

SPORTS

B

Friday,
September 19, 2024

Harrison Hall of Fame to Induct five

• Six teams being honored

CADIZ — On behalf of the Harrison Central Sports Foundation, the Harrison County High School Sports Hall of Fame Committee has released the names of the HOF "Class of 2024". Three former Harrison County sports greats, a dominant Coach/Athlete, a more than deserving volunteer and six of Harrison County's most successful teams will be honored prior to, and at half-time of the Harrison Central — St. Clairsville football game on Sept. 27. The Hall of Fame is sponsored by MPLX and the Harrison News Herald. A pre-game social with light refreshments will be held in honor of the inductees and teams in the John Stephenson gymnasium beginning at 5:30 p.m., and inductions will be held on the football field at halftime. Admission to the social is free of charge.

Mike Sliva has been a dedicated volunteer for Harrison County athletics for over three and a half decades. Among his multitude of volunteer organizations he's involved with, Mike solely maintained the High School football field for 30 years and helped organize a golf scramble that has raised over \$100,000 and counting for the Booster Club and Huskies Sports Foundation. Mike served as Cadiz Booster Club President seven times.

Frank "FG" Gregory, a 1976 Cadiz High School graduate, earned 11 letters, was QB for the undefeated 1975 football team and Cadiz's first OVAC Football Championship. In College Frank started in the infield four seasons for Rio Grande Baseball. As a Girls basketball coach Gregory had 95 wins in five years at Jewett-Scio winning the IVC Title and reaching the Regional Tournament. Gregory went on to win the State Girls Basketball Championship while Head Coach for Meadowbrook.

Phillip Wenner, a 1950 graduate of Jewett High School, was twice in basketball named All-East Ohio Honorable Mention, and as a senior was named United Press All-Ohio Honorable Mention. Wenner was one of only four Harrison County players to receive this honor among nearly 1,000 schools in Class B at the time. In football, Phillip was the team's leading scorer, and he garnered All-League honors for both seasons of his gridiron career.

Jennifer Crall is a 1987 Jewett-Scio graduate. Jennifer scored over 1500 points in her basketball career, and her dominance on the court



Photo by KIM NORTH

EARNING ALL-OVAC Class 3A Golf honors Thursday at Belmont Hills Country Club in St. Clairsville were, from left, medalist Chatum Courson (Fort Frye); Luke Tiu (Wheeling Central); Adam Gill (Linsly); Brady Gallagher (Barnesville) and Hayden Treadway (Barnesville). Chatum shot a 3-under-par 69.

Two Shamrocks golfers named All-Conference

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Depth is a crucial part of any sport for a team to be successful, probably more in a high school golf tournament. Each team is comprised of five players, but only the top four scores count towards the team title.

Wheeling Central, with four players in the top 10, edged past defending co-champion Linsly to capture the OVAC Class 3A championship Thursday at sun-soaked Belmont Hills Country Club. The Maroon Knights shot 311, which was three strokes ahead of the Cadets, who also had four top 10 finishers.

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Luke Tiu, who earned medalist runner up honors with a 1-under-par 71, led the Maroon Knights. He was followed by Bode Burge who finished sixth with a 78. Jake Brown and Rowen Parker both carded 81s to tie for eighth with Monroe Central's Owen Weckbach-

er and Barnesville's Graham Spence.

Coach Burge raved about the course conditions.

"It was great for the weather conditions we've had here lately, (Belmont Hills CC Pro) Mr. (Ron) Baker and his staff did such a great job," Burge praised. "They (the OVAC) moved the tournament here because of the poor conditions at Crispin due to the dry weather, and we took advantage of it."

"Fairways and greens. That's what wins tournaments," he noted. "We've played this course in the past, so we were a little familiar with it."

With one goal accomplished, Wheeling Central can set its sights on a third straight W.Va. Class A state championship which begins in a couple of weeks with regional competition on Sept. 30.

"We've had our ups-and-downs this season, but 311 is a great score," Burge said. "I think they are capable of going lower, though. That's the way I look at it. As long as they (the kids) know that, everyone will know that."

Barnesville finished a distant third with a score of 323. Monroe Central finished fourth at

342, with Martins Ferry (356), Columbiana (372), defending co-champ Fort Frye (375) and Union Local (392) rounding out the 8-team field of 40 players.

Fort Frye's Chatum Courson held off Tiu for medalist honors. The duo was tied after 15 holes.

"Finishing second last year was definitely motivation to win it this year," Courson said. "I started off really hot. I birdied the first hole and was three under through six holes. I was 4-under when we got to 13 and 14, but I went bogey-bogey, so I knew I had to battle back because Luke and I were tied at 2-under. I parred No. 16 and he bogeyed, so I knew I needed to birdie 17 so I had a couple shot cushion going to 18. I had an 8-foot putt and knocked it down."

"For as dry as it was, the greens were firm," Courson said of the course conditions.

Two-time defending medalist Adam Gill of Linsly finished third with a 72 to join Courson and Tiu on the all-conference team. Barnesville's duo of Brady Gallagher (75) and Hayden Treadway (76) rounded out the all-conference top 5.

UL Jets firing on all cylinders with two-QB system

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor

MORRISTOWN — The old saying goes "If you have two quarterbacks, you have none."

This season though, the Union Local Jets have subscribed to a different train of thought — "two is better than one."

Union Local has trotted out both senior Isaiah Tomolonis and junior Colby Carpenter to take snaps at quarterback this year, an unorthodox approach to the position that has worked exceedingly well for the 4-0 Jets.

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See JETS, Page B4



Photo by NICK HENTHORN

UNION LOCAL'S Isaiah Tomolonis splits a pair of tacklers on a rush attempt last week against Harrison Central. Tomolonis is one of two quarterbacks for a Jets team that has gotten off to a 4-0 start.

St. Clairsville boys soccer falls to host Steubenville

STEUBENVILLE — Cole Bowers scored twice and Hayden Hicks and Landon Bowers each had a goal and two assists as Steubenville (6-1-3) defeated visiting St. Clairsville, 5-1, in boys' high school soccer action inside Harding Stadium.

Luke Dinovo had a goal and assist for Big Red.

Robby Lucas made two saves.

Jonathan Verardi scored for the Red Devils off an assist from Carson Hender-shot. Talan Rice had nine saves.

GIRLS SOCCER

St. Clairsville Claims Buckeye 8

EAST LIVERPOOL — The Red Devils won the Buckeye 8 on Thursday with an 11-0 victory over East Liverpool.

Ashlynn Lednik led the way for St. C., scoring four goals and handing out an assist. Elizabeth Morgan scored three goals with two assists, and Emma Gasber scored two goals with on assist.

Olivia McKeever and Isabella Yeager also scored. McKeever had two assists, Yeager one.

Kaylee Shafer dished two assists, with Jolen Brannan and Maxim Lussier each tallying one.

GOLF

Panthers Win Head-To-Head

RAYLAND — Buckeye Local topped Edison Thursday at Bec-Wood Hills Golf Course, picking up a victory over the Wildcats by eight strokes, 166-174.

Two Panthers shared medalist honors — Adam Blackwell and Dugan Dubrovich. Both carded 40's.

Kamden Kinyo shot a 42 and Dom Kempton carded a 44 for Buckeye.

Edison was led by Brady Haunt who carded a 42.

VOLLEYBALL

Union Local Spikes Bellaire

MORRISTOWN — The Jets soared past the Big Reds inside the 'House of Champions' by scores of 25-16, 25-12 and 25-18.

Delaney Butler led Union Local with 16 assists and 11 digs. Alayna Logan handed out a dozen assists and Myah Martin charted 11 digs. Ameera Saunders

recorded nine kills and Emma Yager added eight.

Shadyside Falls To Shenandoah

SARASVILLE — The Tigers fell on the road Thursday, swept by the Zeps 25-16, 25-14, 25-16.

Giovanna Hines led Shadyside in kills, tallying nine. Ali Weatherston passed out a team-high 11 assists along with 10 digs. Aubrey Nippert had 11 digs to lead the Tigers. Josey Greenwood and Adrianna Hines each had two aces.

Indian Creek Tames Huskies

WINTERSVILLE — Indian Creek needed four sets to defeat Harrison Central on Thursday, defending their home court in a 25-23, 25-22, 17-25, 25-18 victory.

Creek was led by Car Nadeborne, who dominated at the net with 13 kills and seven blocks. Brooke Crites tallied 18 assists, five more than Gabby Taylor, while Kaite Cottis and Emma Westfall each had two aces. Cottis had nine kills, Westfall six.

With Big 12 Opener Looming

By **BOB HERTZEL**
WV News
MORGANTOWN — Funny, isn't it, we have this tendency to look back upon what has come to be known as "the good old days" as "the better old days" rather than the "good old days", although that may not be the case.

Nostalgia in sports has always reigned supreme. Roger Maris was villainized for challenging Babe Ruth's sacred single-season home run record, just as Henry Aaron was for breaking Babe's career home run mark.

No matter who they may be, to the old-timers Jim Brown and Gayle Sayers and Earl Campbell and Bo Jackson will always be the best of football's running backs and in this neck of the woods, no one will ever be as good as Jerry West, no matter how much technology and training methods may be creating a far greater athlete.

That's just life as we see it, those good old days being a different era for those who are 40 than for those who are 60 and for those who are 80, and while memories are taxed to recall which key opens the front door, we recall every pitch Sandy Koufax ever threw and every home run Ted Williams hit.

But times really do change, and often it improves the species. Although, as we go through a setback like West Virginia's loss to Pitt last weekend, it really isn't different from the 2007

disaster in substance, even if far more was riding on the outcome.

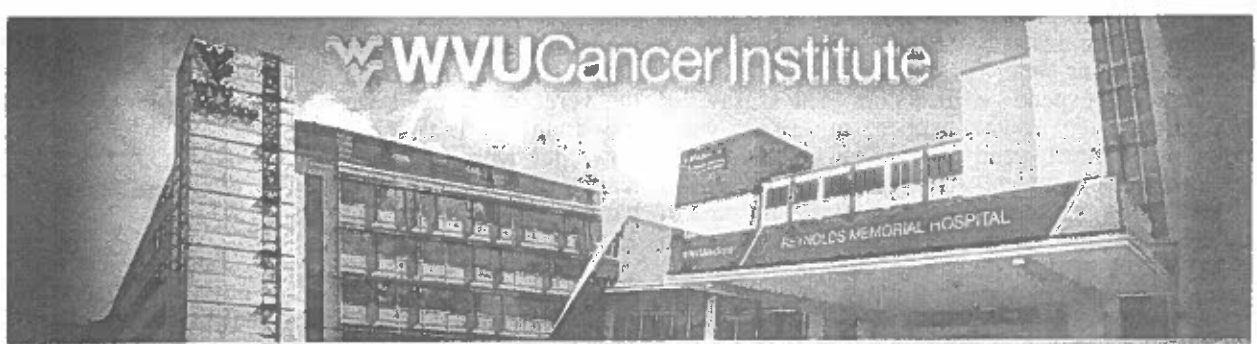
And Bobby Bowden blowing a Backyard Brawl lead of 35-8 at halftime against Pitt in the 1960s had fans grumbling about dismissing him, just as they now are firing Neal Brown and defensive coordinator Jordan Lesley on social media.

What doesn't change is that the coach has to find a way to fix his problems, some of which are in his coaching, some in his players' performance and some of which exist simply in the minds of the players. That may be the priority area to be addressed for WVU as they await Saturday's Big 12 opener at home against Kansas.

These days, teams are armed with strength coaches and nutritionists to aid the physical aspect of recovery, they have the technology to monitor sleep and physical activity, and they have a sports psychologist to help not only the players with whatever mental effects there are but for the coaches on how to handle the matter best.

In those "good old days" a coach like Bear Bryant would get mad and make you practice longer and harder, driving his team in practice, but today this approach has been minimized by both sanity and rules changes, but Neal Brown knows that you can't baby it, either.

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WHEELING HOSPITAL / REYNOLDS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

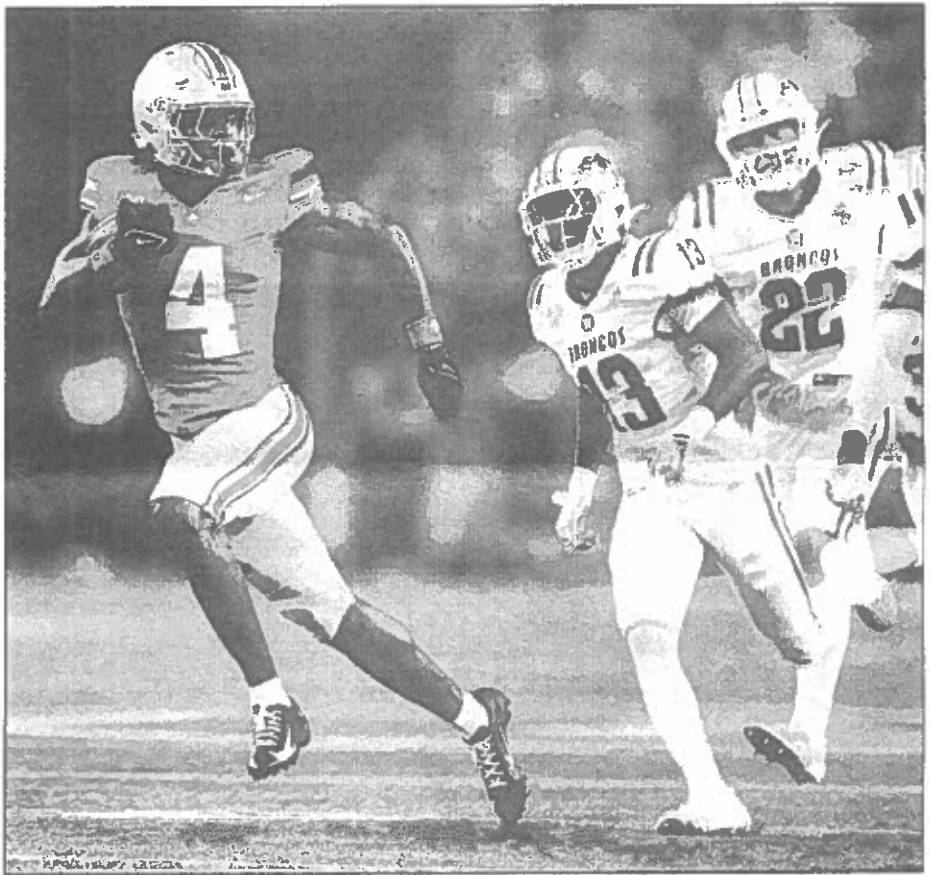
After Week Off, Buckeyes Return To Action vs. Thundering Herd

By **MITCH STACY**
AP Sports Writer
COLUMBUS — No. 3 Ohio State had an unusually early bye last week in the midst of a tune-up schedule that has already seen the Buckeyes outscore opponents by a combined 108-6.

The Buckeyes dropped from No. 2 to No. 3 in the AP poll while other teams were playing more competitive games. And nobody is going to be overly impressed if they cover the 39 1/2-point spread against Marshall of the Sun Belt Conference this Saturday at the Horseshoe.

But Ohio State (2-0) should have all the wrinkles ironed out after walloping Akron and Western Michigan, and then facing the Thundering Herd (1-1) before embarking on a rigorous nine-game Big Ten schedule.

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AP Photo
Ohio State receiver Jeremiah Smith, left, outruns the Western Michigan defense to score a touchdown during the first half of an NCAA college football game Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio.

Union Local Jets Firing On All Cylinders With Two-QB System

By **NICK HENTHORN**
Sports Editor

MORRISTOWN - The old saying goes "If you have two quarterbacks, you have none."

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"We don't necessarily have a QB1," Union Local head coach Bernie Thompson said. "We have two quarterbacks who are going to contribute in their own ways. We made sure that they were aware of that, and we made them aware that although there is someone who will be starting the game, we really don't have a starter."

"Isaiah is the senior, so we'd give him two series - that's how we started the year off, Isaiah would take two series, Colby would take two series. And then we'd kind of go from there based on how the game's going."

The Tomolonis-Carpenter combo has given dual dimensions to the Jets offense, with the pair bringing their own unique strengths to the table whenever one is on the field.

"I think the mindset behind this was just how we could play to their strengths," Thompson said. "Isaiah is an athlete, he's dynamite with the ball in his hands, he uses his legs very well and he's got a big arm. Colby is more of your pocket passer, drop back and distribute the ball."

"We have different strong suits and



Photo by Nick Henthorn

Union Local's Isaiah Tomolonis splits a pair of tacklers on a rush attempt last week against Harrison Central. Tomolonis is one of two quarterbacks for a Jets team that has gotten off to a 4-0 start.

different things we know we're good at," Carpenter said. "We both bring something different to the table and I think that's what makes this work as well as it has been."

What has helped just as much as their skill sets has been their willingness to buy into their roles and pursue winning above all else.

"From week one, they've done a phenomenal job," Thompson said of the two co-existing.

Please see **SYSTEM**, Page 12



Photo by Kim North

Wheeling Central won the OVAC Class 3A Boys Golf championship Thursday at Belmont Hills Country Club in St. Clairsville. The Maroon Knights carded a four-player total of 311, which was three shots better than runner up Linsly. Pictured, from left, are Luke Tiu, assistant coach B.J. Burge; Bode Burge; Jake Brown; Rowen Parker and Gary Hatfield. Tiu earned medalist runner up.

Maroon Knights OVAC Champs; Linsly Cadets Runners-Up

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

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Please see **CHAMPS**, Page 12

Mohigans Win OVAC 5A; Pennybacker All-Conference

By NICK HENTHORN
Sports Editor

WHEELING - For the second straight season, it was the Morgantown Mohigans who came up to Oglebay's Jones Course at the Spiedel Golf Club and left with the gold at the OVAC 5A Golf Championship.

Morgantown finished with a team total of 320, just four strokes fewer than second-place Dover, to secure the top spot in a nine-team field.

Parkersburg South's Parker Vannoy earned medalist honors with a 75

on the Par-71 course University finished third, Parkersburg South finished fourth, and Steubenville finished fifth. Big Red was led by Christopher Elliott, who carded an 80.

Elliott's total was good enough to include him on the All-OVAC team. That team included Elliott, Vannoy, Andrew Sheets (Morgantown), Devon McGlothlin (Dover), Soles Chinn-Kreiner (Morgantown), Ryan Yoder (Dover), Daniel Grabo (University) and Andrew Pennybacker (Wheeling Park).

Pennybacker led the Patriots Thursday, Park finishing in sixth place.

Will Koegler followed him with an 82, Will Fuller shot a 97 and Quinn Marsh shot a 109 to tally a team total of 367.

Warren placed seventh and John Marshall placed eighth. The top four for the Monarchs were Brandt Blake (83), Brayden Kempkens (93), Jasper Murrin (101) and Joshua Elian (113).

Brooke came in at ninth. Their top finisher was Henry Anderson, who shot an 87.

CHAMPS

(Continued from Page 11)

He was followed by Bode Burge who finished sixth with a 78. Jake Brown and Rowen Parker both carded 81s to tie for eighth with Monroe Central's Owen Weckbacher and Barnesville's Graham Spence.

Coach Burge raved about the course conditions.

"It was great for the weather conditions we've had here lately, (Belmont Hills CC Pro) Mr. (Ron) Baker and his staff did such a great job," Burge praised. "They (the OVAC) moved the tournament here because of the poor conditions at Crispin due to the dry weather, and we took advantage of it.

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PAST

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"When you lose, and lose a rivalry game when you were ahead in the final minutes, there's going to be negativity," Brown said on Monday as he began his week of resuscitation. "You just have to process it, own your own mistakes and go about being better."

While fans spend a week griping on social media, players must spend that same week completely differently, building their attitude and confidence back up along with creating a memory of how bad the losing experience is that they will do what is necessary to avoid it this week.

"I'm not going to allow them to be miserable, not going to allow them to hang their heads," Brown said. "We're going to get better."

It is a challenge with Kansas, who has a dynamic quarterback in Jaylon Daniels trying to gain the form he had before being injured last year, and running back Devon Neal, the top career returning Power 4 running back. They are a team that, like WVU, felt itself to be a Big 12 con-

tender this season but also is off to a 1-2 start, facing not only all the challenges the Mountaineers have but must also do it on the road in Morgantown.

The Mountaineer players believe they can turn things around, having done it before. Center Brandon Yates saw it happen in 2022 when WVU had lost four of five games, giving up 40 or more points in three of them and 31 or more in all four losses.

But they won two of the final three games, beating Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

Then in 2021, they lost three in a row, including crushing three-point defeats to Oklahoma and Texas Tech before winning four of the final seven games.

"I think back to 2021 when we lost to Texas Tech," Yates said. "We were expected to win that game and that was a turning point in that season because I feel like if we would have won, it would have changed the season. There were a lot of times after that game when I feel

like we could have turned it around and fixed it."

At Oklahoma State last season, transfer wide receiver Jaden Bray saw the Cowboys lose a non-conference game to South Alabama and then lose the Big 12 opener to Iowa State. The season was on the verge of going down the drain, as is WVU's now, but Mike Gundy's team won 7 of its next 8 games and got to the Big 12 championship.

"That came from not looking at the outside noise and realizing that the only people who knew what was going on were the people that were there every day and out there practicing," Bray explained. "It comes from what type of team we were and what we thought we could achieve."

"It's locking in and making more sacrifices on and off the field," Bray continued. "If we want to get where we really want to be, then we've just got to do the extra."

Of course, it wouldn't hurt if they intercepted a pass or two or, at the very least, covered a receiver.

SYSTEM

(Continued from Page 11)

"They're great teammates, great leaders. They have two different personalities but they both desperately want to win - for each other, for the team. I'm proud of how they've handled navigating this season."

With their different playing styles, it is fitting that the two also have different personalities: Carpenter more stoic, Tomolonis more outgoing.

"Isaiah's the senior here," Thompson said. "He's going to lead us out to the field. The kids know that."

"Colby's a great kid, we call him the stone cold killer. He doesn't show too much emotion."

Results have been positive for both in their quarterbacking co-op. Tomolonis has completed 10 of 16 passes for 151 yards and three touchdowns, while running for 213 yards and two touchdowns at 8.88 yards a pop. He missed week three's game against Indian Creek with an injury. Carpenter has completed 26 of 44 passes for 296 yards, four touchdowns and two interceptions.

Surrounding the pair of quarterbacks are dynamic playmakers in the receiving game and running attack, and an offensive line that has silenced any concerns over replacing multiple starters. In an offense that has averaged 38 points per game, the unit as a whole does not seem to have missed a beat whenever No. 7 and No. 5 swap.

"We have one common goal on offense," Thompson said. "Doesn't matter who the quarterback is, it's to take the ball and get it into the end zone. The guys have gravitated to that kind of plug-and-play style. We've gotten to the point where

a sophomore - had to twice fill in for Tomolonis, who was injured in game one and then again in week six, the latter injury keeping him out the rest of the year.

"Isaiah started the season for us last year, had a couple big games for us," Thompson said. "He played up until week six and ended up breaking his collarbone. Colby came in and actually won that game."

Coming in off the bench in that game vs. unbeaten Weir, Carpenter went 6-6 in the Jet's final drive of the game, throwing a go-ahead 47-yard touchdown pass to Dre Saunders with 90 seconds to play.

"Colby earned a lot of trust that night," Thompson said. "He came in, he won, played the rest of the year and was great, and he was a sophomore then, Isaiah was a junior. Fast-forward to the off-season and now we have two quarterbacks on the roster, both had already proven they could play."

"Ever since then [vs. Weir], he's done a tremendous job at leading the team, completing passes and running the offense," Tomolonis said of Carpenter.

A different coach may have taken the route of simply sitting one of the two, but the Jets' coaches and players embraced the challenge of figuring them both into the offense, knowing the rewards for doing so could be great.

"I think it's been good for the team," Carpenter said. "It makes it hard for a defense, for them to figure out what we're going to do."

and the junior Carpenter taking the occasional words of wisdom from the senior Tomolonis.

"He shows great leadership and he's helped me in so many different ways as a quarterback," Carpenter said of Tomolonis. "We build off of each other in practice and in games."

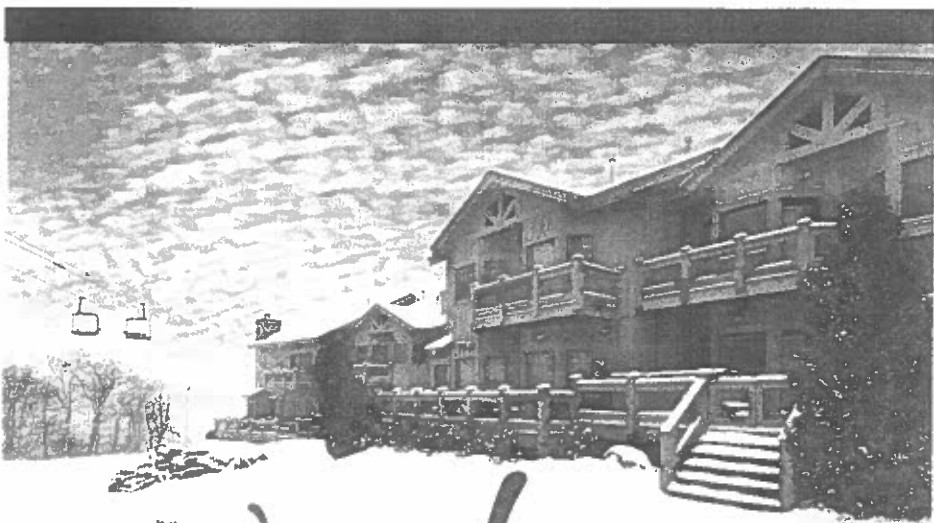
"We do compete a lot at practice," Tomolonis said. "We're always there for each other if we're having a bad practice, we always talk it out. We know each other pretty well, we've been playing ball together since middle school."

Union Local hits the road to take on Shenandoah (2-2) tonight. Thompson expects a tough challenge, one of many as the year goes on.

"We are blessed to have these two kids be the leaders of our team," The sixth-year head coach said. "We're heading into week five now and that's been a big question from the community - who's going to be the quarterback? I was asked that many times over the summer. My answer was always that they're both going to play. We're going to need them down the stretch. Our schedule does not get any easier, actually it gets harder. We're going to need them both at their best."

"Through four weeks we're averaging around 38 points per game, but it's not how you start, it's how you finish. We know that there are going to be tougher opponents and we're going to have to navigate those waters."

Last week at home against Harrison Central, the Jets did not have to do much passing in a 49-13 victory. Both quarterbacks went 3-3 in the air, Tomolonis connecting for two touch-



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Photo by Joe Lovell

River's Lucas Dennis throws a pass deep during the Pilots' game against Martins Ferry. Dennis and River will face Barnesville, on a 30-game regular season win streak, at home on Friday.

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

HANNIBAL - Barnesville and River, who were both regional semifinalists in 2023, will clash for the 37th time on the gridiron Friday night on the artificial surface at Martin Flannery Field, with the Pilots holding a slim, 26-10 edge in the all-time series. Kick off is set for 7 p.m.

However, the Shamrocks have won seven of the last 10 contests, including the three in a row.

Barnesville is streaking along with 30 consecutive regular-season victories, dating back to week 4 of the 2021 sea-

son. It has finished seven of its last 14 games in that streak with a running clock per the OHSAA 30-point mercy-rule, including all four this season as the Shamrocks have outscored its opponents 205 (51.3) to 37 (9.3).

"They are undoubtedly one of the premier teams in the Ohio Valley," veteran River head coach Mike Flannery said. "This will be a challenge for us, but I think our schedule has prepared us for games like this. This (playing a good team) is nothing new for us."

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Page 12

HOME TEAMS

ur team has treated it all!

WVU Medicine
Sports Medicine Team

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CONCUSSIONS / ACLs / BROKEN BONES / MUSCLE TEARS / JOINT PAIN

Wheeling Park Hitting The Road vs. Hawks, Hoping To Build On Big Win

By **NICK HENTHORN**
Sports Editor

WHEELING - When Wheeling Park ships off for a road trip this Friday, it'll be the third road game in four outings for the Patriots. While Park has not stopped at Ken-nywood yet, you could still call their early go-ings a rollercoaster ride.

Coming into the season with new faces at quarterback, running back, and at wide receiver, Park started strong with a win over Parkersburg South. Then, Park was held off the scoreboard against Spring Mills in a 27-0 loss called in the third quarter due to prolonged lightning delays.

Last week, the Patriots took another upward turn with an exciting victory over Musselmen, a game where newly-minted star tailback Brennan Wack broke the school single-game rushing record with 298 yards.

Now, Wheeling Park (2-1) is staring down rival University (1-1), a team that has been a bit



Photo by Nick Henthorn

Wheeling Park quarterback Jay Bordas throws on the run during the Patriots' game against Spring Mills on Sept. 6. Bordas and the Patriots travel to face rival University on Friday.

up-and-down, losing big to Parkersburg South before shutting out Buckhannon-Upshur 49-0 last week.

"Any time you come

off a victory, it's good, and we had a good day of practice yesterday, both sides of the ball," Wheeling Park head coach Chris Daugherty said. "Univer-

sity is always an important game for Wheeling Park and I know it is for them too.

Please see **PARK**, Page 12



Photo by Kim North

Earning all-conference honors during Wednesday's second annual OVAC Girls Golf Tournament at Belmont Hills Country Club in St. Clairsville were, from left, Wheeling Central's Maddie Potts; Edison's Kallie McKeegan; St. Clairsville's medalist runner up Olivia Baker; Morgantown medalist Angela Yao; and Fort Frye's Kohen Coursen.

Second Annual OVAC Girls Golf Tournament Goes To Mohigans

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE - For the first time in school history Morgantown has enough girls to field a golf team, and the Mohigans hit a bulls-eye.

Wednesday during the second annual OVAC Girls Golf Tournament, Morgantown finished atop the 16-team field with a score of 350, which was

23 shots better than Fort Frye, which claimed the inaugural event last year at the Crispin Golf Course inside Oglebay Park.

"This is the first year with enough girls to enter as a team," Morgantown head coach Christian Root said. "This was a target for us. It's been a really exciting year."

Morgantown freshman An-

gela Yao also captured medalist honors over a field of 99 players with a superb 1-under-par 71. That was one stroke ahead of St. Clairsville's Olivia Baker, who was the 2023 medalist.

"Angela has been shooting lights-out all year and she continued that trend today," Root noted.

Please see **OVAC**, Page 12

Walker, Winn Homer, St. Louis Defeats Pirates 10-5

By **WARREN MAYES**
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS - Jordan Walker hit a bases-loaded double to highlight a six-run seventh inning, lifting the St. Louis Cardinals to a 10-5 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Wednesday night in the third game of a four-game series.

"It was a fastball up," Walker said. "It was a pitch I wanted to hit. He gave me a fastball in. I just threw my hands at it and things went my way."

Brendan Donovan hit a two-run homer and Masyn Winn added a solo homer. Nolan Arenado drove in a run, scored twice, had three hits and walked twice.

Billy Cook, who was called up Sept. 8, hit his first big league homer - a three-run blast - for the Pirates, who acquired him from the Orioles at the trade deadline.

"I'm thankful it went out," Cook said. "I just relaxed and it worked out."

Rookie Michael McGreevy (2-0) pitched the final three innings without allowing a run. He struck out four and gave up only two hits. It was first time throwing in relief since 2019 when he was in college at UC Santa Barbara.

"Once I got on the mound, it all felt natural," McGreevy said. "Just attack hitters. When you have a five-run lead, it's just go

get them."

David Bednar (3-8) took the loss. He gave up three runs, two earned, in 1/3 inning in relief.

Pittsburgh starter Jake Woodford faced his former team for the first time and went 4 2/3 innings. He allowed four runs on eight hits with five strikeouts and no walks.

Cardinals starter Sonny Gray pitched 5 2/3 innings, allowing four runs on nine hits. He struck out eight and passed the 200-strikeout mark for the second time in his career. Gray had 205 strikeouts as a member of the Reds in 2019.

"It's a neat feat," Gray said. "It's not easy to do."

Winn got the seventh inning started with a homer to tie the game at 5-5. Bednar left with one out and two men on base. Ivan Herrera, who had three hits, and Lars Nootbaar each drove in a run with bases-loaded singles. Walker cleared the bases with a double down the third-base line, extending the lead to 10-5.

"In that situation, I need to put something in play," Walker said. "I wanted to hit it hard."

The Pirates took a 5-4 lead in the sixth when they chased Gray. After striking out the first two batters, Gray gave up back-to-back singles to Nick Yorke and Jared Triolo.

Please see **HOMER**, Page 12

PARK

(Continued from Page 11)

"It's going to be a tough game on the road, they tend to put their best foot forward at home, and it's a tough place to get a win. We've got to be focused and ready, that's for sure."

Facing their third road trip, Daugherty is seeing the bright side of the bus rides for his squad.

"I think we kind of start to get used to it - having to pack up and take those trips," he said. "I think your team starts to fall into how to prepare for road trips. That's not a bad thing. Love to play at home, but to be a good football team, you have to be able to travel and win and stay focused on those trips. I'll just be thankful it's not three and a half hours this week, it's an hour 15 and we're off the bus, ready to play."

When they do hop off the bus, they'll be tasked with a Hawks team who showed they can score in

bunches last week against the Bucs. In the first half of their previous game, University forced two turnovers and scored six touchdowns. The Hawks defense allowed only 82 total yards of offense.

"They're going to spread you out offensively, sometimes even give you an empty look," Daugherty said. "Defensively they've made a little bit of a change. They'd been a 4-2-5 for awhile now, and now they've changed to a 3-3-5. We've already played against a 3-3-5 once this year. That gives us a little bit of an advantage when we're getting ready for this game. It's always a tough place to win down there, always a tough game for us. We know that they're going to play hard and we know we're going to get their best shot."

While the Patriots may not be expecting another 300 yards rushing from

their running back, they would like to see their still-growing offense of Wack (527 rushing yards, six TDs), quarterback Jay Bordas (364 passing yards, 58.5% completion, five TDs, one interception), and pass-catchers Kollin Wiley (seven catches, 99 yards, two TDs), Owen Dobrzynski-Hines (five catches, 118 yards, one TD) and Jameson Maynard (eight catches, 103 yards, two TDs) build upon last week's success.

"We've been talking a lot about getting a little bit better each week, building off of each week and being a little bit more consistent," Daugherty said. "We were more consistent, both up front and in the backfield, which led to Brennan having a huge game. We want to continue that, but we still have things to fix. We still have areas to grow. Hopefully we add to what we did last week."

CADETS

(Continued from Page 11)

"I'm very impressed with them this year," Depew said of Bridgeport. "We've seen them once and preparing for them is difficult, because what they do offensively is unique and it's also forceful. No matter what they were doing schematically, the way they play is what makes them a strong team."

"They are an unbalanced single-wing offense. They appear to be very one-dimensional but the reality is with all the deception in their offense and the excellence with which they execute, it's far from a one-dimensional offense. They choose to run it, they throw it when they'd like to, they throw to keep you off-balance. They're very good at what you do and it really makes you defend every gap that they present as an offense. Their defense is playing very well, they haven't given up a point yet, we're well aware of that. Their offense and defense really complements each other really well - I would argue that their offense has as much

to do with the shutouts as the defense."

As for the Cadets, quarterback Braden Wade, along with top receivers Ramello Derr and Jaxon Murray, and top tailbacks Simon Hamp and Brody Cottrill, will look to put together a clean game and get some points against the so-far impregnable Bridgeport defense.

"On the offensive side of the ball I think we are executing better," Depew said. "We still make some basic mistakes but they are becoming fewer and fewer. I want to see us improve on our execution, and obviously score some points. It's a big deal when you're facing a team that hasn't given up a point yet. I think it inspires us to find ways to score on them. We find ways to score a couple times on them, get some stops on defense, you might have Bridgeport starting to question how this game's going to go."

Depew wants to see more from his defense as well.

"The biggest deficiency that we recognized over

the first three weeks was probably in our tackling," Depew said. "We're starting quite a few young kids, several freshmen. It takes a little while when you first start playing high school football to gain enough confidence in yourself to be physical and make plays. We are getting better, we definitely saw progress from weeks two to three. We'll have a lot of opportunities to tackle because they're going to run it a lot."

While he is looking for improvement out of his players, Depew is also looking forward to seeing them play in front of a home crowd.

"We definitely are excited to stay in town, and most importantly to have our fanbase," the long-time Cadet coach said. "We will travel well up to West Liberty, we will have a lot more students at the game."

"It'll be really nice to be in our hometown, have kids in the stands, we'll have our band there. It'll feel more like a welcoming environment for our kids, that's for sure."

OVAC

(Continued from Page 11)

"I've been really, really pleased with her play and I'm excited to have her on our team."

This was the first time Yao had played the 18-hole layout in eastern Ohio.

"It was pretty hilly, but it was in very good condition," Yao said of the course. "I didn't have any expectations when I came here, except to have fun and I did."

Besides Yao, other Mohican scorers were Evyn Trembush (88), Kayleigh Kellogg (89) and Claire

Keudzerski (103). The fifth member of the team was Caroline Keudzerski (105).

Root said two of his players played 18 holes for the first time ever in a tournament.

"Very pleased. All of the girls have been putting in the work that you need to be successful."

Angela shooting under-par is amazing," Root added. "Evyn, another frosh, shot a personal best. It was fun to watch them."

In addition to Yao and Baker, also earning

all-conference laurels were Wheeling Central's Maddie Potts (81), Edison's Kallie McKeegan (81) and Fort Frye's Kohen Coursen (83).

The tournament was moved from Crispin this year due to course conditions.

Columbiana finished third at 387, with Edison (402) and Marietta (406) rounding out the top 5. John Marshall (408) was sixth, St. Clairsville (412) seventh, Wheeling Central (415) eighth, Warren Local (428) ninth and

Career.

"We just weren't able to complete it," Pittsburgh manager Derek Shelton said. "Billy came through in a big situation there. We just weren't able to hold on."

St. Louis jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the second inning when Donovan hit a two-run homer into the right field seats after Arenado led off with a single.

The Cardinals added two runs in the third inning. Paul Goldschmidt tripled to right field with two outs, scoring Alec Burleson. The triple, his first since Aug. 27, 2021, snapped an 0 for 10 slump. Goldschmidt then came home on a bloop single by Arenado.

Pittsburgh struck for two runs on four hits and a sacrifice fly in the fourth to cut the St. Louis lead in half to 4-2.

St. Louis manager Oliver Marmol was ejected in the bottom of the fourth inning for arguing balls and strikes. It was his National League-leading sixth early exit this season and 15th in his career. Hitting coach Turner Ward also

STREAK

(Continued from Page 11)

Three of the Pilots' (1-3) four opponents - North Robinson Colonel Crawford (3-1); Martins Ferry (3-1) and Monroe Central (4-0) - have a combined won-loss mark of 10-2, with both of the losses coming just last week.

"We're hoping to get some kids healthy," Flannery noted. "When Peyton (Blue) went down a couple of weeks ago with another season-ending injury (broken foot), our playbook certainly shrank. Not only was a big, talented kid, he brought a lot of intelligence to the field. He was a big loss for us."

Lucas Dennis had a lot to do with River finally getting on the winning side of the ledger last week in a 48-20 win at cross-river rival Magnolia. The senior ran for four touchdowns and 266 yards, while also returning a punt for another TD.

Flannery is hoping for the same type of performance this week, but knows it will be hard to duplicate.

"He needs to eat what he ate last week. He needs to think what he thought last week. He needs to sleep like he slept last week and we'll hope for the same results," Flannery said.

When asked how the Pilots could slow down the high-scoring Shamrocks, Flannery offered, "not show up or maybe play with 15 guys. I don't really know. Barnesville

does a great job on both sides of the ball. They've got great coaches and they deserve all the recognition they get."

Barnesville is senior-laden with some youth sprinkled in here and there. It has rolled past nemesis Fort Frye (51-16); Bellaire (50-6); Buckeye Trail (47-8) and Buckeye Local (57-7). Those four are a combined 10-6, with Buckeye Local having half of the setbacks.

"I am absolutely proud of how focused the kids were last week," Barnesville head coach Blake Allen said. "We (the coaching staff) have been preaching that we needed to get off to a fast start on the road after a couple of big wins at home. We took control early on and never let up."

"Our defense made a couple of plays (interceptions by Casey Carpenter and Cole Francis) that gave us possession deep in Buckeye Local territory and we capitalized."

While Carpenter and Company have been piling up the points, the veteran offensive line is the main reason.

"I truly can't say enough about those guys. We're blessed to have this group that has grown together," Allen stressed. "They are the heart and soul of our team, and we finally have some depth up front."

He was referring to seniors Marshall Meade, Braden Butler, Luke

Triple-A Indianapolis to start Wednesday's game in St. Louis.

Cardinals: Recalled McGreevy from Triple-A Memphis.

TRAINING ROOM

Pirates: RHP Kyle Nicolas (left oblique strain) has been placed on the 15-day injured list, retroactive to Tuesday. ... SS Oneil Cruz (left ankle) remains day to day since leaving Sunday's game.

Cardinals: RHP Lance Lynn (right knee inflammation) placed on the 15-day injured list to end his season. The Cardinals hold a team option on Lynn for next season.

UP NEXT

Pirates: RHP Luis Ortiz (6-6, 3.45) will be making his 14th start and 36th appearance of the season.

Cardinals: RHP Erick Fedde (8-9, 3.45) has had two starts against Pittsburgh with both coming in 2022 while he was pitching for the Washington Nationals. He won both games.



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Bethany at Carnegie Mellon Sunday
PRO FOOTBALL
 LA Chargers at Pittsburgh NY Giants at Cleveland
 Monday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Washington at Cincinnati

Carnegie Mellon 21-0 Sunday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Pittsburgh 21-18 Cleveland 21-18
 Monday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Cincinnati 35-20

Carnegie Mellon 42-21 Sunday
PRO FOOTBALL
 LA Chargers 27-24 Cleveland 32-12
 Monday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Cincinnati 28-14

Carnegie Mellon 55-3 Sunday
PRO FOOTBALL
 LA Chargers 23-20 Cleveland 24-19
 Monday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Cincinnati 29-23

Carnegie Mellon 35-7 Sunday, Sept. 22
PRO FOOTBALL
 Pittsburgh 17-14 Cleveland 20-13
 Monday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Cincinnati 24-14

Carnegie Mellon 30-20 Sunday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Pittsburgh 15-9 Cleveland 18-12
 Monday
PRO FOOTBALL
 Cincinnati 28-17

LOCAL SCHEDULE

(all events begin at 5:30 p.m. unless noted)
Thursday, Sept. 19
BOYS SOCCER
 Belpre at Monroe Central
 Wheeling Park at John Marshall, 6 p.m.
 St. Clairsville at Steubenville, 6 p.m.
 Weir at Harrison Central, 6 p.m.
 Wheeling Central at Trinity Christian, 7 p.m.
GIRLS SOCCER
 Wheeling Park at Weir, 6 p.m.
 Steubenville Catholic at Indian Creek, 7 p.m.
GOLF
 OVAC Class AAA Boys Tournament at Crispin GC, 9 a.m.
 Buckeye Local and Edison at BecWood Hills GC, 3:30 p.m.
VOLLEYBALL
 Bellaire at Union Local
 Monroe Central at Barnesville
 Buckeye Local at Caldwell
 Harrison Central at Indian Creek
 River at Magnolia
 Shadyside at Shenandoah
 Weir at Linsly
 Hurricane and Wheeling Park at Morgantown, 6 p.m.
 Valley at Hundred, 6 p.m.

FOOTBALL CARD

(all games start at 7 p.m. unless noted)
WEEK FIVE
Thursday, Sept. 19
PREP FOOTBALL
 Oak Glen at Toronto
Friday, Sept. 20
PREP FOOTBALL
 Belpre at Beallsville
 Dover at Steubenville
 Indian Creek at Brooke
 Monroe Central at Buckeye Local
 Bellaire at Cambridge
 Magnolia at Cameron
 Bridgeport at Conotton Valley
 Union Local at Shenandoah
 Caldwell at Edison
 Bridgeport (WV) at Linsly
 John Marshall at Washington
 Martins Ferry at Brownsville, Pa.
 St. Clairsville at East Liverpool
 Harrison Central at Fort Frye
 Valley at Frontier
 Webster County at Madonna
 Gonnellsville, Pa. at Morgantown
 Barnesville at River
 United at Southern Local
 Wheeling Park at University
 Wheeling Central at Midland
 Trail
 Buckeye Trail at Indian Valley
 Wellsville at Leetonia
Saturday, Sept. 21
PREP FOOTBALL
 Portsmouth ND at Shadyside, noon
 Montcalm at Paden City, 1 p.m.
 Harding at Steubenville Catholic, 1 p.m.
COLLEGE FOOTBALL
 West Liberty at W.Va. State, TBD
 Kansas at WVU, noon
 Marshall at Ohio State, noon
 Bethany at Carnegie Mellon

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL
CHICAGO CUBS — Reinstated LHP Justin Steele and RHP Jorge Lopez from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Daniel Palencia and Jack Neely to Iowa (IL).
CINCINNATI REDS — Placed LHP Brandon Williamson on the 15-day IL. Recalled LHP Brandon Leibrandt from Louisville (IL).
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Placed RHP Kyle Nicolas on the 15-day IL, retroactive to Sept. 17. Transferred RHP Ben Heller to the 60-day IL. Selected the contract of RHP Jake Woodford.
FOOTBALL
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed TE Matt Sokol and WR Jaray Jenkins to the practice squad. Signed TE Rod Williams to the active roster. Placed WR Ben Skowronek on injured reserve.

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE								
East Division					Central Division			
W	L	Pct	GB	WCGB	L10	Str	Home	Away
New York	88	63	.583	—	7-3	W-2	42-33	46-30
Baltimore	84	68	.553	4½	2-8	L-3	42-35	42-33
Boston	76	76	.500	12½	4	4-6	W-1	35-40
Tampa Bay	74	78	.487	14½	6	4-6	L-1	38-39
Toronto	72	80	.474	16½	8	5-5	L-2	38-37

NATIONAL LEAGUE								
East Division					Central Division			
W	L	Pct	GB	WCGB	L10	Str	Home	Away
Philadelphia	91	61	.599	—	6-4	L-1	52-26	39-35
New York	84	68	.553	7	6-4	W-3	43-34	41-34
Atlanta	82	70	.539	9	2	5-5	W-1	42-33
Washington	68	84	.447	23	16	4-6	L-3	36-39
Miami	56	96	.368	35	28	3-7	L-1	29-48

OVAC GOLF

Girls Tournament (at Belmont Hills CC, par 71)
 1. Morgantown 350
 Angela Yao 34-36 70; Evyn Trembush 46-42 88; Kayleigh Kellogg 40-49 89; Claire Keudzerki 50-53 103
 2. Fort Frye 373
 Kohney Coursen 40-43 83; Denay Layton 39-47 86; Faith Treadway 51-50 101; Adeline Willey 52-51 103
 3. Columbiana 387
 Hailey Muntean 44-47 91; Ellie Jackson 49-47 96; Maddie Jackson 49-50 99; Hannah Moffett 49-52 101
 4. Edison 402
 Kallie McKeegan 40-41 81; Bella Evans 48-49 97; Katie Phillips 53-53 107; Gwen Stine 57-60 117
 5. Marietta 406
 Jillian Elliot 43-50 93; Claire Billi 46-53 99; Kenadee Strauss 538-48 106; Madi Dettorro 54-54 108
 6. John Marshall 408
 Kianna Garrison 44-44 88; Jocelyn Blatt 51-47 98; Peyton Jones 57-52 109; Alexis Thayer 56-57 113
 7. St. Clairsville 412
 Olivia Baker 35-36 71; Alaina Schumacher 48-50 98; Hailey Swierkos 60-61 121; Sidney Wallace 62-60 122
 8. Wheeling Central 415
 Maddie Potts 43-38 81; Kaila Blatt 51-57 108; Olivia Blatt 53-58 111; Quinn Yoders 49-

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East			South			
W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Buffalo	2	0	0	1,000	65	38
Miami	1	1	0	.500	30	48
NYJ	1	1	0	.500	43	49
N. Eng.	1	1	0	.500	36	33

OHIO FOOTBALL PLAYOFF RATINGS

OHSAA Football Computer Ratings — Sept. 18, 2024 (Entering Week 5)

Top 16 schools from each region in the final report Oct. 27 will qualify for the playoffs.

Division III
 Region 11 — 1. Columbus Bishop Watterson (4-0) 10.8, 2. The Plains Athens (4-0) 8.2, 3. Steubenville (4-0) 8.1263, 4. Dover (3-1) 7.85, 5. Dresden Tri-Valley (4-0) 7.35, 6. Granville (4-0) 7.025, 7. Jackson (3-1) 6.5, 8. Circleville (3-1) 6.275, 9. Newark Licking Valley (3-1) 5.775, 10. Cols. Bishop Hartley (3-1) 5.525, 11. Carroll Bloom-Carroll (3-1) 5.5, 12. Wintersville Indian Creek (3-1) 4.7601, 13. New Philadelphia (2-2) 4.65, 14. Vincent Warren (3-1) 4.325, 15. Cols. Eastmoor Acad. (2-2) 4.3, 16. New Concord John Glenn (3-1) 4.125, 17. Cols. West (3-1) 4.1, 18. Marietta (3-1) 3.75, 19. Delaware Buckeye Valley (2-2) 3.7, 20. Carrollton (2-2) 3.625

Division IV
 Region 15 - 1. Indian Valley (4-0) 9.25, 2. St. Clairsville (4-0) 7.975, 3. New Lexington (4-0) 7.75, 4. Circleville Logan Elm (3-1) 6.1, 5. Chillicothe Unioto (3-1) 6, 6. Waverly (3-1) 5.45, 7. Cols. East (3-1) 4.9091, 8. Canton South (2-2) 4.775, 9. Fairfield Union (2-2) 4.15, 10. West Holmes (2-2) 3.675, 11. Jonathan Alder (2-2) 3.275, 12. Philo (2-2) 2.875, 13. Hebron Lakewood (1-3) 1.975, 14. Heath (1-3) 1.95, 15. East Liverpool (1-3) 1.8, 15t. Maysville (1-3) 1.8, 15t. Williamsport Westfall (1-3) 1.8, 18. Vinton County (1-3) 1.625

Monday's Game
 Atlanta 22, Philadelphia 21
Thursday, Sept. 19
 New England at N.Y. Jets, 8:15 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 22
 Chicago at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
 Denver at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
 Green Bay at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
 Houston at Minnesota, 1 p.m.
 L.A. Chargers at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
 N.Y. Giants at Cleveland, 1 p.m.
 Philadelphia at New Orleans, 1 p.m.
 Carolina at Las Vegas, 4:05 p.m.
 Miami at Seattle, 4:05 p.m.
 Baltimore at Dallas, 4:25 p.m.
 Detroit at Arizona, 4:25 p.m.
 San Francisco at L.A. Rams, 4:25 p.m.
 Kansas City at Atlanta, 8:20 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 23
 Jacksonville at Buffalo, 7:30 p.m.
 Washington at Cincinnati, 8:15 p.m.

AP Top 25
 The Top 25 teams in The Associated Press college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Sep. 14, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote, and previous ranking:

Rank	Team	Record	Pts	Prv
1	Texas (35)	3-0	1540	2
2	Georgia (23)	3-0	1518	1
3	Ohio St. (5)	2-0	1461	3
4	Alabama	3-0	1358	4
5	Mississippi	3-0	1316	5
6	Tennessee	3-0	1188	7
7	Missouri	3-0	1127	6
8	Miami	3-0	1094	10
9	Oregon	3-0	1093	9
10	Penn St.	2-0	1050	8
11	S.Cal	2-0	1008	11
12	Utah	3-0	912	12
13	Kansas St.	3-0	836	14
14	Okl. St.	3-0	742	13
15	Oklahoma	3-0	649	15
16	LSU	2-1	537	16
17	Notre D.	2-1	477	18
18	Michigan	2-1	447	17
19	Louisville	2-0	418	19
20	Iowa St.	2-0	354	21
21	Clemson	1-1	291	22
22	Nebraska	3-0	266	23
23	N. Illinois	2-0	151	25
24	Illinois	3-0	137	-
25	Texas A&M	2-1	82	-

HORSE RACING
 FS2 — NYRA: America's Day at the Races
 4:30 p.m.
 FS2 — NYRA: America's Day at the Races
MLB BASEBALL
 1 p.m.
 MLBN — Regional Coverage: San Francisco at Baltimore OR Minnesota at Cleveland
 4 p.m.
 MLBN — Regional Coverage: N.Y. Yankees at Seattle OR Toronto at Texas (2:35 p.m.)
 7 p.m.
 FOX — Regional Coverage: Arizona at Milwaukee OR Philadelphia at N.Y. Mets
NFL FOOTBALL
 8:15 p.m.
 PRIME VIDEO — New England at N.Y. Jets
SOCCER (MEN'S)
 2:55 p.m.
 CBSN — UEFA Champions League: RB Leipzig at Atletico Madrid
SOCCER (WOMEN'S)
 7 p.m.
 CBSN — CONCACAF Champions Cup Stage: Monterrey at Gotham NJ/NY, Group A
TENNIS
 6 a.m.
 TENNIS — Seoul-WTA, Hua Hin-WTA and Hangzhou-ATP Early Rounds
 1 p.m.
 TENNIS — Laver Cup Draw Show

SPORTS

B

Thursday,
September 18, 2024

Photo by KIM NORTH

EARNING ALL-CONFERENCE honors during Wednesday's second annual OVAC Girls Golf Tournament at Belmont Hills Country Club in St. Clairsville were, from left, Wheeling Central's Maddie Potts; Edison's Kallie McKeegan; St. Clairsville's medalist runner up Olivia Baker; Morgantown medalist Angela Yao; and Fort Frye's Kohen Coursen.

Local high school girls golf teams compete in OVAC tournament

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

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Also placing were Brooke (455), Caldwell (459), Beaver Local (462), Wheeling Park (475), River (491) and Weir High (541).

East Liverpool, Martins Ferry and University only had three players each, while Monroe Central and Shadyside had two each. Barnesville, Frontier, Harrison Central, Heartland Christian, Oak Glen, Union Local and Wellsville had one each.

Eli Manning leads group of 1st-time eligible nominees for Pro Football Hall of Fame

TWO-TIME SUPER Bowl MVP Eli Manning, former Defensive Players of the Year Luke Kuechly and Terrell Suggs, and postseason kicking hero Adam Vinatieri are among the players nominated for the 2025 Pro Football Hall of Fame class in their first year of eligibility.

The Hall announced 167 modern era candidates for the class on Wednesday that included 16 players who became eligible this year, including two-time All-Pro guard Marshal Yanda.

A screening committee will reduce the list of nominees to 50 players

There will also be three senior candidates, grouped with one coach and contributor with at least one and no more than three of those finalists getting in based on voting.

The other first-year candidates are offensive linemen Travis Frederick, Ryan Kalil and Joe Staley; running backs Darren Sproles and Marshawn Lynch; receiver Demaryius Thomas; tight ends Vernon Davis and Delanie Walker; and defensive backs Antoine Bethea, Aqib Talib and Earl Thomas.

There are also 10 players back under consideration who were finalists a year ago with tight end

into the Hall following a standout career with the New York Giants. Manning was picked first overall in the 2004 draft and spent his entire career in New York. He led the Giants to an upset win over the undefeated New England Patriots in the Super Bowl following the 2007 season, throwing a game-winning TD pass to Plaxico Burress in the final minute.

Kuechly and Suggs were among the top defensive players of their era with Kuechly selected as the top defensive player in 2013 and Suggs in 2011.

Over his eight-year

He won Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2003 and helped the Ravens win the Super Bowl in the 2012 season. He finished his career in Kansas City where he helped the Chiefs win the Super Bowl in the 2019 season.

Vinatieri was one of the most clutch kickers in NFL history, making the game-winning field goals in the first two Super Bowl titles during New England's dynasty.

Vinatieri is the NFL's all-time leader in points (2,673) and made field goals (599) over a 24-year career with New England and Indianapolis. He also leads all players with 56

Homers from Winn and Donovan lead Cardinals to 10-5 win over Pirates

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Jordan Walker hit a bases-loaded double to highlight a six-run seventh inning, lifting the St. Louis Cardinals to a 10-5 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Wednesday night in the third game of a four-game series.

Brendan Donovan hit a two-run homer and Masyn Winn added a solo homer. Nolan Arenado drove in a run, scored twice, had three hits and walked twice.

Billy Cook, who was called up Sept. 8, hit his first big league homer — a three-run blast — for the Pirates, who acquired him from the Orioles at the trade deadline.

Rookie Michael McGreevy (2-0) pitched the final three innings without allowing a run. He struck out four and gave up only two hits.

David Bednar (3-8) took the loss, giving up three runs, two earned, in 1/3 inning in relief.

Pittsburgh starter Jake Woodford faced his former team for the first time and went 4 2/3 innings. He allowed four runs on eight hits with five strikeouts and no walks.

Cardinals starter Sonny Gray pitched 5 2/3 innings, allowing four runs on nine hits. He struck out eight and passed the 200-strikeout mark for the season.

Winn got the seventh inning started with a homer to tie the game at 5-5. Bednar left with one out and two men on base. Ivan Herrera, who had three hits, and Lars Nootbaar each drove in a run with bases-loaded singles. Walker cleared the bases with a double down the third-base line, extending the lead to 10-5.

The Pirates took a 5-4 lead in the sixth when they chased Gray. After striking out the first two batters, Gray gave up back-to-back singles to Nick Yorke and Jared Triolo. Matthew Liberatore came in and gave up a home run to right center on the first pitch to Cook for the first RBIs of his career.

St. Louis jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the second inning when Donovan hit a two-run homer into the right field seats after Arenado led off with a single.

The Cardinals added two runs in the third inning. Paul Goldschmidt tripled to right field with two outs, scoring Alec Burleson. The triple, his first this season, snapped an 0 for 10 slump. Goldschmidt then came home on a bloop single by Arenado.

Pittsburgh struck for two runs on four hits and a sacrifice fly in the fourth to cut the St. Louis lead in half to 4-2.

See **PIRATES**, Page B4

Rocchio's single gives Guardians a 5-4 win over Twins

CLEVELAND (AP) — Brayan Rocchio singled in Andres Gimenez with the winning run as the AL Central-leading Cleveland Guardians scored three times in the 10th inning to beat the Minnesota Twins 5-4 on Wednesday night, reducing their magic number for clinching a playoff berth to one.

Kyle Manzardo and Will Brennan had RBI singles off Ronny Henriquez (1-1) before Michael Tonkin entered and gave up Rocchio's second career walk-off hit, a chopper to right through a drawn-in infield.

Josh Naylor hit a pair of solo homers and scored three times for Cleveland, which leads the division by 5 1/2 games over Kansas City. Naylor's first shot was a 445-foot rocket to right-center, giving him his first 30-homer season.

Carlos Correa had a two-run single off Hunter Gaddis (5-3) that gave the Twins a 4-2 lead in the top of the 10th. Correa finished with four RBIs and extended his hitting streak to 16 games, matching his career high with Houston in 2019.

Minnesota entered the night with a 1 1/2-game lead over Detroit for the final AL wild-card position.

Twins right-hander Bailey Ober struck out a career-high 12 over seven innings, but remained winless in seven starts since Aug. 9. He allowed two runs without issuing a walk.

Guardians starter Tanner Bibee worked 6 2/3 innings and gave up two runs. The right-hander is 2-0

hits and struck out five. Lynn is 9-0 over his last 21 starts at Busch, where he pitched for the Cardinals from 2011-17 before rejoining St. Louis this season. His last loss in the Cardinals' ballpark came on July 4, 2017, against Miami.

The Cardinals (76-75) are seven games out of the final NL wild card spot with 11 games remaining.

Ryan Fernandez pitched a scoreless seventh inning, and Matthew Liberatore retired three straight batters after surrendering a double to Nick Gonzales and a single to Bryan Reynolds to lead off the eighth.

Ryan Helsley pitched a scoreless ninth for his NL-leading 45th save in 49 chances.

Bailey Falter (8-8) allowed two

five games.

Luken Baker had an RBI triple for the Cardinals in the third, and Walker put St. Louis ahead 2-1 in the fourth when he hit a 3-2 pitch from Falter into the left-field bleachers. Walker has four homers this season, all since he was recalled from Triple-A Memphis on Aug. 30.

Nolan Arenado had a sacrifice fly in

Kyle Nicolas was still feeling upper back soreness after departing Monday night's game after facing just one batter, manager Derek Shelton said.

UP NEXT

RHP Sonny Gray (13-9, 3.75 ERA) was set to start for the Cardinals Wednesday night in the third game of the four-game series. The Pirates had not named a starter.



Photo by KIM NORTH

THE ALL-OVAC Class 4A golf team is pictured. From left, are Harrison Central's Nash Roberts and St. Clairsville's foursome of Andrew Abel, Evan Fix, Brodi Foster and Maverick Malin.

St. C. wins OVAC crown

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The Trent Jones-designed Golf Course at Speidel Golf Club inside Oglebay Park was unforgiving Tuesday as 47 OVAC Class 4A golfers tried their luck on the spacious par-72 layout.

Of that total, just one — St. Clairsville's Brodi Foster — managed to shoot under 80. The left-handed senior carded a 79 to earn medalist honors and lead the Red Devils to their fourth consecutive conference championship.

"It wasn't a bad round. It was definitely playing hard out there," Foster said of his 18-hole round. "Shooting 79 isn't really good, but I guess it was today."

Foster said he played the last five holes at 1-over par.

"If you know the Jones Course, the last five holes are probably the hardest," Foster explained. "I'm glad I finished strong."

The Red Devils' Evan Fix was med-

alist runner up, shooting an 81. Also earning all-conference honors was St. Clairsville's Mavrik Malin and Andrew Abel with 84 and 87, respectively, while Harrison Central's Nash Roberts finished at 95. Malin won the Buckeye 8 title earlier this season. Abel was the OVAC 4A medalist a year ago. Those five, along St. Clairsville's Ethan Turner (88) who didn't figure in the Red Devils team score, were the only ones to shoot under 90 on the day. Eleven players finished under 100.

"It definitely could have been better," Fix said of his 18 holes. "I kind of had to ground it out and throw a score down, but it definitely wasn't the worst or as bad as it could have been."

St. Clairsville shot a team score of 331, which was 56 strokes ahead of second-place Weir High. Beaver Local was third (391), followed by Indian Creek (419), Edison (422), Cambridge (424), Buckeye Local (429), Oak Glen (444), Harrison Central (445) and East Liverpool (464).

"We were pretty confident coming into today. We've been over here to the Jones Course a lot in the last month," St. Clairsville coach Ryan Clifford said. "We've got a pretty good understanding of the course, but our scores are always higher here because the course is really hard. To have all five guys under 90 is really a testament to how hard they've worked all year."

"There weren't many low scores today." This is the second conference title the Red Devils have won for the fourth consecutive year, capturing the Buckeye 8 earlier this year at the Steubenville Country Club.

"Winning this four straight times is what these seniors deserve for all the work they've put in during their careers," Clifford added. "This is nice, but we've got bigger goals ahead, starting Monday at the Cadiz Country Club."

He was referring to the Ohio Division II sectional tournament.

"It's an exciting time of year, for sure."



Photo by KIM NORTH

ST. CLAIRSVILLE captured its fourth straight OVAC Class 4A Golf title Tuesday on the Trent Jones-designed course at Speidel Golf Club inside Oglebay Park. The Red Devils shot 331 to win by 56 strokes over Weir. Team members, from left, are head coach Ryan Clifford, medalist Brodi Foster, Ethan Turner, Andrew Abel, Evan Fix and Mavrik Malin.

Twins down Guardians to stay locked in wild-card spot

CLEVELAND (AP) — Willi Castro hit a two-run homer. Matt Wallner had two RBIs and the Minnesota Twins bounced back from a crushing loss in the series opener to beat the Cleveland Guardians 4-1 on Tuesday night and stay locked into the final AL wild card.

Castro connected in the eighth inning, and both of Wallner's RBI singles came off Gavin Williams (3-10).



AP Photo

MINNESOTA TWINS' Byron Buxton scores behind Cleveland Guardians catcher Bo Naylor, right, in the fifth inning of a baseball game in Cleveland.

Guardians Clase breaking bats, records, making strong case to win AL Cy Young

CLEVELAND (AP) — Emmanuel Clase is breaking bats and records at an almost equal rate.

He's become baseball's grim reaper, the cream of the closer crop. Cleveland's right-hander with a devilish cut fastball not seen since Hall of Famer Mariano Rivera's dominant days with the New York Yankees is having a season to remember.

Maybe one that includes winning the Cy Young, a rarity for relievers.

On Monday night, Clase earned his MLB-leading 46th save — his 33rd straight since May 20 to tie Jose Mesa's single-season team record — as the Guardians inched closer to an unexpected AL Central title by rallying for a

place in the majors where if the bullpen door in right field swings open in the ninth inning, it's game over.

It's been that way all season. Guardians second baseman Andres Gimenez knows the drill. Once he hears Clase's entrance song blaring through the ballpark's sound system and sees his teammate jogging across the outfield grass with his braided, colored hair bouncing out of the back of his cap, there's only one thing left to do.

"I feel like I'm going to go home early," Gimenez said. "Honestly, it's been absolutely incredible this year, and in the last three years. It's just unbelievable, winning 40 games each year."

Steelers sticking with Justin Fields while Wilson rehabs injury

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Justin Fields will likely make his third straight start at quarterback when the Pittsburgh Steelers host the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday.

Coach Mike Tomlin said Tuesday that Fields will practice with the starters during the early portion of the week while Russell Wilson continues to rehab from a calf injury he aggravated a few days ahead of the season opener earlier this month.

Tomlin said there has been no change in Wilson's status. The nine-time Pro Bowler was limited in practice last week and while Wilson said he believes he is getting closer to a return, the Steelers are planning to have Fields play against the unbeaten Chargers (2-0).

Tomlin declined to answer questions on whether Fields has supplanted Wilson as the full-time starter, saying any discussion was hypothetical because Wilson has been unavailable.

Fields has played mistake-free while helping guide the Steelers to their first 2-0 start since 2020. He has yet to throw an interception and has used his legs to extend plays and convert third downs while developing a quick rapport with wide receiver George Pickens.

"He loves to compete," Tomlin said of Fields. "He's got a quiet confidence about him. He doesn't change in environments. There's a clarity in his communication and his response to communications that's really comfortable."

At one point during Sunday's victory over Denver, Tomlin pulled Fields aside and tasked him with giving a pep talk to an offense that struggled to move the ball in the second half.

"I asked him to do it in his own voice, in his own words," Tomlin said. "Those are some of the things you ask the quarterback to do. It's just really good to be in a game circumstance and get an opportunity to work together as coaches and leaders (do)."

While Wilson is likely out, Tomlin said left guard Isaac Seumalo "might be closer" to returning. The veteran has missed Pittsburgh's first two games with a pectoral injury, with Spencer Anderson filling in capably.

See FIELDS, Page B2



Photo by Kim North

St. Clairsville captured its fourth straight OVAC Class 4A Golf title Tuesday on the Trent Jones-designed course at Speidel Golf Club inside Oglebay Park. The Red Devils shot 331 to win by 56 strokes over Weir. Team members, from left, are head coach Ryan Clifford, medalist Brodi Foster, Ethan Turner, Andrew Abel, Ena Fix and Mavrik Malin.

St. Clairsville Captures Fourth Straight Conference Crown

By **KIM NORTH**
Staff Writer

WHEELING - The Trent Jones-designed Golf Course at Speidel Golf Club inside Oglebay Park was unforgiving Tuesday as 47 OVAC Class 4A golfers tried their luck on the spacious par-72 layout.

Of that total, just one - St. Clairsville's Brodi Foster - managed to shoot under 80. The left-handed senior carded a 79 to earn medalist honors and lead the Red Devils to their fourth consecutive conference championship.

"It wasn't a bad round. It was definitely playing hard out there," Foster said of his 18-hole round. "Shooting 79 isn't really good, but I guess it was today."

Foster said he played the last five holes at 1-over par. "If you know the Jones Course, the last five holes are probably the hardest," Foster explained. "I'm glad I finished strong."

The Red Devils' Evan Fix was medalist runner up, shooting an 81. Also earning all-conference honors was St. Clairsville's Mavrik Malin and Andrew Abel

with 84 and 87, respectively, while Harrison Central's Nash Roberts finished at 95. Malin won the Buckeye 8 title earlier this season. Abel was the OVAC 4A medalist a year ago. Those five, along St. Clairsville's Ethan Turner (88) who didn't figure in the Red Devils team score, were the only ones to shoot under 90 on the day. Eleven players finished under 100.

"It definitely could have been better," Fix said of his 18 holes.

Please see **CROWN**, Page 12

Wheeling Central Golf Coach Named WVSSAC Coach Of The Year

WHEELING - Wheeling Central's golf program has been one of the most successful in the Ohio Valley and state of West Virginia.

A big reason for that success is head coach Jim Mortakis. The owner of three state and eight OVAC championships, Mortakis has added another accolade.

Recently the West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission named Mortakis as the 2024 Coach of the Year for golf. By being named, it makes Mortakis a candidate for the national coach of the year award, which will be announced at a later date.

"I had no idea (the coach of the year award) was coming," Mortakis said. "I was definitely surprised and very honored and grateful for the award."

Mortakis has been at the helm of the Maroon Knights program since 2013 and his ascension to the role happened basically by accident.

"Tom Burgoyne was the (Ohio County) sheriff at the time and we ran into each other and he told me, 'we don't have a golf coach (at Central).'" Mortakis recalled. "I knew I loved golf and coaching kids, but I wouldn't guarantee doing it for more than one year."

A planned one-year stay has led to state titles in 2018, 2022 and



JIM MORTAKIS

2023. The Knights won their only regional title under Mortakis' watch in 2018. They claimed the OVAC title in 2014, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 2021 and 22. The Knights will compete for another OVAC title Thursday at Belmont Hills Country Club in the Class 3A event.

"I've been fortunate," Mortakis said. "The kids have been great to work with and it's really meant a lot to me to be able to affect young kids' lives. I've simply tried to set a good example and show them there is a right way to do things."

Mortakis has coached plenty of players who earned All-State or All-OVAC, but some of his proudest moments stemmed from when he saw players simply improve.

"Some of the kids who we've had come through the program were good, but some started out as mediocre and ended up being good golfers," Mortakis said.

Lance Lynn Keeps Pirates' Bats Quiet In 3-1 Cardinals Victory

By **DAVID SOLOMON**
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS - Lance Lynn threw six strong innings in his 100th appearance at Busch Stadium, Jordan Walker homered and the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 3-1 on Tuesday night.

Lynn (7-4) allowed one run on four hits and struck out five. He is 9-0 over his last 21 starts at Busch, where he pitched for the Cardinals from 2011-17 before rejoining St. Louis this season. His last loss in the Cardinals' ballpark came on July 4, 2017, against Miami.

"Obviously, you don't ever want to lose at home," Lynn said. "To have a season where you don't have a loss on your

record at home is pretty cool." The Cardinals (76-75) are seven games out of the final NL wild card spot with 11 games remaining.

Bryan De La Cruz hit his 20th homer of the season, taking Lynn deep in the second inning. De La Cruz's drive to the left-center bleachers traveled 431 feet and was his second for Pittsburgh after being acquired from Miami.

Ryan Fernandez pitched a scoreless seventh inning, and Matthew Liberatore retired three straight batters after surrendering a double to Nick Gonzales and a single to Bryan Reynolds to lead off the eighth.

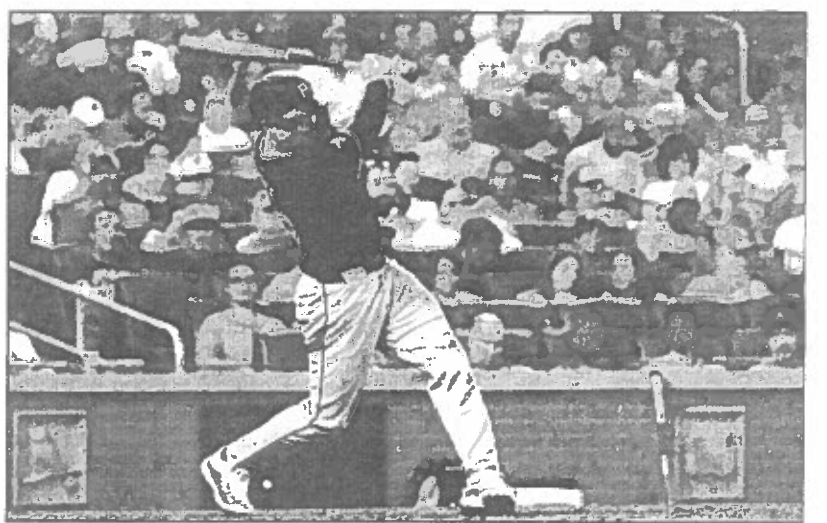
"That didn't get away from

him," Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol said of Liberatore. "That is a very tough row for a lefty there, where we put him in. For him to get those outs and get out of that inning without giving up those runs, that was awesome to see."

Ryan Helsley pitched a scoreless ninth for his NL-leading 45th save in 49 chances.

Bailey Falter (8-8) allowed two runs on four hits and two walks in 5 2/3 innings. Nick Yorke got his first career hit, a single in the fifth, and finished 3 for 4 for the Pirates after making his major league debut a night earlier.

Please see **BATS**, Page 12



AP Photo

Pittsburgh Pirates' Nick Yorke singles during the seventh inning of a game against the St. Louis Cardinals Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2024, in St. Louis.



Wheeling Park Shuts Out Big Red In Possible OVAC Playoff Precursor

By **ANDREW GRIMM**
For The Intelligencer

STEUBENVILLE - Two of the top three teams in OVAC Class 5A met Tuesday night at Harding Stadium just days before the conference tournament field is set.



Holes-In-One Around The Ohio Valley

WHEELING - Pat Doyle scored a hole-in-one Monday at Fairway River hole-in-one on Monday at Crispin Golf Links on the No. 5 hole, a 125-yard Par-3.

Witnesses were Chuck Jerome, Dan McKeever and Bill Stahnke. He accomplished the feat with a nine-iron.

RAYLAND - Mike Eikey scored a hole-in-one Monday at Fairway River hole-in-one on Monday at Crispin Golf Links on the No. 5 hole, a 125-yard Par-3.

CROWN

(Continued from Page 11)

"I kind of had to ground it out and throw a score down, but it definitely wasn't the worst or as bad as it could have been."

St. Clairsville shot a team score of 331, which was 56 strokes ahead of second-place Weir High. Beaver Local was third (391), followed by Indian Creek (419), Edison (422), Cambridge (424), Buckeye Local (429), Oak Glen (444), Harrison Central (445) and East Liverpool (464).

"We were pretty confident coming into today.

We've been over here to the Jones Course a lot in the last month," St. Clairsville coach Ryan Clifford said. "We've got a pretty good understanding of the course, but our scores are always higher here because the course is really hard. To have all five guys under 90 is really a testament to how hard they've worked all year.

"There weren't many low scores today."

This is the second conference title the Red Devils have won for the fourth

consecutive year, capturing the Buckeye 8 earlier this year at the Steubenville Country Club.

"Winning this four straight times is what these seniors deserve for all the work they've put in during their careers," Clifford added. "This is nice, but we've got bigger goals ahead, starting Monday at the Cadiz Country Club."

He was referring to the Ohio Division II sectional tournament.

"It's an exciting time of year, for sure."



Photo by Kim North

The all-OVAC Class 4A golf team is pictured. From left, are Harrison Central's Nash Roberts and St. Clairsville's foursome of Andrew Abel, Evan Fix, Brodi Foster and Maverick Malin.

WVU

(Continued from Page 11)

Both scouting reports were right on.

The postmortem on Saturday's loss and the obituaries that followed clearly exposed the weaknesses in defending pass plays, whether they wound up with quarterback Eli Holstein flinging the ball or scrambling for big yardage with it, but the offensive line's play was overlooked.

On Monday, center Bradon Yates revealed the knockdown power that the offensive line delivered that, had it been a prize fight it might have sounded like a rebroadcast of the George Foreman-Joe Frazier heavyweight fight call of "Down goes Frazier! Down goes Frazier!" from Howard Cosell.

"One guy I want to talk about is Nick Malone," Yates said during his media session. "Look at the production numbers. He went out there and got 13 knockdowns. That's huge for him."

While this is an extremely high number of knockdown blocks, it isn't out of Malone's range as he now has 23 knockdowns on the year while playing 204 snaps a knockdown on about one of every 19 plays, some of which he's not trying for knockdowns.

But Malone was not alone in sending Pitt defenders sprawling.

four..." Yates said.

All of that backed up what Yates said at the start of his session.

"We went out there and played physical. We went out there and played extremely hard," he said. "We put them on the ground. When we needed it on third downs we were able to hold up and do what we needed to do."

He said Malone's play has not surprised him.

"He's extremely athletic. He does the right things all the time. He and I have been here for the longest time. I've seen his progression and I knew it was time for him to flourish and do well. It comes down to him. His willingness to strain every single play. He's doing the right things now," Yates said.

"Thirteen knockdowns is huge, but it doesn't surprise us. We know what's going on. We see him in the weight room. Our mentality is someone has to be on the ground every single play. Someone has to! He did it 13 times."

The offensive line has lived up to its billing after a tough start at Penn State, a Top 10 team with one of the nation's premier defenses.

And Yates, as center, has been in the middle of it.

Yates was the question mark coming into the season, replacing All Amer-

Pittsburgh Steelers. Yates is a converted center who did well when forced into duty at center for the bowl game at the end of last season when Frazier was out with an injury.

Against Penn State, there were a couple of early snap mistakes but Yates has played his way through that.

"For me, first game, first couple of snap situations. Since then I haven't had any mistakes like that because you see the mistakes on tape and you get it fixed. Every single game I've gotten better."

"The things I need to get better at are communication and consistency. Consistency is what I've been working on for years now; being the same guy every single snap. I wasn't perfect, but I feel like it was the best game I've had so far."

It's crucial that this line takes command. WVU is going to have to play a ball-control kind of game, the kind that had it leading Pitt late, and it will come mostly through the running game and through an offensive line that gives up neither tackles for losses or sacks.

Yates, a senior who has played in 51 games, starting 36 of them, is a leader and trying to help his group through this difficult start to the season.

"Talking to the guys, I told them all we can do

Cleveland Closer Clase Breaking Bats And Records, Making For Interesting AL Cy Young Case

CLEVELAND (AP) — Emmanuel Clase is breaking bats and records at an almost equal rate.

He's become baseball's grim reaper, the cream of the closer crop. Cleveland's right-hander with a devilish cut fastball not seen since Hall of Famer Mariano Rivera's dominant days with the New York Yankees is having a season to remember.

Maybe one that includes winning the Cy Young, a rarity for relievers.

On Monday night, Clase earned his MLB-leading 46th save — his 33rd straight since May 20 to tie Jose Mesa's single-season team record — as the Guardians inched closer to an unexpected AL Central title by rallying for a 4-3 win over the Minnesota Twins.

The game followed a familiar script: another Cleveland comeback (the club's 40th), followed by Clase.

Progressive Field may be the only place in the majors where if the bullpen door in right field swings open in the ninth inning, it's game over.

It's been that way all season.

Guardians second baseman Andres Gimenez knows the drill. Once he hears Clase's entrance song blaring through the ballpark's sound system and sees his teammate

jogging across the outfield grass with his braided, colored hair bouncing out of the back of his cap, there's only one thing left to do.

"I feel like I'm going to go home early," Gimenez said. "Honestly, it's been absolutely incredible this year, and in the last three years. It's just unbelievable, saving 40 games each season. It's crazy. It's special."

Crazy. Special. Unfathomable. Unhittable.

Clase is posting statistics that almost seem imaginary. He's allowed just five earned runs in 69 1/3 innings, a 0.65 ERA that along with his conversion percentage on saves (94%) has put Clase firmly in the conversation for AL Cy Young consideration.

His advanced stats also separate Clase from most pitchers, and the fact that he's done it for a Cleveland team that has led its division since early April makes the 26-year-old — already the Guardians career saves leader — an even stronger candidate.

But it goes beyond the numbers with Clase, who would likely be leading the majors in broken bats if the stat was kept.

He wants the ball every day, craves it. Last month, after Clase pitched on four consecutive days, first-year Guardians manager Stephen Vogt made him stay in the dugout so there would be no chance of him pitching.

The AL hasn't had a reliever win the award since Oakland's Dennis Eckersley in 1992. Eric Gagne was the last NL reliever to win after saving 55 games in 2003.

There's been a reluctance among writers to vote for a specialist, perhaps baseball's equivalent to a defensive player winning the Heisman Trophy in college football. But

BATS

(Continued from Page 11)

"I think any time you get your first hit, you go through your first game, there's so many emotions," Pirates manager Derek Shelton said. "You relax a little bit. Overall, in the first two games, there's been good at-bats. But I do think, you get your first hit and you breathe a little bit, and then we saw two really good swings after that."

Pittsburgh lost for the fourth time in five games.

"We were a hit away at times or a pitch away at times, and we have to make that," Shelton said. "Tonight, we had a couple opportunities late and weren't able to capitalize on it. We need to figure out a way to get that hitter or make that pitch."

Luken Baker had an RBI triple for the Cardinals in the third, and Walker put St. Louis ahead 2-1 in the fourth when he hit a 3-2 pitch from Falter into the

Clase has built a strong case to end the drought.

Vogt certainly thinks so.

"The way I look at the Cy Young is like the MVP," Vogt said. "It's the most valuable pitcher, and what Emmanuel means to us and to our team, 100% he should be in consideration. But that's my opinion on it. I don't get to vote, and I'm a little biased."

Vogt should be, but with every flailing strikeout and splintered bat, Clase, who saved 86 games the past two seasons, has gained the respect of hitters and managers across both leagues.

"He's elite. He's one of the game's best, if not the best," Kansas City manager Matt Quatraro said on a recent stop in Cleveland. "There's not a whole lot you can say that he doesn't do well. He gets righties and lefties out. Puts the ball on the ground. There's very little damage. There's strikeouts."

"Clearly, he loves that moment. He doesn't flinch from any moment. He can go multiple innings if he needs to. I think every team would love to have someone like that."

Not a bad game plan.

For his part, Clase remains humble and unfazed by his success and the attention that has come with it.

"I just see it as my role," he said through team interpreter Agustin Rivero. "I know that's the time I'm going to come in and pitch, and I have to prepare to perform in those situations."

Closers are unique, performing under immense pressure on a virtual tight rope where one mistake can be costly. Clase has walked it for months with barely a wobble.

Whether he's earned any awards is for others to decide.

Memphis on Aug. 30.

"I feel good with my swing right now," Walker said. "It's just a matter of what I'm swinging at. I'm not chasing, and then when they do give me a good pitch to hit, just swinging at it and driving it."

Nolan Arenado had a sacrifice fly in the eighth for St. Louis.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Pirates: CF Oneil Cruz (left ankle discomfort) was held out of the starting lineup for a second straight game. He entered as a pinch-hitter in the seventh and struck out. ... RHP Kyle Nicolas was still feeling upper back soreness after departing Monday night's game after facing just one batter, Shelton said.

UP NEXT

RHP Sonny Gray (13-9, 3.75 ERA) was set to start for the Cardinals Wednesday.

