



Photo by Kerry Patrick

Tyler Consolidated's Jayden Helmick delivers during Saturday's West Virginia Class A championship game. The Silver Knights fell to Wahama, 10-0.

Tyler Falls To Wahama For Class A Title

By KERRY PATRICK
For The Intelligencer
CHARLESTON

One school seeking redemption. Another seeking its first state title.

On Saturday morning at GoMart Ballpark in the West Virginia High School State Baseball Tournament for the Class A state championship between Wahama and Tyler Consolidated, the White Falcons added a third baseball state title to its collection after handing the Silver Knights a 10-0 defeat in six innings.

Wahama starting pitcher Bryce Zuspan was on the hill when Charleston Catholic rallied in the bottom of the seventh inning during last year's 7-6 win in the state title game. One year later, Zuspan was in

familiar territory. This time, he pitched with a purpose and needed just 85 pitches to complete the journey. The junior kept Tyler's hitters off stride and limited the Silver Knights to four hits while striking out six as part of his complete game effort.

"We went from a decent hard-throwing lefty (in Thursday's semifinal win over Petersburg) to a guy who doesn't throw as hard," said TCHS senior Ty Walton, who joined three other teammates on the All-Tournament team. "He kept us off balance and got us on our front foot. We were popping everything up. He did a heck of a job."

Please see TYLER,
Page 10

W.Va. All-Stars Stun Ohio With 3 In 7th



Photo by Kim North

Linsly's Collin Paull (11) slides safely into home plate with the winning run in the bottom of the seventh inning Sunday afternoon as West Virginia rallied for a 5-4 victory over Ohio in the annual OVAC George Kovalick All-Star Baseball Game at sun-soaked Wheeling Park High School's Patriot Field.

Prather's 2-Run Double Sets Up Reinacher Walkoff

By KIM NORTH
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Yogi Berra was smiling high up in the heavens Sunday afternoon as his decades-old saying 'It ain't over until it's over' came into play once again.

Trailing 4-2 entering the bottom of the seventh, W.Va. staged a dramatic rally to stun Ohio, 5-4, in the annual OVAC George Kovalick All-Star Baseball Game high above the Friendly City on the sun-soaked all-turf surface at Wheeling Park High School's Patriot Field.

After Linsly's Trev Prather tied

the contest with a two-run double to deep center field, Madonna's Brock Reinacher bounced to Bellaire's Jake Heatherington at short with the infield drawn in and runners on second and third with no outs. However, the throw to the plate was late as Linsly's Collin Paull, who broke for the plate on contact, slid in safely for the win.

"The kids battled and never quit. They played hard and found a way to win," Linsly's Jay Cartwright said. "This is always a fun game to coach in. The kids played well and I'm happy for them."

The inning started with Oak Glen's Jarid Hissam being hit by a pitch. Wheeling Park's Quinn Jamison then rolled a single up the middle and Paull drew a walk to load the bases. Prather then sent a drive over the centerfielder's head as Hissam and Jamison circled the bases to make it 4-4 and set up the game-winning play.

"It was one of those things. They hit the ball and made plays when they had to," said Indian Creek's Mike Cottis. "It was a good game. Our kids played hard. It was a good baseball game."

Please see ALL-STARS, Page 10

Pirates Win 2-1, Finish 3-Game Sweep Of Cardinals

By WILL GRAVES
AP Sports Writer

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

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

Hill is in Pittsburgh to show a young staff how to be a pro while

occasionally showing the kids he can still bring it. That example was on display in a 2-1 victory over St. Louis on Sunday that gave Pittsburgh a three-game sweep of its longtime NL Central nemesis.

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

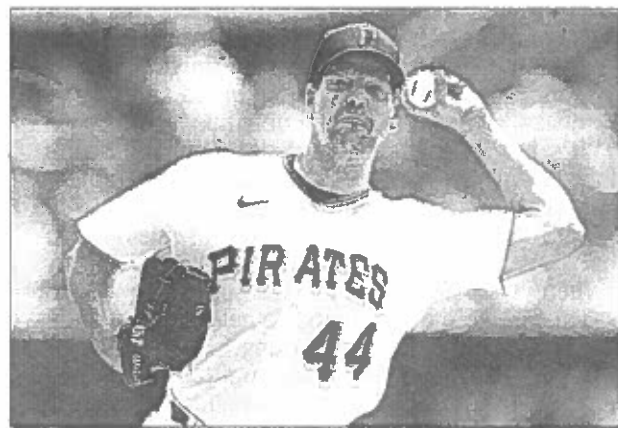
Hill walked three and struck out six while giving up just one run, a seventh-inning homer by Andrew Knizner that drew the Cardinals

within one. He allowed the leadoff hitter to reach in the first four innings and stranded them all as the Pirates pushed their winning streak to five.

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

Ji Hwan Bae's two-run single off Miles Mikolas (4-2) in the first provided all the offense Hill would need as Pittsburgh swept St. Louis for the first time in five years.

Please see PIRATES, Page 11



AP Photo

Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher Rich Hill delivers during the first inning against the St. Louis Cardinals in Pittsburgh, Sunday.

OHSAA STATE TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

OVAC Schools Produce
A Total Of 16 All-Ohioans

Sochor Wins
State Title In



"This is a tough pill to swallow, but we are proud of our team," TCHS coach Robby Jones after his ballclub closed out the season with a record of 32-7. "We played almost 40 baseball games this year, so we saw all kinds of pitchers. We had seen Zuspan before. He is the head coach's son and he battles every day. He understands the game and has a high baseball IQ. It was an unbelievable effort from that kid."

TCHS outscored Wahama 16-5 while sweeping both meetings between the two teams during the regular season. The Silver Knights' scoring prospects were few and far between. Zuspan did not allow a baserunner to reach third base.

On the three occasions TCHS put someone on second base, Zuspan was able to retire the next batter for the third out.

"I think the difference was just the start," Wahama coach Billy Zuspan said after guiding his squad to a 27-10 season. "The two previous times he pitched here — this past Thursday and last year in the championship game, he came in in relief. That's a different mentality, a different approach."

"I felt good giving him the ball to start out because he is a gamer. That is what he does. He has pitched a lot of complete games under 100 pitches and is very efficient. I am proud of him."

While Zuspan cooled of the Tyler bats under extreme heat conditions, his opposite number was matching him pitch for pitch for nearly five innings. Senior Jayden Helmick, who threw 49 pitches as the starter for Thursday's semifinal game, required one day of rest but was available to start the championship game.

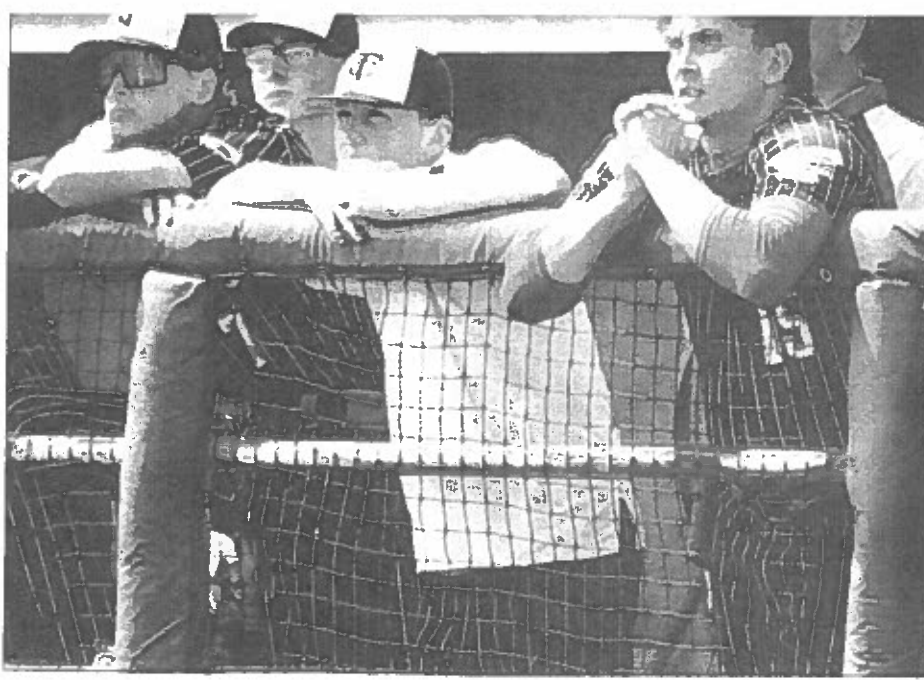


Photo by Kerry Patrick
Tyler Consolidated's Ty Walton, far right, and several teammates watch from the dugout as the Silver Knights try to get its offense going during a 10-0, six-inning loss to Wahama during Saturday's Class A championship game at the West Virginia High School Baseball State Tournament played at GoMart Ballpark in Charleston.

Helmick allowed no hits through three innings and allowed one fourth-inning run on a two-out single by Eli Rickard. In the top half of the fifth inning, Helmick retired the first two batters he faced — the second out arriving as his ninth strikeout.

Wahama then discovered two-out magic in dominating fashion as the next seven batters reached safely, including five hits and a walk surrendered by Helmick before he exited with runners at first and second base and another four

runs added to Wahama's lead.

Ethan Gray and Rickard contributed an RBI single, while Trey Ohlinger's base hit with the bases loaded brought in two runs as the White Falcons batted around.

Coach Jones utilized a pair of relievers in the sixth inning — freshman Reese Davis and senior Carson Gorby as Wahama tacked on five runs and extended the lead to 10-0 despite having only two hits in the frame. Gray added two RBIs on a bases-loaded single.

nal inning.

Even though the Silver Knights were in danger of losing by the mercy rule, the energy in the dugout never waned in the home half of the sixth inning. Ethan Clark led off with a double before Zuspan followed with a strikeout and pair of fly outs to left field.

"I never counted us out," said Helmick, who was also named All-Tournament, along with teammates Hayden Brown and Gorby. "When we were down 10-0, I'm like 'Guys, we chip off four runs in the sixth then we can chip off seven and win this thing.' You have seen how we have come back."

"We accomplished goals we wanted to and came up short, but I think we established a good platform for our underclassmen to come back to," said Helmick, who was also named All-Tournament, along with teammates Hayden Brown and Gorby. "Honestly, I think we came into this game too relaxed. We were focused, but we could have had better at-bats. It stings now, but there is nothing you can do about it now."

Coach Zuspan joined two former Wahama skippers as part of the school's three baseball state titles, which have all occurred in the past nine years. The White Falcons also finished runner-up twice in the 1990's.

"Winning a state championship means so much whether it is one, whether it is five — whatever it is," coach Zuspan said. "What makes this extra sweet is the fact that we were so close last year and left here in such heartbreak fashion then come back and have our back against the wall seven times and come out victorious."

ALL-STARS

(Continued from Page 9)

The Buckeye State grabbed a 2-0 lead in the top of the fourth on a two-run single to left-center by losing pitcher Chance Maffe of Bellaire. It scored Steubenville Catholic's Jascob Kissinger and Fort Frye's Dawson Layton. Kissinger opened the inning with a walk and Layton singled after failing to get a sacrifice bunt down on two attempts.

The Mountaineers drew even an inning later. University's Cody Thomas

singled to right-center to score Wheeling Park's Grant Simons and John Marshall's Braden Sobutka. Simons singled to right leading off and Sobutka walked. Both moved up 90 feet on a double steal and Thomas lined a one-out single to score both.

Ohio regained the advantage in the sixth as Frontier's Tice Curtis's single plated Wellsville's Jaxon Brewer and Fort Frye's Owen Brown. Brewer singled and stole sec-

ond and went to third on an error. Brown reached on a fielder's choice and stole second before Curtis brought both home.

W.Va. let a golden scoring opportunity slip away when it left the bases loaded in the bottom of the sixth. Wheeling Park's Gian Degenova belted a two-out ground-rule double to deep left-center and Brooke's Charles Fuscardo and Morgantown's Ty Gaulsky both drew walks. However, Ohio got out of

the inning on an infield popup.

Thomas, the seventh pitcher used by W.Va., earned the win. The hurlers combined to strike out three and walk a like number. Degenova added a single to his double for the only multi-hit game for the Mountaineers.

Curtis and Layton both recorded a pair of singles.

GAME NOTES

■ Steubenville Catholic's Donnie Young was honored as the OVAC

Coach of the Year, and also for winning his 100th game this season.

■ Edison's Mike Collopy was honored for winning his 300th career game this season.

■ The OVAC Players of the Year were also honored. They included: Cameron's Coy Angel (Class 1A); River's Peyton Blue (Class 2A); Fort Frye's Layton (Class 3A); Harrison Central's Treston Nemeth (Class 4A); and University's Noah

Braham (Class 5A).

Nemeth wasn't eligible to play as his Huskies qualified for the Ohio Division III Final 4 and will play Friday night at Canal Park in Akron against Heath.

Braham is the son of former WVU and Cincinnati Bengals center Rich Braham.

■ Umpires were Paul Curnes; Jason Carpenter; Ron Holzopfel and Jim Payne.

■ The game took 1 hour, 50 minutes.

SOCHOR

(Continued from Page 9)

Running in lane three, Sochor was just eyes on the finish line. However, he did — out of the corner of his eye — see who he thought was leading stumble.

"I saw him look as if he had tripped, and I just kept going," Sochor said. "I wasn't worried what the time. I just wanted to get to the finish line."

Sochor looked up at the video board and saw the results and seemed to do a double take.

"It's just wild when you think about it," Sochor said. "I am just honored and excited to be able to win this and represent Bellaire."

For Sochor, it's been a roller coaster ride of a season.

There were stretches this season when Sochor was unsure he'd even qualify to get back to Columbus, let alone win the whole thing.

In early May, Sochor, who admitted that he was running through some injury issues, failed to qualify for the OVAC championship race.

"I had ran so well (in 2022) and then I was struggling to run under 16 for a stretch this season, so it really had gotten into my head," Sochor said.

Though disappointed, Sochor didn't let it get to him. He simply went back to work.

"I was running really bad for a while, but I was able to get better before the postseason and have just been able to keep it going," Sochor said.

Sochor, who had been battling some back issues, admitted that the struggles started to get into his head.

"I was able to get it worked out," Sochor said.

Since the postseason began, Sochor has been rounding back into form. He dipped under 15 for the first time in the regional and stayed there this weekend at the state meet.

"Somehow, it all came back together for me and it couldn't have happened at a better time," Sochor said.

Bellaire's last state champion was Cole LaRoche, who won the shot put crown in 2018.

ALL-OHIOANS

(Continued from Page 9)

That tends to happen when you finish as state runnerup in both of the individual events in which you qualify.

Henry came into Saturday's state championship races as the top seed in both the 100 and 200 meter dashes and though she came up short of gold, she ran brilliant times and laid the groundwork for what could be a senior season for the ages.

In the 100, Henry broke the tape in 11.89 and then came back in the 200 and turned in a 24.61, but fell to Marengo Highland's Juliette Laracuente-Huebner, who simply wasn't going to be denied as she put the finishing touches on a four-gold medal meet.

"I was a little nervous, but I am truly grateful for this opportunity to compete here," Henry said. "I am really happy. I ran another personal record and I feel like this is a great way to end the season. I am just hopeful that I can keep moving on the upward track I've been on and continue to make my family proud."

Red Devil junior distance runner Ben Shields put the finishing touches on a brilliant school year of distance running by capturing a bronze medal in the 3200-meter run with a time of 9:29.30.

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

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

"All the work from last summer, through cross country and throughout the winter led up to this point"

meet in three events and Jets junior thrower Johnny Sabinski and senior sprinter Josie Goodson are bringing home three medals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I really have to thank my coach because he's really put in the work

three individual events, advanced to the final in the 100 as the ninth seed. She moved up a spot en route to garnering All-Ohio by finishing eighth with a solid 12.32 clocking.

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

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

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

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

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

"I didn't get the results I wanted in the hurdles, but I will just have to try to go harder in the rest of my career," Mitchell said. "Coming here was a beautiful experience, but it just didn't go the way I wanted."

By his own admission, Mitchell "messed up" on the first hurdle and simply couldn't recover. He finished with a 14.97.

In the intermediates, Mitchell was leading the race, but clipped the seventh hurdle, causing him to lose



BELLAIRE JUNIOR Mayson Sochor skims the 10th and final hurdle during Saturday's Division III state championship race at Ohio State's Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium. Sochor won the state title in the event with a time of 14.80.

T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

high hurdles en route to posting a 14.80 to win the gold by nine hundredths of a second over Versailles' Colton Reese.

"I am just happy to win," Sochor smiled just moments after having his shiny gold medal placed around his neck. "I knew after (Friday's) qualifying that it was going to be a close race, and I just came to the track ready to try my hardest."

During the course of the race, a competitor went down and others were clipping hurdles to the point where it seemingly affected their steps and timing.

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there were surprises this season when Sochor was unsure he'd even qualify to get back to Columbus, let alone win the whole thing.

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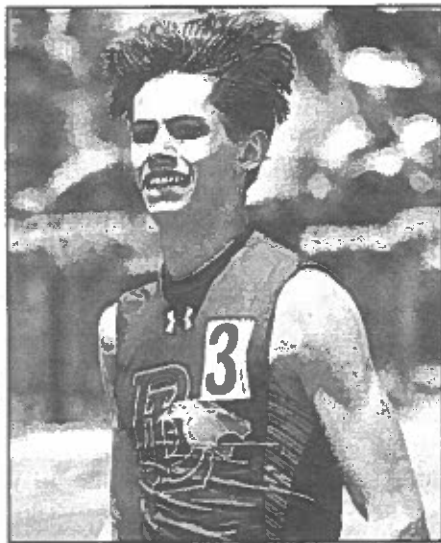
"I had ran so well (in 2022) and then I was struggling to run under 16 for a stretch this season, so it really had gotten into my head," Sochor said.

Though disappointed, Sochor didn't let See, **SOCHOR**, Page B2



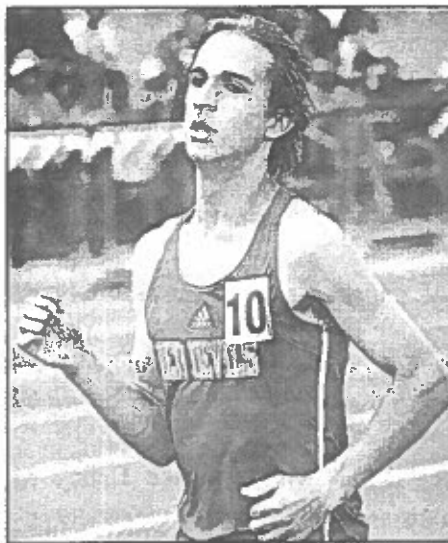
T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

UNION LOCAL senior Josie Goodson sprints to a fifth-place finish in the 400 meter dash in Division II.



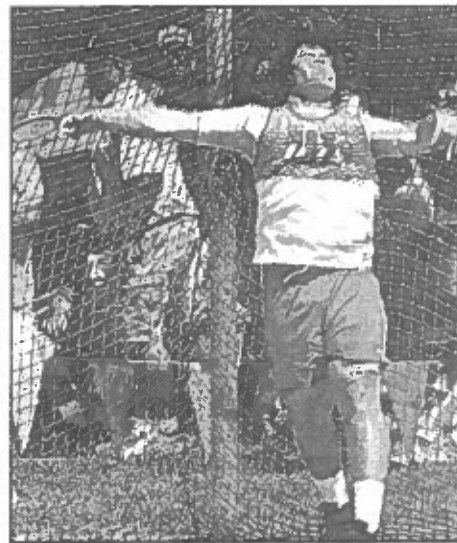
T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

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T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

ST. CLAIRSVILLE junior Ben Shields runs to a third-place finish in the 3200 meter run in Division II.



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

UNION LOCAL junior Johnny Sabinski throws the discus to a fourth-place finish in Division II.

Six area athletes garner All-Ohio in Division II

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

COLUMBUS — The final day of track and field season for 2023 was definitely one to remember.

No fewer than six area athletes are returning to the Ohio Valley with a nice, shiny new medal to add to their vast collections after the conclusion of the OHSAA State Track and Field Championship at Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium Saturday.

While seven wrapped up their events on the Ohio State campus on Saturday, a total of 10 area athletes, counting those from Friday's action, are now newly minted All-Ohioans.

Bellaire junior Mayson Sochor was the lone Ohio Valley Athletic Conference athlete to win a state championship. He captured the Division III state high hurdle title.

However, in Division II, St. Clairsville, Union Local, Buckeye Local and Steubenville all produced multiple All-Ohioans.

St. Clairsville's Emma Henry put forth a state meet that she won't soon forget.

That tends to happen when you

finish as state runnerup in both of the individual events in which you qualify.

Henry came into Saturday's state championship races as the top seed in both the 100 and 200 meter dashes and though she came up short of gold, she ran brilliant times and laid the groundwork for what could be a senior season for the ages.

In the 100, Henry broke the tape in 11.89 and then came back in the 200 and turned in a 24.61, but fell to Marengo Highland's Juliette Laracuente-Huebner, who simply wasn't going to be denied as she put the finishing touches on a four-gold medal meet.

"I was a little nervous, but I am truly grateful for this opportunity to compete here," Henry said. "I am really happy. I ran another personal record and I feel like this is a great way to end the season. I am just hopeful that I can keep moving on the upward track I've been on and continue to make my family proud."

Red Devil junior distance runner Ben Shields put the finishing touches on a brilliant school year

See, **SIX**, Page B2



T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

ABOVE: BUCKEYE Local junior Brynn McKeever stands on the podium with her eighth-place medal in the Division II 100M dash Saturday in Columbus.

AT LEFT: St. Clairsville junior Emma Henry gives thumbs up to her family and fans in the crowd as she stands on the awards podium following her state runner-up finish in the 100 meter dash. She was also runnerup in the 200 meter dash.



Photo/KIM NORTH

BELLAIRE'S JAKE Heatherington delivers a pitch during Sunday's OVAC George Kovalick All-Star Baseball Game held at Wheeling Park High School. West Virginia rallied for a 5-4 victory.

W.Va. rallies to win OVAC all-star baseball game

By **KIM NORTH**
For The Times Leader

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"It was one of those things. They hit the ball and made plays when they had to," said Indian Creek's Mike Cottis. "It was a good game. Our kids played hard. It was a good baseball game."

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See, **OVAC**, Page B2

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

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

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

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

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

• Sochor

Continued from Page B1

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

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

on 11th inning strikeouts (4-2) in the first provided all the offense Hill would need as Pittsburgh swept St. Louis for the first time in five years. Ke'Bryan Hayes singled three times and is hitting .562 (9 for 16) over his last four games after a 3-for-32 funk dropped him to seventh in the batting order.

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

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

Hovland delivers clutch putts and wins Memorial

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

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

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

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

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

McCarthy had a one-shot lead

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

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

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

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

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

But what a week to forget with the putter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guardians manage split of series by topping Twins

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

McKenzie tossed five scoreless innings in his baserunner, a two-out injury-delayed season debut, and Josh Naylor delivered a breakthrough RBI double in the seventh to give the Guardians a

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

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

McKenzie had 10 strikeouts and only one single by Michael Taylor in the third. The 25-year-old right-hander threw 79 pitches after missing more than two months

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

"That flew past encouraging," said manager Terry Francona, whose defending AL Central champion Guardians (27-32) have had a losing record since April 29 and trail the Twins (31-29) by 3 1/2 games.

Twins starter Joe Ryan (7-3) was just as sharp

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

Andrés Giménez then greeted Caleb Thielbar with an RBI triple that gave them a two-run lead.

• OVAC

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Marshall's Braden Sobutka. Simons singled to right leading off and Sobutka walked. Both moved up 90 feet on a double steal and Thomas lined a one-out single to score both.

Ohio regained the advantage in the sixth as Frontier's Tice Curtis's single plated Wellsville's Jaxon Brewer and Fort Frye's Owen Brown. Brewer singled and stole second and went to third on an error. Brown reached on a fielder's choice and stole second before Curtis brought both home.

W.Va. left a golden scoring opportunity slip away when it left the bases loaded in the bottom of the sixth. Wheeling Park's Gian Degenova belted a two-out ground-rule double to deep left-center and Brooke's Charles

Fuscardo and Morgantown's Ty Gaulsky both drew walks. However, Ohio got out of the inning on an infield popup.

Thomas, the seventh pitcher used by W.Va., earned the win. The hurlers combined to strike out three and walk a like number. Degenova added a single to his double for the only multi-hit game for the Mountaineers.

Curtis and Layton both recorded a pair of singles.

GAME NOTES:

- Steubenville Catholic's Donnie Young was honored as the OVAC Coach of the Year, and also for winning his 100th game this season.

- Edison's Mike Collopy was honored for winning his 300th career game this season.

- The OVAC Players of the Year were also honored. They included: Cameron's Coy Angel (Class 1A); River's Peyton Blue (Class 2A); Fort Frye's Layton (Class 3A); Harrison Central's Treston Nemeth (Class 4A); and University's Noah Braham (Class 5A).

Nemeth wasn't eligible to play as his Huskies qualified for the Ohio Division III Final 4 and will play Friday night at Canal Park in Akron against Heath.

Braham is the son of former WVU and Cincinnati Bengals center Rich Braham.

- Umpires were Paul Curnes; Jason Carpenter; Ron Holzopfel and Jim Payne.

- The game took 1-hour, 50-minutes.

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