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Spring **FORECAST**

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 3



Annika Bredel



Cassidy Kettleman



Dominic Poltrone

- Lorain County "Miss Softball" & "Mr. Baseball" award winners
- High school softball & baseball team previews

INSIDE:

Guardians, Crushers, Previews & Schedules

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Diamond Duel Broadcast Schedule

BASEBALL (BLUE) • SOFTBALL (RED)

SATURDAY, APRIL 15

Elyria @ Elyria Catholic, 1pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

Brookside @ Firelands, 5pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

Keystone @ Lorain, 10am

Vermilion @ Avon Lake, 1pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

Firelands @ Wellington, 5pm

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

Prebis Memorial Tournament

Elyria Catholic vs. Midview
5pm @ Victory Park

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

Prebis Memorial Tournament

Keystone vs. St. Vincent-St. Mary
10am @ LaGrange

Amherst vs. Olentangy Liberty
12pm @ LaGrange

THURSDAY, MAY 4

Brookside @ Open Door, 5pm

SATURDAY, MAY 6

Columbia @ Elyria Catholic, 11am

THURSDAY, MAY 11

Midview @ Vermilion, 4:45pm

SATURDAY, MAY 13

Lorain @ Amherst, 12pm

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Spring FORECAST

ABOUT THE COVER

Shortstops Annika Bredel (Elyria Catholic) and Cassidy Kettleman (Amherst) shared the 2022 Lorain County "Miss Softball" title.

Kettleman is the fourth Comets player to receive the award, posting an astounding .623 batting average with seven doubles, six triples, three home runs and 40 RBIs over the course of 28 games her senior season. She struck out just once last season.

And with a .957 fielding percentage, her glove is as good as her bat. Kettleman is studying at Indiana University in Bloomington, where she also plays softball in the Big Ten Conference.

Bredel is the first Panther to receive the award, amassing a .649 batting average with 11 doubles, five triples, nine home runs and 28 RBIs over the course of 19 games her senior season. She was also a perfect 27-for-27 in stolen base attempts, and had a .907 fielding percentage.

She left her mark on Lorain County sports history, setting records for her career batting average (.626) and home runs (37), before heading to the University of Findlay to continue her academic and athletic career.

In addition to both being "Miss Softball" and shortstops, Kettleman and Bredel have another thing in common: They are the only players in Lorain County history to finish with a career batting average over .600.

Dominic Poltrone (Avon Lake) is Lorain County's 2022 "Mr. Baseball," one of many honors he received last year. He was also named the Southwestern Conference's MVP and Lorain County Division I "Player of the Year."

As a senior for the Shoremen, Poltrone was nearly untouchable on the mound. He finished his 2022 campaign with a 5-2 record, 1.42 ERA and 77 strikeouts in 44.1 innings of work, allowing only nine earned runs in eight starts.

Prior to a mid-season wrist injury, Poltrone delivered at the plate too – tallying a .484 batting average, 16 RBIs and nine stolen bases.

Poltrone is playing baseball this spring at Lake Erie College.



PHOTOS:
KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

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THE FORECAST SPRING 2023

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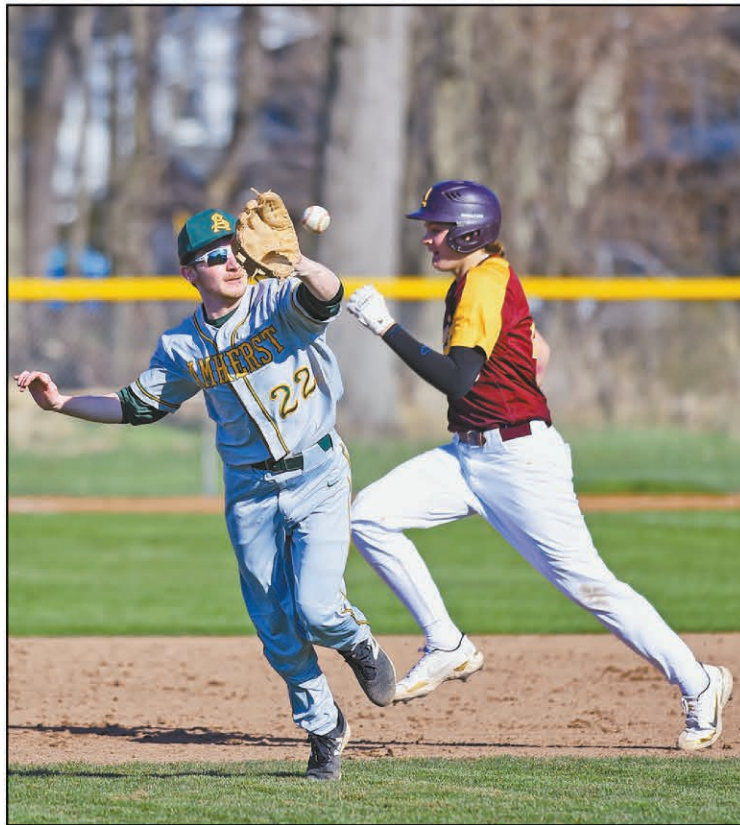
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AMHERST COMETS

Softball: In recent years the Comets have been the cream of the crop in the Southwestern Conference, winning six consecutive league titles. With seven returning letterwinners, including senior pitcher Sierra Dorobek, who was 16-7 last year, Amherst has the talent to make a run at a seventh SWC title. The Comets' offense is led by sophomore Nevaeh Sadler, who batted .418 last season, and junior outfielder Kristen Kelley, also a highly recruited basketball player, who batted .371 in 2022. Comets coach Lacey Reichert has compiled a 171-54 record in just eight years.

Baseball: Amherst looks to rebound after a 15-14 season in 2022 snapped its string of five consecutive 20-win campaigns. The Comets have a loaded roster, with 11 returnees including three senior pitchers — Martin Polonkay, Chase Mayer and Cam Gendics, all of whom had earned run averages under three in 2022. Mayer also led the area with four saves. Amherst won five of its final six games before losing to Avon in the district semifinals. With one of the deepest rosters in the SWC, Amherst is hoping to win a league title for the first time since 2018.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Amherst's second baseman Jonathan Williams (22) narrowly misses tagging out Avon Lake's Drew Graham (23) on Thursday evening, April 21, 2022.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Amherst's shortstop Cassidy Kettleman (15) is unable to secure the ball in time to tag out Avon's Ryann Clapham (2) after Clapham stole second on Wednesday, May 4, 2022.



THOMAS FETCENKO/ CHRONICLE
Avon's Kayla Dykin (9) receives a hug from her teammates Elaina Rodriguez (3), Ryann Clapham (2) and Lauren Robinson (13) after Dykin hit a homerun against North Olmsted in the D1 Districts Tournament.

AVON EAGLES

Softball: Last season, the Eagles just missed out on a trip to the state tournament in Akron, losing to eventual Division I state runner-up Holland Springfield, 3-2, in nine innings. Avon hopes to make another deep postseason run this year with eight returning letterwinners, led by senior catcher Emma Ody. Ody, a Toledo commit, hit .443 with nine home runs last season. Avon also returns sophomore Amelia Holbrook, who hit .417 in 2022, and a duo of .300 hitters in Lauren Fischer and Jillian Rattay. The Eagles' non-league schedule includes traditional powerhouses Mentor, Keystone and Sylvania Northview.

Baseball: Avon returns three first-team all-Southwestern Conference players from last year's league championship team. Senior Gavin Ehrhardt, a Cincinnati commit, was 6-1 on the mound last year while maintaining an on-base percentage of .463. Seniors Leo Walters and Brenton Dill both earned first-team all-SWC honors after batting .407 and .341 respectively. The Eagles will once again play the majority of their home games at Mercy Health Stadium, home of the Lake Erie Crushers.

AVON LAKE SHOREMEN

Softball: Pitching was a strength for the Shoregals, as junior Avery Orille averaged 1.33 strikeouts per inning in the circle. Senior outfielder Brooke Moore was third on the team last season with a .278 average. Sixth-year coach Jana Peachman is also counting on other players for big contributions, including outfielders Lindsay Revmatas and Erin Jagdzinski as well as middle infielders Kaila Polk and Ella Green.

Baseball: Avon Lake took a step back from 2021's conference championship winning team with a 14-10 record last season. But with 10 letterwinners back in the fold, the Shoremen are hoping to get back to the top of the SWC standings. Infielders Adrian Hernandez and Hayden Blosser each return after driving in 10 runs last season. Seniors Alex Deily and C.J. Gurule and junior Kyle Ritter should be mainstays on the mound for the Shoremen.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Avon Lake High School's first baseman Drew Graham (23) catches a popfly while teammate, second baseman Dylan Welsh (2) looks on during a game against Elyria on Tuesday evening, April 26, 2022.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Black River's Noah Hopek (21) slides safely into home during a game against Wellington on Wednesday evening, May 18, 2022.

BLACK RIVER PIRATES

Softball: The Pirates come into 2023 with an eclectic roster that includes five returning letterwinners, a pair of promising freshmen and three foreign exchange students who are just learning the game. Junior pitcher Jordan Bradford earned all-district honors last year after batting .456 and posting a 2.31 ERA. Senior catcher Carly Eckert, who hit .338 last year, is Black River's only three-year letterwinner. Although they finished with a 13-11 record, the Pirates advanced to the district semifinals last year.

Baseball: Black River won its first conference title in 29 years last season and brings back enough talent to do it again. The Pirates had a team ERA under two last season and return four pitchers — seniors Noah Hopek, Hunter McJunkins and Kenny Boggs, and junior Evan Ladina — that were a big part of that success. Junior John Kray hit .387 and stole 26 bases and scored 20 runs last year.

BROOKSIDE CARDINALS

Softball: Brookside had another big season in 2022, finishing 14-7 and advancing to the Division III district finals. The Cardinals are loaded again this season with eight returning letterwinners. Pitcher Lindsey Nader and infielder Faye Clark hit .493 and .483 respectively last season. Senior Lexi Bartlome and sophomore Leanne Clark are also coming off of seasons where they hit over .300, each earning all-conference honors last season.

Baseball: Junior shortstop Ben Montgomery was a second-team all-Lorain County League selection last year after hitting .417 with eight runs. When the Cardinals pitching staff was good last season, they were very good, with three shutouts and a pair of games where it held the team to one run in league play. However Brookside also had seven LCL games where it allowed seven or more runs. With a little more consistency the Cardinals should be able to improve on last year's 8-13 record.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Brookside's pitcher Leah Musall (6) pitches against Columbia on Thursday afternoon, April 28, 2022.

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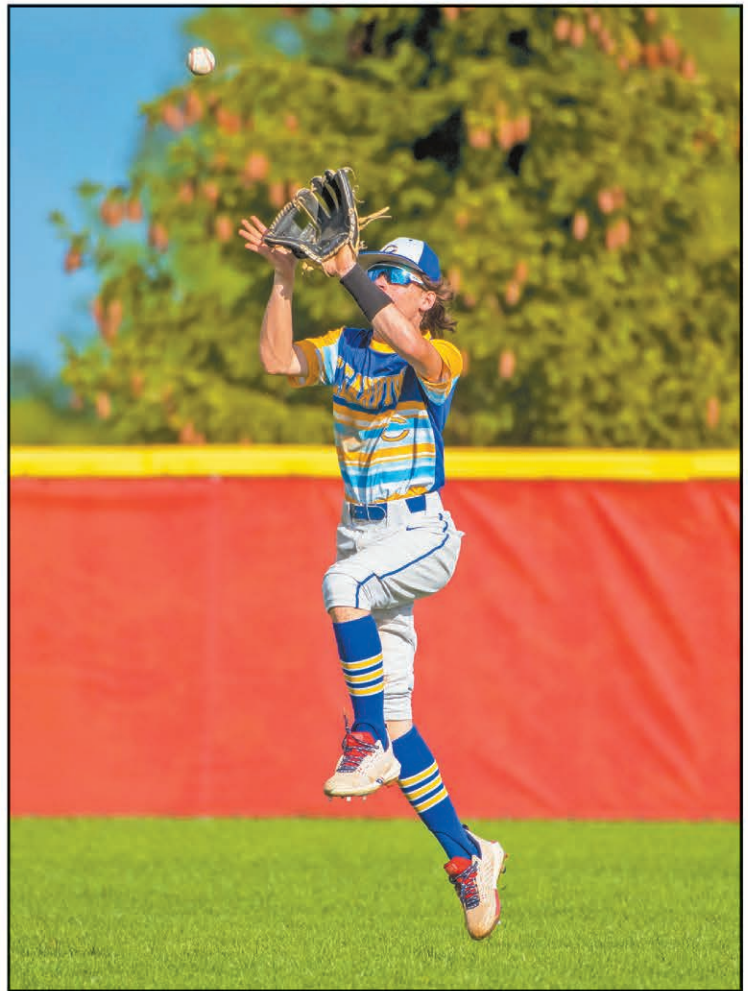
COVINO & RICH

5-7 PM

CLEARVIEW CLIPPERS

Softball: It should be a turnaround year for the Clippers, who return eight letterwinners. Seniors Adri Castro, Jari-mar Ruiz and Hailey Parsons earned all-county honors last year alongside sophomore Gracie Linger. Other return-ees include seniors Natali Trent and Jocelyn Pallens and juniors Alina Pallens and Ava Dotson. The Clippers will rely on speed and defense to get them through a tough Lorain County League schedule.

Baseball: The Clippers return six starters from last year's team but just one senior, third baseman/outfielder Tyler Bockwich. Junior pitchers Josiah Feliciano and Anthony Ruiz should be anchors of the Clearview pitching staff. Junior Ayden Cruz earned first-team all-Lorain County honors last season. New coach Gilberto "Pito" Quinones took over a team that has struggled to light up the score-board, finishing seventh in the LCL in runs scored in each of the last two seasons.



ANGELO ANGEL/ CHRONICLE

Clearview's Josiah Feliciano (3) catches a pop fly at Firelands on Monday, May 16, 2022.

COLUMBIA RAIDERS

Softball: Columbia returns eight from last year's team that finished third in the Lorain County League. Seniors Elise Aniol, Hailey Lash and sophomore Bree Heidecker were all second-team all county selections in 2022. The Raiders welcome back Kailey Minarchick, who was a member of their 2013 state runner-up team, as an assistant coach. Sophomore Sadie Schulke led the LCL in triples last spring.

Baseball: The Raiders weren't able to repeat their success from 2021 when they won the first district title in school history, but still managed a 15-9 record and a second-place finish in the Lorain County League last season. Columbia's offense will be led by senior outfielder Carter Kalamasz, who hit .310 last year. and junior shortstop Jacob Sanders. Coach Dan Durante is looking to junior Cody Hall to be the ace of the Raiders pitching staff. The Raiders have some holes to fill up the middle due to graduation. How quickly they can do that will determine how successful they will be in 2023.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

Columbia's Owen Menge (1) slides safely into second before Hillsdale's second baseman Owen Hoffman (10) can put down the tag with an assist from teammate, shortstop Mark Abel (7) on Wednesday evening, May 25, 2022 in the district tournament.

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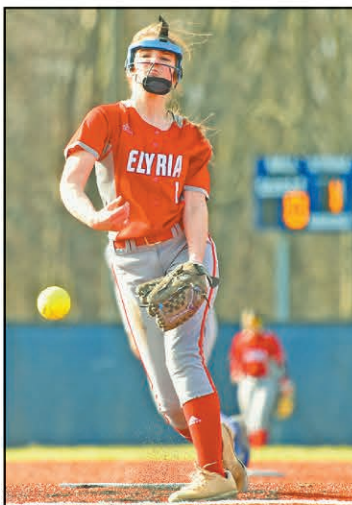
KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

TOP:

Elyria's second baseman Malikye Robinson (32) throws to first baseman Jacob Holmberg (8) to make an out against Amherst on Monday, May 2, 2022.

RIGHT:

Elyria's pitcher Payton Tackett (1) pitches against North Ridgeville on Thursday, April 7, 2022.



KRISTIN BAUER /
CHRONICLE

Elyria Catholic's shortstop Annika Bredel (6) fields a ground ball during a game against Elyria on Friday, April 12, 2022.

THOMAS FETCENKO/
CHRONICLE

Elyria Catholic's Nick Thoman (8) celebrates a hit with Coach Bruce Lisicky on Wednesday, May 25, 2022.



ELYRIA PIONEERS

Softball: The Pioneers are coming off back-to-back losing seasons for the first time since 1991. That year, Elyria started a string of 14 consecutive league titles. While this year's Elyria team may not be ready to take down the Southwestern Conference, it should be a much improved team with first-team all-SWC third baseman Kloie Troutman being joined in the lineup by second-team all-SWC sophomores Morgan Palos and Alliyah Alberto. The Pioneers will compete in the prestigious Wendy's Softball Classic in Ashland for the 19th time on April 21-22.

Baseball: First-year coach Jordan Connell inherits a loaded team. The 11 returning letterwinners are led by senior Nicolas Chernitsky, a first-team all-Southwestern Conference selection who had a 1.91 ERA in six starts last season. The Elyria offense will be led by first baseman Jacob Holmberg and catcher Isaac Ramos, who both batted over .300 last season. If the Pioneers can get consistent hitting throughout the lineup, they should be able to surpass their 16-win total from 2022.

ELYRIA CATHOLIC PANTHERS

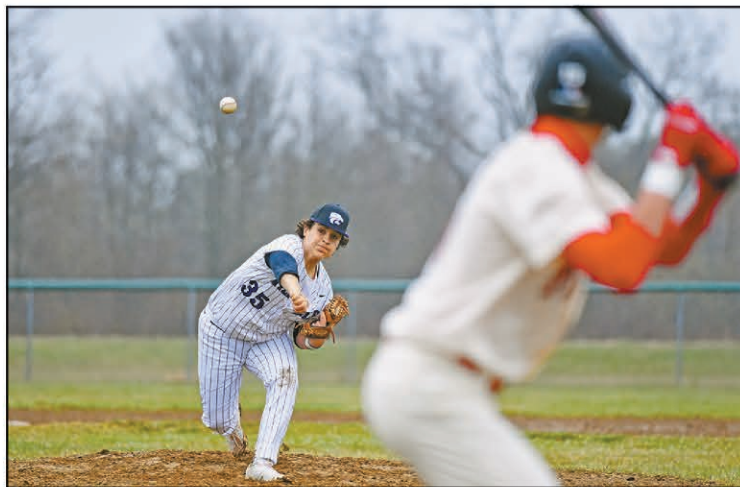
Softball: Elyria Catholic will be tasked with defending the Great Lakes Conference championship title this season, and they will have to do so without Lorain County's all-time top home run hitter Annika Bredel. The Panthers team isn't without other talented players, however. Junior Savannah Dixon, who hit .550 last season and earned first-team all-Lorain County honors, will be back on the field with shortstop Hannah Brooks, outfielders Grace Belza and Isabelle Niederst. Coach Terrel Dixon's Panthers team will host crosstown rival Elyria on April 15.

Baseball: Elyria Catholic has high hopes heading into the new season and Division II – where they are a favorite to earn their first district championship since 2019. All-Ohio first baseman and pitcher Levi Ellis and sophomore catcher and shortstop Tyler Belza return to the Panthers' lineup. Ellis will lead Elyria Catholic's pitching staff with junior Christian Begalla and Kyle Fairbanks. The trio combined for 12 of the Panthers' wins in 2022.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

Firelands' shortstop Kyle Ransom (10) dives after the ball during a game against Keystone on Wednesday, April 6, 2022.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

Keystone's pitcher Macin Padin (35) pitches to Firelands' Neeko Gotsis (15) on Wednesday, April 6, 2022.

KEYSTONE WILDCATS

Softball: It's hard to get a read on this year's Wildcats. On one hand, the program is going through a period of transition with its third different coach in as many years, but the talent pool still runs deep. Keystone has 12 returnees from its 2022 Lorain County League championship team led by junior infielder Hannah Gurich, a second-team all-Ohio selection, and seniors Bella Minisall, Bri Ehrke and Charlee Hudak. The Wildcats will host the Prebis Memorial tournament again this season at LaGrange Community Park.

Baseball: Keystone was one of four teams that tied for second in the Lorain County League last season. The Wildcats lost just one player to graduation, so they will be returning an experienced team. Senior Jack Sivec, who hit .434 with 30 RBIs last year, and Callum Davies, a .300 hitter with 16 RBIs, will be among the leaders of the Keystone offense. Keystone has finished no worse than third in conference since 2016.

FIRELANDS FALCONS

Softball: The Falcons finished third in the Lorain County League in coach Collin Pecoraro's first year at the helm, with a 14-10 record. Last year the Falcons got off to a strong start, winning five of their first seven league games, with just one returning senior, pitcher-infielder Adrianna Buchanan. The continued evolution of junior Mandy DeWitt, a second-team all-LCL selection as a sophomore, and the Falcons' strong freshman and sophomore classes will determine how far they can go this year.

Baseball: Firelands is just two years removed from playing in a regional final and are hoping to go deep in the post-season again this year coming off of a 16-12 season last spring. Senior Cory Ransom, a first-team all-Lorain County League catcher in 2022, hit .463 last season with 28 stolen bases and is one of eight returning letterwinners. The Falcons returned three of their top pitchers, senior Silas Skvor and juniors Nate Draga and Tony Poyle. Two members of the 2021 team, Tyler Ruth and Evan Zidar, are now part of the Falcons coaching staff.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

Firelands' shortstop Abby Aslaksen (19) fields a ground ball hit on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 during the Lorain County Softball All Star game.



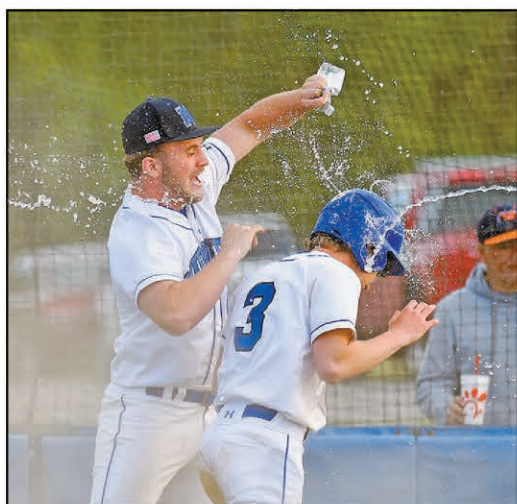
KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

Keystone's Jayln Owca (8) scores a run against Columbia High School as teammate Kennedy Kerr (22) cheers on Friday, May 20, 2022.



THOMAS
FETCENKO/
CHRONICLE

Lorain's Tracy Hough (9) pitches against Alliance on Saturday, July 23, 2022.



THOMAS
FETCENKO/
CHRONICLE

Midview's Tyler Smith (15) celebrates Bryce Newton's (3) winning run against Berea-Midpark on Tuesday, May 17, 2022.

MIDVIEW MIDDIES

Softball: The Middies were a young team last season but still managed to finish above .500, 11-10. This year Midview hopes to put the experience it gained last season to good use with five 3-year varsity players in the lineup, including juniors Olivia DiFranco, Addison Reisinger, Lily Tomasheski and Jasmine Willis. DiFranco and junior third baseman Alana Stacey were also members of Midview's Division I Final Four basketball team.

Baseball: Pitchers Ryan Bors and Ethan Elbert combined to go 6-2 on the mound last season and will be keys to the Middies' success this season. The Midview offense will be led by junior Zak Jockel, who had 12 RBIs and a .402 on-base percentage, and Jordan Smith, who hit .333 with three doubles and 13 runs scored. You might need a lineup card to tell who's at-bat for the Middies this season as the lineup boasts twin brothers Michael and Mateo Lopez and another set of brothers, Sam and Henry Calcut.

LORAIN TITANS

Softball: The Titans are the defending Lake Erie League co-champions with Bedford. After going 13-1 last season, the team is looking for repeat success with catcher Adi'Anna Bucci and Trinity Gunder, who hit over .400. Juniors Aolani Gonzalez and Brooke Bolin and sophomore Ja'lynet Cortes also return to Lorain's lineup. Coach Pam Jackson, the 2022 LEL Coach of the Year, is entering her twenty-fourth season coaching the Titans' program.

Baseball: Lorain is coming off a 12-9 season where they finished second in the Lake Erie League in 2022. Coach Brad Ternes is returning with four letterwinners — seniors Anthony Lorenzo, Matthew Roesel, Xavier Palos and Yan-iel Valentin. This young and talented Titans team should have a deep pitching rotation with the addition of juniors Anthony Rosa, Ciani Taylor and sophomore Tracy Hough.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

Midview's Alana Stacey (5) dives over Amhersts' Cassidy Kettleman (15) as Stacey tries to secure the ball and Kettleman safely makes it to the base on Tuesday, April 5, 2022.

RIDGEVILLE RANGERS

Softball: The two-time defending district champion Rangers bring back four starters and six letterwinners from last year's 23-3 team. Pitcher Autumn Behlke, a Youngstown State University commit, had an 8-1 record with a 0.99 ERA and 100 strikeouts in 56.1 innings of work last season. Behlke also hit .457 with 32 RBIs. Senior Allie Chinchar hit a home run in last year's regional semifinal loss to Avon. Junior Kasey Timko and sophomore Naomi Bottomlee were also starters in the Rangers' regional semifinal. Over the past two seasons, North Ridgeville has a 46-8 record.

Baseball: The Rangers have high hopes heading into 2023, coming off a 20-win season with eight returning letterwinners including Adam Bright, Jake Boynar, Troy Duke and Gavin Padgett, who will be playing college baseball after graduation. Bright hit .407 last year and was North Ridgeville's ace with five wins, 2.20 ERA and 57 strikeouts. Boynar nearly equaled Bright's numbers with four wins and 56 strikeouts. If North Ridgeville is ever going to make a deep postseason run, this could be the year.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

North Ridgeville's shortstop Carson Izzi (15) loses his hat while turning a double play to first baseman Jake Boynar (1), with backup from second baseman Alex Elbert (19), tagging out Bays' Jack Sutherland (8) on Friday, April 15, 2022.

High school baseball and softball previews from Todd Shapiro.

Follow Shapiro on Twitter @BTS44107



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE

North Ridgeville's Daylan Baker (12) slides safely into home, scoring the winning run, before Avon's catcher Emma Ody (10) can secure the ball to make an out on Friday, April 22, 2022.



THOMAS FETCENKO/ CHRONICLE

North Ridgeville's team celebrates a district championship win over Berea Midpark on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

OBERLIN PHOENIX

Softball: First-year coach Brianna Stevenson took over an Oberlin program that is one of the youngest in the area. The Phoenix return eight letterwinners and a trio of juniors led by all-Lorain County League pitcher Katlyn Streater and third baseman Desiree Randleman. The continued player development within Oberlin's sophomore class should pay dividends in the win-loss column this spring.

Baseball: Oberlin has never won a Lorain County League game, and is one year away from the fiftieth anniversary of the team's last league title. First-year coach Nik Ruiz is looking to bury the past and start winning games with nine returning letterwinners, led by sophomore all-Lorain County infielder/pitcher Julian Anderson. The Phoenix are counting on the strong senior leadership of Justin Yarber Jr. to kickstart the rebuild of the baseball program.

OPEN DOOR PATRIOTS

Softball: In 2022 the Patriots only had one player who had previous high school experience. A year later, first-year coach Tom Anderson inherits a team that not only includes eight players with varsity experience but also five freshmen that will help give Open Door the depth it lacked last season. The Patriots have four seniors — Katie Humphreys, Gina Shawver, Alyssa Badillo and Hailey Baker — on their roster.

Baseball: Open Door returns six letterwinners from last year's 9-9 team. First-year coach Denny Reaser brings back four players, seniors Josh Moore and Anthony Olivencia and juniors Parker Loescher and Tyler Reaser, that hit over .340 last season. Tyler Reaser and Moore also combined to score 39 runs. Avoiding injuries will be a concern for the Patriots as they start the season with only 12 players on the active roster.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Wellington's Mallory Pickering (12) pitches against Elyria Catholic on Wednesday, March 30, 2022.



THOMAS FETCENKO/ CHRONICLE
Vermilion's Ethan Hendrickson (7) throws to first to make an out against Amherst on Saturday, April 9, 2022.

VERMILION SAILORS

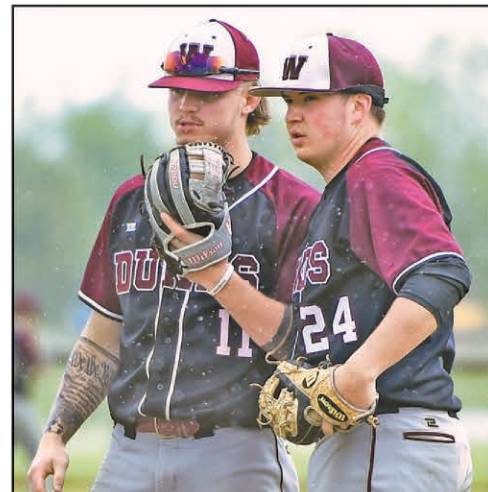
Softball: The Sailors are coming off of a rough 1-18 season, but look to turn the corner in 2023. Vermilion returns six seniors led by four-year starter Lillian Mealey. In addition to Mealey, Vermilion also returns second-team all-Lorain County pitcher Gracie Porter and infielders Abi Rhodes and Jeighla Peak. The team struggled to produce runs last season and will need timely hitting from veteran players to compete in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

Baseball: After a state tournament run in 2021, last year was a rebuilding year for the Sailors, who finished 9-17. Vermilion has eight returning players, including seniors Blake Hoffman, Dylan Willard and Tyler McCale. The Sailors have high hopes for junior pitcher Riley Kearns, who struck out 28 batters in 25 innings of work last season. Veteran Vermilion coach Jeff Keck needs nine wins to reach 500 in his 34-year coaching career.

WELLINGTON DUKES

Softball: Former Black River coach Merle Simmons takes over a Wellington team that finished 12-13 last season. The Dukes return five players, including all-Lorain County league pitcher Mallory Pickering, a sophomore who was among the league leaders for strikeouts with a 2.93 ERA. Senior first baseman Lexi Kline, junior catcher Lily Oswald and outfielders Autumn Rhodes and Danica Borzy also return. Wellington earned the district champion title in 2019 and finished second in the LCL in 2021. Simmons hopes to get the team back to that level of success this season.

Baseball: The Dukes finished in a four-way tie for second last year in the Lorain County League. With seven returnees led by senior C.J. Polen, Wellington is hoping for another big season. Polen had a 2.19 ERA last year with 59 strikeouts in 44 innings and hit for a .368 average. The Dukes also return a pair of .300 hitters, sophomore infielder Johnnie Kinter and outfielder Connor Sheppard. Wellington scored 112 runs in 14 league games last season, an average of eight per game — second only to Black River.



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Wellington's pitcher C.J. Polen (24) meets on the mound with third baseman Drew Unangst (11) while playing Black River on Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

Before the 2022 season, ESPN projected a 75 win season for the Cleveland Guardians, giving the team just a 15 percent chance to make the postseason.

With a fanbase uneasy over the name change and an extremely young roster, there was no way Cleveland would be able to compete, right? But the young and scrappy team would win the division and land just one game shy of the American League Championship Series.

The shocking success of last season has propelled the Guardians into a “compete now” mindset, forcing other teams in the American League Central to take notice.

The White Sox made a move for former Cleveland starter Mike Clevinger, trying to keep pace with the elite pitching of the Guardians.

The Twins have a competitive roster, however injuries and other problems sent the team into a downward spiral one season ago.

The Guardians are no longer the over-looked young and innocent team – far from it.

Led by one of Major League Baseball’s greatest managers, Terry Francona, the Guardians are hungry for more.

But how do they build off the success of 2022?

Core values

The key veterans who led this team last summer are back.

It begins with third baseman Jose Ramirez, who solidified his future in Cleveland with the contract he signed last April.

He was an All-Star and a Silver Slugger in 2022, and for good reason.

He finished in the top ten in hits, triples and Wins Above Replacement (WAR), leading the American League with 44 doubles and finishing second with 126 RBIs.

No one is more important to Cleveland’s offense.

Shortstop Amed Rosario and second baseman Andres Gimenez are also coming off impressive campaigns.

Rosario led the American League in singles and triples, while tallying the third-most hits.



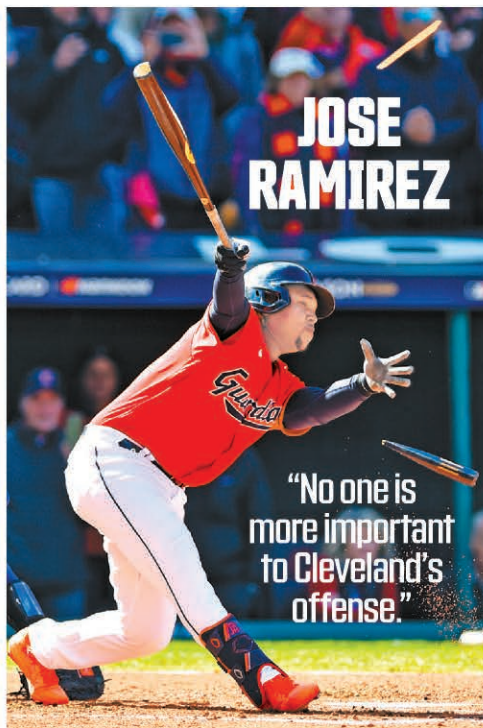
Gimenez was an All-Star and finished sixth in MVP voting, two spots behind Ramirez.

Only two players posted a better WAR in 2022, Aaron Judge (Yankees) and Shohei Ohtani (Angels).

A rockin’ rotation

On the mound, Shane Bieber once again leads a strong rotation.

Bieber improved his strikeout, walk and home run totals in 2022. His ERA went from 3.17 to 2.88 in a single season.



Triston McKenzie is second in the rotation.

McKenzie, known as “Dr. Sticks,” had the ninth-best ERA in the American League last season at 2.96.

He was in the American League’s top ten for strikeouts, and allowed the fourth-fewest hits per nine innings.

Cal Quantrill is third in the Guardians’ rotation, and represented Team Canada in the World Baseball Classic this spring.

Last season, Quantrill started more than 30 games for the first time in his career.

Quantrill introduced a cutter, or “cut fastball,” to

his arsenal of pitches in 2021, and doubled its usage in 2022, when batters sported just a .235 batting average when facing it.

Aaron Civale, coming off a tough injury-riddled season, is expected to be the fourth starter, which leaves the fifth and final spot up for grabs.

Among those battling for the job will be Zach Plesac, Konnor Pilkington, Cody Morris and Xzavion Curry.

Plesac seems to be the favorite this spring, however if he struggles again this season the Guardians have other options.

Bullpen mafia

Cleveland’s bullpen was one of major league baseball’s best in 2022.

With many of the same names returning this season, quality relief outings are to be expected.

Closer Emmanuel Clase is coming off his first All-Star appearance, and led the American League with 42 saves.

James Karinchak, his setup man, dropped nearly two points from his ERA last season.

Former starter Eli Morgan, lefty Sam Hentges, Trevor Stephan, Nick Sandlin and Enyel De Los Santos are expected to be key cogs in the machine as well.

Rule changes

Guardians pitchers will feel the impact of the new MLB rule changes with the pitch clock.

When no one is on base, pitchers have 15 seconds to deliver a pitch. When runners are on base, pitchers have 20 seconds.

See **GUARDIANS**, 16



2023 SEASON SCHEDULE

MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30 10:10	31 10:10	1 9:40
				SEA	SEA	SEA
2 4:10	3 9:40	4 9:40	5 3:37	6	7 4:10	8 6:10
SEA	OAK	OAK	OAK		SEA	SEA
9 1:40	10 6:10	11 6:10	12 1:10	13	14 7:05	15 4:05
SEA	NYN	NYN	NYN		WSH	WSH
16 1:35	17 6:40	18 6:40	19 1:10	20	21 7:10	22 6:10
WSH	DET	DET	DET		MIA	MIA
23 1:40	24 6:10	25 6:10	26 1:10	27	28 7:10	29 4:10
MIA 1:35 BOS	COL	COL	COL		BOS	BOS

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 7:05	2 7:05	3 7:05	4	5 7:10	6 6:10
	NYN	NYN	NYN		MIN	MIN
7 1:40	8 6:10	9 6:10	10 1:10	11	12 7:10	13 6:10
MIN	DET	DET	DET		LAA	LAA
14 1:40	15	16 8:10	17 8:10	18 2:10	19 7:10	20 4:10
LAA		CWS	CWS	CWS	NYM	NYM
21 7:08	22 6:10	23 6:10	24 1:10	25	26 7:10	27 7:15
NYM	CWS	CWS	CWS		STL	STL
28 1:40	29 1:05	30 7:05	31 3:05			
STL	BAL	BAL	BAL			

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 7:40	2 8:10	3 7:15
				MIN	MIN	MIN
4 2:10	5	6 7:10	7 7:10	8 7:10	9 7:10	10 6:10
MIN		BOS	BOS	BOS	HOU	HOU
11 1:40	12	13 9:40	14 9:40	15 8:40	16 9:40	17 10:10
HOU		SD	SD	SD	ARI	ARI
18 4:10	19	20 7:10	21 7:10	22 1:10	23 7:10	24 4:10
ARI		OAK	OAK	OAK	MIL	MIL
25 1:40	26	27 8:10	28 8:10	29 2:10	30 2:20	
MIL		KC	KC	KC	CHC	

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 7:15
						CHC
2 2:20	3 7:10	4 7:10	5 7:10	6 7:10	7 7:10	8 4:10
CHC	ATL	ATL	ATL	KC	KC	KC
9 1:40	10	11	12	13	14 8:05	15 4:05
KC	ALL-STAR BREAK				TEX	TEX
16 2:35	17 7:05	18 7:05	19 12:35	20	21 7:10	22 7:10
TEX	PIT	PIT	PIT		PHI	PHI
23 1:40	24 7:10	25 7:10	26 1:10	27 8:10	28 8:10	29 7:10
PHI 2:10 CWS	KC 8:10 HOU	KC	KC	CWS	CWS	CWS

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 8:10	2 2:10	3	4 7:10	5 7:10
		HOU	HOU		CWS	CWS
6 1:40	7 7:10	8 7:10	9 7:10	10 1:10	11 6:40	12 4:10
CWS	TOR	TOR	TOR	TOR	TB	TB
13 1:40	14	15 6:40	16 6:40	17 7:15	18 7:10	19 7:10
TB		CIN	CIN	DET	DET	DET
20 1:40	21	22 7:10	23 7:10	24 1:10	25 7:07	26 3:07
DET		LAD	LAD	LAD	TOR	TOR
27 1:37	28 7:40	29 7:40	30 1:10	31		
TOR	MIN	MIN	MIN			

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 7:10	2 6:10
					TB	TB
3 4:10	4 6:10	5 6:10	6 1:10	7 9:38	8 9:38	9 9:07
TB	MIN	MIN	MIN	LAA	LAA	LAA
10 4:07	11 9:45	12 9:45	13 3:45	14	15 7:10	16 6:10
LAA	SF	SF	SF		TEX	TEX
17 1:40	18 2:10	19 7:40	20 2:10	21 7:10	22 7:10	23 6:10
TEX	KC	KC	KC	BAL	BAL	BAL
24 1:40	25	26 6:10	27 6:10	28	29 6:40	30 1:10
BAL 3:10 DET		CIN	CIN		DET	DET

■ HOME ■ AWAY

All game dates and times are subject to change. Schedule tentative as of January 2023.

GUARDIANS, from 14

If the pitcher has not started his motion to the plate before that time is up, an automatic ball is called. If a batter is not in the box before eight seconds remain on the clock, an automatic strike is called.

Infielders will have to adjust to rule changes too. The shift, where fielders move from their traditional positions on the field to better defend a batter, is no longer permitted.

All four infielders need to be on infield dirt with two players on each side of second base.

Rookies no more

Seventeen players made their debut for the Guardians in a historic 2022 season.

The Guardians are the only team in MLB history to clinch their division title while starting at least 16 rookies.

The lineup that trotted out on Opening Day at Progressive Field was nearly unrecognizable by October.

This made last year's run so special.

So many of these players, from top prospects to minor-league surprises, found a way to contribute on the field and in the batter's box.

Several Cleveland pitchers made their first major league appearances in 2022. How they fare in 2023 remains to be seen.

Xzavion Curry, a 2019 draft pick, dazzled in the minors and made two starts in 2022.

Cody Morris made five starts before taking a bullpen role late in the year during the postseason.

Hunter Gaddis and Konnor Pilkington are vying for roles on this team. However, with a strong rotation seemingly in place, it may be tough for these young arms to break into the rotation.

The list doesn't stop with pitchers.

Tyler Freeman and Gabriel Arias are looking for infield utility roles this season.

Richie Palacios and Will Brennan are making their respective cases for more playing time in the outfield.

Brennan contributed to the Guardians' postseason run and logged better numbers than Palacios, albeit with a fraction of the games played.

Mike Zunino was signed as a free agent, and he will assume the starting catcher position. Bryan Lavastida and Cam Gallagher are competing for the second spot.

Steven Kwan

One of the rookies that debuted in 2022 was Steven Kwan, who came out of the gates on fire, reaching base 15 times in his first four games – a feat no other player has achieved in the live-ball era.

Kwan's approach to the plate is one of discipline, spraying the ball around the yard. That small-ball mentality, blooming in hits and moving runners over and in, became the identity of the Guardians.

However, no one did it better than Kwan, who finished the season with a .298 batting average at the top of major league baseball for fewest strikeouts. He finished third in American League Rookie of the Year voting.

Only the Twins' Luis Arraez struck out less than Kwan.



Who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

In October, the theme song from "Spongebob Squarepants" bellowed through Progressive Field with fans singing in unison at the top of their lungs.

It was the walk-up music for Oscar Gonzalez, who might not live in a pineapple under the sea or have saved Bikini Bottom, but he did save Cleveland and sent the Guardians to the divisional round of the playoffs with some extra-inning heroics in the Wild Card series.

Gonzalez is one of the more fun personalities in the Guardians' clubhouse, and probably not the only player on this young team who watched the popular Nickelodeon show.

"OG," as he is referred to by fans, provides some pep and excitement to a lineup that is somewhat lacking for power-hitters.

There was no nautical nonsense with Gonzalez. His ability to deliver in the clutch, such as the Guardians' third game against the Yankees, is invaluable to a contending team.

In Tito we trust

Since 2015, Cleveland has a .560 winning percentage, and a 668-524 record under Terry "Tito" Francona's leadership.

That is fourth-best in all of baseball.

The only teams with more wins are the Dodgers, Astros and Yankees. New York had

689 wins in that same stretch, only 21 more than Cleveland, with a significantly higher payroll for the ball club.

So what keeps Cleveland in contention, despite a massive contrast in dollars? The answer is Tito.

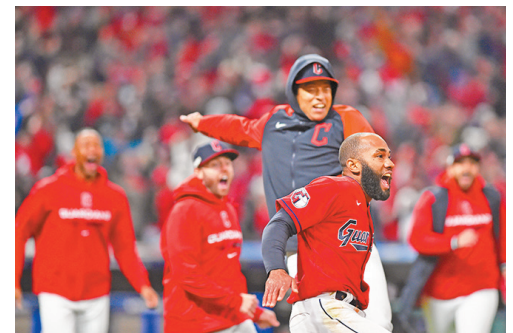
Currently, Francona is arguably the best manager in the game, and for good reason. Players respond to Tito, plain and simple. Whatever an athlete has to offer, Francona finds a way to extract that and then some.

Other teams just don't have the same level of camaraderie within their clubhouse and it shows on the field, as evidenced by last year's White Sox team falling apart at the end of their season, getting swept by the Guardians and Detroit Tigers.

Every spring, Tito sets the tone on the first day of full-squad workouts, delivering a team-wide speech. This year, he has the clubhouse ready to roll again after another motivational sermon in late February.

"It's a great table-setter," outfielder Richie Palacios told MLB.com Guardians reporter Mandy Bell.

Palacios said, "It fired the guys up and set the tone on how we know we need to play the game in order for us to be good, and we're looking forward to doing that this year."



The Guardians celebrate an at-home win over the Yankees on Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022 in the ALDS game.

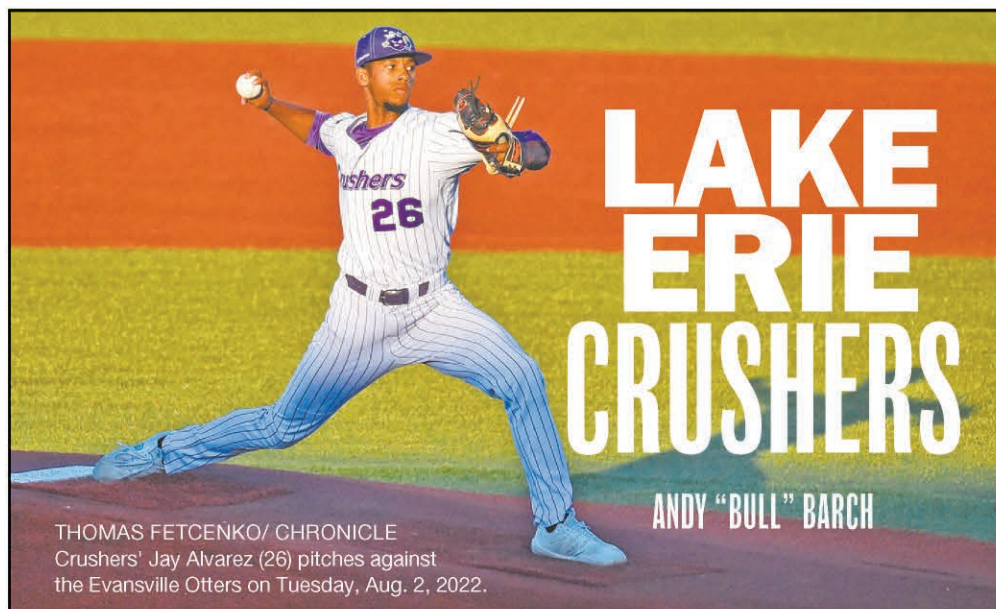
Back to the ballpark ... and your radio!

The return of Guardians baseball means the return of warmer weather and fun days at Progressive Field.

Nothing beats cruising down the road with the windows down or sitting on the back patio listening to Tom Hamilton welcome you into the corner of Carnegie and Ontario through your radio.

Catch Guardians baseball, along with "Hammy" and "Rosie," Jim Rosenhaus, all season long on AM 930 & 100.3 FM, WEOL.

*Follow Rocco Nuosci
on Twitter @noush9602*



What is new at the Crushers' Stadium

The Lake Erie Crushers have several changes for the 2023 season – fans who venture to Mercy Health Stadium for a game will surely be in for a treat.

From new manager Jared Lemieux, stadium upgrades and a faster style of play, there are big things in the works for the Crushers' 2023 campaign.

Crushers fans will be greeted by a new marquee, displaying 11-foot by 22-foot high-resolution images, located just outside of the stadium, along with new turf on the field, both installed following the 2022 season.

The long-awaited arrival of a large 20-foot by 35-foot high-resolution video board will enhance the fan experience this season by offering video replays, live-roaming concourse cameras and games, bringing on-field promotional activities to life and making them easier for fans to see.

With the new video board comes more possibilities – fans can await future opportunities for movie nights and watch parties.

The video board is scheduled to be installed in right field before the Crushers' opening day.

New rules, faster play

This season, the Frontier League has implemented new rules designed to shorten game times, putting a large emphasis on quickening the pace of play – which was a conversation throughout the 2022 season.

A pitch clock has been implemented, and pitchers cannot wait more than 14 seconds between pitches when no runners are on-base. If there are runners on base, pitchers will have 18 seconds to deliver the pitch across the plate.

Batters must be in the box, ready to hit before 9 seconds have passed.

Violation of these time parameters can result in a called strike or ball depending on the offender.

The rule changes also include limits on the number of disengagements that a pitcher can make per at-bat, such as pick-off attempts or stepping off the rubber on the pitching mound.

Once a runner is at the base, the pitcher is allowed two disengagements. If the pitcher makes a third pick-off attempt, for example, and is unsuccessful, a balk will be called and the baserunner(s) will advance one base.

According to Lemieux, this will test the Crushers' preparedness.

"The game will move faster and situations will come at you quickly from getting fingers down from the catcher, to other ways of communicating," he said. "The game won't change much, but the players and coaches will adjust quickly."

Lemieux thinks the new rules could be an advantage for pitchers to dictate the pace of the game.

"You'll see pitchers mix pitches and affect hitters' eye lines. The only issue for pitchers will be if they get tired working too quickly."

New year, new management

Following the 2022 season, the Crushers parted ways with manager Cam Roth, who managed more games than any other manager in the 13-year history of the franchise.

The Crushers hired Lemieux about a month after parting ways with Roth. Lemieux has spent 15 years in professional baseball playing and coaching, working as an assistant coach for the New Jersey Jackals.

Lemieux began his career at home in Maine at Bowdoin College, a division III school known for its academics, where he still holds a few offensive records.

He played independent baseball in the CanAM League and American Association before heading to Springfield, MA, to study for a Masters degree and coaching at Southern Maine Community College.

He later became a certified umpire in Maine and hitting coach in New Jersey, learning from many coaches and managers along the way.

Lemieux grew up wanting to be a coach.

"I realized I wanted to coach at a young age," he said. "My dad coached me in little league and I figured I'd be a part of it as long as I could."

That same energy propelled him to Avon, where he met Crushers' president and CEO Tom Kramig.

"I love Tom's vision for the team, because Tom is working in it and invested in this all year long," he said. "I love that he takes pride in it, it's his baby."

Lemieux got a glimpse of the Crushers' organization while coaching for New Jersey, when the Jackals

were the visiting team, "I saw it here first hand, I just love the atmosphere with the fans." Now he is part of it.

Welcome, Bienvenue 2023

The Crushers will begin their fourteenth season on Friday, May 12, when they welcome the 2022 Frontier League Champion Quebec Capitales (Les Quebec Capitales, Champions 2022 de la Ligue Frontière) to Mercy Health Stadium.

Ticket information is available at www.LakeErieCrushers.com.

Follow Andy "Bull" Barch on Twitter @theruleofbull



KRISTIN BAUER/ CHRONICLE
Crushers' Kokko Figueiredo (1) celebrates a double as New Jersey Jackals' shortstop Santiago Chirinio (12) is left waiting for the ball on Wednesday, June 8, 2022.

2023 GAME SCHEDULE



PRESENTED BY:



MAY

MERCYHEALTH STADIUM

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 2:05 FLO	5	6 7:05 WSH
7	8	9	10	11	12 7:05 QC	13 6:05 QC
14 2:05 QC	15	16 11:05 ESG	17 11:05 ESG	18 11:05 ESG	19 7:05 FLO	20 6:05 FLO
21 2:05 FLO	22	23 3R	24 3R	25 3R	26 SC	27 SC
28 SC	29	30 6:35 GAT	31 1:05 GAT			

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 6:35 GAT	2 WSH	3 WSH
4 WSH	5	6 7:05 SC	7 7:05 SC	8 7:05 SC	9 7:05 WC	10 6:05 WC
11 2:05 WC	12	13 TRI	14 TRI	15 TRI	16 NY	17 NY
18 NY	19	20 7:05 SCH	21 7:05 SCH	22 7:05 SCH	23 7:05 JOL	24 6:05 JOL
25 2:05 JOL	26	27 NJ	28 NJ	29 NJ	30 7:05 NY	

WEST

EVN EVANSVILLE OTTERS
FLO FLORENCE Y'ALLS
GAT GATEWAY GRIZZLIES
JOL JOLIET SLAMMERS
LE LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS
SCH SCHAUMBURG BOOMERS
WSH WASHINGTON WILD THINGS
WC WINDY CITY THUNDERBOLTS

EAST

ESG EMPIRE STATE GREYS
NJ NEW JERSEY JACKALS
NY NEW YORK BOULDERS
OTT OTTAWA TITANS
QC QUEBEC CAPITALES
SC SUSSEX COUNTY MINERS
TRI TRI-CITY VALLEYCATS
3R TROIS-RIVIERES AIGLES

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1 6:05 NY
2 2:05 NY	3 7:05 EVN	4 2:05 EVN	5	6 7:05 EVN	7 SCH	8 SCH
9 SCH	10	11	12	13	14 7:05 OTT	15 6:05 OTT
16 2:05 OTT	17	18 EVN	19 EVN	20 EVN	21 JOL	22 JOL
23 JOL	24	25 11:05 EVN	26 11:05 EVN	27 7:05 EVN	28 7:05 TRI	29 6:05 TRI
30 2:05 TRI	31					

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 WC	2 WC	3 WC	4 JOL	5 JOL
6 JOL	7	8 7:05 WSH	9 7:05 WSH	10 7:05 WSH	11 FLO	12 FLO
13 FLO	14	15 7:05 SCH	16 7:05 SCH	17 7:05 SCH	18 7:05 GAT	19 6:05 GAT
20 2:05 GAT	21	22 FLO	23 FLO	24 FLO	25 7:05 WSH	26 6:05 WSH
27 2:05 WSH	28	29 WC	30 WC	31 WC		

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 GAT	2 GAT
3 GAT						

HOME

AWAY

FRIDAY
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"Bobby D" DiBiasio
Senior Vice President of Public
Affairs at Cleveland Guardians



**THURSDAYS
AT 8:10 AM**
Jim "Rosie"
Rosenhaus
Guardians Radio Network

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