a very good ball team and it really means something to beat them twice now.

"Their lineup is stacked with hitters so you can't give in to them," Koehler added.

With the loss, the Expos (10-3) have now lost three of their last six after a 7-0 start.

"With the exception of two games recently, we've been struggling to string hits together," Moundsville player/manager Matt Carnahan explained of the slump his team has been in. "It seems like every game we will have that one inning where we get some big hits, but we can't

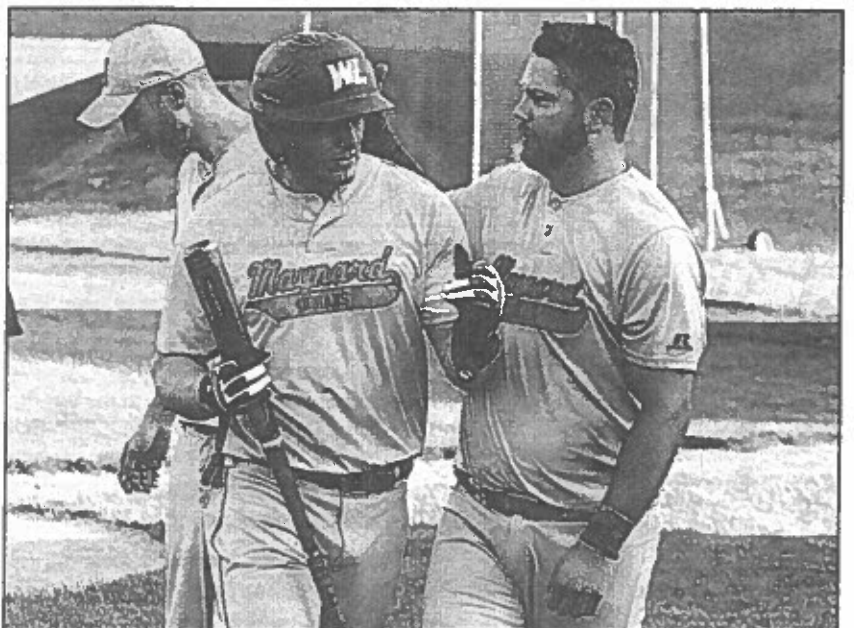
seem to tie them all together. "Mackenzie did a really good job tonight. We couldn't barrel him up and we chased quite a few pitches tonight,"

Carnahan was spot-on as the Expos' three hits came in different innings, with lead-off hitter John Santimarinio singling in the first and third frames, while Carnahan blasted his second homer of the season to deep left-center leading off the fourth.

"He's a great hitter, maybe the best in this league," Koehler said of Carnahan. "That's why we walked him in the sixth."

The strategy worked to a tee as Carnahan was intentionally walked with a

See **MAYNARD** Page B2



T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

MAYNARD'S HUNTER Westlake, left, receives congratulations from teammate B.A. Holloway after scoring a run in Wednesday night's 3-1 Ohio Valley Baseball League victory over Moundsville on Bob Montgomery Field at John Marshall High School in Glen Dale.

• **Maynard**

Continued from Page B1

ner on first and one out in the sixth. The next batter grounded into a 3-6-1 double play to snuff out the attempted rally.

"That was huge," Koehler recalled. "You have to play smart sometimes even if it means eating your ego. Matt is so strong that he can hit a bad pitch out of the park."

Koehler threw 61 strikes while fanning half-a-dozen, walking two and hitting a batter. He hit the strike zone 16 of 25 times with his first pitch to a batter.

Maynard took a 1-0 lead in the second when Banal legged out an infield single as Jared Kernan scored from third. Kernan had doubled down the left field line with two outs and went to third on a wild pitch.

Carnahan tied the game in the fourth but the Indi-

ans scored what proved to be the game-winner in the fifth. Klay Cottis singled to left leading off and went to second when the ball was bobbled in the outfield. A comebacker to the mound moved Cottis to third and Jayden Starks bounced a 1-0 pitch through the right side of the infield as Cottis crossed the plate.

Banal supplied his second big hit of the contest in the sixth as Maynard added an insurance marker. Hunter Westlake was hit-by-a-pitch leading off and two outs later, Banal doubled over the head of Moundsville's rightfielder as Westlake chugged home, making it 3-1.

Following Carnahan's roundtripper, Koehler retired 12 of the final 14 Expos he faced. Jake Stoner was plunked with one out in the sixth be-

fore Carnahan was put on without a pitch. Hunter Cottrell's bouncer to Kernan at first was relayed to shortstop Matthew Busby to erase Stoner. Busby's throw to Koehler covering first just beat the runner.

Maynard hosts Barton Friday night on Firemen's Field inside the Community Park, while Moundsville welcomes Shadyside.

Weirton 1, Barton 0
AT WEIRTON, Jacob Rosnick was a thorn in Braves sides as he pitched a complete game and knocked in the only run of the contest with a one-out bloop single to right.

Tyler Blomquist also went the distance on the hill for Barton (4-5).

The Bobcats improved to 6-5.

• **Banks**

Continued from Page B1

new venue in which to practice because Wheeling University, St. Clairsville's normal practice site, wasn't available or basically having to re-build a schedule because many meets were being canceled due to the pandemic. The Red Devils simply put their heads down.

"Obviously, many of the issues we faced were common among most teams, but our girls' ability to adapt to the things that needed done was unbelievable," Banks stressed.

The Red Devils had fewer than 10 actual meets prior to the postseason. They were able to post enough quality marks to win their fourth consecutive OVAC Class 1A-4A title in a meet that was held via compiling marks throughout both the Ohio and West Virginia seasons and then scored.

In the postseason, it was simply back to work. St. Clairsville won eight of the 11 events at the sectional and finished second in the team standings.

The Devils took five swimmers - Maggie Marody, Casadie DiBetta, Kylie McKeegan, Brenna Planey and Olivia Moyer - to the district meet. Those five accumulated 226 points and finished second in the team standings for the first time in school history. Actually, it was the first time a Belmont County team had brought back a team trophy from the district swim meet in either gender.

But, maybe, most importantly, the Red Devils laid the groundwork for a record-setting state meet. In Canton, the Devils took part in eight of the 11

events, also the best ever for a school from Belmont County.

"Those five girls (who competed at the district and state meets) are next-level-kids," Banks said. "Whether it's personally, in the pool or in the classroom, those are five great kids. I would put them up against anyone."

The Red Devils' success wasn't done. At the state meet, all five swimmers earned All-Ohio acclaim, which allowed the team to accumulate a program-best 83 points and finish eighth in the team standings.

"I still can't fathom all of the things we accomplished," Banks said. "To finish eighth in the state with five kids is unbelievable. Several schools basically take full teams to the state meet and then there was us with five kids. Our kids relished the opportunity to compete, no matter who it was against. I just don't think these kids fully understand how great they are. They're amazing."

Banks has been the Red Devils' head coach since 2014 and his involvement with the youth program started well before that. Basically, he's watched the program grow from the ground up.

"I never dreamed we'd be at the level we are," Banks said. "When I first started helping (with the high school), we'd have a handful of kids who would make the district meet. Then we got a kid to the state and more kids to the district and another state qualifier and then Maggie (Marody) came along and then this group that will be seniors. I thought we had the potential to be good, but not to the level these girls have taken it."

• **Golf**

Continued from Page B1

frustrated.

The answer is simple: play real golf. Play by the rules, play the ball as it lies and the golf course as you find it. Too many players play golf casually. Again, I am speaking to those outside of the above beginners groups. Too many players give themselves putts, don't truly follow out of bounds, do not know the rules of bunker play; in short, they do not play real golf. What happens is this: a person becomes a nine handicap and then, when the tournament season rolls around, they must play real golf. The out of bounds drive is counted, the three missed six footers add up and the paper nine handicap player shoots 92

or 93. Frustration builds up and amount of fun goes down, as do the number of rounds played.

Honestly assess your golf game. See what you really shoot. Play by the rules and when you genuinely see improvement, which you will, you can take pride in being a nine handicap, for real, not on paper.

I do not want to sound as if everyone is not playing real golf, but if you are one of those that is not, let me leave you with this: playing real golf will make you fall in love with the game of golf and all the mysteries associated with it. It will also allow you to truly compete and have fun anywhere you play.



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- Consume fiber-rich whole grains.
- Stick with lean meat, fish or skinless chicken.
- Opt for low-fat dairy products.
- Broil, bake, grill, steam or poach whenever possible.
- Avoid processed and pre-packaged foods that are often high in trans fats, sodium and added sugars.
- Get moving with at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.
- Find ways to minimize stress and get adequate amounts of sleep.
- Talk to your doctor about your blood pressure, cholesterol, heart rate, blood sugar and weight.



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Oak Glen Falls In State Title Tilt

Huskies beat Golden Bears twice; earn 4-peat

By **JOE CATULLO**
For The Intelligencer

SOUTH CHARLESTON — Oak Glen could feel what it would be like to be the Class AA state softball championship Wednesday afternoon.

The Golden Bears, playing as the home team, held a three-run lead in the top of the seventh inning in the winner-take-all game against Herbert Hoover. They only needed three more outs for their first state title since 1998.

The Huskies entered as the defending three-time champions for a reason, never quit and stunned everyone on Oak Glen's side of the dugout.

The Bears' time may come next year, as they are only losing two seniors in Amber Moore and Alexis Holden. As for the conclusion to the 2020 season, it was Herbert Hoover that celebrated the title with a 6-5 victory in eight innings to cap a long and exhausting day.

"Being off last year and just having a season was enough, but this is more than enough. That's just it." Oak Glen head coach Sherrie Garner said while fighting back tears. "The love and support that we've had, I mean I feel for them. I can't say enough. It's always been a dream of mine to come here since I played at their age. To bring this here as an adult and to have all of the support from their families and our community is unbelievable. We can't be more proud."

The Huskies began with a 10-0 victory in six innings over Sissonville Wednesday morning to advance to the championship round. They lost four times all season, and three have come against the Indians, including a

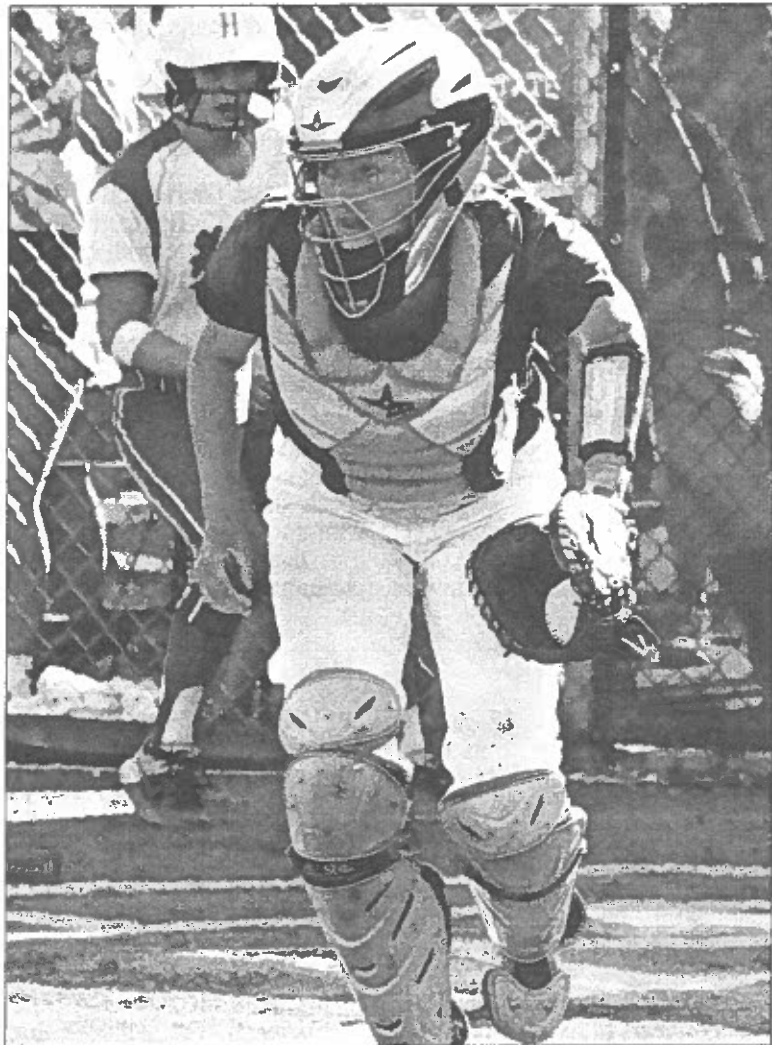


Photo by Joe Catullo
Oak Glen's Sarah Brown fields a throw from a teammate during the Class AA state championship game against Herbert Hoover.

7-3 setback Tuesday in Game 2 of the state tournament.

In the first game with the Bears on Wednesday, Herbert Hoover utilized a 10-run fifth inning to cruise to a 10-0 win.

During the do-or-die game, Oak Glen was in control following a five-run fourth.

"They are a fantastic hitting team. We just couldn't get the outs when we needed to stop the bleeding. That was unfortunate because these girls have done a great job," Garner said.

Maddie McKay and Sarah Brown singled to open the fourth, and both runners advanced on an error in right field. Olivia Munoz and Makayla Zoellers provided back-to-back RBI bunts, with the throws going to the catcher. With one away, Grace Smith blooped an RBI single to right for a 3-0 lead. Two batters later and with two outs, Sydney Brown lined a two-run base hit for the five-run advantage.

Please see **OAK GLEN**, Page 13



Photo by Seth Staskey
St. Clairsville girls swimming coach Ernie Banks (right) was named the 2021 winner of the OVAC Bill Van Horne Coach of the Year. The award was presented by OVAC Executive Director Dirk Decoy.

St. C.'s Banks Wins OVAC Coach of Year

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"This is a complete surprise," Banks said. "When I got the call, it just caught be totally off guard and I didn't believe it. It's just so hard to fathom that I still can't believe it."

Banks — who was also a finalist for the award in 2019 — becomes the first swimming coach in conference history to receive the award. He's also the fourth St. Clairsville coach to earn the accolade, joining football coaches George Strager (1979, 1987) and Brett McLean (2013).

"I think part of what makes this is hard to believe is that swimming isn't one of the 'big' sports that gets a lot of the top recognition normally," Banks admitted. "The OVAC definitely treats swimming well, and we're grateful for that."

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However, he quickly passed the credit to his athletes, their families and his wife, Katie, who is also his chief assistant coach.

Please see **BANKS**, Page 12

Wheeling Post 1 Begins 2021 Season Today

By **CODY TOMER**
Sports Writer

WHEELING — As summer rolls around, so does legion baseball.

Wheeling Post 1 opens its 2021 season today as it travels to Morgantown to play in the Cap Classic at Mylan Park for a weekend tournament.

With no legion season last year due to COVID, Wheeling Post 1 players are looking forward to getting back to spending the next few months at the ballpark.

"Hopefully we're back to normal and we're just hoping we can win as many games as possible and win the tournament, honestly," Wheeling's Michael Toepfer said. "We're all experienced guys and we challenge each other every day and I think we

will play very well."

Following this weekend's tournament, Post 1 will enter the Beast of the East, which was also canceled last year, on July 1-4.

"COVID last year put a damper on everything," Post 1 coach Jon-Michael Brunner said. "As a coaching staff we're excited to play for something meaningful again, not that their development with the Wheeling Stogies last year wasn't but we're going out and playing in a tournament this weekend and ultimately for state. It's the first time playing for something of that caliber again and it's exciting."

Wheeling will also play host to the state tournament this year, which adds some incentive for Post 1, which is looking for its first state title since 2017.

"We have a good mix of kids from all different schools," Brunner said. "It's an older group of guys in terms of maturity level. They have the things you look for in tight games in terms of their mental approach so we're able to kind of build on that. They know what it takes to win and they are willing to work."

Brunner is also excited about what his pitchers will bring to the table this summer.

"We have close to 12 arms and it's going to be interesting how we keep everyone fresh and ready to go," Brunner said. "We have a couple P-O's who have done well for their high school teams and we expect them to jump in and ride that wave."

Please see **POST 1**, Page 12



Photo by Cody Tomer
Wheeling Post 1's Jack Selmon fields a ball at third base during Wednesday's practice. The team kicks off the season today at Morgantown.

White Sox Down Bucs



WLU's Irwin, Bolon Earn MEC Men's Coach and Player of Year

BRIDGEPORT, W.Va. — West win was voted Super Region 3 Coach

Post 1

(Continued from Page 11)

Doing the majority of the catching for the pitching staff will be Linsly's standout Zac Taylor.

"This is my last year before going to college to play in the fall so we're trying to see as many live at-bats as we can and we'll try to get our pitchers as many reps as we can, too," Taylor said. "We have a great group of a lot of seniors and juniors. It's going to be a good mix with older guys leading the path and younger guys keeping it going."

Hunter Kelley and Brodie Selmon are also key players from Linsly, while Ben Foster and Kaden Yocum are other stand-

outs from Central.

Wheeling Park has a plethora of players on the Post 1 roster, as well, with Nick Fencl, Gage Thomas, Seth Hand, Chris Vargo, Noah Seivertson, Dylan Hodgson and James Salvatori, while Dylan Gongola will be a big weapon at third, on the mound and at the plate for Brunner's squad.

"I'm just trying to get better and enjoy playing with a lot of seniors I'm friends with," Gongola said. "Hopefully we'll get back to playing just like we were in the regular season and hopefully we'll have a pretty good season."

BANKS

(Continued from Page 11)

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WLU

(Continued from Page 11)

For Bolon, this marks the third time since the MEC awards began in 2015 that a Hilltopper basketball player has been honored as the MEC Male Athlete of the Year. Seger Bonifant won back-to-back awards in 2015 and 2016.

He wrapped up an impressive four years in style during the abbreviated 2021 season. The Hilltoppers' leading scorer (21.3 ppg.) and rebounder (7.7 rpg.) for the second straight year, Bolon hit double-figures in all

22 games as WLU rolled to its fourth straight MEC title, 12th consecutive NCAA D2 Tournament berth and sixth NCAA D2 Elite Eight run since 2011.

The two-time MEC and Atlantic Region Player of the Year ranked among the nation's Top 25 in scoring, 3-point field goals/game, 3-point field goal percentage and double-doubles this winter. That capped a WLU career that saw him reach double figures in 103 of 117 games while leading the Hilltoppers to a 99-18 record.

Bolon leaves the hill-top as the second-leading scorer in school and MEC history with 2,247 career points and also ranks No. 2 all-time at WLU with an MEC-record 351 3-point field goals.

The three-time NCAA D2 Academic All-American and 2-time NCAA D2 All-American is the only Mountain East Conference men's basketball player to earn MEC Freshman of the Year and MEC Player of the Year honors during his career.

LAUREL HIGHLANDS GOLF WEEKEND

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BUCS

(Continued from Page 11)

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GIANTS 9 ANGELS 3

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Shohei Ohtani struck out nine over six innings of one-run ball for the Angels, but the San Francisco Giants rallied for seven runs in the 13th inning of a victory over Los Angeles.

NATIONALS 13 PHILLIES 12

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Starlin Castro hit a go-ahead, two-run single off closer Hector Neris in the ninth inning and Washington rallied three times to beat Philadelphia.

BREWERS 3

DIAMONDBACKS 2 PHOENIX (AP) — Brandon Woodruff threw seven dominant innings and also had an RBI single at the plate, leading Milwaukee over Arizona.

ROCKIES 5

MARINERS 2 SEATTLE (AP) — Trevor Story homered twice, German Marquez took a perfect game into the sixth inning and Colorado beat Seattle for just its sixth road victory this season.

TIGERS 6,

CARDINALS 2 DETROIT (AP) — Jonathan Schoop hit a solo homer and a two-run double to help Detroit beat skidding St. Louis.

ASTROS 13

ORIOLES 0 BALTIMORE (AP) — Jose Altuve silenced the booing fans at Camden Yards with a two-run homer. Jose Urquidy pitched seven innings of three-hit ball and the Houston Astros stretched their winning streak to 10 games by breezing past the Baltimore Orioles.

RAYS 8, RED SOX 2

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Austin Meadows, Mike Zunino and Brandon Lowe homered to help the Tampa Bay Rays stop a seven-game losing streak by beating the AL East-leading Boston Red Sox.

BLUE JAYS 3

MARTINS 1

All T-L Softball/D3
 Ferry Hall of Fame/D4
 NASCAR/D5
 Classified/D6-8

SPORTS

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Sunday,
 June 20, 2021

OVAC Coach of the Year finalists named

By **SETH STASKEY**
 Times Leader Sports Editor

It was a school year in which every high school coach deserves an award. Battling through COVID-19, the protocols, restrictions, schedule changes and pauses that came with it led to an athletic year that won't soon be forgotten.

While every coach in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference and nation — for that matter — deserves a major pat on the back for his or her efforts, only one



ERNE BANKS



CARRIE HANNA



BRETT MCLEAN



ERIC MERCER



HOLLY PETTIT

They are Ernie Banks (St. Clairsville swimming), Carrie Hanna (Wheeling Park girls soccer), Brett McLean (St. Clairsville football), Eric Mercer (Shadyside volleyball) and Holly Pettit (Cameron girls basketball).

In alphabetical order, here's a look at each finalist:

can be named the OVAC Coach of the Year.

Before the winner is announced during Wednesday's virtual OVAC

Banquet of Champions, the selection committee was tasked with narrowing a lengthy list of candidates down to five finalists.

ERNE BANKS, St. Clairsville Swimming — This veteran Red Devil swim mentor guided his girls team to a season of several firsts in 2021.

The Red Devils posted a program-best See, **OVAC**, Page D2



PITTSBURGH PIRATES' Gregory Polanco celebrates after hitting a two-run home run off Cleveland Indians pitcher Jean Carlos Mejia during the first inning of a game in Pittsburgh, Friday.

Pirates snap 10-game losing streak with win over Indians

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Gregory Polanco hit a two-run homer in a five-run first inning and the Pittsburgh Pirates nearly squandered a 10-run lead in the late innings before hanging on to beat the Cleveland Indians 11-10, snapping a 10-game losing streak.

Ke'Bryan Hayes had a three-run double that highlighted a five-run outburst in the sixth inning, staking the Pirates to an 11-1 lead.

The Indians rallied by scoring six runs in the seventh inning and three runs in the eighth, cutting the deficit to a run.

Cesar Hernandez hit a grand slam off Sam Howard in the seventh inning, pulling the Indians within 11-7.

A two-run single by Rene Rivera and a throwing error by center fielder Bryan Reynolds an inning late made it a one-run game.

Richard Rodriguez pitched a scoreless ninth inning, allowing a pair of singles, for his eighth save in 10 chances. He struck out rookie slugger Bobby Bradley with runners on second and third to end the game.

Indians three-time Silver Slug-

ger-winning third baseman Jose Ramirez left the game after being hit on the left foot by a pitch in the eighth inning.

The Pirates bullpen nearly blew the double-digit lead after starter Chad Kuhl (1-4) allowed one run in six innings.

Hernandez finished with three hits and five RBIs as the Indians lost for the second time in eight games. Rivera had three hits and three RBIs, and Eddie Rosario added two hits.

Reynolds homered for the Pirates and joined Adam Frazier with two hits.

The Pirates jumped on rookie starting pitcher J.C. Mejia (1-2) early with the big first inning. After the first run scored on a groundout, Jacob Stallings hit a two-run double to the wall in right-center and Polanco followed with a drive into the right-field stands.

Staked to the early lead, Kuhl scattered four hits with four strikeouts and one walk. He was aided by four double plays.

It was Kuhl's first win since Sept. 24, 2020. He failed to record a victory in his first seven starts this

year. In his last outing, Kuhl was tagged for six runs in 3 1/3 innings in a loss at Milwaukee.

Mejia lasted a career-high five innings, giving up six runs and seven hits while striking out three.

Hayes, a rookie, has reached base in 23 consecutive games dating to last September.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians: RHP Zach Plesac (broken right thumb) and C Roberto Perez (broken right ring finger) are scheduled to be examined Saturday by Pittsburgh hand specialist Dr. Thomas Graham.

Pirates: 1B Colin Moran (back strain) returned to the starting lineup after being limited to one pinch-hitting appearance in a three-game series at Washington.

UP NEXT

Indians RHP Cal Quantrill (0-2, 3.11) will start today against Pirates RHP Wil Crowe (0-4, 6.75). Quantrill will be pitching on short rest after allowing one run in four innings Tuesday against Baltimore. Crowe had a career-high eight strikeouts in five innings in his last start, a no-decision against Milwaukee last Sunday.

MOVL expands to nine schools and splits into two divisions

By **SETH STASKEY**
 Times Leader Sports Editor

The Mid-Ohio Valley League, which is set to embark on its third school year, is expanding.

At a recent meeting, the league formally approved Barnesville, Beallsville, Paden City and Shenandoah for membership and also announced it will be splitting into two divisions.

The 'Scarlet Division' will consist of Barnesville, Monroe Central, River, Shadyside and Shenandoah, while the Gray Division will include Beallsville, Bridgeport, Frontier and Paden City.

"These four (new) schools bring a lot of tradition with them," MOVL President Mark Romick, who is the Director of Athletics at River, said. "The expansion made a lot of sense for all schools as everyone competes against each other regularly."

The league currently stands at nine members because Magnolia withdrew in May, citing scheduling difficulties as the chief reason.

With the split into divisions, the league will crown its champions in baseball, basketball, softball and volleyball through a 'Day of Champions' style event. It's similar to what the Buckeye 8 utilizes.

The champion of the Scarlet and Gray divisions will play each other to determine the league champion. The second place teams will meet and same for the third and fourth. The fifth-place team in the Scarlet will be left without a game due to the odd number of schools.

Because volleyball and winter sports schedules are already completed for the 2021-22 school year, the league will begin this format in the spring of 2022 with baseball and softball events. The Gray division schools will host.

The remaining sports will begin a championship event in the 2022-23 school year.

The charter membership will still determine league champions via head-to-head matchups in football, volleyball and basketball as it did this past school year.

See, **MOVL**, Page D2

Sixers clip Hawks to force a Game 7

ATLANTA (AP) — Seth Curry hit six 3-pointers and scored 24 points and the top-seeded Philadelphia 76ers avoided elimination in the Eastern Conference semi-final series by beating the Atlanta Hawks 104-99.



Bland leads U.S. Open that is open

SAN DIEGO (AP) series for the leading — The U.S. Open 10 players to get into prides itself on being the U.S. Open. Travel restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic eliminated the 36-hole walks of golf having a chance to compete.

Richard Bland is an example of that. He arrived at Torrey Pines and immediately liked what he saw.

Just over a month ago, the 48-year-old from England was 0-for-447 in his European Tour career. On Friday, he shot a 4-under 67 and walked

He arrived at Torrey Pines and immediately liked what he saw. "I was feeling pretty good about my game. I've been driving the ball well for five, six weeks now, which is the cornerstone if you're



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played the schools in its half of the league.

"Two things about the MOVL really stick out," Beallsville A.D. Delmas Moore said.

"One is there is a championship in each sport and in many of the sports you'll get the chance to play up (in division) at least once and I also think this league will generate positive publicity for our kids."

to become members of the MOVL," Zeps A.D. Eric Sholtis said. "The schools of the MOVL are like-minded districts and we believe this will be a mutually beneficial relationship. High school athletics in the Ohio Valley have a rich history and we feel this will be a great fit for our student-athletes and our community. We're excited for the future."

• OVAC

Continued from Page D1

eighth-place finish in the team standings of the highly competitive Ohio Division II State Swimming Championship by scoring 83 points.

To accomplish such a total, the Red Devils took part in 10 of the 12 events at the state meet and did so with just five girls — Maggie Marody, Casadie DiBetta, Brenna Planey, Olivia Moyer and Kylie McKeeagan — taking part.

St. Clairsville brought back an All-Ohioan in seven of the aforementioned 10 events.

Prior to getting to the state meet, the Red Devils accomplished another first. Still, with only five girls scoring, St. C. finished second in the district meet, accumulating 226 points.

In a bizarre season due to COVID-19, the OVAC Championship meet was held virtually, but still the Red Devils claimed that team award and also won yet another Buckeye 8 championship.

CARRIE HANNA, Wheeling Park Girls Soccer — In one of the most challenging seasons in prep sports history, the Wheeling Park Patriots stood above all the rest in West Virginia Class AAA girls soccer.

Hanna guided her squad to an impressive 20-2 record that was capped with an impressive, 1-0 victory, against then undefeated Parkersburg South last November in Beckley.

The Patriots' lone goal in the title game came off a free kick by Hanna's daughter, Gracelyn, in the 14th minute.

The state tournament almost didn't happen at all because of COVID-19. A judge tried to shut down the championships, but an injunction permitted the tournament to go on, giving the Patriots the opportunity in which they made the most of.

The West Virginia color-coded map didn't permit Wheeling Park from playing in the OVAC Tournament.

BRETT MCLEAN, St. Clairsville Football — The OVAC Coach of the Year in 2013 and a finalist in 2008, the veteran Red Devils' football coach returns to the final five after directing his team to an impressive 2020 campaign.

In a season that was cut down to six games and allowed everyone to make the playoffs, the Red Devils made the most of their opportunities. They finished a perfect 6-0 in the regular season and captured the OVAC Class 4A title.

They were voted the top seed in Division IV, Region 15, allowing them the right to play at Red Devil Stadium throughout the regional tournament. St. Clairsville, which received a bye in the opening round, advanced to the regional championship game before bowing out to Bloom-Carroll.

ERIC MERCER, Shadyside Volleyball — This second-year Tiger volleyball coach took his team to new heights during the 2020 season.

Shadyside, which re-started its volleyball program in 2012 after a long absence, advanced to the school's first regional tournament last season where it fell to South Webster. The Tigers did so impressively, too. They rallied from two sets down to defeat Tuscarawas Central Catholic to claim the district championship.

The Tigers, who finished the season with a strong 22-3 record, captured the OVAC Class 2A title by downing defending champion Shenandoah in the title game. Shadyside had fallen to the Zeps in the 2019 conference title game.

The Tigers also won the inaugural Mid-Ohio Valley League volleyball crown as well.

HOLLY PETTIT, Cameron Girls Basketball — The Dragons girls basketball program went on a ride that no one in Marshall County or the Ohio Valley will soon forget.

After seeing the girls basketball season significantly delayed due to COVID-19, the Dragons didn't let the opportunity to play pass them by when they finally got it.

Cameron won its first Class A sectional title since 2008 and then captured its first regional title to advance to the West Virginia State Tournament in Charleston. There, the Dragons took down Madonna and Calhoun County to reach the state championship game.

In the title game, unfortunately, the Dragons fell, 63-45, to Tug Valley. That loss snapped a 17-game winning streak.

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 ■ 3:30 p.m. — NASCAR, The Ally 400, NBCSN

GOLF
 ■ Noon — U.S. Open from Torrey Pines, NBC

MLB
 ■ 1 p.m. — Cleveland at Pittsburgh, ATT

■ 7 p.m. — St. Louis at Atlanta, ESPN

NHL
 ■ 8 p.m. — Stanley Cup Semifinal, Vegas at Montreal, NBCSN

Marlee Porter concludes her successful prep track campaign a week ago when she collected two gold and two silver medals at the West Virginia Class AAA state track meet.

On Friday, she wrote the final chapter of her storybook prep career when she signed her National Letter of Intent to continue her academic and athletic careers at Marshall University.

"My family is a Marshall family as a WVU family too," Porter said. "They have a really great program."

"If you look at all the past sprinters and hurdlers in the state, you'll notice some of the big names and record holders, they all went to Marshall. I've talked to their coach, and it seems like a good fit for me."

Porter also had offers from West Liberty, Wheeling and West Virginia Wesleyan.

She was an immediate impact for the Patriots. Her senior season, she was regarded as one of the best sprinters and hurdlers in the state.

Porter won the 200 timing in at 25.54 at the state meet after placing second in the 100 and 300 hurdles.

In both of those races,



Photo by Kyle Lutz
 Wheeling Park's Marlee Porter signed her letter of intent to run track for Marshall University on Friday, where she plans on running the 400 hurdles.

she lost by less than a second. Porter did set the school record in the 100 when she clocked in at 12.20.

She ended her prep career as she ran anchor on the winning 4x400 relay team.

"The past four years, this just exemplifies who Marlee Porter is," Wheeling Park girls coach Bryan Arbes said. "She is a hard worker. With last season being canceled, she had to do a lot of stuff on her own because we

weren't allowed to work with our athletes. So, she spent a lot of time on her own and getting herself ready and make sure she was in the right shape for the season."

"At the state track meet, we asked a lot from her, and she shattered every expectation we had for her."

"This is icing on the top for her career. She's definitely earned it."

Please see Porter Page C2



Photo by Cody Tomer
 John Marshall freshman Ava Blake is the leadoff hitter for the state-bound Monarchs.

JM's Blake Gets Her Shot at State After Watching Sisters Play, Now It's Her Turn

By CODY TOMER
 Sports Writer

GLEN DALE — John Marshall freshman Ava Blake remembers watching her sisters play in the state softball tournament in 2017 and 2018 and how badly she wanted to follow in their footsteps.

Blake is about to do just that as the Monarchs (21-5-3) are heading back to the state tournament next week and will play St. Albans (30-1) on Tuesday at 9:45 a.m. in Game 1 of a double elimination event.

Although it's just a game to some, Blake has had her eyes on this moment...

"Since I was born," Blake said with a laugh. "I started playing when I was 4 and it means the world to me. It's more of a lifestyle than a sport to me. I fell in love with the sport at a very young age. I've always been around it."

"When my sisters made state I was down there with them and I watched them have so much fun."

"It just gets me motivated and makes me want to do the same and have the same experience as they did."

In only her first year at the varsity level, Blake has been crucial to the Monarchs' lineup and has made quite an impact from the leadoff spot.

Please see Blake, Page C2

Five Finalists Announced for OVAC Coach of the Year

By SETH STASKEY
 For the News-Register

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In alphabetical order, here's a look at each finalist:

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gram-best eighth-place finish in the team standings of the highly competitive Ohio Division II State Swimming Championship by scoring 83 points.

To accomplish such a total, the Red Devils took part in 10 of the 12 events at the state meet and did so with just five girls — Maggie Marody, Casadie DiBetta, Brenna Planey, Olivia Moyer and Ky-

lie McKeegan — taking part. St. Clairsville brought back an All-Ohioan in seven of the aforementioned 10 events.

Prior to getting to the state meet, the Red Devils accomplished another first.

Please see Coach, Page C2

Pirates Hold On To Edge Indians, Stop 10-Game Skid

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Cesar Hernandez hit a grand slam off Sam Howard in the seventh inning, pulling the Indians within 11-7.

A two-run single by Rene Rivera and a throwing error by center fielder Bryan Reynolds an inning late made it a one-run game.

Richard Rodriguez



AP Photo

Pittsburgh Pirates' Ke'Bryan Hayes (13) hits a three-run double during the sixth inning of Friday's game in Pittsburgh.

pitched a scoreless ninth inning, allowing a pair of singles, for his eighth save in 10 chances. He struck out rookie slugger Bobby Bradley with runners on second and third to end the game.

Indians three-time Silver Slugger-winning third baseman Jose Ramirez left the game after being hit on the left foot by a pitch in the eighth inning.

The Pirates bullpen nearly blew the double-digit lead after starter Chad Kuhl (1-4) allowed one run in six innings.

Hernandez finished with three hits and five RBIs as the Indians lost for the second time in eight games. Rivera had three hits and three RBIs, and Eddie Rosario added two hits.

Please see Pirates, Page C4

Plans Finalized for Jack Dorsey Memorial Tennis Tournament

The Wheeling Oglebay Tennis Club will present the Jack Dorsey Memorial Senior Tennis Tournament from June 24 through 27, at the Oglebay Tennis Facility and Wheeling Park's Hilltop Courts.

This is a nationally sanctioned tournament, awarding points for the United States Tennis Association (USTA) national rankings as well as the International Federation of Tennis (ITF) international rankings.

Divisions include ages 35 through 90 in singles and doubles, with age groups in five year increments. Kelly Molyneaux Rose is serving as tournament director again this year.

"It's been two years since we've run this tournament, having cancelled last year due to the pandemic," Rose said. "Players are eager to get into competition again, and we are expecting record numbers. My goal as director these past few years has been to grow the tournament. Now that we'll have a strong turnout, my goal this year is to provide a great experience so that they'll make this an annual trip."

The tournament is named for John T. "Jack" Dorsey, Jr., who passed away in 2010. Dorsey had a great love for the sport of tennis.

He loved competing as well as serving as an ambassador for the sport. Dorsey brought this men's national senior event to Wheeling and served as its director for 15+ years.

Norm Lowery, who resides in Colorado and plays tournaments across the country, says this is one of his favorite venues.

Lowery explained that the idyllic setting keeps him coming back year after year.

He loves the features of Oglebay Park, including its beautiful rolling hills, the zoo, and the historical museum on the property. He also loves to get out and explore after his matches. He has visited Moundsville where he toured the prison and the Indian mound, and he enjoys spending time in Wheeling with its historic buildings and quaint downtown area. Lowery will be competing in the mens' 80 and over singles bracket with match play beginning on Thursday.

Local players from West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania will face off against competitors from clubs as far away as Nevada and Vermont.

Play will begin each day at 9 a.m. with the singles competition. Doubles will follow. Admission to the tournament is free.

Back row are Wheeling Park athletics director Dwaine Rodgers, Wheeling Park boys' track coach Chris Dunaway and Wheeling Park girls track coach Bryan Arbes.

Park boys' track coach Chris Dunaway.



Baylor Inks With West Liberty

Photo Provided

Wheeling Park's BriJaun Baylor signed his National Letter of Intent to continue his academic and athletics career at West Liberty University. Baylor was busy at the West Virginia Class AAA state meet his senior year as he ran in four events earning medals in all of them. Individually, he placed third in the long jump and sixth in the 110 hurdles.

He also was on the fourth place 4x200 relay and fifth place shuttle hurdle.

He is flanked by, from left, Yvonne Stradwick, Britt Stradwick and Cornell Stradwick.

Back row are Wheeling Park athletics director Dwaine Rodgers and Wheeling Park boys' track coach Chris Dunaway.



Janeczko Will Be a Hilltopper

Photo Provided

Wheeling Park's Zarik Janeczko will take his talents to the Hilltop. Janeczko signed his National Letter of Intent to continue his academic and athletics careers at West Liberty University.

Janeczko was on the Patriots' 4x400 relay team which won at OVAC and Class AAA Regionals.

Individually, he placed fourth at regionals in the 400 and qualified to the state meet. He also placed third in the event in OVAC Class 5A.

He is flanked by Cara-Lyn Janeczko and David Janeczko.

Back row are Wheeling Park athletics director Dwaine Rodgers and Wheeling Park boys' track coach Chris Dunaway.

PORTER

Continued from Page C1

At Marshall, Porter said that they are looking at her to run the 400 hurdles.

She also stated she may jump in on relay teams at times, but right now the focus is on the long hurdles.

"I think my goal in the 400 hurdles is to go under a minute," Porter said. "It's a crazy goal for me, but I think I can do it. That's my main goal."

"Also, I just want to get faster and try to fix my mechanics a little bit because I can be sloppy when I run, so I'm hoping I can fix that in my hurdling form."

Porter also holds the Wheeling Park school re-

cord in the 200 (25.54) and 300 hurdles (44.02).

She is also a five-time state champion for the Patriots.

Along with her two state championships this year, she was on the winning 4x200 relay team in 2018 and 2019. She also won a gold medal in the shuttle hurdle relay in 2019.

She was also very involved at Wheeling Park as she was part of National Honor Society, REAP Counselor, freshman mentor and was part of Young Life.

She was also the 2021 Beneke Scholarship Winner and had a 4.3 GPA.

On top of all that, she

made sure she was as good of a leader as her mentors were.

"It meant a lot," Porter said about her time at Wheeling Park. "I met some of my best friends here and I got to continue running with everyone that I ran with in middle school, primarily. My sophomore year was a big year for me at state. That team meant so much to me and I knew I kind of wanted to be a leader for this year's team because that's what I got when I was a sophomore and freshman. We had a lot of freshmen this year and it meant a lot to me to take them in and show them to enjoy track as much as I do."

BLAKE

Continued from Page C1

She will certainly be ready for that first pitch of the tournament.

"She is like a spark plug and she has that same fire and desire that her sisters had," John Marshall coach Ed West said. "Sometimes we have to calm her down because she gets so amped up and wants to perform so well. She'll make four or five good plays on defense a game and on offense she's been a good leadoff hitter."

"She is batting around .360, she's scored about 30 runs, she finds a way to get on base, she has two home runs so she can hit for power and she has good speed."

Blake takes great pride in her duties as a leadoff hitter and setting the table for the rest of the lineup. She also thoroughly enjoys bringing enthusiasm to the field and in the dugout.

"As a leadoff hitter I just want to try to bring the spark to the team," Blake said. "If the leadoff hitter gets on, I know the rest of the team will follow and they feed off that energy. So I think it's pretty awesome that as a freshman I get to lead off and be that energy for the team. It makes me want to do better when everyone is feeding off of each other."

Her twin sisters were both first team all-state members in high school.

In 2018, Abby earned first team honors with a .470 average, 10 home runs and 40 RBI and in 2019, it was Anna collecting first team accolades, hitting at a .411 clip with 41 hits, 27 RBI and eight doubles.

Now, it's Ava's turn to leave her mark and create her own legacy.

"Watching my sisters play really motivated me to just be the best version of myself," Ava said. "Whenever I go on the field, I just feel good."

"I've always been told I'm the energetic one and I'm definitely the more rowdy one of the group."

Along with her sisters, Ava looks up to all of the players who she enjoyed watching in the Women's College World Series, as well, and even has her own hopes of playing there one day.

"Those girls are absolutely amazing," Ava said. "They all set the bar very high and I just want to be able to meet that one day and keep on working to be there."

For now, however, she is focused solely on accomplishing one goal at the state tournament.

"I want to win," Ava said. "This team is filled with some amazing and athletic people and to see us all put it together and win together would be amazing."

Black Bears Fall on Road

NILES, OH — Ma-honing Valley outthit the West Virginia Black Bears 14-5 and won the game 7-3 on a warm Friday night.

Leading the way for the Black Bears was first

baseman Kaeber Rog who supplied a single, a double and a RBI.

Left fielder Paul McIntosh turned in a strong performance with a triple,

two RBI and a run scored. Center fielder Garrett

Spain collected a double in the setback and third baseman Freylin Minyety and catcher Tucker Mitchell each crossed the plate for a run. The two teams meet again Saturday and Sunday.

COACH

Continued from Page C1

Still, with only five girls scoring, St. C. finished second in the district meet, accumulating 226 points.

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Carrie Hanna, Wheeling Park Girls Soccer

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Brett McLean, St. Clairsville Football

The OVAC Coach of the Year in 2013 and a finalist in 2008, the veteran Red Devils' football coach returns to the final five after directing his team to an impressive 2020 campaign.

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Clairsville, which received a bye in the opening round, advanced to the regional championship game before bowing out to Bloom-Carroll.

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This second-year Tiger volleyball coach took his team to new heights during the 2020 season.

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The Tigers, who finished the season with a strong 22-3 record, captured the OVAC Class 2A title by downing defending champion Shenandoah in the title game. Shadyside had fallen to the Zeps in the 2019 conference title game.

The Tigers also won the inaugural Mid-Ohio Valley League volleyball crown as well.

Holly Pettit, Cameron Girls Basketball

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In the title game, unfortunately, the Dragons fell, 63-45, to Tug Valley. That loss snapped a 17-game winning streak.

Cameron also won the OVAC Class 1A title.