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Baseball preview

Dallas, Lehman enter season deep, experienced

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Correspondent

The Dallas Mountaineers and the Lake-Lehman Black Knights enter the 1993 baseball season with many more similarities than differences.

Both teams will begin the season as championship contenders. Both return a host of lettermen and both have pitching staffs with a number of quality pitchers but no proven stopper.

Lehman, the returning Wyoming Valley Conference West division champions, have finished ahead of the Mounts the past two seasons. But this year, Dallas takes a leap to Class AAA, facing a murderous schedule (seven of their first 10 games are on the road) and a number of quality opponents, including Tunkhannock, Nanticoke and Hazleton Area, which had 94 players tryout

for the team.

Here are the team previews, in alphabetical order:

DALLAS

A quick look at the team roster is all you need to realize why optimism is running high at Dallas. Eleven returning lettermen, including nine seniors, highlight the roster and are creating some interesting battles for starting positions.

"We have some experience, no question," said head coach Jack Wolensky, who enters his 14th season at the helm. "So many of our kids have played varsity baseball. I think we're extremely versatile. So many kids can play so many positions."

"There are some battles right now," said the veteran coach of starting lineup possibilities. "I can anticipate having many different starting lineups during the sea-

son. My philosophy is the hitters play. You play the player who is swinging the hot bat."

Returning senior lettermen include seniors Matt Bailey (2B), Mark Barbose (C), Al Brzezinski (P), Jason Davies (1B-P), Dave Fisher (P-SS), Andy Flint (OF), Pat Joyce (3B), Todd Paczewski (Inf-OF-P), and Mike Wagner.

Also on the roster are junior letterwinner Brian Brady (P-OF) and sophomore Rich Butcofski (C). Wolensky, who is assisted by former Crestwood standout Jim McGovern, is also counting on help from senior Shawn Scavone, junior Jared Cooney, sophomores Mike Viglone and Peter Waichulis and freshmen Jeff Kunkle and Rich Klick.

"Todd (Paczewski) is one of the top five players in the league," said Wolensky, of his all-purpose player. "He's being recruited by a number of colleges. We have five

guys who pitched in varsity games last year but not a real stopper. Todd only pitched 14 innings last season because of tendonitis."

Although their outside play has been extremely limited, the Mounts recently returned from a trip to Virginia where they played a pair of games, including the school's first night game. The Mounts beat I.C. Norcum, 4-0, in the first contest and then lost to returning regional champ Lake Taylor, 5-3, in the nightcap. A pair of games the following day were washed out.

LAKE-LEHMAN

The two-time defending WVC champs, under head coach Dwight Barbacci, will have to replace a quality starter and catcher if they are to have a chance to "threepeat." Gone are pitching standout Don James and catcher Chuck

Smith. Promising seniors are Brian Llewellyn (1B-OF), New Jersey transfer Jason Kamienski (2B), Ben Sevanski (C) and Mark Danowski (OF). Sophomores Rob Fugate (OF) and Tom Smigielski (C-1B-OF), are expected to make an impact on the Black Knights.

"We don't have a proven stopper," said Barbacci, who enters his ninth season with the Black Knights. "We have some kids who threw last year and had some success. I'm excited about our infield. We have a good, solid infield with good fielders and soft hands."

Barbacci will rely on returning junior pitchers Ernie Chamberlain and Larry Smith. Smith was 3-0 last season while Chamberlain was 3-1. Barbacci will also call on junior Will Woronko and freshmen John Oliver to handle mound duties.

Returning to the Black Knights are seniors Chris Traver (DH) and Shawn Kelly (3B), juniors Aaron Yaple (CF), Harry Owens (OF), Woronko, Chamberlain and

Smith.

"Northwest should be a very tough team," added the Lehman coach. "They have a lot of four-year starters. Wyoming Seminary should also be very competitive. Our goal is to win the West division and make the playoffs. That's our goal every season."

Softball preview

1993 will be challenge for Mounts, Knights

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Correspondent

During a combined nearly 20 seasons of coaching their respective softball teams, Jay Pope and Rose Ragnacci have been models of consistency.

But this season, both find themselves in very unfamiliar situations.

At Dallas High School, where the beginning of softball season brings with it high expectations, Pope finds himself with his most inexperienced team in a dozen seasons.

And at Lake-Lehman High School, where team balance has become a trademark, Ragnacci admittedly finds herself depending on one player to carry the team on her shoulders until the young players develop.

This should be an interesting year for Lehman and Dallas, which finished 1-2 in the Wyoming Valley Conference North division last season.

Here are the previews, in alphabetical order:

DALLAS

The Lady Mountaineers finished with a record of 11-5 last year in the WVC North, but Pope knows with just three seniors on the roster, he'll be hard-pressed to equal last year's mark.

"Any game we finish over .500 will be a feather in our cap," said Pope, who enters his 12th season at the helm of the Lady Mounts.

"We're very inexperienced in many key positions. I think there's more pressure on us this year. The kids know the tradition and are expected to win year after year."

Like every softball and baseball coach in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Pope feels the frustration from field conditions and lack of outside practice time.

"We have not had one general outside practice," said the Dallas coach. "We've had nine exhibition games washed out. Not being able to go outside makes the job that much more difficult."

The Mountaineers return six letterwinners from last season, led by co-captains Theresa Mathers and Kelly Janosky. Mathers, a senior third baseman and Janosky, a junior shortstop, anchor the Dallas infield.

Seniors Kelly McIntyre (OF) and Sally Friar (C-1B), and sophomores Katie Sallitt (P) and Bridget Temperine (P-OF) join Mathers and Janosky as the returning letterwinners. Pope is counting

on help from juniors Jamie Barbacci (OF) and Michelle Siglin (OF) as well as sophomores Theresa Paxton (C), Kelly West (P), and Heather Patton (OF). Freshmen Holly Baseski (2B) and Suzanne Fisher (1B) are expected to make an immediate contribution.

Despite the uphill battle, Pope is confident his charges will rise to the challenge.

"The kids are responding well," added Pope. "They're up to meeting the challenge. The quicker the underclassmen mature, the better we'll be. The strengths of our team are our dedication, positive attitude and the unity among the players."

LAKE-LEHMAN

Ragnacci makes no bones about it; the early success of the defending WVC (14-2 record) and District 2 champs lies with the right arm of senior pitcher Cherub Honeywell.

"We better hope that nothing happens to Cherub," Ragnacci half-joked about her returning fireballer. "She should be one of the top three pitchers in the league. She threw no-hitters as a freshman and a sophomore. She throws a lot of smoke but she's been working on other pitches. We're counting on Cherub."

But Honeywell, who led the Lady Knights to the state basketball playoffs, will not be alone this season. In fact, the Lady Knights have a solid middle defense, a key element to success.

Seniors Christina Conrad (C), Heather Gray (2B), Mindy Main (SS), and Noell Brooks all return to the starting lineup.

"Our middle is strong," said the Lehman coach, who enters her eighth year as head coach of the Lady Knights. "(Conrad) calls a good game and has good fundamentals. Heather, Mindy and Noell are all natural athletes."

Ragnacci is also counting on senior Bridget Hozempa (OF), junior Julie Babcock (C), sophomores Amy Rogers (3B), and Jessica Oplinger (1B) and freshmen Kelly Spencer (1B) and Janelle Elgaway (OF).

"We have some girls who have not seen varsity pitching or hitting," explained Ragnacci, of the team's weaknesses. "And our outfield is young. But Amy (Rogers) has made an excellent transition from shortstop to third base. Our infield looks like it could be pretty good."

Ragnacci is assisted by Kim Barbacci and volunteer assistant Heather Ruger.



GALLOPIN' GATORS - Pictured above are the Gators of Gate of Heaven who took third place in the 11th annual Frank P. Crossin 8th grade girls' basketball tournament. First row, from left, Christy Kane, Audrey Marut, Becky Ostrowski, Erin Stair, Bianca Badanis, Maureen Paley. Second row, John Powell of the LCRD, coaches Bob Paley and Ed Ostrowski. Absent from photo: Gussi Malpass, Kelly Nelen, Shawna Hinchy.

Gate of Heaven girls win tourney

The first annual Regis Academy Invitational 7th and 8th grade boys and girls basketball tournament was held at Bishop O'Reilly gymnasium on Friday, April 2 and Saturday, April 3. Four schools participated.

Gate of Heaven won the girls' division by defeating St. Mary's Assumption (Pittston) 36-30. Top scorers were Chrissy Kane (14) and Beck Ostrosky (12). Jillian Dessoie (15) was top scorer for St. Mary's. Holy Child's girls were victorious over the Regis Academy girls for third place.

Most Valuable Player for the girls' tournament was Chrissy Kane of Gate of Heaven; the Sportsmanship Award went to Jillian Dessoie of St. Mary's.

The boys' division was won by Holy Child in a cliffhanger not decided until the last buzzer, 57-55. Host Regis Academy took second place. An-

drew Desiderio was top scorer for both teams with 35 points; teammate Tom Stambaugh scored 17; Jason Harlen (16), Joe Onzik (15) and Mark Melnick (14) were top scorers for Regis. Gate of Heaven defeated St. Jude's in the consolation game to place third.

Most Valuable player in the boys' tournament was Andrew Desiderio of Holy Child; Joe Onzik of Regis Academy was honored with the Sportsmanship award.

Foul shooting and three-point shooting were contested in separate competition at the tournament. Three-point shooting competitions were won by Jennie Lojewski of St. Mary's for the girls and Joe Casey of Regis Academy for the boys.

Foul shooting winners were Chris Lohin of Gate of Heaven for the boys, Janyne Swircek of Regis Academy for the girls.

Local gymnasts take top honors

Two Back Mountain gymnasts represented the Pittston YMCA Gymnastic's Team at the Allegheny Mountain Gymnastic's League championships on Saturday, April 3.

The meet was held at the Bellefonte Middle School, Bellefonte, Pa. Approximately 80 gymnasts from various YMCA's competed in the event.

The Pittston YMCA gymnasts, Emily Schweitzer and Robin Holeman, competed in the 13-and-up age group. Both girls were suc-

cessful in taking top awards in all events. Emily placed first in the floor exercise with a score of 7.6, second on balance beam with a score of 7.45, fifth in vaulting with a score of 7.25 and ninth on the uneven bars with a score of 5.9.

Robin placed first on bars with a score of 7.3, first on beam with a score of 7.5, fourth on the floor exercise with a score of 7.35, and seventh in vaulting with a score of 7.1. Robin and Emily took the top two places in all-around scoring with final scores of 29.25 and 28.25 respectively.

Both gymnasts are eighth grade students at the Dallas Middle School. Emily is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Schweitzer of Dallas. Robin is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Holeman of Dallas.

The Pittston YMCA Gymnastic's Team is coached by Dawn Denk of Dallas. Dawn coached the undefeated team to a first place finish in the Allegheny Mountain Gymnastic's League. The executive director of the Pittston YMCA is Kirby Shimp.

20 Noxen Strikers advance to regionals

On Saturday, March 27, the AAU's were held at Tunkhannock. Twenty Noxen Strikers advanced to compete in the Middle Atlantic Regionals at Shamokin, April 3 and 4. They were:

Bantam: 40 lbs., John Houssock, 1st; 56 lbs., Ryan Post, 3rd; 60 lbs., Joe Miller, 3rd; 73 lbs.,

Matt Galka, 1st; Unlim. Keith Bomberger, 2nd.

Midget: 54 lbs., Dale Ridginski, 3rd; 62 lbs., Todd Jones, 1st; 66 lbs., Nathan Spagnolo, 2nd; 75 lbs., Louis MacMillen, 2nd; 85 lbs., Matt Belles, 3rd; 90 lbs., Eric Edwards, 3rd; Unlim. Mike Burnside, 2nd.

Junior: 78 lbs., Mike Galka, 3rd; 86 lbs., Sam Saylor, 2nd; 98 lbs., Lynn MacMillan, 1st; 98 lbs., Jayson Harris, 3rd; 105 lbs., Adam Schooley, 1st; 105 lbs., Jeff Traver, 3rd.

Intermediate: 82 lbs., Jason Maciejczak, 1st; 95 lbs., Eric Sickler, 1st.

Lehman volleyball ranked in state top 20

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

With several impressive wins under their belts, the Lake-Lehman boys' volleyball team has been named to the Pennsylvania Volleyball Coaches' Association weekly Top Ten in Eastern Pennsylvania and Top 20 in the entire state.

The top teams are evaluated and selected weekly, based on their performance and strength, by member coaches.

The Knights placed sixth of the top ten eastern teams and tenth in the top 20 teams in the state for this week, according to coach John Baranowski.

At its first away game against Crestwood March 30, the boys won 15-7 and 15-4 in two out of three games.

Senior Tony Scavone scored eight spectacular kills, spiking the ball over the net directly to the floor in front of his opponents.

Senior Rob Spencer and junior Jarrod Baranowski scored five kills each, while coach John Baranowski commended seniors Chris Salko and Tim Norconk for their great defense.

April 1 was no joke for North Pocono, when the Knights beat them at home, 15-4 and 15-8 in two out of three games.

Spencer and Scavone scorched the opposition with 11 and nine kills respectively, while Baranowski served for 14 points in the match.

At the Northeastern York "Bobcat" Invitational April 2, the Knights placed third overall out of ten teams and second out of ten on their own court, playing an exhausting 11 games.

Sports Shorts

Dallas Jr. Football registration

Dallas Jr. Football Association registrations are being accepted for "A" football team only. If interested, contact: 675-1738 or 675-2767.

L-L Jr. Football Club meeting April 8

The Lake-Lehman Jr. Football Club will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, April 8 at 7 p.m. at the Harveys Lake American Legion. All parents of football players and cheerleaders are cordially invited.

Get on the Ball!

Send your baseball or softball scores to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612

Back Mtn. soccer registration April 17

Back Mt. Youth Soccer Association will hold registration for the upcoming 1993 Fall Intramural Soccer season on Saturday, April 17, in the Dallas Middle School Cafeteria from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Intramural League is for boys and girls in the U-8, U-10, U-12 and U-14 age divisions. U-8 will be coed, U-10, U-12 and U-14 will have male and female divisions.

First time registrants need a copy of their birth certificate and all registering need their SS#. Registration will be limited to the number of coaches that we have registered.