

Eye on Campus

Diamond being mined

Baseball team starts fast, optimism running high

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Members of the Penn State Delaware County men's baseball team are looking forward to a successful and exciting season.

According to freshman Mike Yost, "It's nice to already know people on the team and there's good sophomore leadership. I think we'll do well."

Shortstop Steve Fletcher agreed saying, "I think we'll be good this year. We're better offensively."

Commenting on the mix of new and returning players assistant student coach Frank Flaim added, "We've got the talent...we're meshing very well."

The season opened with a doubleheader at Philadelphia Community College resulting in two impressive victories.

Highlights of the first game included 13 strikeouts from Karl Jastrzebski and a two-run double from Will Kast. The second game was an 11-0 shut out.

The first home game on September 14 against Luzerne County Community College yielded mixed results. After a 13-3 victory in the first game, the team suffered a frustrating 11-6 loss during the second.

According to Yost, "We were tired but



Photo by Luanne Sims

Among the members of the Penn State Delco baseball team, front, from left, head coach Vickers, Vito Cianci, Brandon Bush, Devin Zuezek, Assistant Coach Benz; middle, Jim Wilkinson, John Brady, Chris Napoli, Levi Ahlefeld, Mike Yost; rear, Assistant Coach DiAntonio, Student Assistant Coach Haines, Steve Watson, David Wray, Carl Jastrzebski, Will Kast.

that's not really an excuse. Our focus wasn't there for a couple of the innings. It's tough with every game being a doubleheader...to beat the team twice."

Pitcher Dave Wray said, "We have a

better team than last year. It's smaller but better."

Yost explained, "Once everything comes together we're strong hitting and pitching. The team just has to make sure

it's keeping focus this season."

For more information on the baseball team contact Head Coach Jeff Vickers at jwv@psu.edu or Assistant Coach Joe DiAntonio, at jrd21@psu.edu.

DiAntonio has plans for athletics mapped out

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The role of a college athletic director is a huge responsibility, requiring incredible organization, enthusiasm, communication and budgeting skills, not to mention extensive sports knowledge.

Coach Joe DiAntonio, the new A.D. for Penn State Delaware County, is up to the challenge. "I was always involved in athletics, through high school and college," says DiAntonio. "I'm excited to be here in this new job."

Growing up in nearby Boothwyn, DiAntonio played basketball, baseball and football at Chichester High before earning his teaching degree at West Chester University.

He began his coaching career during his college years, eventually leading to his current position with Penn State. DiAntonio has coached for Penncrest High School and recently worked as an elementary school physical education teacher for the Garnet Valley School District.

Children in kindergarten through fifth grade are quite different from the average college student. What would motivate

such a change?

"That job was hard to leave, but I realized that this position (as Athletic Director) was right for me. I look forward to being a part of the experience of a Penn State student," DiAntonio said. He will be replacing Luanne Sims, now Associate Director of Student Affairs, who briefly replaced Kinesiology instructor longtime A.D. Tiz Griffith. In his first few weeks as the new athletic director, DiAntonio has tasted the challenges that the position will require.

"You have to be very organized, exact and precise. You can't have mistakes," he said. "If a team has an away game, the bus better be out there. There are a lot of hours. Night games can start at 6 or 8 and not be finished until 10:30p.m. The job really has three parts. I oversee the fitness center, intramural sports, and varsity sports."

While the athletic director does not manage club sports on campus, he will work with and encourage any students interested in starting a new athletic club or event. Men's baseball pitcher Dave Wray

described DiAntonio as "very personable and willing to sacrifice his time for the teams."

The new A.D. has several goals for the coming season of athletic programs on campus. "Number one would be recruitment and retention of student athletes," he said. DiAntonio recognizes the struggle that comes with the high turnover rate of a commuter campus like PSU-Delco and advises that coaches continue to scout year-round to recruit student athletes throughout the area, because "local colleges pluck players away."

Second, "we need to increase the exposure of our sports teams. I think our athletic programs are hidden."

DiAntonio hopes to increase exposure of Penn State Delco sports through more press releases and schedule distribution so that the campus community will know when and where to support their teams.

Third, "I think we need to start providing for our athletes," he said. "Students are working and taking time out of their



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busy schedules to play, and we have to make them want to stay."

The six varsity sports offered at Penn State Delco are baseball, soccer, women's volleyball, team tennis, women's basketball, and men's basketball. Women's volleyball and men's basketball offer four-year eligibility while other varsity sports offer team members two years of play. DiAntonio explained that while he would like for all student athletes to have the opportunity to play for a full four years, PSU-Delco must compete against local community colleges which have only two-year eligibility to fill their opponents' roster and qualify for interleague play.

Many student athletes already know DiAntonio from his coaching roles as assistant coach for baseball and head coach for women's basketball, positions he hopes to continue. Campus community members look forward to a friendly and familiar face as their athletic director.

According to Florence Akuffo, member of the women's basketball team, "He is a great coach and a very hard working person. I trust that he won't let our school down. I know he'll do a good job."

Previous campus A.D. Griffith approvingly stated, "He's a good one."