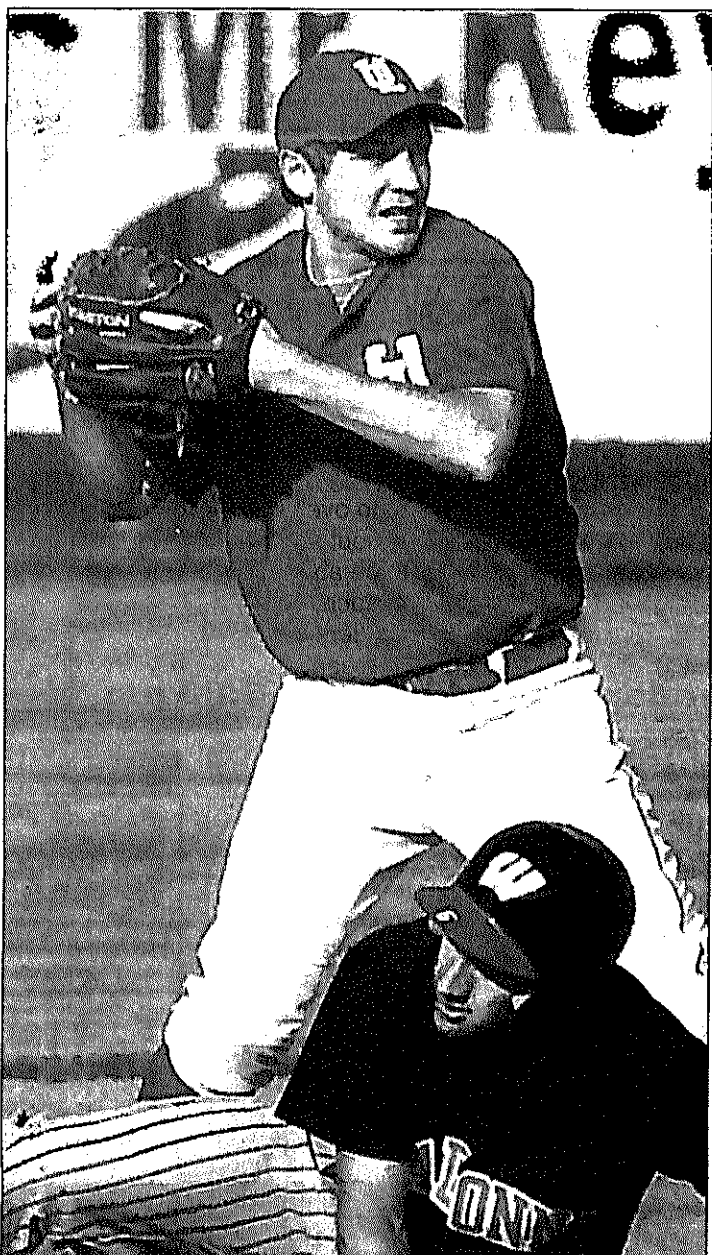


Photos by Alex Kozłowski

Top: Toronto's Dustin Coil (1) gets around Weir catcher Mike Buffo, but not before Buffo applied the tag to Coil who was trying to score in the fourth inning. Bottom: Union Local's Pec Schmitt turns to throw to first as Weirton Madonna's Matt Ceran slides into second base. Ohio defeated West Virginia, 7-4, in the George Kovalick OVAC Ohio/West Virginia All-Star Baseball Game in Steubenville.



# Ohio Eighth Seals Win

## Leasure's blast highlights 7-4 victory

By RICK THORP  
Staff Writer

Monroe Central's Chris Leasure blasted a two-run homer and Steubenville's Mike Mort and Edison's Corey Keenan also plated runs as Ohio topped West Virginia, 7-4, at the George Kovalick OVAC Ohio/West Virginia All-Star Baseball Game at Vaccaro Field in Steubenville.

Sure, Ohio boasted plenty of hot bats. But the Buckeyes also benefited from four strong pitching performances, led by Steubenville's Tom Brown, who worked the first three frames and struck out six and walked none.

It was an all-around performance praised by Ohio's coaching staff.

"The hitting came on, but the pitching was unbelievable all game," commented Bellaire St. John's Donnie Murray, who coached the Buckeyes along with Indian Creek's Mike Cottis, Martins Ferry's Josh Lucas, Frontier's Bob McPeck and Harrison Central's Mike Saffel.

There's no exact science to putting together a lineup for an all-star game. But the Ohio coaches certainly came up with the right combination Tuesday evening.

"Coach Cottis put it together and talked to the players about where they were hitting during the week."

But before the Buckeyes started their hitting barrage, it was Brown who stood tall.

The Big Red righty looked unstoppable during the first three frames, including fanning the side in the third.

Linsly's Gary Sprague, who was part of the West Virginia coaching staff, said pitching usually wins out in all-star games.

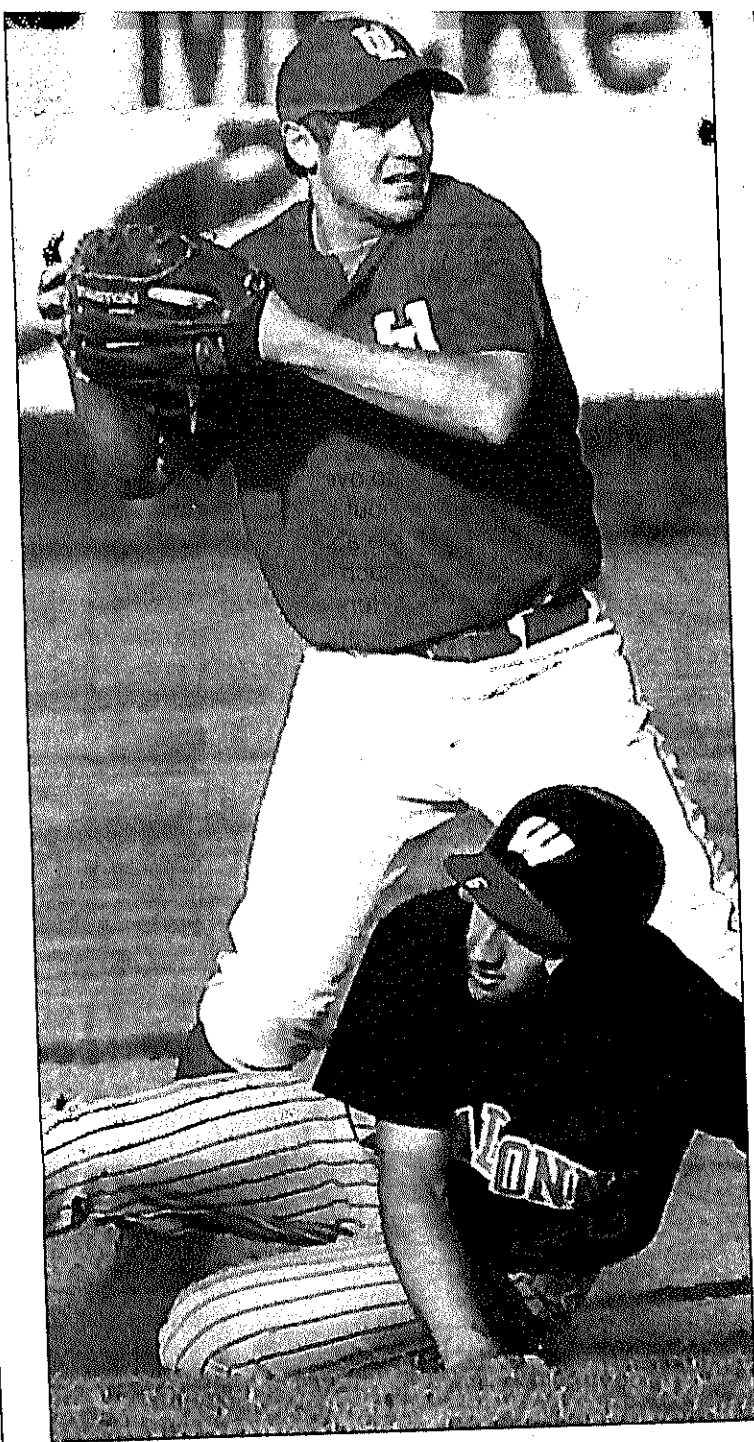
"There's no question about it," he said. "We've got some of the best pitchers in the OVAC here and a lot of the guys have never seen each other before."

Sprague was joined on the West Virginia bench by Bishop Donahue's Jason Hanson, Tyler Consolidated's Rob Jones and Brooke's Ron Ujcich.

Wheeling Park's Jimmy Estep, who worked the first two innings for the Mountaineers, was also impressive. He was relieved by Brooke's Matt Taylor in the third. And Taylor ran into trouble right away.

With one on and one out, Harrison Central's Dan Milleson reached first on an error after the West Virginia third baseman bobbled what looked like a sure double-play ball.

With men on first and second, Mort walked, loading the bases for Keenan. The Wildcat came through with a single, scoring Meadow-



# Ohio Lightnings Seals Win

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Staff Writer

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There's no exact science to putting together a lineup for an all-star game. But the Ohio coaches certainly came up with the right combination Tuesday evening.

"Coach Cottis put it together and talked to the players about where they were batting during the regular season," Murray said. "We would go power, hitter, hitter and power, with the whole idea about getting some guys on and then getting someone up with power to get them in."

Eight players contributed to Ohio's nine-hit outing.

But before the Buckeyes started their hitting barrage, it was Brown who stood tall.

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Linsly's Gary Sprague, who was part of the West Virginia coaching staff, said pitching usually wins out in all-star games.

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With one on and one out, Harrison Central's Dan Milleson reached first on an error after the West Virginia third baseman bobbled what looked like a sure double-play ball.

With men on first and second, Mort walked, loading the bases for Keenan. The Wildcat came through with a single, scoring Meadowbrook's Kyle Winland to make it 1-0.

The bases remained juiced, but not for long. Union Local's Pec Schmitt reached on a fielder's choice which scored Milleson from third to make it 2-0.

Please See OHIO, Page 17

## Ohio

(Continued from Page 15)

After Toronto's Dustin Coil allowed one hit in the top of the fourth, Ohio came back with two more runs in the bottom of the frame.

Coil aided his own cause with a double to start off the inning.

Brown next lofted a single, but Coil was tagged out by West Virginia catcher Mike Buffo at the plate.

With two out, Brown stole second and then watched as Big Red teammate Lee Bainbridge walked.

Both runners advanced a short time later on a wild pitch.

A walk by Cambridge's Johnny Jones loaded the bags.

Harrison Central's Cody Smith responded with a two-run single to up the Ohio lead to 4-0.

The Buckeyes maintained the shutout until the top of the seventh when West Virginia platted a pair to trim the deficit to 4-2.

John Marshall's Rob Conroy led off with a single to center, followed by another single by Monarch teammate Sean Edge.

With Linsly's Corby Wilson batting, Mort tried to pick off Edge at first, but his throw went into right field, sending the two Monarchs up a base.

Weir's Jason Gatto responded with a two-run single.

Conroy and Edge both belted two hits for the Mountaineers.

West Virginia had the bases loaded in the top of the eighth, but were unable to get anyone home.

Meanwhile, Ohio powered its way to three more runs in

**"I hadn't really thought about this being my last game."**

Gary Sprague  
Linsly coach

the bottom of the eighth, highlighted by Leasure's shot that sailed over the scoreboard in left field.

Mort provided the other RBI in the inning.

"This was kind of their last hurrah before they go to college," Murray said. "I think it was kind of fun."

Sprague agreed.

"It was fun," he said. "It's an all-star game and it's meant to be fun. Everybody got a chance to play and showcase their talent. It was a great opportunity for them."

Sprague was coaching his final high school baseball game after 33 years at the Cadet helm.

After 488 victories and 13 OVAC titles — the most recent coming last month at Vaccaro — the veteran mentor said coaching in an all-star contest was a great way to go out.

"I hadn't really thought about this being my last game," he said. "I thought of it as just another baseball game."

"It was enjoyable and I enjoyed every minute of it. And I enjoyed being with the kids."

# Ohio stops W.Va., 7-4

By RICH GIBSON  
Times Leader Sports Writer

Ohio turned back West Virginia by a 7-4 count to capture the annual George Kovalik OVAC All-Star Game Tuesday evening at Steubenville's Vaccaro Field.

Four Buckeye pitchers teamed to record 16 strikeouts. Additionally, Ohio's defense proved pivotal.

"Two state rivals going at each other in a good hard-fought battle. That's what all-star games are supposed to be about," exclaimed Indian Creek's Mike Cottis, one of five coaches in the Buckeyes' dugout.

"We got some key hits made some key pitches at the right time. A lot of different players contributed."

Ohio's mound corps included Tom Brown (Steubenville), Dustin Coil (Toronto), Adam Walter (Indian Creek) and Cody Smith (Harrison Central).

Although outhit, 10-9, the Buckeyes benefited from a two-run eighth-inning round-tripper off the bat of Monroe Central's Chris Leasure.

Headed to Shawnee State College in Portsmouth to continue his baseball career, Leasure crushed a delivery from Cameron's Brandon Rush over the scoreboard in left field, elevating the Buckeyes' lead to 6-2 in the eighth.

Later in the frame, Steubenville Big Red catcher Mike Mort clouted a sacrifice fly for a 7-2 lighting.

West Virginia rallied to score twice in its final at-bat. John Marshall's Sean Edge singled home a pair before the Huskies' Smith registered a game-ending strikeout.

One inning earlier, Smith faced a two-out, bases-loaded jam. But the southpaw fanned Brooke's Matt Taylor to end the threat.

Ohio took a 2-0 lead in the last of the third when Meadowbrook's Kyle Winland walked and advanced as Harrison's Dan Milleson reached on the Mountaineers' lone error of the encounter.

Edison's Corey Keenan scored Winland with a base knock and Milleson tallied on a fielder's choice off the bat of Union Local's Pec Schmitt.

It became a four-run Ohio lead in the fourth. Coil clubbed a leadoff double but was out trying to score after Big Red's Brown belted a single to left.

John Marshall's Cody Hartley came up throwing, cutting down Coil at the plate as Weir catcher Mike Buffo applied the tag.

See, OVAC, Page B2



Photo/ALEX KOZLOWSKI

LINSLEY outfielder Tyler Jividen races in to make a catch of a fly ball during Tuesday's annual OVAC All-Star Baseball Classic at Vaccaro Field in Steubenville. Ohio won the game 7-4.

MES LEADER - Wednesday, June 7, 2006 - B2

## ● OVAC

Continued from Page B1

Walks issued to Big Red's Lee Bainbridge and Cambridge's Johnny Jones preceded a two-run single off the bat of Harrison Central's Smith.

Following six scoreless frames, West Virginia cuts its deficit in half, posting two runs in the top of the seventh.

Weir's Jason Gatto lined a two-run single to left, plating Edge and Linsly's Tyler Jividen.

The 4-2 count remained until Leasure connected in the Bucks' eighth frame.

Mountaineer moundmen Jim Estep (Wheeling Park), Matt Taylor (Brooke), Cody Winters (Oak Glen) and Brandon Rush (Cameron) combined for six strikeouts, eight walks and two hit batsmen.

Defensively, Ohio turned a sixth-inning double play and nailed a West Virginia runner at the plate on a throw from Keenan in left field to Mort.

Several special awards were presented during intervals.

Linsly's Gary Sprague, coaching his final prep game following 33 years, 13 OVAC crowns and 488 victories, was recognized.

Retired coaching greats Jim Bittengle (Shadyside), Perry West (Brooke) and Dan Finnell (Wellsburg) were honored as well as three current mentors who have surpassed 100 career wins, including Shadyside's Gary Cunningham, Harrison Central's Mike Saffell, and Cameron's Eric James.

W. Va. 000 000 202 - 4 10 1

Ohio 002 200 03x - 7 9 1

BATTERIES: Estep, Taylor (3), Winters (5), Rush (7) and Buffo, Jividen (5), Brown, Coil (4), Walter (6), Smith (8) and Mort.

Gibson can be reached at rgibson@timesleaderonline.com

# OVAC Sets All-Star Baseball Rosters

Rosters have been announced for the annual OVAC George Kovalick Ohio/West Virginia Baseball All-Star Classic, which is set for 6 p.m. Tuesday at Vaccaro Field in Steubenville.

The game pits the top senior baseball players from Ohio against their West Virginia counterparts and is scheduled for nine innings.

Martins Ferry's Josh Lucas, Frontier's Rob McPeck, Bellaire St. John Central's Donnie Murray and Mike Cottis of Indian Creek have been chosen to coach the Ohio stars.

Linsly's Gary Sprague, Bishop Donahue's Jason Hanson, Tyler Consolidated's Robert Jones and Ron Ujcich of Brooke will call the shots for West Virginia.

The OVAC Baseball Committee will also be making some special presentations.

The players of the year in each division will be honored.

They are: Class AAAA: Lee Bainbridge, Steubenville; Class AAA: Tim Ohalek, Indian Creek; Class AA: Travis Miller, Toronto; Class A: Michael Meintel, Shadyside.

Also to be honored is 2006 OVAC Baseball Coach of the Year Brian Perkins of Toronto.

The committee also plans to recognize three former coaches for their service to the sport. They are: Dan Finnell of Wellsburg High School; Jim Bittenge of Shadyside High School and Perry West of Brooke High School.

In addition, three current coaches will be honored for having surpassed the 100-win milestone this spring. They are: Gary Cunningham, Shadyside; Mike Saffell, Harrison Central and Eric James, Cameron.

Players and coaches are to report to Vaccaro

Field at 4:45 p.m. Introductions will start at 5:45 p.m. with the first pitch set for 6 p.m.

Admission prices are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students.

## OHIO

### Coaches

Josh Lucas, Martins Ferry; Rob McPeck, Frontier; Don Murray, St. John Central; Michael Cottis, Indian Creek

### Players

#### Catchers

Mike Mort, Steubenville; Mike Freshwater, Toronto

#### First Base

Chris Leasure, Monroe Central; Johnny Jones, Cambridge

#### Second Base

Casey Omdorff, River; Josh Waggle, St. Clairsville

#### Shortstop

Pec Schmitt, Union Local; Dan Milleson, Harrison Central

#### Third Base

Lee Bainbridge, Steubenville; Kyle Winland, Meadowbrook

#### Outfielders

Jordan Turner, Monroe Central; Jake Stone, Toronto; Greg Ashmead, Steub. Central; Corey Keenan, Edison; Corey Doughty, Bridgeport

#### Pitchers

Cody Smith, Harrison Central; Adam Walter, Indian Creek; Dustin Coil, Toronto; Tom Brown, Steubenville

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Coaches

Gary Sprague, Linsly; Jason Hanson, Bishop Donahue; Robert Jones, Tyler Consolidated; Ron Ujcich, Brooke

### Players

#### Catchers

Corby Wilson, Linsly; Mike Buffo, Weir

#### First Base

Cory Hardman, Magnolia; Rudy Nagy, Weir

#### Second Base

Brandon Rush, Cameron

#### Shortstop

Cody Winters, Oak Glen; Jason Gatto, Weir; Brandon Carroll, Magnolia

#### Third Base

Rob Conroy, John Marshall

#### Outfielders

Tyler Jividen, Linsly; Joe Risdan, Bishop Donahue; Matt Ceran, Weir; Sean Edge, John Marshall; Cody Hartley, John Marshall

#### Pitchers

Jim Estep, Wheeling Park; Matt Taylor, Brooke; Bob Kovalik, Madonna

## OVAC All-Star Baseball Roster

### OHIO ROSTER

c-Mike Mort-Steubenville  
c-Mike Freshwater-Toronto  
1b-Chris Leasure-Monroe Central  
1b-Johnny Jones-Cambridge  
2b-Casey Omdorff-River  
2b-Josh Waggle-St. Clairsville  
ss-Pec Schmitt-Union Local  
ss-Dan Milleson-Harrison Central  
3b-Lee Bainbridge-Steubenville  
3b-Kyle Winland-Meadowbrook  
of-Jordan Turner-Monroe Central  
of-Jake Stone-Toronto  
of-Greg Ashmead-Steub. Central  
of-Corey Keenan-Edison  
of-Corey Doughty-Bridgeport  
p-Cody Smith-Harrison Central  
p-Adam Walter-Indian Creek  
p-Dustin Coil-Toronto  
p-Tom Brown-Steubenville  
Coaches:  
Josh Lucas-Martins Ferry  
Rob McPeck-Frontier  
Don Murray-St. John  
Michael Cottis-Indian Creek

### WV ROSTER

c-Corby Wilson-Linsly  
c-Mike Buffo-Weirton  
1b-Cory Hardman-Magnolia  
1b-Rudy Nagy-Weirton  
2b-Brandon Rush-Cameron  
ss-Cody Winters-Oak Glen  
ss-Jason Gatto-Weirton

ss-Brandon Carroll-Magnolia  
3b-Rob Conroy-John Marshall  
of-Tyler Jividen-Linsly  
of-Joe Risdan-Bishop Donahue  
of-Matt Ceran-Weirton  
of-Sean Edge-John Marshall  
of-Cody Hartley-John Marshall  
p-Jim Estep-Wheeling Park  
p-Matt Taylor-Brooke  
p-Bob Kovalik-Madonna

### COACHES:

Gary Sprague-Linsly  
Jason Hanson-Bishop Donahue  
Robert Jones-Tyler Consolidated  
Ron Ujcich-Brooke

Players of the year to be honored:

A Michael Meintel-Shadyside  
AA Travis Miller-Toronto  
AAA Tim Ohalek-Indian Creek  
AAAA Lee Bainbridge-Steubenville

### COACH OF THE YEAR:

Brian Perkins

### FORMER COACHES TO BE HONORED:

Dan Finnell-Wellsburg High  
Jim Bittenge-Shadyside High  
Perry West-Follansbee/Brooke

### COACHES ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

Gary Cunningham-Shadyside  
Mike Saffell-Harrison Central  
Eric James-Cameron