

Bellaire Bid Thwarted

Ironton Trips Big Reds, Faces Steubenville Central

NEWARK (Special) — Bellaire High's baseball team, appearing in a regional tournament for the first time in the school's history, saw its bid for a berth in the state tourney by Ironton, 11-1, at Edwards Field Friday afternoon.

Coach Terry Snively's club fell behind 3-1 in the first inning and then failed to take advantage of several promising

opportunities in the opening three frames.

The Tigers then broke it wide open with a barrage of three straight two-run innings — fourth through the sixth — to gain a berth in today's finals against another Eastern Ohio nine, Steubenville Central.

Ironton, now 25-3 on the season, took the field against

John Nese's Crusaders at 2 p.m., with the winner earning a berth in next weekend's state tourney. Steubenville Central owns a 22-1 record.

"I'm naturally disappointed in the outcome of our game against Ironton, but I'm also satisfied with the way the boys played this season," Snively said.

"No one expected us to have a

very good year, but these kids dedicated themselves that they could beat some good clubs and they did," the Bellaire mentor added.

The Big Reds wound up with a 17-10 record and lose only four starters by graduation.

This marks only the fourth year for baseball at Bellaire since the sport was revived

after an absence of nearly 20 years. Last spring, the Big Reds advanced to the district tourney before losing to eventual state champion Portsmouth in eight innings, 2-1.

Ironton's ace hurler Jerry Murnahan and Bob Collins, who took over in the sixth, combined to hold Bellaire to five hits. Murnahan, who is now 11-0 on the year, fanned 10 and walked two, while Collins had five strikeouts and did not issue a walk.

Nonetheless, Murnahan had his hands full over the first three innings when Bellaire left eight runners on base.

"We just couldn't take advantage of these situations and it seemed to take the gas out of us," lamented Snively.

Ironton scored three times in the first. Jim Payne doubled and scored on a two-base hit by Bob Bagert. Dave Kriebel then singled home the second run and took second on the throw to home plate. Greg Spence's single made it a 3-0 issue.

Bellaire came back with a run in the bottom of the first. Roger Blumling singled and advanced to third on a pair of passed balls. He scored when Bob Crozier singled.

The Big Reds went on to load the bases in the first, but couldn't dent the scoring column. Bellaire loaded the bases with none out in the second and had runners on second and third with one out in the third, but again these runners were stranded.

Ironton made it 4-1 in the third before going into its string of three straight two-run innings. The Tigers' two in the fifth included a solo home run by Keith Parker.

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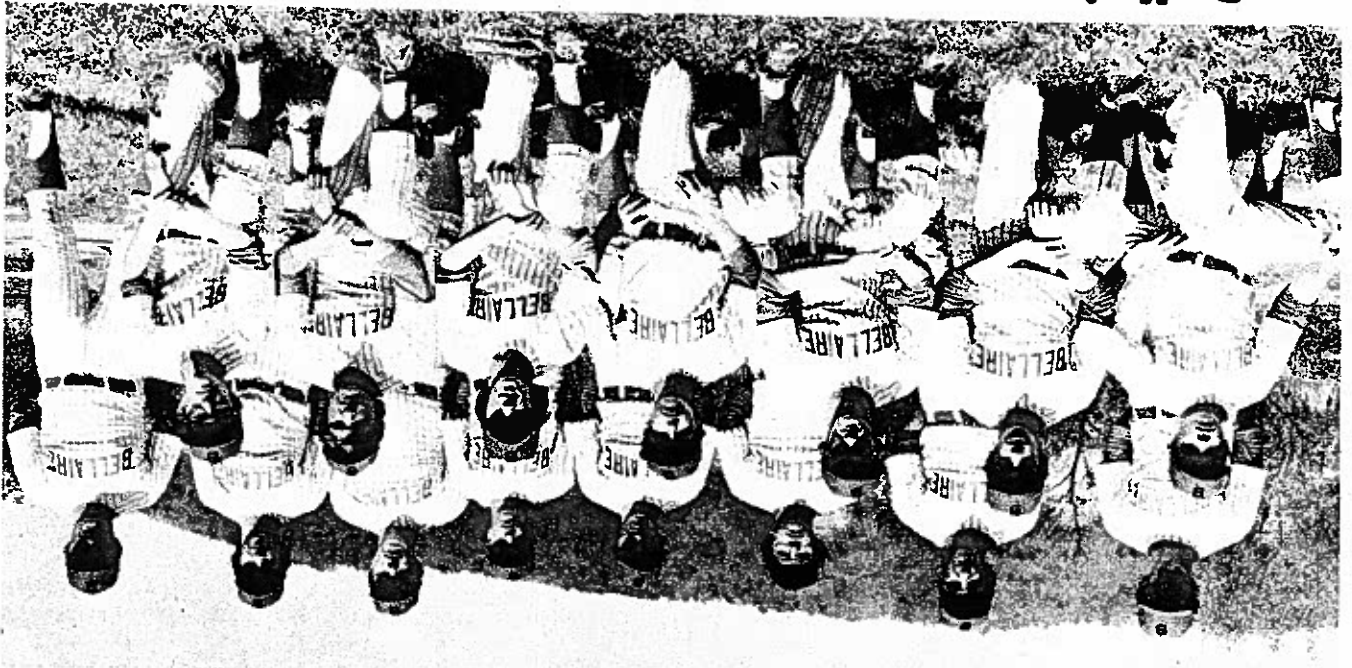
Kriebel led the winners with a double and three singles. Parker had a single to go with his homer. Payne collected two doubles and Spence had three singles. Line score:

Ironton 301 222 1 — 11 17 2
Bellaire 100 000 0 — 1 5 2

Batteries: Murahan, Collins (6) and Kriebel; Irwin, O'fat (5), Marling (7) and Crozier, Liberati (7).

Bellaire Nabs 15th Verdict

Mark Marling and John Irwin combined on a four-hitter as Bellaire topped visiting Wheeling Central, 7-2, Friday. The win improved Bellaire's mark to 15-7. The Big Reds will play host to St. Clairsville Monday. Line score: Wng. Cen. 100 010 0-2 4 3 Bellaire 300 112 x-7 8 3 Batteries: Thompson and Burke; Marling, Irwin (5), and Crozier.



Bellaire's Sectional Baseball Champions

AWAITING THEIR debut in the four-team Class AA District baseball tourney to be held at Bridgeport next week are these Bellaire High Big Reds, winners of the sectional held at the same diamond. Front row, from left are Joe Tomlan, Dave Liberaid, Ed Ofat, Doug LaRoche, Roger Blumling, Mark Marling and Chuck Shubat. Back row, are Bill Boston, John Irwin, Larry Tuclo, Guy DeLong, Lee Theburn, Bob Crozier, Frank Sabatino and coach Terry Smively. The Big Reds own a 15-7 record and sport new pinstriped uniforms purchased by the Big Reds Touchdown Club. PHOTO BY NELSON