

Lions drop six in Ohio

Hitting remains solid, but pitching shaky

by Matt Plizga
Sports Editor

It's hard to win without pitching. That's the problem the Behrend baseball team has run into so far this year.

The struggling pitching staff of the Lions wasn't able to right itself over the weekend in the Capital University Tournament.

Playing six games in a three day span didn't help matters for the young group.

"We gained a great deal of game experience, but realized that we don't have the pitching depth to play six games in three days" said coach Paul Benim.

Despite losing six straight in Columbus things aren't as bad as they may seem.

Friday the Lions dropped two games to host Capital University.

In the first game Behrend jumped out to a 2-0 lead after three innings. A solo home run by first baseman Jeff Hortsman got the offense going in the second inning, but it wasn't enough.

After three solid innings pitching starter Sean McKlveen ran into control problems. Behrend eventually lost 13-3.

The second game was more competitive as Behrend lost 12-9. A Lion rally that featured a grand slam by freshman Cory Walters fell just short.

Capital improved to seven and two with the wins over the Lions

"Capital is a solid Division III baseball team," said Benim.

Saturday's action put the Lions up against a powerful Ohio Wesleyan team. Wesleyan is ranked 15th in the country in Division III baseball.

They showed their power and exposed Behrend's struggling pitching staff in 19-5 and 20-7

wins. "Ohio Wesleyan is the best team we will see this year" said Benim.

On Sunday the Lions traveled to Denison to wrap up their road trip to central Ohio.

The first game versus Denison was Behrend's best chance to earn a win. After rallying from a three run deficit the Lions were robbed of a run.

Some freshman really stepped up for us...

Coach Benim

A controversial call at home plate nullified what would have been the game-tying run. The ensuing argument saw heated talks between the teams and assistant

coach Bill Graham ejected from the game.

The emotional let down of that call carried over to the second game as the Lions lost 20-2.

Despite losing six straight not everything is sour for the Lions. Once the pitching staff comes around Behrend will win some games.

As a team the Lions batted .352 and averaged five and a half runs per game.

Over the weekend Behrend had seven batters hit over .300, five of which hit over .400.

Freshman Jeremy Brubaker had a tremendous trip going 9 of 15 at the plate, for a .600 batting average. Brubaker led the team in hits, batting average, and doubles.

Another freshman, Michael Thompson, hit .600 for the Lions. He also scored five runs, hit a home run and had six consecutive hits.

"Some freshman really stepped up for us. Thompson, Brubaker and Walters hit the ball well," said Benim.

Offensively we hit the ball well, we just gave up to many big innings.

Coach Benim

Walters hit .467 for the Lions while driving in five runs.

Senior Quinn McGuire did his job in the lead-off position hitting .467 and drawing two walks. He also stole four bases and scored five runs.



Colleen Gritzer/Photo Editor

Keep your eye on the ball! That is exactly what the Behrend Lions did over the weekend. The team has a .352 batting average over the last six outings.

Fellow senior Bill Vitron hit .316 while driving in a team high six runs. Sophomore Jeff Hortsman hit .400 and scored five runs on the trip.

Freshman Dylan Stewart also hit over .400 while playing errorless ball behind the plate.

"Stewart did a good job behind the dish," said Benim.

"Offensively we hit the ball well, we just gave up to many big innings defensively," said Benim.

On four separate occasions the Lions gave up seven or more runs

in an inning. "Everybody hits in college, we'd walk a couple, give up a hit, then make an error. Before you knew it, they had scored four runs," said Benim.

Behrend returns to action on Thursday at home. The Lions will face Oberlin College. The first pitch is scheduled for 1:00 p.m.

"The good part is that we are playing two games instead of six in three days" said Benim.



Colleen Gritzer/Photo Editor

Swing and a miss! Something the Lions did little of in the Capital University Tournament. The team average five and a half runs per game while hitting three home runs.

1997 BASEBALL by RICK WILSON - ALONG WITH BOBBY VALENTINE

Port St. Lucie, Fla. — One of the most questionable teams is the 1997 New York Mets. Manager Bobby Valentine has a wait-and-see attitude. "They keep saying, 'Be patient, be patient,'" star relief pitcher John Franco states. "But sometimes, patience wear off."

States Valentine, who replaced Dallas Green last season, "The majority of the improvements this team had to make had to come from within, regardless of spending money. I'm looking forward to seeing how much we can improve. If we do, we'll see if can play with the big boys."

General Manager Joe McIlvaine wants a 91-71 record this year, and newly-acquired relief pitcher Greg McMichael from the Atlanta Braves wants the World Series. Bobby, though, isn't making any major promises, but the Mets will be competitive as any team Bobby has managed.

"I will know what to expect of our team after I see it. I'm not smart enough to figure that stuff out until then. I don't think there was an emphasis on just playing the game of baseball last season. The emphasis was on pitching it, and hitting it. There wasn't an emphasis on just playing it."

How confident is Bobby V. about his status with the Mets because his contract only runs for this season? "In this situation, at this time, that's what I wanted. They don't know what they've got with me. As for security, I have that within myself."

N.L. PREDICTIONS

EAST

1. **FLORIDA MARLINS** — There are a lot of questions here. However, if this team stays healthy — LOOK OUT! Without a doubt, Jimmy Leyland is one of the best managers in baseball. Yet, he needs help from Gary Sheffield and Bobby Bonilla to stay healthy all season. (92-70).

2. **ATLANTA BRAVES** — The supposed giants of baseball have won five consecutive divisional titles since 1991, but have never become the dynasty like the New York Yankees or Oakland A's in their heyday. They showed their vulnerability, obviously, last year in the World Series. (90-72).

3. **NEW YORK METS** — Give it a .500-plus season now and playoff time comes next year! You never know, though, a surprise could be in the offing for this year! (88-74).

4. **MONTREAL EXPOS** — Yes, here is cost-cutting. Felipe Alou is firm, yet again, very easy-going, and gets the best out of his guys who have the utmost respect for him. I could be wrong with this pick. (74-88).

5. **PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES**

— As Elizabeth Taylor would say, "A great BIG flop." (58-104).

CENTRAL

1. **ST. LOUIS CARDINALS** — Who could ever bet against a genius like manager Tony LaRussa? Whatever cards he is dealt, the guy wins! (89-73).

2. **CHICAGO CUBS** — This year, they may come close to a wild-card spot. I think they will go all the way to the end against the Cards this year. (86-76).

3. **HOUSTON ASTROS** — The talent is there, but something is spooky when you talented professionals haven't made it to the BIG DANCE! (85-77).

4. **CINCINNATI REDS** — SAD, SAD, SAD. Ray Knight is a great manager; the management and powers-that-be is another long, long story. (80-82).

5. **PITTSBURGH PIRATES** — As they say in Robin Williams' hit movie, "Birdcage," starring Gene Hackman, "I don't understand, I don't understand, I think I'm going insane!" (67-95).

WEST

1. **LOS ANGELES DODGERS** — Cannot deny it, the hitting and especially the pitching, is there day in and day out. (91-71).

2. **COLORADO ROCKIES** — If they had the pitching, well, this would be the World Series winners hands-down. (90-72).

3. **SAN DIEGO PADRES** — Great run last season, but I believe not enough was done in the off-season to make you a first-place team again. (82-80).

4. **SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS** — What has happened here? (62-100).

WILD CARD TEAM: Atlanta Braves.

N. L. CHAMPIONS: Florida Marlins.

A.L. PREDICTIONS

EAST

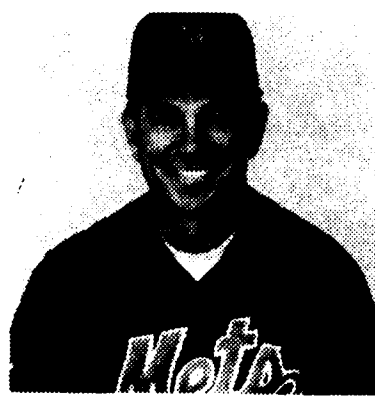
1. **NEW YORK YANKEES** — George Steinbrenner has told all of us in the media that he IS NOT promising another trophy to City Hall. However, with all the controversy surrounding our PINSTRIPERS, don't definitely bet against it. (92-70).

2. **BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Davey Johnson is underrated, but the Birds don't have the savvy the Yanks do. (91-71).

3. **TORONTO BLUE JAYS** — Even with Roger Clemens, who is still questionable, in my opinion, I don't think they will contend. (79-83).

4. **BOSTON RED SOX** — Questionable pitching and, can you believe this, hitting as well. (76-86).

5. **DETROIT TIGERS** — Blood



BOBBY VALENTINE

pressure pills for manager Buddy Bell. (63-99).

CENTRAL

1. **CLEVELAND INDIANS** — Well, here we go again. Perhaps the best team in baseball, even after losing Albert Belle. However, the Tribe will once again not win a World Series. (93-69).

2. **CHICAGO WHITE SOX** — Owner Jerry Reisdorf is no George Steinbrenner. Jerry thinks he can buy a pennant, but Boss George can. (85-77).

3. **KANSAS CITY ROYALS** — I personally think the waterfalls will die at this beautiful stadium as the season wears on. (81-81).

4. **MINNESOTA TWINS** — It breaks my heart, as they came from champs to chumps. 'NUFF SAID! (70-92).

5. **MILWAUKEE BREWERS** — Thank God for the Green Bay Packers. It's going to be a long summer with the Brews. (70-92).

WEST

1. **SEATTLE MARINERS** — Here they come! The Kingdome and their power hitting and pitching could be a lot of trouble for their rivals in the Bronx. And let's face it, Lou Piniella is a master manager. These kids, if they all stay healthy, are going to be major trouble. (108-54).

2. **TEXAS RANGERS** — Always a bridesmaid! (83-79).

3. **OAKLAND ATHLETICS** — Pitching is weak and so are injury-plagued veterans. (74-88).

4. **ANAHEIM ANGELS** — New name, same old results. (74-88).

WILD CARD: Baltimore Orioles

A.L. CHAMPIONS: Seattle Mariners.

WORLD SERIES: Florida Marlins over Seattle Mariners.

M.V.P.: Gary Sheffield, Florida Marlins, (N.L.); Ken Griffey, Jr., Seattle Mariners, (A.L.).

Cy Young: Kevin Brown, Florida Marlins, (N.L.); Randy Johnson, Seattle Mariners, (A.L.).

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Gregory picks the winners

by Brian Gregory
Sports Editor

(Erie). While baseball gears up for one of the most exciting seasons in recent years, the Cleveland Indians keep building to make their team the best in the league. Tuesday, Cleveland traded Alan Embree and all-star centerfielder Kenny Lofton to the Atlanta Braves for David Justice and Marquis Grissom. Cleveland will have Grissom leading off and what comes next could terrorize opposition pitching.

Jim Thome bats third, Matt Williams bats fourth, David Justice will be fifth, Manny Ramirez sixth and Kevin Mitchell will bat seventh. Any Questions?

I have one. Can they beat the Yankees. The yankees only really lose Jimmy Key, Jim Leyritz, and John Wetteland. The team keeps Cecil Fielder and picked up starter David Wells. They are still the team to beat in the American League. Steinbrenner may have built a dynasty. In the National League, the Florida Marlins may be on the way to championship form, but the Braves are still solid and they stand in their way.

You can bet that the Cardinals will be back. Tony LaRussa showed that he can coach a great team as the Cardinals played exceptional ball in the second half last year.

N.L. Predictions

EAST

1. **Atlanta Braves**—The Braves will run away with this conference once again. They have solid pitching, great bats, and excellent defense to help them.

2. **Florida Marlins**—Great off-season moves by the staff, especially in getting Jimmy Leyland to coach will help turn this team around. Leyland is tired of losing, the last three years with the Pirates is enough.

3. **New York Mets**—The youth of the Mets and the many great pitching prospects will keep them above .500 this year, but no playoffs just yet.

4. **Montreal Expos**—The Expos have lost too many players since the championship team in the strike-shortened season. Alou will fight, but he can only do so much.

5. **Philadelphia Phillies**—This team will crash this year. Watch for them to trade away most of remaining talent for draft picks late in year.

CENTRAL

1. **St. Louis Cardinals**— Tony LaRussa will lead this team far this year. Look for the cinderella season to end in the World Series.

2. **Houston Astros**—Finally a year the Astros can be proud of. The team has a chance to make the playoffs, but will have to play

good ball against the N.L. East. One thing's for sure, still no fans!!

3. **Chicago Cubs**—Many people think this will be a year for Harry Carey to celebrate, I think it'll just be another season for him to get drunk and sing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame!"

4. **Cincinnati Reds**—I almost hate to put them in fourth. I think I will be wrong. When no one expects much out of the Reds, they have outstanding years.

5. **Pittsburgh Pirates**—As a friend of mine in the sports business said, "Why do they even have to play this year. They should just take a year off." Indeed, this is true. Owner Kevin McClatchey is trying to drive this team into the ground.

WEST

1. **Colorado Rockies**—The Rockies will find late season pitching and make a pennant drive. Look for them to have a banner year as they try to equal the Marlins.

2. **Los Angeles Dodgers**—As Lasorda goes, so do the Dodgers. They still have all the talent, but the coaching style is gone.

3. **San Diego Padres**—Always just one step away from an excellent year. They will be happy to finish above .500.

4. **San Francisco A's**—I didn't forget the Gi for nothing.

WILD CARD TEAM: Florida Marlins

N.L. Champions: St. Louis Cardinals

A.L. PREDICTIONS

EAST

1. **New York Yankees**—Once again the team to beat in the A.L. The Yankees are well stocked for another World Series run. Look for them to start slow and come on in June.

2. **Baltimore Orioles**—Baltimore is always solid and Davey Johnson is a good manager. They will probably remain a strong second falling just short of the wild-card.

3. **Boston Red Sox**—Once again local Bostonians will be calling for someone's head as a talented team underachievers.

4. **Toronto Blue Jays**—Even with Roger Clemens as the ace, this team has too many gaps.

5. **Detroit Tigers**—The Pittsburgh Pirates of the A.L. Buddy Bell will have this team in contention by the end of NEXT year.

CENTRAL

1. **Cleveland Indians**—The most qualified team to catch the Yankees. Good hitting will support a weakened pitching staff most of the year. You can't beat their 3-4-5 hitters.

2. **Chicago White Sox**—There is new talent in the New Comiskey Park. Albert Belle will be one half of the "Big Boys" with perennial all-star Frank Thomas. However, only Frank can control his temper.

3. **Milwaukee Brewers**—This team will surprise a lot of people. With a couple more trades next year, they could challenge the Indians.

4. **Kansas City Royals**—Still way short of a contender. They may start strong, but very few veterans are left to anchor them.

5. **Minnesota Twins**—A lot of talent will be kept on hold as they complete another rebuilding year.

WEST

1. **Seattle Mariners**—This team will once again have a lot of power and will win over 70% of home games. Many A.L. teams fear Johnson, Buhner, Martinez, and Griffey Jr.

2. **Texas Rangers**—With the addition of closer John Wetteland, the Rangers will snatch up the final wild-card spot. Injured Juan Gonzalez will need to return fast.

3. **Oakland Athletics**—This is a team on the rebound. If the reunited "Bash Brothers" get fired up, Seattle and Texas will have to look out.

4. **Anaheim Angels**—New look, same bad taste.

A.L. WILDCARD: Texas Rangers

A.L. CHAMPION: New York Yankees

World Series Champs: New York Yankees— I have to go with my heart on this one, but it could just as easily be Cleveland or Seattle.