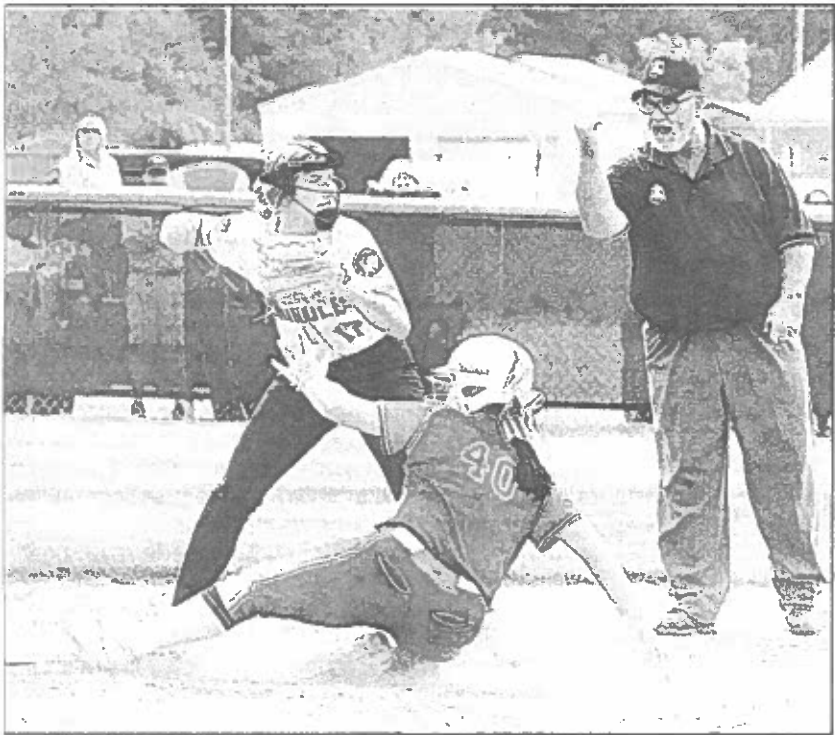


Classified/B5-6

# SPORTS

Tuesday,  
June 6, 2023



Photo/KIM NORTH

**MONROE CENTRAL'S** Kynzi Bishop looks to turn two after recording a force out of Morgantown's Abigail Barki during Monday's OVAC All-Star Softball Game. Also pictured is umpire Randy Whitlatch. Ohio won, 5-4.

## Ohio edges West Virginia in OVAC All-Star Softball Game

By **KIM NORTH**  
For The Times Leader

ELM GROVE - Ohio scored a pair of unearned runs in the bottom of the sixth inning Monday night and then handed the ball to its ace in the circle to preserve a 5-4 victory over W.Va. in the annual OVAC All-Star Softball Game on Ben's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex.

The Buckeye State trailed 4-3 entering the home half of the sixth before St. Clairsville's Abby Salisbury lined a leadoff double to the gap in right-center and Conotton Valley's Daphne Stuber walked. With two outs, both runners advanced a base on a passed ball before Bellaire's Sophie Porter lofted a ball into shallow left-center that skipped on the fielder's glove as Salisbury and Stuber both scored.

Steubenville's Jules King struck the first five batters she faced before yielding a two-out single to John Marshall standout Kadence Pettit, who had doubled earlier in the

contest. However, King chalked up her sixth punch out to end the eighth.

In the ninth, King induced a comebacker for the first out. Linsly's Baeleigh Burwell reached on an error, but Caldwell's Maddie Mumaw, playing short, made an acrobatic catch of a pop up in shallow left, turned and fired a strike to first for a game-ending double play.

"To be able to coach a group of girls like this is a coach's dream. It was an amazing atmosphere to be around," Shadyside's Robert Gorrell Jr. said. "The girls never quit and got the win."

It was a pitcher's night as eight hurlers - four from each side - combined for 20 strikeouts and just two base-on-balls. They did serve up 15 hits, but 11 were singles.

Edison's Katie Fluharty, who returned from vacation in Jamaica to play in the game, earned the win with a three-inning stint. She struck out three and didn't walk a batter. She followed Mumaw (1K) and

See, **OVAC**, Page B2

## Heat are on a comeback run like very few others

MIAMI (AP) — The easiest way to explain what the Miami Heat are doing in the comeback department during these playoffs is simply to put up their numbers against the rest of the league.

When facing a deficit of at least 12 points this postseason:

- The Heat are 7-6.
- The rest of the NBA is 6-59.

Combined.

"Biggest thing for us, we had the will and we had the belief," Heat center Bam Adebayo said. "And we keep finding ways to win."

Doesn't matter the opponent, either. Milwaukee, New York, Boston and now Denver in the NBA Finals all have found themselves on the wrong end of a Heat rally.

Miami rallied from 15 points down to beat top-seeded Milwaukee in Game 4 and then from 16 down to win the clinching Game 5; from 12 down to win Game 1 over New York and from 14 down in Game 6 to eliminate the Knicks; erased a 13-point deficit in Game 1 at Boston and then a 12-point deficit to win Game 2 over the Celtics — and now, a 15-point comeback to win Game 2 of the NBA Finals over Denver.

Sunday night's rally matched the fifth-largest in a finals game in the last 25 years. The Heat trailed the Nuggets 50-35 with 5 minutes left in the second quarter and outscored Denver 76-58 the rest of the way to even the series. The series now shifts to Miami, with both teams practicing there Tuesday before Game 3 on Wednesday night.

This improbable story — a team that trailed in the final minutes of an elimination game of the play-in tournament somehow getting to the NBA Finals — now has an even wackier plot twist. The eighth-seeded Heat have home-court advantage in the ti-

See, **HEAT**, Page B2



AP PHOTO

**PITTSBURGH PIRATES'** Andrew McCutchen (22) gets out of the way of a fastball from Oakland Athletics starting pitcher Shintaro Fujinami during the sixth inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh, Monday.

## Pirates rally past Athletics, 5-4

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Andrew McCutchen's tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the eighth inning lifted Pittsburgh to a 5-4 victory over Oakland on Monday night, extending the Pirates' win streak to six games and sending the Athletics to their record-tying 15th consecutive road loss.

The 15 straight defeats away from home, matching the Athletics' record since they moved from Kansas City in 1968. Oakland set that mark in 1986.

The major league-worst Athletics (12-50) have lost five games in a row overall. They are on pace to finish the season exactly 100 games under .500 at 31-131.

McCutchen also singled and drew three walks to go with two RBIs. The 2013 NL MVP now has 1,998 career hits.

With the score tied at 4, Ji Hwan Bae led off the decisive eighth inning with a single off Sam Moll (0-3) and advanced to third on Austin Hedges' one-out single. McCutchen's sac fly plated Bae.

Angel Perdomo (1-0) retired both hitters he faced, and Colin Holdeman pitched a scoreless ninth inning for his first career save. It was an eventful inning for Holdeman as the first three batters reached base, but he struck out Carlos Perez with runners on the corners to end it.

Pittsburgh starter Johan Oviedo gave up three runs and four hits with five strikeouts and two walks.

Oakland left-hander JP Sears did not allow a hit until Mark Mathias' lead-off single in the fifth but was unable to make it through the inning. Sears was

charged with one run in 4 2/3 innings while allowing two hits, walking five and striking out six.

Sears has not allowed more than two runs in five consecutive starts. His nine no-decisions are the most in the major leagues.

Ryan Noda and Brent Rooker had two hits each for the Athletics.

The Athletics tied the score at 4-4 in the eighth inning on pinch-hitter Aledmys Diaz's run-scoring double. Oakland left the bases loaded, though, when Nick Allen hit an inning-ending flyout.

Consecutive bases-loaded walks keyed a three-run sixth inning that put the Pirates 4-3. Andrew McCutchen and Bryan Reynolds each worked bases on balls off Shintaro Fujinami to tie

See, **PIRATES**, Page B2

## Cink among 45 players in US Open after 36-hole qualifiers

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Stewart Cink doesn't



## Vegas takes 2-0 lead in Stanley Cup Final

SLASHED HIM WITH HIS STICK.

The Knights were dominant early, taking a 2-0 lead in the first period on goals from Marchessault and Martinez.

It was Vegas' third game in a

juiced on a hit by Vegas forward Ivan Barbashev. Gudas left 6:39 in and did not return.

That was one of several big hits by Barbashev, the Golden Knights' biggest trade-deadline acquisition,

vegas had its own scare late in the second period when Jack Eichel was nailed in the right shoulder by Tkachuk. Eichel returned in the third and set up Marchessault's second goal.

enging him on. Defensively, he's made strides too.

Davis was the first overall selection in the 2021 amateur draft from the University of Louisville.

### EVENTFUL NIGHT FOR UMP

Sears and Oviedo were both called for pitch-clock violations. The home plate umpire was Jansen Visconti, a native of nearby Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Visconti then ejected Oakland manager Mark Kotsay for arguing a called third strike to Noda to end the top of the seventh inning.

## • Heat

Continued from Page B1

title series over Denver, the No. 1 seed out of the Western Conference.

"We've won on the road before," Nuggets veteran Jeff Green said after Game 2 in Denver. "I think we understand what's at stake. They did what they were supposed to do. They came in here, got a split. Now they're going home, and I think we have to go in there worried about Game 3. We can't worry about Game 4. We have to worry about Game 3."

What Miami is doing is simultaneously historic and completely on brand for the Heat.

There have been four teams in the last 25 years to have seven postseason wins after trailing by double digits in a game: Golden State did it last year on the way to the NBA title.

The other three teams on that list? The 2011 Heat, the 2012 Heat and now the 2023 Heat — all coached by Erik Spoelstra.

"We faced a lot of adversity during the season," Spoelstra said. "We handled it the right way. ... It steeled us and we developed some grit, which is what we all want. We

want to be able to have that privilege of having adversity and being able to overcome it. You gain strength from that."

The effect of all that adversity — like 44 games decided by five points or fewer, the Heat going 28-16 so far in those — is this: They just never think they're out of a game.

Sure, there's the axiom that in the NBA every team eventually makes a run, and that's largely true, but the Heat didn't even raise the surrender flag in Game 1 when trailing by 21 points in the fourth quarter. They got the lead down to nine with 2:34 left.

And in Game 2, the comeback wasn't in vain.

Down eight going into the fourth, Duncan Robinson and Gabe Vincent — two undrafted guards who were forged from the Heat player development program — scored Miami's first 15 points of the final quarter.

They gave Miami the lead, and the Heat didn't give it away.

"We just needed to come out with a sense of urgency in that fourth," Robinson said afterward.

"It was kind of like a now or never sort of thing.

Started with the defense, obviously, and we were able to do some things from there."

What made the Game 2 comeback even more improbable — even for a team that is making rallies seem like an everyday thing in the playoffs — is that the Nuggets were 45-3 this season in games where they led by at least 15 points. And in games at home where they led by more than 10 points, they were 38-0.

The Comeback Heat weren't deterred. Heat forward Jimmy Butler says it's the "I don't give a damn factor" that kicks in at those moments.

"I just think nobody cares on our team. We're not worried about what anybody thinks," Butler said. "We're so focused in on what we do well and who we are as a group that at the end of the day, that's what we fall back on. Make or miss shots, we're going to be who we are because we're not worried about anybody else. That's how it's been all year long, and that's not going to change."

## • OVAC

Continued from Page B1

Martins Ferry's Kelli Gillespie in the circle. King didn't allow a walk in her three frames.

Pettit fanned five and didn't walk a batter in her three innings as the W.Va. starter. She was followed by Wheeling Park's Dalaney Theiss, Burwell (2K, 1BB) and Oak Glen's Lizzie Kell (3K, 0BB). Burwell suffered the loss.

"The OVAC does a phenomenal job of putting this all star on," Oak Glen's Sherri Garner said. "It's great to be out here with the Ohio Valley's best softball players. It's the highlight of these girls' careers. It's great to be around them."

The Mountaineers scored single runs in the first, third and fourth to take a 3-0 lead.

Weir's Reagan Hoover reached on a two-out,

two-base error in the opening inning. She raced home on Kell's single to right. Wheeling Central's Jocelyn Shaw reached on a fielder's choice in the second. She advanced to second on an error and moved to third on a groundout. She scored on an error, making it 2-0.

Weir's Phia Aperfine singled leading off the fourth. She was sacrificed to second by Parkersburg South's Taylor Lamp. Wheeling Park's Hannah Sievertson bounced a single up the middle as Aperfine crossed the plate for a 3-0 reading.

The Buckeyes came right back to draw even as Fluharty reached on a one-out error. Gillespie was inserted as the courtesy runner and she would race around the bases with Harrison Central's Madie Butler smacked a tri-

ple to the gap in right-center. She would score when Abby Starkey's grounder was misplayed and, after Monroe Central's Kynzi Bishop was safe on a fielder's choice, Indian Creek's Alexis Dawson belted a run-scoring double to deep left-center that evened things at 3.

W.Va. re-took the lead in the fifth as Kell singled and Burwell reached on a fielder's choice. Wheeling Park's Mikayah Strothers bounced back to the circle and Fluharty threw to first for the out, but Kell sped home for a 4-3 lead.

The Mountaineers had two runners on with one out in the sixth but couldn't break through.

Pettit and Kell evenly divided four of their team's nine hits. Butler had a single and triple for Ohio.

The win stops a two-game Ohio losing streak and bumps its advantage to 17-7 in the all-time series.

### FAST PITCHES

The OVAC Players of the Year were each presented with a plaque between innings. They were Steubenville's King (Class 5A), Oak Glen's Kell (Class 4A), Caldwell's Mumaw (Class 3A), Toronto's Michelle Anderson (Class 2A) and Conotton Valley's Madison Kelley (Class 1A).

Umpiring the game were Donnie Martin, Russ Hall, Randy Whitlatch and Tim Johnson.

Steubenville's Gus DiMarzio was the OVAC Coach of the Year. However, he was ejected during the fifth inning for arguing calls.

Martins Ferry's Jerry Magistro (400), Edison's Spencer Bendle (400) and John Marshall's Ed West (350) were honored for reaching milestone victories during the season.



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- 8:30-10 **VINYL SOUL**

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Pittsburgh Pirates' Andrew McCutchen (22) gets out of the way of a fastball from Oakland Athletics starting pitcher Shintaro Fujinami during the sixth inning of a game in Pittsburgh, Monday.

## McCutchen's Sac Fly Lifts Pirates Over Athletics, 5-4

### Pittsburgh Moves Into First Place In Central Division

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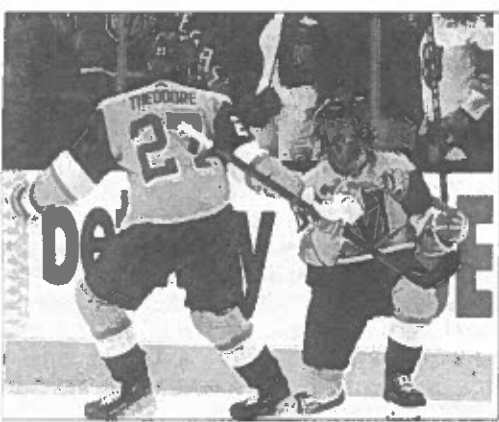
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Please see PIRATES, Page 10



Vegas Golden Knights right wing Jonathan Marchessault, right, celebrates his goal against the Florida Panthers with Vegas Golden Knights defenseman Shea Theodore (27) during the first period of Game 2 of the NHL Stanley Cup Finals, Monday, in Las Vegas.

## Vegas Up 2-0 In Stanley Cup

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Jonathan Marchessault scored twice and started an early blitz that chased the NHL's hottest postseason goalie, and Adin Hill continued his stellar play as the Vegas Golden Knights seized control of the Stanley Cup Final with a 7-2 victory over the Florida Panthers to take a 2-0 series lead Monday night.

Hill made 29 saves and Marchessault had an assist to finish with three points. His 12 postseason goals set a Golden Knights record, with all coming after the first round.

Brett Howden scored twice for the Knights, who also got goals from Alec Martinez, Nicolas Roy and Michael Amadio. Six players had at least two points for Vegas, all 18 Knights skaters were on the ice for even-strength goals and their nine goal scorers through the first two games are a Stanley Cup Final record. The Knights' seven goals tied a franchise mark for a playoff game.

Please see VEGAS, Page 10

### OVAC ALL-STAR SOFTBALL GAME

## Ohio Rallies Past W.Va. To End Losing Streak

### Two Unearned Runs In Sixth Inning Are Difference Makers

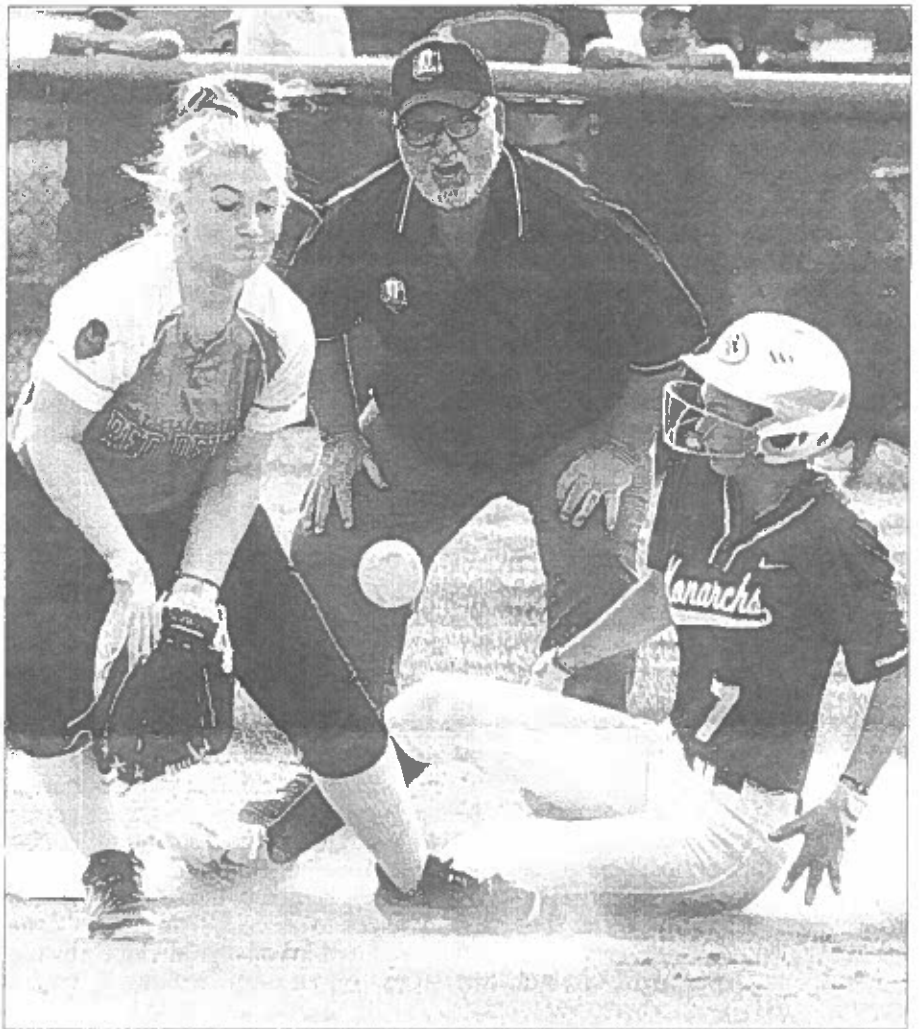
By KIM NORTH  
Staff Writer

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Steubenville's Jules King struck the first five batters she faced before yielding a two-out single to John Marshall standout Kadence Pettit, who had doubled earlier in the contest. However, King chalked up her sixth punch out to end the eight.

Please see OHIO, Page 10



John Marshall's Paytyn Tucker (7) slides safely into second base after a successful steal attempt in the second inning Monday night as St. Clairsville shortstop, Abby Salisbury, waits for the ball. Umpire Randy Whitlatch looks on.

## Preakness Winner Has Final Workout For Belmont Stakes

NEW YORK (AP) — Preakness winner National Treasure breezed five furlongs on Monday in his final workout for the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes this weekend.

Working on the main track at Belmont Park with exercise rider Erick Garcia aboard, National Treasure was timed in 59.55 seconds and galloped out six furlongs in 1:11.20 and seven furlongs in 1:25.20.

It was the second workout on the track for the Bob Baffert-trained colt, who also worked last Tuesday.

Florida State celebrates after a win over Tennessee after an NCAA softball Women's College World Series game Monday, in Oklahoma City.

AP Photo



## FSU, Oklahoma To Play For D-I Softball Crown

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Florida State is back in a familiar position.

Kathryn Sandercock and Makena Reid combined for five innings of scoreless relief to help No. 3 seed Florida State defeat No. 4 Tennessee 5-1 on Monday night and advance to the Women's College World Series championship series.

Sandercock, the Seminoles' veteran ace, allowed one hit and struck out four in three innings to claim her 10th save of the year. Reid, a fresh-

for, a rematch on June 7, 2023.

That is what will happen on Wednesday in Paris: No. 1 Swiatek vs. No. 6 Gauff for a berth in the semifinals. In Monday's

much anyone else? Her answer sounded both honest and revelatory.

"Since last year, I have been wanting to play her — especial-

importantly, believes she's capable of achieving, too.

The 22-year-old from Poland took over at No. 1 in the WTA rankings 14 months ago.

that matchup, as well." Swiatek figures they know each other's games well.

But she also made the point that a quarterfinal does not

matchup last year in that round. No. 4 Casper Ruud against No. 6 Holger Rune, along with No. 22 Alexander Zverev against Tomas Martin Etcheverry.

## SOFTBALL

(Continued from Page 9)

gave way to Sandercock after allowing one hit in two innings. She claimed the win to improve to 13-0 this season.

This is more like it for Florida State. Last year, the Seminoles were the No. 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament but lost in regionals. Now, they are in the championship series for the third time in the past five finals.

"It's just every athlete's dream to end their career in a national championship game," Sandercock said. "I always knew that we could do it, so I'm just really, really, really proud of the team today. Like, I just don't think that words could even express how happy I'm just so elated to be playing one more day and getting to put the jersey on one more time."

Florida State (58-9) will play No. 1 seed Oklahoma (59-1) in a best-of-three series for the national title starting Wednesday. It's a rematch of the 2021 series that Oklahoma won.

Oklahoma looks to become the first program since UCLA from 1988 to 1990 to win three straight national championships. The Sooners have won four of the past six titles.

Oklahoma defeated No. 9 Stanford 4-2 earlier in the day and waited for the evening winner.

Tennessee's Zaida Puni hit a solo shot off Mack Leonard in the first to open the scoring. It was her sixth NCAA Tournament home run in nine games.

Florida State's Michaela Edenfield answered with

a solo home run in the second. Bethaney Keen's first homer of the season pushed the Seminoles' lead to 2-1 in the third and Jahni Kerr's RBI single in the fifth pushed Florida State's lead to 3-1.

Tennessee starter Payton Gottshall took the loss. Lady Vols ace Ashley Rogers entered the game in the fifth, but Hallie Wacaser's two-run shot off her in the sixth made it 5-1. It was Wacaser's fourth homer of the year.

The home runs by Keen and Wacaser were examples of how Florida State gets contributions from various sources and finds ways to win.

"The ultimate goal when you get here is can you have everything firing on all cylinders," Florida State coach Lonni Alameda said. "There's no book written on how to do that. You have to go from your previous experiences, your upperclassmen, what you think they can consistently bring, how you can grow your young ones."

Tennessee's Kiki Milloy, a first-team National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-American, was held hitless in four at-bats after being one of the best performers in the tournament. The Lady Vols (51-10) left seven runners on base.

"We had some opportunities," Tennessee coach Karen Weekly said. "You kind of knew if they got to a point where they had a lead, you were going to see Sandercock. She's very good. She's one of the best pitchers. You saw why tonight."

## OHIO

(Continued from Page 9)

In the ninth, King induced a comeback for the first out. Linsly's Baeleigh Burwell reached on an error, but Caldwell's Maddie Mumaw, playing short, made an acrobatic catch of a pop up in shallow left, turned and fired a strike to first for a game-ending double play.

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- Martins Ferry's Jerry Magistro (400), Edison's Spencer Bendle (400) and John Marshall's Ed West (350) were honored for reaching milestone victories during the season.

## BELMONT

(Continued from Page 9)

"He worked very well this morning," said Jimmy Barnes, Baffert's top assistant. "It's a big track and you can find yourself lost out there. Erick did an excellent job working him and now we're just waiting for the race."

National Treasure was fourth in the Santa Anita Derby before the Preakness on May 20.

Trainer Steve Asmussen's Red Route One also posted his final work for Saturday's final jewel of the Triple Crown, breezing a half-mile in 50.20 seconds over Belmont Park's dirt training track.

"I thought he went beautiful," said Toby Sheets, Asmussen's Belmont-based assistant. "It was nice and fluid and he came back with good energy. I'm very happy with him. We wanted to be out on the track before it got really busy."

## BORDAS

(Continued from Page 9)

"This golf tournament is the epitome of what makes Oglebay Park a special place. It's the oldest amateur golf tournament on the east coast. It's put on by volunteers and the Oglebay Park men's golf club does an incredible job all year of getting ready for this weekend," he said. "About 20,000 uses of the park each year are a result of this golf tournament and scholarships are given through our Access to the Parks program."

"That allows local children who would not otherwise be able to afford to go to the park access to enjoy many activities throughout the summer months," he added.

A total purse of \$10,000 will be awarded.

Ryan Bilby and Cole Tegano teamed for the best-ball championship a year ago, while Campbell Koegler was the Junior Champion and claimed the John Wilson Memorial Trophy.

In winning last summer, Peterson IV tied the tournament record of 126 set by Thadd Obecnyn in 2015.

There were 196 entrants last year. There are at least nine junior players entered this year, according to tournament officials. Last year's youngest participant, seventh-grade Drew Marling of Sherrard Middle school, is reportedly in this year's field.

## PIRATES

(Continued from Page 9)

Pittsburgh starter Johan Oviedo gave up three runs and four hits with five strikeouts and two walks.

Oakland left-hander JP Sears did not allow a hit until Mark Mathias' leadoff single in the fifth but was unable to make it through the inning. Sears was charged with one run in 4 2/3 innings while allowing two hits, walking five and striking out six.

Sears has not allowed more than two runs in five consecutive starts. His nine no-decisions are the most in the major leagues.

Ryan Noda and Brent Rooker had two hits each for the Athletics.

The Athletics tied the score at 4-4 in the eighth inning on pinch-hitter Aledmys Diaz's run-scoring double. Oakland left the bases loaded, though, when Nick Allen hit an inning-ending flyout.

Consecutive bases-loaded walks keyed a three-run sixth inning that put the Pirates 4-3. Andrew McCutchen and Bryan Reynolds each worked bases on balls off Shintaro Fujinami to tie the score at 3-all and pinch-hitter Jack Suwinski followed with a sacrifice fly.

The Athletics opened the scoring in the first inning when rookie Esteury Ruiz reached on catcher's interference, stole his MLB-leading 30th base of the season and scored on Noda's single. Seth Brown doubled in a run in the third and came home on Perez's sacrifice fly to push Oakland's lead to 3-0.

Connor Joe hit an RBI double for the Pirates in the fifth.

### TOP PICK PROMOTED

Pirates catching prospect Henry Davis was promoted to Triple-A Indianapolis from Double-A Altoona. In 41 games at Double-A this season, the 23-year-old hit .284 with 10 home runs and seven stolen bases.

"He was performing offensively at a level where we felt like he was more than ready to meet the challenges," Pirates general manager Ben Cherington said. "He improved as an offensive player even since spring training, focusing on the things we were challenging him on. Defensively, he's made strides too."

Davis was the first overall selection in the 2021 amateur draft from the University of Louisville.

### EVENTFUL NIGHT FOR UMP

Sears and Oviedo were both called for pitch-clock violations. The home plate umpire was Jansen Visconti, a native of nearby Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Visconti then ejected Oakland manager Mark Kot-say for arguing a called third strike to Noda to end the top of the seventh inning.

### UP NEXT

Athletics RHP James Kaprielian (0-6, 8.12 ERA) will make his first start in June after taking the loss in all four starts in May and face RHP Mitch Keller (7-1, 3.25). Keller has eight or more strikeouts in seven consecutive starts, the longest streak by a Pirates

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## • Six

Continued from Page B1

of distance running by capturing a bronze medal in the 3200 meter run with a time of 9:29.30.

Shields was the premier area cross country runner and then put forth a brilliant indoor track season. He competed in both state meets and then he's been one to watch in the two mile.

This however, marked his first All-Ohio finish in an OHSAA-sponsored event.

"All the work from last summer, through cross country and throughout the winter led up to this point," Shields said. "It feels amazing to have it all pay off in a setting like this."

Shields remained in a tight pack for the first mile and then as the pack broke up a bit, he went with the leaders.

"I knew it was going to be a battle during the second mile when things pick up like they always do," Shields said. "I just went with the lead pack to try get as good of a place as possible."

Union Local entered the state meet in three events and Jets junior thrower Johnny Sabinski and senior sprinter Josie Goodson are bringing home three medals.

Sabinski got thing rolling on Friday when he finished second in the shot put. He returned to the Jesse Owens Stadium bright and early Saturday as the top seed in the discus.

He settled for a fourth-place medal in the platter event with a mark of 171-10.

"It wasn't really my day, throwing 10 feet shorter than I did last week (at regional), but I didn't even make the final in the discus last year," Sabinski offered. "No excuses. I just didn't throw as well as I can, but I am happy to have placed."

Goodson, meanwhile, put forth a brilliant effort all weekend in each of the 400 meter dashes she was required to run.

She advanced to her first state final in the event and didn't settle for just being there.

Goodson, who had qualified for the state in 2022, finished fifth in the event with a sparkling — and school-record — time of 57.84. Goodson didn't know her time until it was announced over the public address system and nearly broke down in tears as she eclipsed Amanda Mercer's record, which had stood for more than 20 years.

"I've been praying for this and have worked so hard for this," Goodson said as she fought back emotion. "I've had so many people supporting me through all of this and it's just an amazing feeling. I have to thank my teammates for always pushing me. I couldn't have asked for a better support system to help make me who I am as a runner. I came here last year and I didn't run a good time, but I told my family after last season that race was just a warm up for (2023) because I knew I wanted to be on the podium."

The Buckeye Local Brother-Sister duo of senior Cai McKeever and junior Brynn McKeever were there rooting each other on every step of the way.

Cai McKeever — a standout in the 400 meter dash — concluded his prep career in impressive fashion. He turned in an impressive 49.81 en route to garnering a sixth-place finish.

The elder McKeever just transitioned to the sprint events this spring. He had been primarily a distance runner, but dropping down to the 400 was a perfect match.

"I really have to thank my coach because he's really put in the work to help make me a great sprinter," Cai McKeever said. "This is really cool. I didn't even make it to the regional last year, so I never even thought I'd be here (at the state). I've put in the work and it's paid off. It's really cool to have placed. Doing it after my sister was really cool. I love her so much and I watch the amazing work she puts in at practice, and I am so proud of what she's accomplished."

Brynn, who was the lone area athlete to qualify to the state meet in three individual events, advanced to the final in the 100 as the ninth seed. She moved up a spot en route to garner All-Ohio by finishing eighth with a solid 12.32 clocking.

McKeever admitted that if someone told her in March that she'd be an all-Ohio sprinter in June, she wouldn't have believed it.

"I usually had spent most of the spring playing AAU basketball, but my coaches have really been encouraging to focus on track and it's paid off," Brynn McKeever said. "It's been crazy how I've been dropping time all year. Plus, getting to experience this with my brother is great."

Both McKeever as well as junior thrower Pam Kandrach, who competed in the shot put on Saturday — received Academic All-Ohio acclaim as well.

Steubenville's Micah Mitchell, who ran a sub 14 high hurdle semifinal, didn't get the results he had envisioned on Saturday.

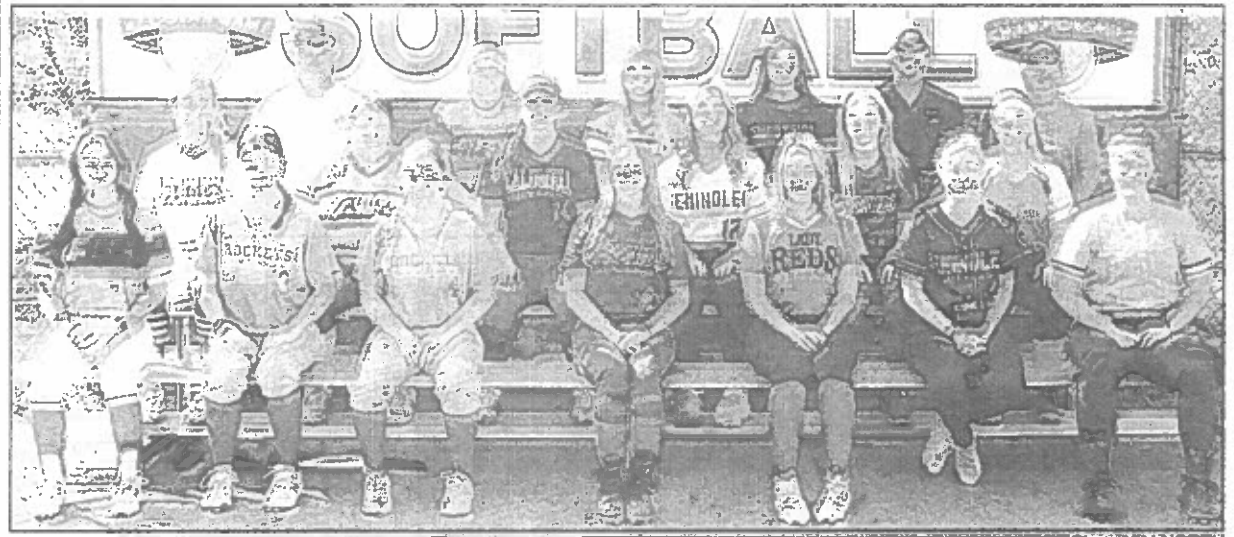
He entered as the top seed in both the high and intermediates hurdles, but settled for eighth and third, respectively. He did run a leg on the 4x2 and 4x4 teams, which also placed, making him a four-event All-Ohioan.

Junior Sabria Jones was able to place use determination and guts to finish seventh in the long jump.

## • Sochor

Continued from Page B1

## OVAC All-Star Softball



Photo/KIM NORTH

PICTURED IS the 2023 Ohio OVAC All-Star softball team. Front row, from left, are Abby Starkey (Indian Creek); Daphne Stuber (Conotton Valley); Chloe Stuber (Conotton Valley); Maddie Butler (Harrison Central); Sophie Porter (Bellaire); Madison Stimpert (Monroe Central); and Jamison Schmidt (Frontier). Middle row, from left, Kaylee Morris (Warren); Taylor Bell (Martins Ferry); Maddie Mumaw (Caldwell); Kynzi Bishop (Monroe Central); Lizzy Clelland (Harrison Central); and Abby Salisbury (St. Clairsville). Back row, from left, are coach Doug Pfeffer (Caldwell); Alexis Dawson (Indian Creek); Kelsi Gillespie (Martins Ferry); Gentry Brown (Shadyside); coach Robert Gorrell Jr. (Shadyside); and coach Jeremy Bleining (Conotton Valley). Not pictured are Emily Kellaway (Union Local); Katie Fluharty (Edison); Jules King (Steubenville); and coach Gus DiMarzio (Steubenville).

## Pirates complete sweep of Cardinals, 2-1

PITTSBURGH (AP) — When he's on, Rich Hill's pitches still dance. They still dart. They go this way. Then that way. They can baffle hitters with their movement, particularly the ones that don't come close to breaking the speed limit on most interstates.

In a game that seems to get faster each year, Hill is a throwback. A survivor. At 43 and 19 years into a career he figured would have been over long ago, the well-traveled left-hander knows he's essentially playing on borrowed time.

Hill is in Pittsburgh to show a young staff how to be a pro while occasionally showing the kids he can still bring it. That example was on display in a 2-1 victory over St. Louis on Sunday that gave Pittsburgh a three-game sweep of its longtime NL Central nemesis.

Knowing the bullpen needed a bit of a break, Hill (5-5) kept the Cardinals off balance for 6 2/3 innings, expertly weaving in and out of trouble with a series of curveballs that hover around 70 mph offset by a fastball that can touch 90 mph but plays up because everything else comes in so much softer.

Hill walked three and struck out six while giving up just one run, a seventh-inning homer by Andrew Knizner that drew the Cardinals within one. He allowed the leadoff hitter to reach in the first four innings and stranded them all as the Pirates pushed their winning streak to five.

"He threw the pitches he wanted to throw," Pirates manager Derek Shelton said. "They didn't swing at them. The fact that he's able to just bounce back and continue to

execute shows how savvy he is as a veteran."

Ji Hwan Bae's two-run single off Miles Mikolas (4-2) in the first provided all the offense Hill would need as Pittsburgh swept St. Louis for the first time in five years. Ke'Bryan Hayes singled three times and is hitting .562 (9 for 16) over his last four games after a 3-for-32 funk dropped him to seventh in the batting order.

David Bednar worked the ninth for his 13th save and third in as many days, striking out Knizner with a 98 mph fastball that provided an exclamation point to three days of tight, meaningful baseball, the kind the Pirates haven't played much of for the better part of a decade.

"We know we have a very good team," Hill said.

## Hovland delivers clutch putts and wins Memorial

DUBLIN, Ohio (AP) — Viktor Hovland handled the toughest stretch at Muirfield Village and delivered three clutch putts at the end to win the Memorial in a playoff over hard-luck Denny McCarthy on Sunday.

Hovland closed with a 2-under 70 on another brutal test on a course baked all week by sun, forcing the playoff with a 30-foot birdie on the 17th — the only one on that hole in the final round — and saving par from behind the 18th green.

Back to the 18th in the playoff, Hovland barely got onto the front of the green, some 60 feet away from the back pin, and two-putted by holing a 7-foot par putt.

It was his fourth PGA Tour victory and first on American soil, this one with a \$3.6 million winner's check and a handshake from host Jack Nicklaus. The Norwegian's previous wins were in Mexico twice and Puerto Rico.

It was a crushing loss for McCarthy, one of the purest putters on the PGA Tour. He showed his touch by saving crucial pars and playing bogey-free on a day when the average score was just under 75. His only bogey came on the 18th hole — twice.

McCarthy had a one-shot lead

when he missed the 18th fairway to the left, pitched out to the fairway and narrowly missed a 25-foot par putt for the win. In the playoff, his shot from the right rough rolled back off the green some 50 yards away. He pitched to 12 feet and the putt caught the left edge and spun away.

"I'm heartbroken right now," McCarthy said, emotion in his voice after his closest call to win on the PGA Tour in his 156th attempt.

This was a final day when so many went in reverse from the 22 players who had been separated by three shots at the start of the round.

Rory McIlroy chipped in from below the fourth green for birdie and had the lead on the front nine, but he gave away far too many shots on the back — three bogeys in a row — for a 75 that took him out of the picture.

Scottie Scheffler closed with a 67 and finished third and missed the playoff by one shot, remarkable considering he made the cut on the number. The No. 1 player in the world has not finished worse than 12th in his 13 starts this year.

But what a week to forget with the putter.

Scheffler turned a statistically dominant performance from tee-to-green, picking up 20.7 strokes

on the field in that category. But he lost 8.5 strokes to the field in his putting. This might be the best context — it was nearly a 20-shot differential in putting to McCarthy, and Scheffler finished one shot behind.

"I think a little bit of my struggles with the putting have probably helped me elevate my ball striking, just because if I'm trying to compete out here ... with the putts not going in. I've got to hit it really good. And I've been able to do that," Scheffler said.

"Maybe people are asking me about my putting so much more because I'm hitting it so good," he said. "When you're hitting a bunch of greens it's not easy to make every putt. I mean, if I was putting the best this week, I would have won by a crazy amount of shots."

That belonged to Hovland, who joined McCarthy (70) at 7-under 281.

Hovland, who moves to No. 5 in the world ranking, didn't feel as though he did anything special. He has had better weeks striking the ball. His lowest round all week was 69. But he was the only player to break par in all four rounds.

"I played smart. I played my game. And I came up clutch this time," Hovland said.

## Guardians manage split of series by topping Twins

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Triston McKenzie eased right back into the rotation, hopeful that he can be part of an early summer spark for the lagging Cleveland Guardians.

McKenzie tossed five scoreless innings in his

2-1 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Sunday afternoon that split the four-game series.

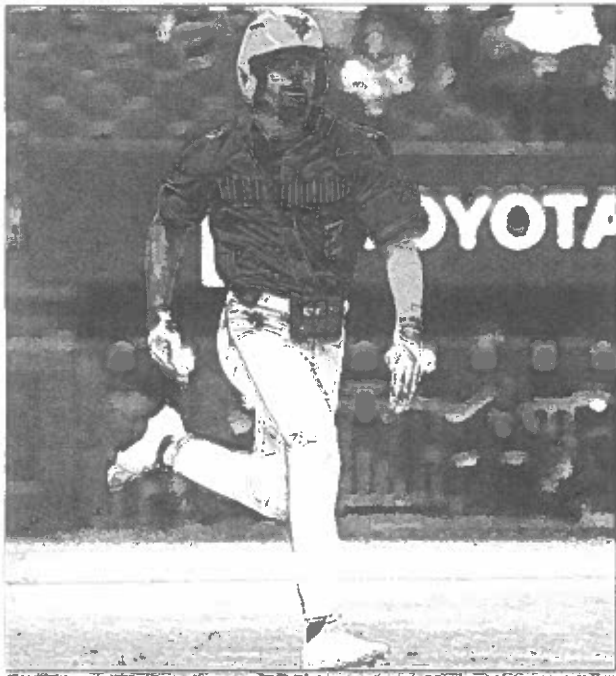
"I think it's about time we start to get up a little bit," McKenzie said.

McKenzie had 10 strikeouts and only one baserunner, a two-out

with a muscle strain in his shoulder that popped up at the end of spring training.

"That flew past encouraging," said manager Terry Francona, whose defending AL Central champion Guardians (27-32) have had a losing re-

as McKenzie until Josiah Ram rez drew a two-out, full-count walk in the seventh. Naylor followed with a drive off the limestone facade that juts out over the right-field wall, putting the Guardians, who are last in the major leagues in home runs, on



TEVIN TUCKER

## Tucker Is Mountaineers' Obi-Wan Kenobi Figure

MORGANTOWN — When the first pitch of the West Virginia baseball team's return to the NCAA Tournament takes place with an opening round game against Indiana in Lexington, Ky., on Friday after a three-year absence (the 2020 College World Series being canceled due to COVID-19), JJ Wetherholt will be a key figure for the Mountaineers.

But, in the meantime, shortstop and leadoff hitter Tevin Tucker acts as the Mountaineers' Obi-Wan Kenobi in preparing themselves for something they have not experienced.



BOB HERTZEL  
WV News

It is a difficult step for a team that had powered its way into the national scene and was set to host a regional tournament until the season's final week when they were swallowed up into the deep hole of reality — being swept the final season at Texas when they could have clinched an outright Big 12 championship, and then being eliminated in the Big 12 tournament with a pair of lackluster performances.

Tucker, a fifth-year senior, was there the last time the Mountaineers were invited to the tournament, got to play on his home field as WVU was a regional host and learned just how difficult tournament play can be.

He knows the joy of being there, the increased media scrutiny they will face, the idea that they are away from home in a different atmosphere with different pressures, with a different feeling in the pit of your stomach.

(Please see TUCKER, Page 12)

### ANNUAL OVAC ALL-STAR SOFTBALL GAME

## Bragging Rights At Stake When Ohio-W.Va. Square Off Monday

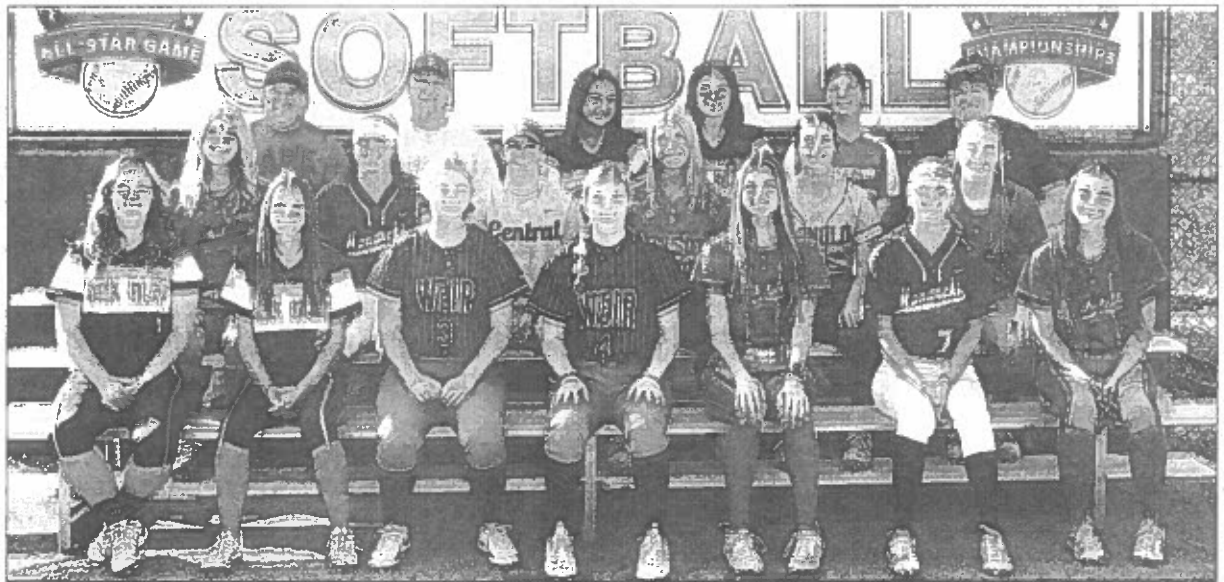


Photo by Kim North

Pictured above is the 2023 W.Va. OVAC All-Star softball team. Front row, from left, are Sydney Brown (Oak Glen); Lizzie Kell (Oak Glen); Reagan Hoover (Weir), Sophie Aperfine (Weir); Lauren Nolte (Wheeling Park); Paytyn Tucker (John Marshall); and Makiyah Strothers (Wheeling Park). Middle row, from left, are Hannah Sievertson (Wheeling Park); Kadence Pettit (John Marshall); Jocelyn Shaw (Wheeling Central); Baeleigh Burwell (Linsly); Bella Connor (Magnolia); and Delaney Theiss (Wheeling Park). Back row, from left, are coach Pat Durkin (Wheeling Park); Coach Buck Davidson (Wheeling Central); Olivia Munoz (Oak Glen); Sarah Brown (Oak Glen); Abigail Herki (Morgantown); and coach Sherri Garner (Oak Glen). Not pictured are Landry Bone (Brooke) and Taylor Lamp (Parkersburg South).

## Senior Players From Both Sides Of Ohio River To Battle For Pride

By KIM NORTH  
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The 24th annual OVAC All-Star Softball Game doesn't usually make exceptions for players who are taking vacations at the same time as the game. However, there is always a first, and even, a second.

As the senior players on the Ohio and West Virginia rosters were warming up for a 3-inning practice session Tuesday night on sun-splashed Lisa's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex, OVAC Softball Commissioner Tom Bechtel told of two young ladies who will be enjoying both.

"Wheeling Park's Makiyah Strothers will be flying to Florida tomorrow and then flying back over the weekend. She will play in the game, and then fly back out to Florida," Bechtel said. "Amazing."

Strothers recently signed to continue her career at West Liberty.

According to 'Bear,' Edison's Katie Fluharty is currently in Jamaica, but will be returning to take part in the game."

The game, a 9-inning affair, will be played Monday at 6:30 p.m. on Ben's Field, also at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex.

"It should turn out to be a great game," Bechtel said. "You've got outstanding pitching in Kadence Pettit from John Marshall which won the W.Va. Class AAA state championship, and you could also have Steubenville's Jules King who has Big Red in the Ohio Division II state tournament for the first time ever."

"You don't get many things like that happen too often."

King was absent from media day and practice as she prepares for Thursday's state semifinal against Canfield

at Akron's Firestone Stadium.

Last season's contest had a pair of future NCAA Division I hurlers get the start in Oak Glen's Maddie McKay (Toledo) for West Virginia and New Philadelphia's Julia Miller (Ohio State).

"I think these two are just as good as those two were."

The two 18-player rosters represent 23 schools, with the Buckeye State leading the way with 13. They are Bellaire, Caldwell, Conotton Valley, Edison, Frontier, Harrison Central, Indian Creek, Martins Ferry, Monroe Central, St. Clairsville, Steubenville, Union Local and Warren. The Mountain State schools include Brooke, John Marshall, Linsly, Magnolia, Morgantown, Oak Glen, Parkersburg South, Weir, Wheeling Central and Wheeling Park

(Please see BRAGGING, Page 12)

## Martin's Rise To NBA Finals Becomes Latest Heat Undrafted Success Story

DENVER (AP) — Caleb Martin was undrafted coming out of college. He entered the NBA with almost no guarantees. He had to play in the G League. Charlotte let him go after two seasons.

Desperate for a second chance, he joined the Miami Heat on a two-way contract to basically start from scratch again.

That's what it takes for some guys to make the league.

And that's what it took for Martin to make the NBA Finals.

On a Heat team filled with undrafted contributors, Martin stood out and became the breakout star of the Eastern Conference finals. He averaged 19.3 points on 60% shooting, scored a play-off-career-high 26 points on Boston's home floor in Game 7, and the Heat needed it all to oust the Celtics and earn a trip to the title round against the Denver Nuggets.

"I definitely reflect on where I started and the journey it's taken to get here, and even as early as the two-way last year," Martin said. "But I think more than anything, it's kind of a weird feeling because I'm also understanding that as happy as I am, as grateful I am to be here, I also understand that we have four more. The job is not done. We didn't go through what we went through all the regular season and my personal journey to stop here."

That's the credo for so many in the Heat locker room.



CALEB MARTIN

The captain, 20-year veteran and soon-to-be retired Udonis Haslem, was undrafted. Starting point guard Gabe Vincent, undrafted. Starting shooting guard Max Strus, undrafted. Duncan Robinson, who has made more 3-pointers than anyone in Heat history, undrafted. Haywood Highsmith, who gave the Heat tremendous minutes of energy off the bench against the Celtics, undrafted.

Miami will finish this postseason with more points and starts from undrafted players than the other 15 teams that made the playoffs this year will — combined. The Heat currently have 876 points and 39 starts from undrafted guys; the rest of the league has 778 points and 31 starts. Denver basically doesn't play anyone that isn't undrafted, so the Heat margin on the rest of the league will only grow the rest of the way.

"That storyline is over," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said earlier in these playoffs about the undrafted contributors. "These guys have proven themselves as competitors and winning players."

They have. But pointing it out isn't a sign of disrespect. It's a hat tip to the Heat buzz word — culture.

Miami's player development program — taking players that other teams overlooked, finding their strength, figuring out how to implement it into the Heat system and then working them like never before — is raved about by many in the league, and Martin is one of the best examples right now. He was one vote away from being the MVP of the East finals after shooting 11-for-16 and scoring 26 points in Game 7 on Monday night, after not playing at all in a Game 7 loss to Boston in last year's East finals.

(Please see NBA, Page 12)

## Pirates' Connor Joe Homers vs. Old Team

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Connor Joe homered against his former team and the Pittsburgh Pirates beat San Francisco 2-1 on Tuesday night to snap a



## No. 2 Seed Medvedev Ousted At French Open

PARIS (AP) — If anyone thought a couple of recent runs to Week 2 at the French Open and a clay-court title a little more than a week ago made Daniil



## NASCAR Suspends Elliott For One Race

CONCORD, N.C. (AP) — NASCAR suspended Chase Elliott for one race on Tuesday, less than one day after the five-time most popular driver and former Cup champion deliberately wrecked Denny Hamlin in the Coca-Cola 600.

Hendrick Motorsports said in a statement it will not appeal the suspension and Corey Lajoie will replace Elliott in the No. 9 Chevrolet this weekend at Gateway, outside of St. Louis.

"We understand NASCAR's need to maintain consistency in its officiating," Hendrick Motorsports said in a statement. Elliott denied deliberately crashing Hamlin with a dangerous left hook into Hamlin's car during the rain-rescheduled race Monday night at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Hamlin countered with simulated data he posted on social media after the crash, then double-downed

on calls for Elliott to be suspended on his Tuesday podcast.

Hamlin owns the car driven by Bubba Wallace, who was suspended one race last year for deliberately hooking Kyle Larson in a race in Las Vegas. The move is considered one of the most dangerous in NASCAR.

NASCAR suspended Elliott under a section of rulebook covered under "Member Code of Conduct." Among the rules covered in that section is "removing another competitor from championship contention in a dangerous manner when not racing for position based on the available evidence and specific circumstances of the incident."

"It was an intentional act by Chase in our opinion in our view after reviewing all of the available resources," said NASCAR senior vice president of competition Elton Sawyer on Sirius NASCAR Radio.

## Maynard, Barton On Top In Ohio Valley Baseball League

GLEN DALE - Defending Ohio Valley Baseball League champion Maynard continued its winning ways with a 6-3 doubling up of homestanding Moundsville Tuesday night on the John Marshall High School diamond.

Mason VanNest pitched five innings with eight strikeouts. He also helped himself with a two-run double that sparked a three-run sixth inning. Hunter Westlake added an RBI double while Mitch Viakley singled twice and Matt Busby doubled.

Izaak Babiczuk singled twice for the Expos.

### Barton 11, Wheeling 7

WEST LIBERTY - The Braves banged out 15 hits and scored seven times in the top of the third to break open a close contest on West Liberty University's Kovalick Field. The game was called after six innings due to darkness.

Trevor Thomas drove in a run with two singles and a triple, while Colton Coss singled thrice. Gaetan Sinisgali singled twice and plated two runs, while Drake Dobson had a two-run single. Ben Wach singled and doubled to drive in a run. Josh Speaker also singled and doubled.

Kevin Dobson fanned eight in three innings of mound work, while Drake Dobson struck out six in his three innings.

Bill Marsh had three singles and an RBI for the Pirates.

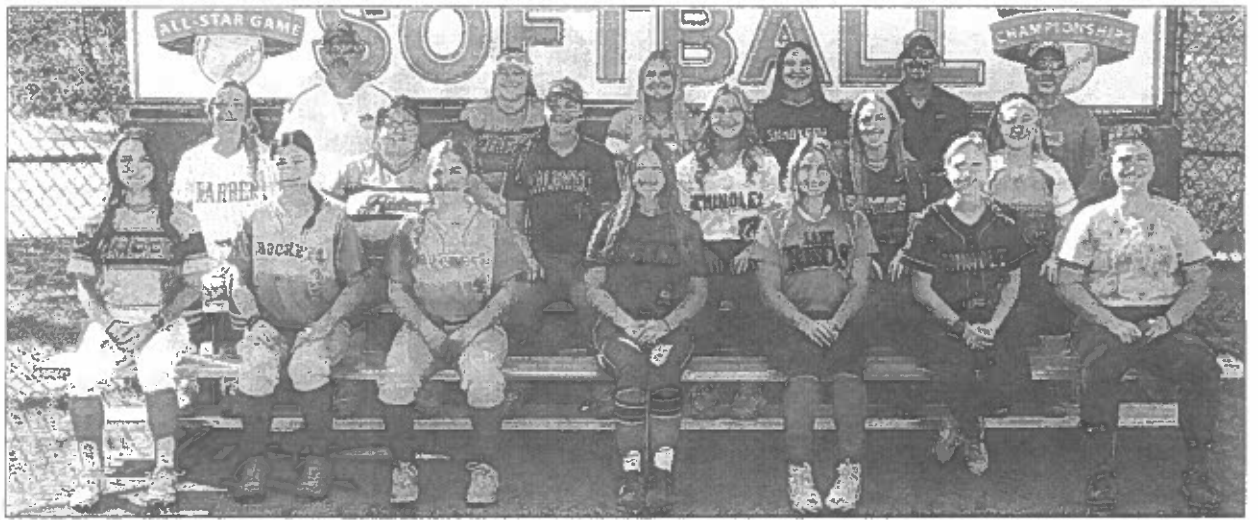


Photo by Kim North

Pictured above is the 2023 Ohio OVAC All-Star softball team. Front row, from left, are Abby Starkey (Indian Creek); Daphne Stuber (Conotton Valley); Chloe Stuber (Conotton Valley); Maddie Butler (Harrison Central); Sophie Porter (Bellaire); Madison Stimpert (Monroe Central); and Jamison Schmidt (Frontier). Middle row, from left, Kaylee Morris (Warren); Taylor Bell (Martins Ferry); Maddie Mumaw (Caldwell); Kynzi Bishop (Monroe Central); Lizzy Clelland (Harrison Central); and Abby Salisbury (St. Clairsville). Back row, from left, are coach Doug Pfeffer (Caldwell); Alexis Dawson (Indian Creek); Kelsi Gillespie (Martins Ferry); Gentry Brown (Shadyside); coach Robert Gorrell Jr. (Shadyside); and coach Jeremy Bleininger (Conotton Valley). Not pictured are Emily Kellaway (Union Local); Katie Fluharty (Edison); Jules King (Steubenville); and coach Gus DiMarzio (Steubenville).

## BRAGGING

(Continued from Page 11)

"The coaches do a great job of selecting the girls," Bechtel added.

The Ohio roster is made up of Bellaire's Sophie Porter (2B); Caldwell's Maddie Mumaw (P); Conotton Valley's Daphne Stuber (2B) and Chloe Stuber (OF); Edison's Fluharty (P); Frontier's Jamison Schmidt (C); Harrison Central's Maddie Butler (3B) and Lizzy Clelland (C); Indian Creek's Abby Starkey (C) and Alexis Dawson (3B); Martins Ferry's Taylor Bell (3B) and Kelsi Gillespie (P/2B); Monroe Central's Kynzi Bishop (2B) and Madison Stimpert (OF); St. Clairs-

ville's Abby Salisbury (SS/OF); Steubenville's King (P); Union Local's Emily Kellaway (OF/SS); and Warren's Kaylee Morris (1B).

Coaches are Gus DiMarzio (Steubenville); Jeremy Bleininger (Conotton Valley); Robert Gorrell Jr. (Shadyside); and Doug Pfeffer (Caldwell).

Comprising the W.Va. roster is Brooke's Landy Bone (P); John Marshall's Kadence Pettit (P) and Paytyn Tucker (OF); Linsly's Baeleigh Burwell (P); Magnolia's Bella Conner (C); Morgantown's Abigail Herki (C); Oak Glen's Sydney

Brown (Inf), Lizzie Kell (P), Olivia Munoz (3B) and Sarah Brown (Ca); Parkersburg South's Taylor Lamp (OF); Weir's Sophie Aperfine (Ca) and Reagan Hoover (OF); Wheeling Central's Jocelyn Shaw (SS); and Wheeling Park's Lauren Nolte (2B), Hannah Sivertson (OF), Strothers (OF) and Delaney Theiss (P).

Coaches are Ed West (John Marshall); Sherrie Garner (Oak Glen); Buck Davidson (Wheeling Central) and Pat Durkin (Wheeling Park).

Despite back-to-back losses, Ohio still holds a 16-7 advantage in the all-time series.

## NBA

(Continued from Page 11)

"That might have surprised y'all," said Heat star Jimmy Butler, who won the MVP trophy. "To the untrained eye, he just looks like he's an undrafted guy who has been in the G League, who has started with Charlotte and now he's here. Started on a two-way contract. That's what it looks like to y'all. To us, he's a hell of a player, hell of a defender, playmaker, shotmaker, all of the above."

It makes sense that some longshot players helped the Heat get here — since as a No. 8 seed that almost was eliminated in the play-in tournament, Miami was a longshot to do much of anything in the playoffs, much less make the finals for the league-best seventh time in the past 17 seasons.

Martin was solid in the first two rounds against No. 1 Milwaukee and No. 5 New York, averaging 10.8 points on nearly 53% shooting. Against the second-seeded Celtics, his numbers soared. Boston took a risk and didn't spend a lot of defensive effort on Martin.

He made the Celtics pay for that one.

"It's super-high-level competition," said Martin, whose

twin brother, Cody, has been at many Heat playoff games this spring and has spent his four NBA seasons with Charlotte. "You can't hide it. You figure out if you're built for these type of environments or not whenever you get into them. I just I feel like I've just been continuously prepping and getting ready for these moments, and when these moments come, I feel like I'm ready for them. I feel like I'm built for these type of moments."

Martin signed a three-year, \$20 million contract last summer. For the real world, that's a ton of money. For the NBA, that makes him an absolute bargain. It's something he likely never saw coming when he was in college at N.C. State and Nevada, then never heard his name called on draft night, then got told he'd have to fight for everything he got in the league.

But he was at his best when Miami needed him most. And now the finals await.

"I'm so proud and happy for him," Butler said. "I think he's going to be even better in the next round, and I don't think he's going to be a surprise to anybody any longer."

## FRENCH

(Continued from Page 11)

It's the first time the second-seeded man lost in the first round of the French Open since 2000, when Pete Sampras — no fan of clay himself — was eliminated by Mark Philippoussis.

"It definitely was the happiest day of my life," said Seybolt Wild, a 23-year-old from Brazil. "I knew it was going to be a tough match, but I knew how to play. I have watched him play 1,000 times already. I just had to believe in myself."

So what was his game plan going in? "Walking on the court, I really just wanted to get the angles, try to get to the net as much as possible, try to use my forehand against his," Seybolt Wild explained. "It worked pretty well."

Did it ever. Employing a high-risk, high-reward style, Seybolt Wild compiled a 69-45

edge in total winners, including 47-15 on the forehand side.

He hadn't even played a tour-level main-draw match at all in 2023, instead competing on the lower-level ATP Challenger Tour. At his most recent event, in Turin, Italy, Seybolt Wild made it to the quarterfinals and left with a paycheck for \$5,950.

At his news conference, Seyboth Wild drew the sort of attention and questions that arrive when a relatively unknown player pulls off a stunning win.

One reporter pulled out some puns related to Seyboth Wild's last name, including references to whether this was his "wildest victory" and exceeded his "wildest dreams" — to which the response was: "I honestly don't know how many times I have heard that joke, but it never gets old."

## TUCKER

(Continued from Page 11)

"I hope he'll be able to keep us calm and let us know what to do," Wetherholt said.

The euphoria of victory is heightened and the depth of defeat is exaggerated ... or is it, for Tucker has experienced a

player who never had his average above .200 in three previous seasons to one who was a key offensive igniter and who carries a .319 mark into the

NCAAs with the reputation of being a player who gets on base and scores

ing of the NCAAs as a healing period. Interestingly, if we might play with words here, he believes they will get the message through a massage.

"It's been kind of a regroup ... we had an off

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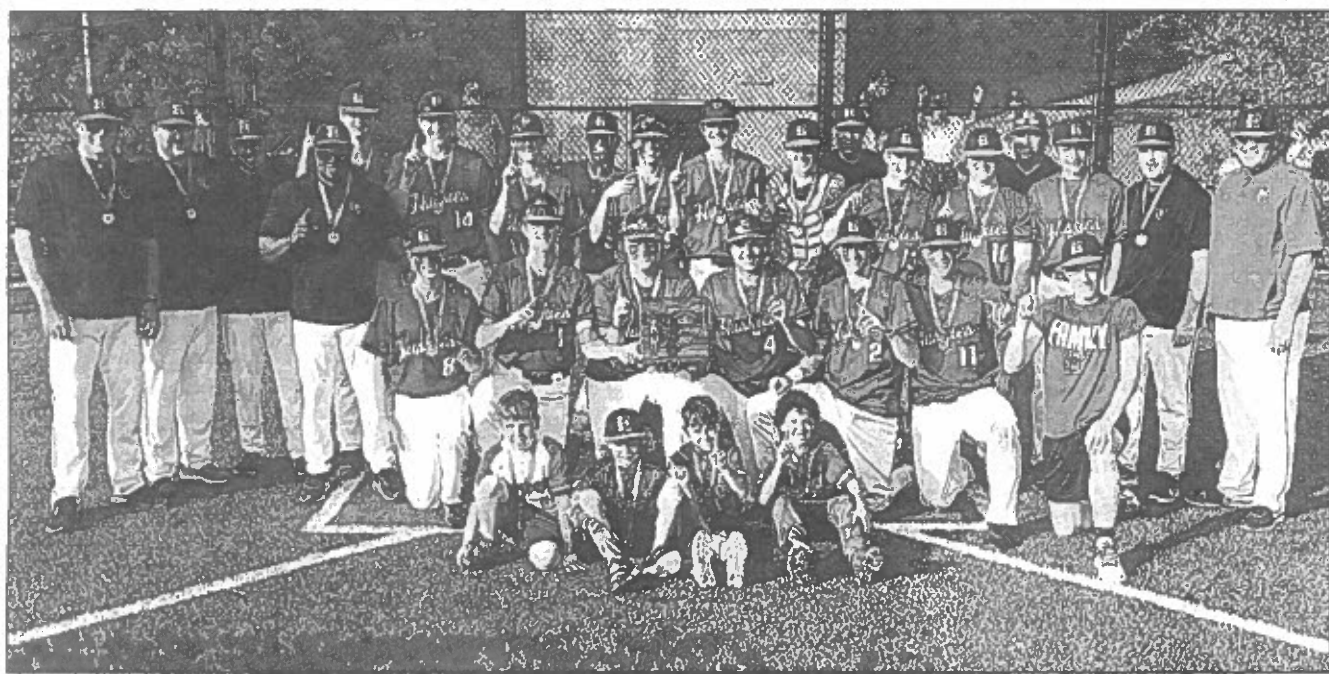
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Classified/B7-8

# SPORTS

Wednesday,  
May 31, 2023



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**PICTURED IS** the Harrison Central baseball team, which won the Division III Eastern District championship and will take on Winchester Eastern Thursday at Ohio Dominican in Columbus. Front row, from left, are managers Maddox Valesko, Grayson Madzia, Blake Barcroft and Kam Vancuren. Second row, from left, are Wyatt Pierce, Tre Rex, Cabot Arbaugh, Jace Madzia, Kaden Jurosko, Treston Nemeth and R.J. Belon. Third row, from left, are E.J. Keener, Reed Arbaugh, Cole Saiter, Leland Lopez, Tucker Snyder, Kayden Dunkle, Anthony Pelegreen, Chaz Culbertson, Braden Cook and Colten Rutter. The coaching staff, from left, are Dave Barcroft, A.J. Barsch, head coach Mike Valesko, Ian White, Brandon Mitchell, Brian Gossett, Logan Barsch and Derek Madzia.

## OVAC All-Star Softball Game set for Monday at I-470 Fields

By **KIM NORTH**  
For The Times Leader

**ELM GROVE** - The 24th annual OVAC All-Star Softball Game doesn't usually make exceptions for players who are taking vacations at the same time as the game. However, there is always a first, and even a second.

As the senior players on the Ohio and West Virginia rosters were warming up for a 3-inning practice session Tuesday night on sun-splashed Lisa's Field at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex, OVAC Softball Commissioner Tom Bechtel told of two young ladies who will be enjoying both.

"Wheeling Park's Makiyah Strothers will be flying to Florida tomorrow and then flying back over the weekend. She will play in the game, and then fly back out to Florida," Bechtel said. "Amazing."

Strothers recently signed to continue her career at West Liberty.

According to 'Bear,' Edison's Katie Fluharty is currently in Jamaica, but will be returning to take part in the game."

The game, a 9-inning affair, will be played Monday at 6:30 p.m. on Ben's Field, also at the J.B. Chambers I-470 Youth Sports Complex.

"It should turn out to be a great game," Bechtel said. "You've got outstanding pitching in Kadence Pettit from John Marshall which won the W.Va. Class AAA state championship, and you could also have Steubenville's Jules King who has Big Red in the Ohio Division II state tournament for the first time ever.

"You don't get many things like that happen too often."

King was absent from Tuesday's media day and practice as she prepares for Thursday's state semifinal against Canfield at Akron's Firestone Stadium.

Last season's contest had a pair of future NCAA Division I hurlers get the start in Oak Glen's Maddie McKay (Toledo) for West Virginia and New Philadelphia's Julia Miller (Ohio State).

"I think these two are just as good as those two were."

See, **OVAC**, Page B2

## Harrison not satisfied just being in the Division III regional tournament

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**CADIZ** - Harrison Central's school year officially ended late last week.

It's baseball season, however, marches onward.

The Huskies (17-12) will venture to Ohio Dominican University in Columbus on Thursday for a 5 p.m. first pitch against Winchester Eastern in a Division III regional semifinal, marking the third trip to the Sweet 16 in school history and first since 2016.

"It's definitely an exciting time when you're still practicing and playing (games) when school

is out," Huskies head coach Mike Valesko said. "We're at the point where the school work is done and the kids can just enjoy and focus on baseball."

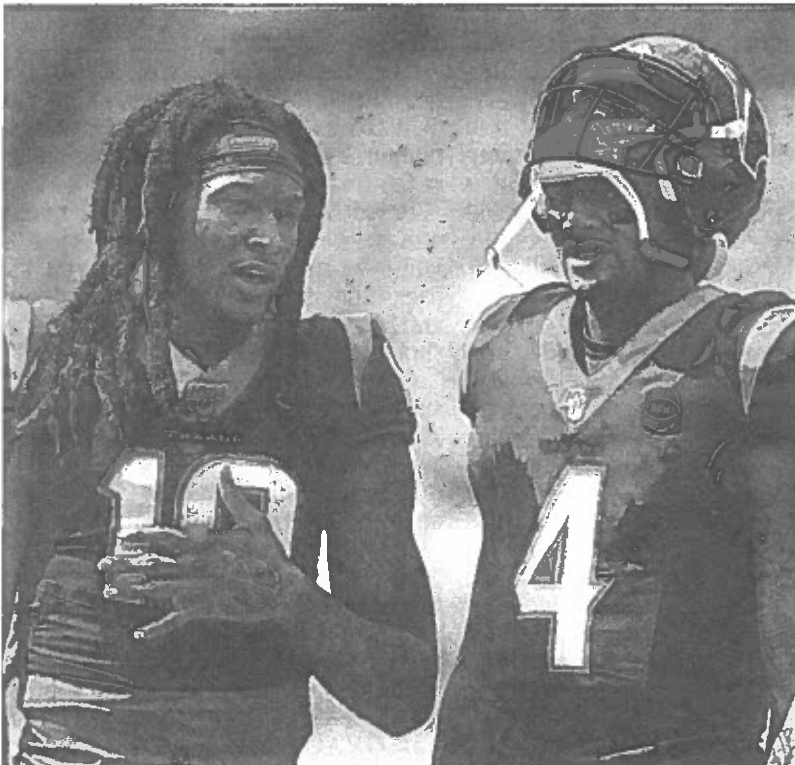
The Huskies sewed up their third district title a week ago with a 10-0 victory in six innings against top-seeded Fort Frye. A day later, Eastern claimed a Southeast District title by knocking off Minford, 4-1.

"We went down and watched their district championship game and they look like a team that's similar to many teams we've played in terms of their athleticism and talent, so we're going to have to be ready to see. **HARRISON**, Page B2



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**HARRISON CENTRAL** outfielder Leland Lopez has been one of the key contributors defensively for the Huskies.



AP FILE PHOTO

**HOUSTON TEXANS** wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins, left, talks with quarterback Deshaun Watson before an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Chargers Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019, in Carson, Calif.

## Watson makes pitch for Hopkins to reunite with him in Cleveland

**ROCKY RIVER, Ohio (AP)** - Standing a few feet from a golf green, Deshaun Watson made a pitch for DeAndre Hopkins to join him in Cleveland.

The Browns quarterback said Tuesday that he has spoken to Hopkins, his close friend and former Houston teammate, and encouraged the three-time All-Pro wide receiver to consider a reunion. Hopkins is a free agent after the Arizona Cardinals released him last week.

"Of course we would love to have him," Watson said at the Browns charity golf outing. "He knows that we had a lot of connections, but that's kind of out of my range of things. So all I can do is make a call and see what happens and let AB (Browns general manager Andrew Berry) do the rest."

The Browns appear to be a longshot to land the 30-year-old Hopkins because of a lack of salary cap space. But Cleveland wasn't expected to get Watson either until they lured him with a fully guaranteed \$230 million contract.

Berry will undoubtedly explore signing Hopkins, who may be out of Cleveland's price range and will be competing with numerous

The idea of throwing again to Hopkins - they were teammates for three seasons - has Watson thinking big. Although Hopkins did not list Cleveland as one of his preferred teams, Watson said that doesn't mean he has ruled out the Browns.

"I'll just say this, D-Hop, DeAndre Hopkins would love to be in a place where the opportunity is there for us to win," Watson said. "We check all those boxes and I think for us to know and make sure we check all those boxes on the national stage, we've got to go out there and prove it and I think D-Hop would love to be a part of that."

In 38 games together with Houston, Watson and Hopkins combined for 3,433 yards and 25 touchdowns. Hopkins made the Pro Bowl each year.

Watson said he and Hopkins had a special chemistry.

"He just makes the throws a lot easier," Watson said. "His range, catch radius is super. It's probably the best in the league. Just the things he can do, he just made my job a lot easier. I just put the ball in his direction. He made the plays."





AP PHOTO

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS' Jose Ramirez follows through on a swing against the Baltimore Orioles during the first inning of a baseball game, Tuesday in Baltimore.

## Santander's big night helps Orioles outlast Guardians, 8-5

BALTIMORE (AP) — Anthony Santander hit a bases-clearing triple during Baltimore's five-run second inning, then added a pair of doubles to lift the Orioles to an 8-5 victory over the Cleveland Guardians on Tuesday night.

Kyle Gibson (7-3) won his third straight start, allowing three runs and seven hits in 5 2/3 innings. Baltimore led 8-1 at the start of the sixth but still had to use its top relievers to close the game out.

It was 8-5 with the tying run batting when Yennier Cano got the third out of the seventh. Then he allowed two straight singles to start the eighth, again bringing up the tying run, but the Guardians squandered the chance.

Felix Bautista pitched a perfect ninth for his 14th save in 18 chances.

The Orioles took a 2-0 lead in the first when right fielder Will Brennan misplayed Gunnar Henderson's two-out line drive. The ball went over Brennan's head after he stepped the wrong way initially, and Henderson had a two-run double.

Brennan's day didn't get any better in the second. After Adley Rutschman's bases-loaded walk made it 3-0, Santander followed by pulling a 3-2 pitch down the line in right for extra bases. All three runners scored, and Brennan overran the ball when it caromed off the wall.

Santander made it to third and then scored on a sacrifice fly by Austin Hays.

Josh Bell hit an RBI single in the fourth for Cleveland. Santander doubled in the fifth and scored on Henderson's single, which chased Guardians starter Cal Quantrill (2-4).

Bell hit a sacrifice fly in the sixth, and Andrés Giménez followed with an RBI double. Josh Naylor hit a two-run single in the seventh to make it 8-5.

The Orioles loaded the bases with nobody out in the seventh, but Henderson bounced into a 4-2-3 double play and Baltimore didn't score.

### TRAINER'S ROOM

Guardians: Manager Terry Francona said RHP Aaron Civale (left oblique strain) will pitch Friday at Minnesota. ... RHP Triston McKenzie (right teres major strain) pitched Tuesday night for Triple-A Columbus and is expected to meet the big league club in Minnesota.

Orioles: Baltimore put CF Cedric Mullins (strained right groin) on the 10-day injured list and signed OF Aaron Hicks.

### UP NEXT

Shane Bieber (4-3) takes the mound for the Guardians in the series finale Wednesday. Austin Voth (1-1) is expected to pitch for Baltimore, although the Orioles may use an opener before him.

## • Cut

Continued from Page B1

Rahm said the Masters has a small field — 88 players qualified this year — and has a cut to the top 50 and ties.

### US OPEN DETOUR

Tegan Andrews was

hopeful this finally would be the year he advanced out of first stage to earn a shot at final qualifying for the U.S. Open, and that's how it turned out.

It's just not the way he

imagined.

The plan was for Andrew to return to nearby La Purisima Golf Course where he previously tried local U.S. Open qualifying.

## • Watson

Continued from Page B1

Hopkins has made it clear he wants to join a contender, and on a podcast last week he rattled off a list of preferred quarterbacks without mentioning Watson.

"It's all media," Watson said of the perceived snub. "He don't have to mention me. Just like if I mentioned the top five

receivers and I forget D-Hop. He won't take that personal because he already knows our relationship and what I believe and what I think about him."

Coach Kevin Stefanski would not comment on the team's interest in Hopkins, saying he was pleased with some of its

offseason additions.

"I really, really like our wide receiver room," Stefanski said. "I love the guys that are in there. Andrew and his crew are always looking at every avenue and that type of thing, so I won't comment specifically on the player other than to say I really like our roster."

## • OVAC

Continued from Page B1

The two 18-player rosters represent 23 schools, with the Buckeye State leading the way with 13. They are Belaire, Caldwell, Conotton Valley, Edison, Frontier, Harrison Central, Indian Creek, Martins Ferry, Monroe Central, St. Clairsville, Steubenville, Union Local and Warren. The Mountain State schools include Brooke, John Marshall, Linsly, Magnolia, Morgantown, Oak Glen, Parkersburg South, Weir, Wheeling Central and Wheeling Park.

"The coaches do a great job of selecting the girls," Bechtel added.

The Ohio roster is made up of Belaire's Sophie Porter (2B); Caldwell's Maddie Mumaw (P); Conotton Valley's Daphne Stuber (2B) and Chloe Stuber (OF); Edison's Fluharty (P); Frontier's Jamison Schmidt (C), Harrison Central's Maddie Butler (3B) and Lizzy Clelland (C); Indian Creek's Abby Starkey (C) and Alexis Dawson (3B); Martins Ferry's Taylor Bell (3B) and Kelsi Gillespie (P/2B); Monroe Central's Kynzi Bishop (2B) and Madison Stimpert (OF); St. Clairsville's Abby Salisbury (SS/OF); Steubenville's King (P);

Union Local's Emily Kellaway (OF/SS); and Warren's Kaylee Morris (1B).

Coaches are Gus DiMarzio (Steubenville); Jeremy Bleninger (Conotton Valley); Robert Gorrell Jr. (Shadyside); and Doug Pfeffer (Caldwell).

Comprising the W.Va. roster is Brooke's Landy Bone (P); John Marshall's Kadence Pettit (P) and Paytyn Tucker (OF); Linsly's Baeleigh Burwell (P); Magnolia's Bella Conner (C); Morgantown's Abigail Herki (C); Oak Glen's Sydney Brown (Inf), Lizzie Kell (P), Olivia Munoz (3B) and Sarah Brown (Ca); Parkersburg South's Taylor Lamp (OF); Weir's Sophie Aperfine (Ca) and Reagan Hoover (OF); Wheeling Central's Jocelyn Shaw (SS); and Wheeling Park's Lauren Nolte (2B), Hannah Sivertson (OF), Strothers (OF) and Delaney Theiss (P).

Coaches are Ed West (John Marshall); Sherrie Garner (Oak Glen); Buck Davidson (Wheeling Central) and Pat Durkin (Wheeling Park).

Despite back-to-back losses, Ohio still holds a 16-7 advantage in the all-time series.

## • Harrison

Continued from Page B1

play," Valesko said.

Harrison Central entered the post-season with a modest 13-12 record. It edged Ridgewood and Martins Ferry to get to the district where it rallied past Buckeye Trail before dominating the aforementioned district final.

"Give our guys credit," Valesko said. "We've played a challenging schedule, including 20 games against Division II or larger schools. That's paid off for us in the tournament. Our schedule won't allow us to go 25-5 or something. But, our guys have kept believing and playing."

The Warriors, meanwhile, come into the game with tournament wins over Fayetteville-Perry (2-1), Felicity-Franklin (11-1) and Fairland (4-1) prior to the Minford win.

As for what lies ahead in the regional, Valesko believes the tournament is wide open. The other side of the bracket finds perennial power Wheelersburg taking on Lucasville Valley at 11 a.m. in Chillicothe.

"Obviously, when there are only 16 teams left, everyone is good and everyone has good pitching," Valesko said. "But, we're fortunate that there isn't anyone in this region who is throwing 90 mph and I really believe anyone can win this thing."

Should the Huskies win on Thursday, they will remain in Central Ohio for the night and then take on the winner of the other semifinal at 3 p.m. at Lancaster.

Harrison Central enters the regional coming off what Valesko called its best performance of the season. All facets of the game were clicking. Harrison Central pounded out 16 hits, didn't commit an error and oh by the way, Nemeth threw a no hitter.

It's all been part of the process for the Huskies, who came up short in both

"If I don't give the ball to Treston, he has the best chance of beating me up," Valesko joked. "All kidding aside, it's hard not to give him the ball. We trust all of our pitchers, but the way he pitched last week was impressive."

Indeed.

Nemeth has worked 36.1 innings and has an earned run average of 2.31. He's fanned 36 hitters and allowed only 30 hits.

Wyatt Pierce is another viable option and could pitch Friday should Harrison advance or would be an option out of the pen. He's 5-2 with 53.1 innings of work with a team-best 2.23 earned run average.

The Huskies will take on a Warriors' lineup that is led by Wyatt Haupt, who Valesko believes will be their starting pitcher, too. He was the winning pitcher in the district semifinal.

Pryce Murphy picked up the mound win with a complete-game effort in which he surrendered six hits in the district title game. He also had a double and hits in the second spot, which is one spot ahead of Haupt.

Carter Vaughn hits in the lead-off spot, while Haupt, Brandon Bailey and Jackson Prine comprise the heart of the Warriors' order.

"From the information we've been able to find, it seems their top four guys really swing it well and Haupt is hitting .436," Valesko said. "We saw them field the ball well and they make the plays when they needed to."

As for the Huskies' offense, Nemeth is the unquestioned leader. A soon-to-be three-time All-Ohioan and three-time OVAC Player of the Year, Nemeth is hitting a robust .551 and has driven a team-high 39 runs. He has a slugging percentage of .859 and has scored 34 runs and swiped 20 bases.

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