

FORECAST

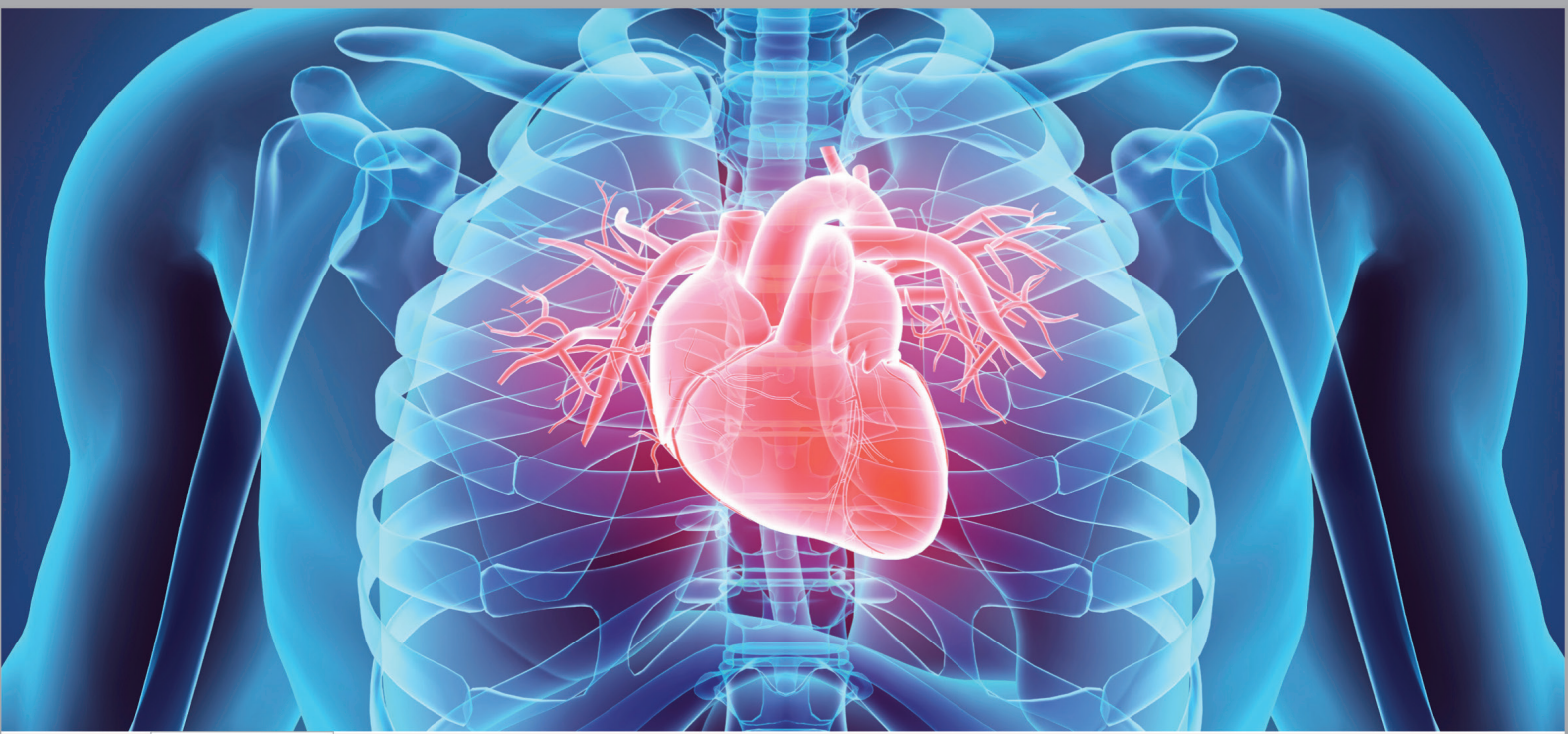
Volume 23 Issue 3
Spring 2021

Inside:

- ☐ WEOL High School Diamond Duel Previews
- ☐ Cleveland Indians Feature & Schedule
- ☐ Lake Erie Crushers Schedule



NEWS / SPORTS / TALK
WEOL
AM 930  100.3FM



University Hospitals provides local access to nationally recognized heart and vascular care.



A team of 1,700 across 26 locations, bringing cardiovascular care close to home



Virtual and in-person appointment options



Specialized heart care programs for patients with cancer, diabetes, lung or chronic inflammatory conditions



Location near you

UH Elyria Medical Center
630 East River Street, Elyria

Schedule an Appointment Online or by Phone

Visit UHhospitals.org/Heart20 or call 216-714-8161.



University Hospitals
Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute
The Science of Health. The Art of Compassion.

FORECAST

2021 Spring Preview

PREVIEWS

Lorain County Softball Preview.....	pg. 3
Lorain County Baseball Preview	pg. 6
Lake Erie Crushers	pg. 10
Cleveland Indians.....	pg. 13

SCHEDULES

WEOL Spring Broadcasts	pg. 9
Lake Erie Crushers	pg. 12
Cleveland Indians.....	pg. 15

WEOL FORECAST MAGAZINE SPRING 2021 PREVIEW

A Publication of AM 930 WEOL
Volume 22 Issue 3

Editor
Rocco Nuosci

Feature Writers
Craig Adams
Andy Barch
Todd Shapiro

Cover Design
Chronicle-Telegram

Publisher
Source3Media



Stewart's

TV & APPLIANCE

Family owned & operated since 1946

468 CLEVELAND ST. ELYRIA, OH
440-365-7321

SHOP ONLINE AT
WWW.STEWARTAPPLIANCE.COM

CELEBRATING



Thank you for your Past and Future Business!

Large in stock appliance inventory
& special orders available
In house service and parts department
Experienced and knowledgeable sales,
service & delivery
FREE delivery* and FREE haul away
on appliance purchases over \$499
Competitive Pricing on Appliances,
Grills & Televisions
Flexible Financing Options available
*Limited Delivery Area - see store for details

"In our sundown perambulations of late, through the outer parts of Brooklyn, we have observed several parties of youngsters playing 'base', a form of 'ball'. Let us go forth for awhile and get better air in our lungs. Let us leave our closed rooms. The game of ball is glorious." Walt Whitman

Great words about a great game, needed now more than ever, with hopes that the COVID pandemic will soon be 'long gone' as the late, great Ernie Harwell would declare during radio broadcasts of Detroit Tigers games.

Welcome to Forecast, the spring edition from AM 930 WEOL and 100.3 FM! Inside, you'll find everything you need to enjoy the game of 'ball'.

Something new this year...we will bring you more 'live' games on the air and on our free mobile app. In the past, we would record them and play them back in the evening.

Special thanks to the outstanding advertisers who are supporting this magazine and our broadcast schedule of high school baseball and softball.

Thanks also go to the athletic directors and coaches for their support.

From the sparkling diamonds of local high schools to the turf of the Lake Erie Crushers home in Avon and the Cleveland Indians home at Progressive Field, it is indeed time to 'play ball'!

Craig R. Adams

Operations Manager/News Director
WEOL AM 930 - 100.3 FM

NEWS / SPORTS / TALK
WEOL
AM 930  100.3 FM

SPORTS

Telling the stories
beyond the games

**Veteran staff covering
local stories on athletes and sports
in your community and schools.**

Have a story you want to share?

Send it to: kaprile@chroniclet.com

Right: Scott Petrak, Chronicle reporter.

CHRONICLET.COM

follow us on
social media



2021 Lorain County High School Softball Preview

By Todd Shapiro

In 2020 Keystone and Elyria were supposed to defend their regional championships, Amherst was going to try to extend its reign atop the Southwestern Conference and the eight teams of the Lorain County League were set to usher in a new era in a new conference.

But before the first shouts of "Play Ball" could be heard across area sandlots, the season, the remainder of the school year and the world as we remember it came crashing to a halt due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ohio and across the nation.

The Class of 2020 never had the chance to see how their senior year would have played out or even say goodbye. Now it's time for a new group of seniors to lead their teams on the field, pick up the pieces of the lost season and continue Lorain County's proud history of softball dominance.

One familiar face won't be in the dugout this season. Legendary Elyria coach Ken Fenik retired last fall after leading the Pioneers for 26 years.

Fenik won three Division I state championships and 596 games in his storied career. Now it's up to Megan Bashak to continue the winning tradition at Elyria.

Bashak, who was a bat girl for Elyria's 2002 state championship team and played in three state championships games for the Pioneers between 2006-08, takes over a rebuilding team. Just one player, junior infielder-pitcher Mya St. Peter, saw time in the varsity lineup in 2019.

In Elyria's final year in the Greater Cleveland Conference before moving to the Southwestern Conference, Bashak, who compiled a 42-28 record in three years coaching at Elyria Catholic, is hoping her young team will gain the experience and confidence needed to be ready to make a postseason run in May.

While Lorain County has lost a pair of 500-win coaches over the past two years with the retirements of Fenik and Bill Mat-



Wellington's Payton Regal.

thews, who won 526 games at Amherst and Vermilion, it is soon to gain another.

Keystone coach Jim Piazza enters 2021 needing 19 wins to join the 500-win club.

The Wildcats, who were 28-1 in 2019, are loaded again with a pair of Division I commits in shortstop Madi Herrington and infielder Kerrigan Williams. Plus Keystone has a junior pitcher, Lily Cassell, who has already made an oral commitment to Northern Illinois.

Herrington and Cassell are two of six returning Wildcats, joining senior Morgan Modock and juniors Kennedy Kerr, Ashley Wolfe, and Brynn Duta, each of whom saw action in Keystone's 2019 state semifinal loss to Hebron Lakewood.

They will be joined by Williams, and senior Jessica Chapman, a Lourdes University commit, who both transferred to Keystone after playing for Elyria in its 2019 state semifinal loss to Louisville.

Keystone has been to the state tourna-

ment 18 times, winning state titles in 1999, 2006, 2012 and 2018, and Piazza is hoping his Wildcats will be making their sixth consecutive trip to Akron's Firestone Stadium in June.

Before Keystone can look ahead to Akron, first will focus on winning the inaugural Lorain County League title. The Wildcats won league titles in the Patriot Athletic Conference in all but one year of the league's 14-year existence and they are favorites to continue their winning ways in the LCL.

The top contender to knock off the Wildcats will be **Wellington**. Dukes coach Duane Sunagel returns 10 players from Wellington's 2019 district championship team.

The Dukes offense will be led by junior catcher Teddi Hardoby, who hit .420 with nine home runs and 42 RBI's as a freshman, junior first baseman Kennedi Benko, who is

See **SOFTBALL**, 4



WHY SIGN UP FOR SMARTHUB?

Lorain-Medina Rural Electric Cooperative members who sign up for SmartHub have easy, free access to several features that make paying and saving on their monthly electric bill a breeze, including:

- Online bill pay options
- Quick access to view and analyze energy use
- Fastest way to update contact information with the co-op
- AND MORE!

<https://www.lmre.org/smarthub>

**ONE-TIME
\$5 CREDIT
EACH FOR ENROLLING IN:**
- PAPERLESS BILLING - AUTOPAY
Per member, not account;
new enrollments only

SOFTBALL

From 3

coming off of a freshman year where she hit .397 and senior Payton Regal. Regal, who plans to continue her softball career next spring at Grove City (Pa.) College, hit .407 two years ago, and along with junior Maile Oswald, will be the workhorses of the Wellington pitching staff.

Firelands came just shy of a 20-win season in 2019, ending the year 19-12. Coach Judy Dostall expects her Falcons to be near the top of the LCL standings with five returning letterwinners including junior catcher Larren Rounds, a Toledo commit, and senior left field Delaney Overstreet.

Clearview also returns a talented lineup led by senior pitcher-infielder Elizabeth Allen who hit .479 with 22 RBI's as a sophomore, junior third baseman Madison Pennington and junior infielder Hailey Reichert, who hit .350 and .313 respectively in 2019.

Coach Mark Majoras' Clippers squad has a total on nine returning letterwinners and the lineup will also be bolstered by the addition of all-Ohio basketball player Brooke Rebman. The Clippers have beefed-up their non-league scheduled for 2021



Keystone girls softball team.

with a game scheduled against Akron Hoban in addition to playing Division I powers Elyria and Brunswick in the Prebis Memorial Classic.

Columbia returns three seniors — outfielders Alyssa Wilkins and Rebecca Pritt and infielder Averey Lavinder — plus junior pitcher Jessi Morlock, who earned second-team all-Patriot Athletic Conference honors as a freshman.

Raiders coach Ken Lugo has a total of eight returning letterwinners which should put Columbia in position to be among the top teams in the LCL.

Oberlin only returns two seniors, center fielder Casey Amato and third baseman-left fielder Jenna Tatum. The Phoenix lineup will benefit from a strong junior class led by Emerson Freas, Emily Emerich and Mariah Thompson plus the addition of talented freshman pitcher-outfielder Katlyn Stretator.

Pitching will be the name of the game for **Brookside** this spring. The Cardinals return junior pitcher Leah Musall, who

went 6-3 with 164 strikeouts in her freshman year and will welcome sophomore Lindsey Nader into the pitching rotation. Coach Ken Collins' offense will be led by Musall, who hit .367 is a freshman and senior catcher Ashlee Aliff, who had five doubles in 2019. Outfielder Sarah Torres is the Cardinals only other returning senior.

Black River returns to action in 2021 with seven returning letterwinners including a trio of seniors, infielder Kennedy Petrucci and outfielders Ashley Kalman and Sydney Simonson.

In the Southwestern Conference **Amherst** is hoping it can pick up where it left off in 2019. The Comets return 11 letterwinners from a team that finished 22-4 and won the SWC title two years ago.

Coach Lacey Reichert, who has compiled a 124-42 record over her first seven seasons, has a quartet of players who will be headed on to play college softball.

Senior McKenzie Cornwell, a University of Akron commit, batted .345 as a sophomore. Senior Lindsey Reavis, who

is headed to the University of Charleston is coming off a 2019 season where she hit .400. Another senior, Kate Kastelic, a Chattanooga State commit, is a transfer from Avon Lake.

The Comets junior class is led by junior Cassidy Kettleman. As a freshman Kettleman set school records with 55 hits and 49 runs scored while battling .573. Kettleman has already orally committed to the University of Indiana.

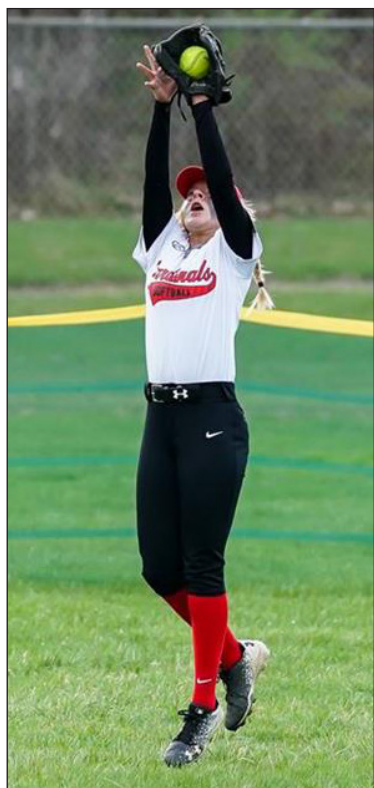
Seeing Kastelic is the lone returnee with extensive varsity pitching experience, Amherst might have to rely on its offensive firepower to win games this spring.

One of the biggest threats to Amherst in its bid to repeat will likely come from North Ridgeville.

The Rangers also 11 returning letterwinners from 2019's 17-6 team.

North Ridgeville will rely on the pitching of junior Katie Barnhart. Barnhart had a huge freshman year for the Rangers with a 14-6 record in the circle and 156 strikeouts. She also hit

See **SOFTBALL**, 5



Brookside's Sarah Torres.

SOFTBALL

From 4

.425 with four home runs.

North Ridgeville's senior class is led by University of Findlay commit Rachel Mease. Mease hit .424 with 33 stolen bases as a sophomore. Rangers junior catcher Jenna Jaffee is a Walsh University commit.

With the retirement of Fenik, Avon's Ken Matuszak is now the longest tenured coach in Lorain County beginning his 24th consecutive season with the Eagles (Firelands' Judy Dostall is also beginning her 24th season but her time has been split up over two stints in charge of the Firelands program).

Matuszak's Eagles return three seniors —Jessie Dean, Amanda Demmerle and Taylor Graham and junior pitcher-first baseman Kayla Dykin.

Avon, which hit .350 as a team in 2019, is also celebrating the completion of its all new turf field.

The Eagles beefed up their non-league schedule for 2021. In addition to playing at the Prebis Memorial Classic, Avon has non-conference games with Keystone, Bowling Green, Medina and Solon.

Midview should have one of the top infields in the SWC with returning seniors Mallory Dunlap, Maddie Huge and Emma Barnes at first base, second base and shortstop and junior catcher Taylor Yaksic, the Mid-dies only other returning letter-



Avon's Jessie Dean.

winner, behind the plate.

Coach Mike Ives' Midview team was 17-10 in 2019.

Avon Lake coach Jana Peachman has three returning seniors, centerfielder Mallory McClellan, shortstop Allison Peachman and catcher-third baseman Kylie Boutin. The Shoregals also have a duo of talented freshman pitchers

in Avery Orille and Lindsay Revmatas. They should set up Avon Lake well not just for this year but also for years to come.

Vermilion coach Tony Larizza was prepared to take over the Sailors programs last year but thanks to the pandemic he won't get the chance to coach his first game until 2021.

The Sailors, who play in the Sandusky Bay Conference, return five seniors, pitcher Danielle McGlothin, first baseman Emma Kretchmar, second baseman Grace Mealey, outfielder Grace Payne, and third baseman Jayden Peake, a third baseman a Penn State New Kensington commit.

Under veteran coach Pam Jackson, **Lorain** will look to bounce back from a 6-13 season in 2019 and get back to the top of the Lake Erie League standings.

The Titans don't have any returning players from two seasons ago and will look to peace to piece together a winning lineup from a roster that includes emerging stars, Ariana Flores-Santiago, D'Avianique Crawford, Katherine Dull, Adi' Anna Bucci.

Elyria Catholic will also have a new coach as it heads into the 2021 Great Lakes Conference season. Terrel Dixon will take over for Bashak, who is now at Elyria.

Tournaments are the highlight of any softball season. None are as big as the Prebis Memorial Classic. This year's Prebis, which will be played April 23 and 24 and LaGrange Community Park and Wellington Community Park, will feature 57 games with some of the best teams from across Ohio participating.

In addition to Keystone and Wellington, local teams participating include Elyria, Elyria Catholic, Amherst, Avon, Clearview, Midview, Columbia and North Ridgeville.

With mask mandates and social distancing in place the 2021 softball season may have a slightly different look than previous seasons but if 2020 taught us anything, the only thing that matters is this year the girls will have the chance to play.



Columbia's Avery Lavinder.

2021 Lorain County High School Baseball Preview

By Todd Shapiro

Anyone who has seen the classic film *A League of Their Own* knows "There's no crying in baseball." But in 2020 there were many tears shed across Lorain County and the rest of northeastern Ohio because there was no baseball.

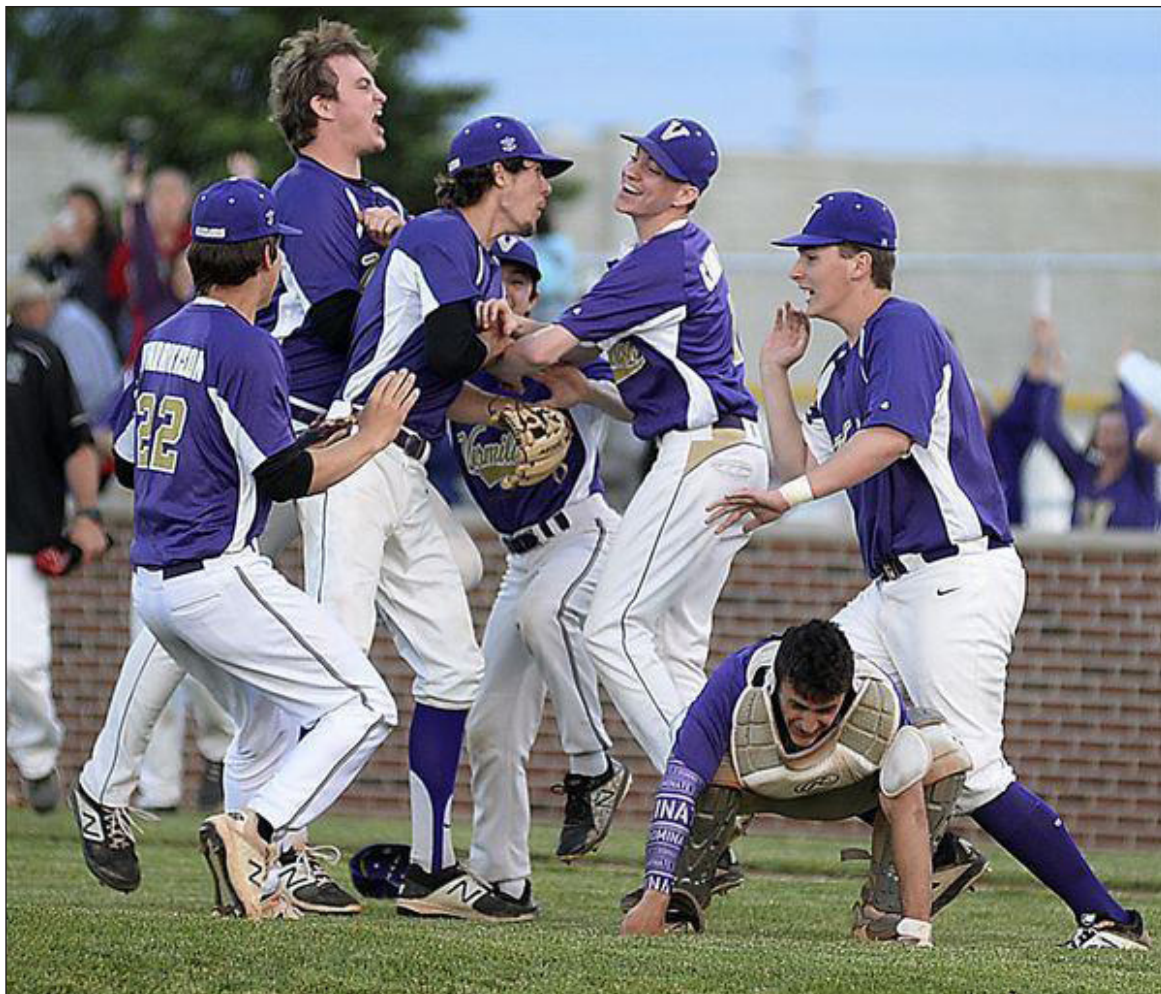
The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of high school baseball season before it even started, leaving Amherst, Vermilion and Elyria Catholic to wait another year to defend their 2019 district championships. It also denied the eight teams in the new Lorain County League a chance to compete for the inaugural league title.

The 2019 season ended on high note with Vermilion winning its first district title in nearly 30 years, Amherst winning its third district title in four years and Elyria Catholic advancing to regionals for the first since 2016. Keystone also advanced to the district finals only to fall to the Panthers in the Division II district final at Cuyahoga Community College.

With the 2021 season on the horizon, both the Sailors and the Comets look poised to make another run at a district title.

Vermilion, under the tutelage of veteran coach Jeff Keck, went 22-9 in '19, and returns five letterwinners, two of whom, senior pitcher Jacob Krausher and junior Jack Wells, are University of Akron commits. The Sailors are three-time defending Sandusky Bay Conference Lake Division Champions.

Krausher, who was on the mound when Vermilion defeated



Vermilion's baseball team.

Shelby in the Division II district finals, was 3-3 with a 3.17 ERA in his sophomore year. He also hit .322 with 21 RBIs.

Wells, who plays both second base and outfield, was the Sailors leadoff hitter as a freshman during their postseason run, ending the year with a .333 average. Wells will be joined in the outfield by senior Ethan Young.

Joining Krausher at the top of

the Vermilion rotation is senior Carter Klausung. Klausung, a Tiffin University commit, was 1-1 with a 1.70 ERA two year ago.

The Comets have won 20 or more games four years in a row and coach Matt Rositano has the talent on his team to make it another 20-win season in 2021. Amherst has six returning players from its 2019 roster, five of whom have already committed to

continue their baseball careers at either the Division I or Division II college level.

Shortstop Josh Qualls, a Kent State commit, hit .297 with four doubles and 18 RBI's in 2019 and is ranked among the best defensive shortstops in Ohio. First baseman Caleb McGee, a University of Findlay commit, was

See **BASEBALL**, 7

Elyria - 366-3673

CHAD WHITACRE

Service Manager

Service Hours

Mon - Fri 7:30 A - 6P

Sat 8A - NOON



CHUCK STURGILL
General Manager



BUILD AMERICA. BUY AMERICAN.

www.abrahamautomall.com

Lorain - 233-7402

BRIAN MARPLE

Used Car Manager

KYLE KLEKOTA

New Car Manager

Sales Hours

Mon & Thur 9A - 9P

Tue, Wed, Fri 9A - 6P

Sat - 9A - 5P

BASEBALL

From 6

second on the Amherst team as a sophomore with a .371 batting averaging. McGee was also tied for the team lead in home runs and third on the team with 17 RBIs.

Infielders Dylan Bailey and Graham Solak are also headed to Ohio Dominican University and Lake Erie College respectively. Senior pitcher Jake Armbruster will be playing baseball next spring at Tiffin University.

Elyria Catholic won a Division II district championship in 2019 but this year the Panthers will be competing in Division III. Coach Bruce Lisicky begins his 10th year at Elyria Catholic with two returning letterwinners from that 2019 team, senior centerfielder Aiden Timko and junior left fielder Alex Carandang. Timko hit .281 with 14 runs scored and 12 stolen bases in 2019 and Carandang had a monster freshman year hitting .386 with nine stolen bases.

The Panthers have four seniors who they will be counting on to keep them competitive in Great Lakes Conference. Chris Phillips, Kayden Anderson and Aiden DeBolt, who are all pitchers and infielders, and infielder Skye Paslowski.

Olmsted Falls won the Southwestern Conference in 2019 with Amherst finishing in second place. Two local teams that are hoping to rise to the top of the



Midview's Devin Bors.

SWC standings will have new coaches this spring.

Andrew Means takes over an **Avon Lake** team that finished 12-15 a year ago. The Shoremen have 10 seniors, including two, infielder Aidan Grabowski and outfielder Gage Duesler, who were everyday players in 2019 and three, catcher Griffin Lidyard, infielder Cullen Reutter and pitcher-infielder Kevin McKinley who saw limited varsity action as sophomore.

According to the website prep-baseballreport.com, Avon Lake

also has the top-ranked freshman in Ohio — left-handed pitcher - first baseman Drew Graham, who is reported to have an 88 MPH fastball, to go along with a breaking ball and a changeup.

The highlight of the Shoremen's schedule will be on April 16 when they will play Kenston at Progressive Field as part of the "Cleveland Indians Charities High School Hardball Classic."

Midview is another team with a first-year coach as former Elyria assistant Ryan Morgan took over the Middies program prior to the aborted 2020 season. Midview returns two seniors, Bryce Sanders and Ethan Honis, who were both .300 hitters in 2019.

The Middies also have a pair of seniors, Dylan Branham and Devin Bors, who they expect to provide depth and experience to their pitching rotation.

Avon finished third in the SWC in 2019 with a 15-13 record and coach Craig Kirschner has a pair of Division I commits on his roster this spring that he hopes can push the team to the top of the standings.

Senior pitcher Ryan Starr committed to Miami University after going 3-2 with a 2.52 ERA his sophomore year. Sophomore Gavin Ehrhardt, who, thanks to the lost 2020 season, earned a scholarship offer from the University of Cincinnati before ever playing a high school game.

The Eagles also have a Division II commit, in senior Andrew Siler, who is headed to Tiffin University. Avon is also expecting a big year from junior infielder-pitcher Troy Sudbrook.

North Ridgeville lost a lot of talent to graduation over the last two years, but the Rangers have three players who be moving on to play college baseball once the 2021 season is complete.

Senior catcher Jake Flescher, a Hiram College commit, is the only returning starter from two years ago. Senior pitchers Dylan Peregord and Andrew Stano will be going to Defiance College and St. Vincent College respectively.

With 12 pitchers on the roster Rangers coach Matt Ponting is hoping pitching depth can make up for an overall lack of varsity experience.

After waiting for a year, North Ridgeville will finally get to play on their new on-campus home field for the 2021 season.

After graduating 13 seniors over the last two years Elyria coach Ed Piazza know his team's final season in the Greater Cleveland Conference might be a time for rebuilding.

Senior centerfielder Stephen Larkins, who hit .310 with 10 RBIs as a sophomore is the only returning letterwinner from 2019.

Elyria is counting on getting solid pitching from senior Jake Szabo and juniors Nick Schuster and Ryan Kowalski, plus the play of senior pitcher-infielder Derek Lopez, a University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg commit who moved into the district from Puerto Rico last year.

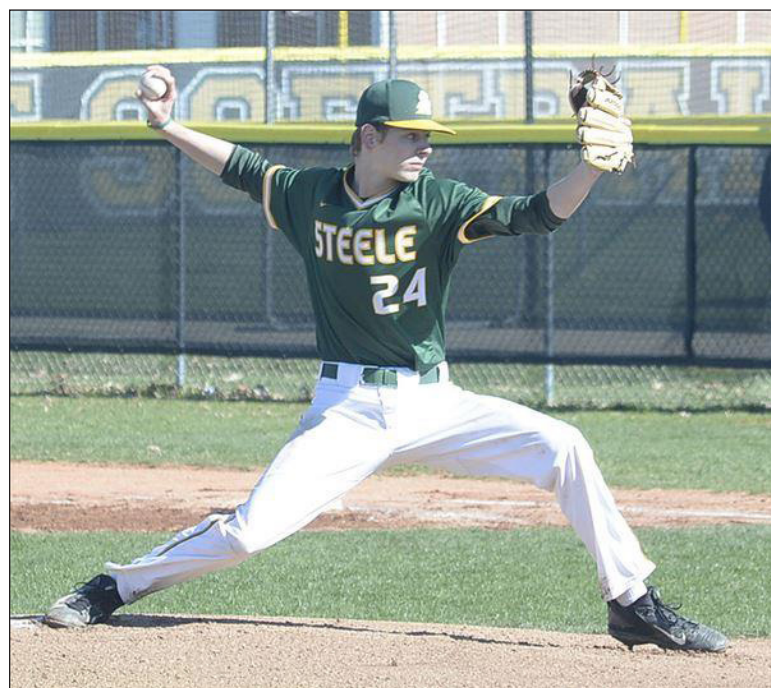
Lorain has won four consecutive Lake Erie League titles but longtime head coach Brad Ternes might have his work cut out for him if the Titans are going to make it five in a row.

Lorain only returns two players, senior centerfielder Carlos Gonzalez and junior catcher Nate Antus, with varsity experience. Antus had a solid freshman year in '19 hitting .286 with nine RBIs. Gonzalez was among the team leaders in stolen bases with 11.

Lorain has five additional seniors — Richard Morales, Ezekiel Rivera, Jessiel Hidalgo, Justin Pryor and Jose Rivera — who will be playing their first season on the varsity level.

Open Door was hoping its 2020

See **BASEBALL**, 8



Amherst's Caleb McGee.

BASEBALL

From 7

team would be the best in school history. While the 2021 Patriots aren't as loaded as they would have been a year ago veteran coach Matt Loescher still has a lot of talent on his roster. Open Door returns four letterwinners, Bailey Loescher, Mitch Abram, Josiah Munger and Teddy Murphy, who hit over .300 in 2019, with Loescher leading the way with a .440 average.

The Patriots also return pitcher James Green, who was 4-3 with four complete games two years ago and seniors Isaac Trunko and junior Danny DeFranco, who saw limited action in 2019.

Keystone won the final Patriot Athletic Conference Stars Division championship in 2019 and now the Wildcats hope to continue their winning way in the Lorain County League.

Coach Bert Fitzgerald, who led his team to a 24-6 record two years, returns four senior letterwinners.

Outfielder Nathan Archer, a Bowling Green commit, who led the Wildcats with four triples in 2019, will be joined by Nathen Prunty, a Thiel commit, outfield Rocky Houston and pitcher-infielder Sean Saterlee, who went 5-2 on the mound in 2019.

Firelands won a district championship and the PAC championship in 2018. Coach Dan Ransom enters the 2021 season with a pair of four-year letterwinners, Zach Brill and Aaron Urban, who played in that 2018 district championship game.

The Falcons also have a pair of three-year letterswinner —



Caden Bombback and Kyle Ransom — and senior Tyler Ruth, a transfer from Amherst.

With a total of 12 returning letterwinners the Falcons hope to compete for both the LCL and district titles again this spring.

The pregame coaches' meetings in the LCL might be a little longer than usually this season. The coaches will still be getting to know each other, as four of the conference's eight teams have coaches who will be in their first season in 2021.

At **Brookside**, Joe Ferrara took over prior to the cancelled 2020 season. The Cardinals bring back five players from 2019 including senior shortstop Joe Smith, senior pitcher-first baseman Gabe Pawloski and senior centerfielder Mason Besserer,

who hit .362 in 2019.

Brookside, who hasn't had a winning record in league play since 2015, also returns a pair of talented juniors in pitcher-third baseman Kenny Grobolsek and catcher Carter Vilevac.

Clearview's new head coach Miles Jones spent three years at Cleveland Horizon Science Academy before taking over the Clippers JV program in 2018.

Upon taking over the varsity coaching job, Jones inherited a talented lineup with five returning letterwinners. This includes senior pitcher-first baseman Josiah Moon, who hit .420 and drove in 16 runs as a sophomore and seniors Kyle Mettler, Julian Mendez and Nathan Klamer, each of whom hit over .300 as sophomores. Senior Tyler Green and junior Ethan Davis also return from 2019.

Wellington coach Dan Davison will also kick off his coaching career with the help of a talented senior class led by infielder Cameron Brinker, who batted .369 as a sophomore.

Other seniors returning to the Dukes' lineup are infielder Jacob Evans, second baseman-pitcher Wyatt Sasack, first baseman-pitcher Caleb Teague and second baseman-outfielder Brayden Cole.

At **Oberlin**, first-year coach Jeremy Leyva will be in rebuilding mode, with seniors Andrew

Streator and Mikah Jones-Smith being the only returning letterwinners in the Phoenix lineup.

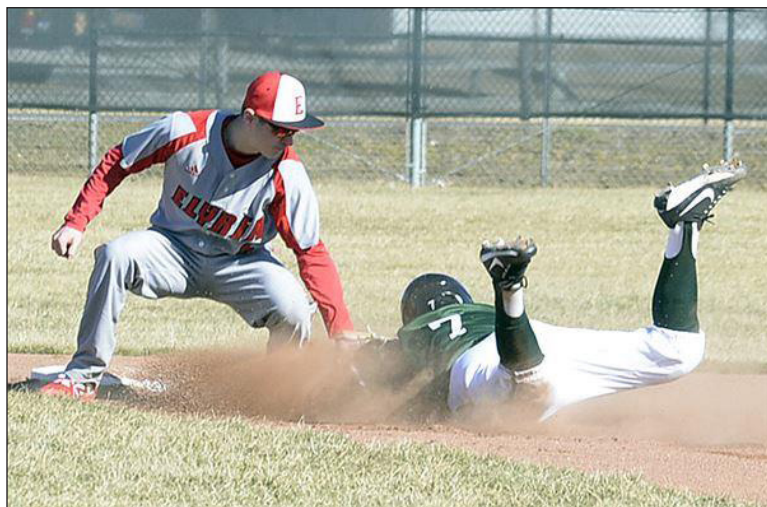
Columbia was the final PAC Stripes Division champion, going 11-5 in league play (15-10 overall) in 2019. Raiders coach Dan Durante returns three letter winners, seniors Trevor Hotell and Jeff Grzwna and junior Owen Menge, who batted .379 as a freshman.

The Raiders will also be relying on senior Austin Stair and junior Cody Davis to lead their pitching staff.

Black River coach Jake O'Connor will have some big hitters in his lineup this spring. The Pirates return five letterwinners from 2019. Two of those returnees, senior first baseman Conner Burke and senior shortstop Trent Sexton, batted over .400 in their sophomore seasons. They will be joined by senior Ryan Schultz and juniors Carter Kocik and Ethan Foster.

Lake Ridge Academy will return to athletic competition for the first time since the winter of 2020 with an 11-game home schedule that includes games against Bedford, Garfield Heights and Lake Effect Conference foe Open Door.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association state tournament returns to Akron's Canal Park on June 10-12.





Center for Orthopedics

Diamond Duel Schedule

Baseball

WEOL NEWS / SPORTS / TALK
AM 930  100.3FM

Softball

4/17: Elyria @ Midview

11am

4/17: Keystone @ Lorain

1pm

4/28: No. Olmsted @ Amherst

4:45pm

4/29: Midview @ Avon

4:45pm

5/1: Vermilion @ Ely. Catholic

11am

5/5: Warrensville Hts. @ Lorain

4pm

5/8: Firelands @ No. Ridgeville

11am

4/23-4/24: Prebis Tournament

4/23: Wellington vs Midview

4:30pm

4/24: Keystone vs Champion

10am

4/24: Amherst vs Olen. Liberty

2pm

4/24: Margaretta vs Ely. Catholic

9am

5/4: Wellington @ Brookside

5pm

The new Journey in a Larger Frontier



Much has changed since the Lake Erie Crushers played their last game in September of 2019.

While the Crushers ended a five year playoff drought in the 2019 season and had a lot to look forward to in 2020, the pandemic has changed a lot, and as a result, things will be very different in 2021, not only for the Crushers, but the Frontier League as well.

Beginning with the most obvious, as a lot of fans are wondering if they will be able watch the Crushers in Avon this season.

"Right now the State says 30-percent capacity, which would be approximately 1,200–1,500 fans," said Lake Erie Crushers owner Tom Kramig. "We need to submit a formal plan to the State for approval on 'how' we're going to

socially distance fans so at this point I cannot give you an exact number. We are hoping that as the summer goes along the number of fans allowed in will continue to increase."

There will certainly be changes for those that attend the games as well, at least early on. Kramig mentioned that they are working on a way to streamline con-

cessions sales as well. "We are exploring a system to order your food ahead through your phone and simply pick it up at the concession stands, but that is not yet finalized," Kramig added. He also said they are going to limit groups to a maximum of six early on.

As far as what the rest of the league will look like, there are a

See **JOURNEY**, 11



JOURNEY

From 10

lot of new teams. There are so many teams, that one of the divisions is made up of all but one that wasn't in the Frontier League back in 2019. The league has expanded into Canada, with three teams north of the border, along with four in the New York and New Jersey areas.

One of the biggest changes, and perhaps the most exciting for this year is that the Frontier League has been named an official Major League Baseball partner league. "The Partner League status gives us, the American Association, and the Atlantic League formal recognition by Major League Baseball as playing a role in their development system," said Deputy Commissioner Steve Tahsler. "For 2021 most of the benefits will occur behind the scenes. Public features are likely to be implemented for the 2022 season. Discussions with MLB will resume once their 2021 regular season begins." This certainly should elevate the level of play in the coming years.

Tahsler added that the contraction in Minor League Baseball has benefited the Frontier League. "With the minor league contraction and new organizational limits on players under contract we estimate that there are 1,200 fewer professional baseball jobs

in 2021," Tahsler added. "Adding two new clubs plus our overall player focus puts the Frontier League in the best position among Partner Leagues to benefit from the extra talent now looking for jobs."

The Deputy Commissioner also discussed the value of the new markets added to the league. "Tri-City fits in well with New York, New Jersey, and Sussex County. The ValleyCats were the prize market of those contracted and we are thrilled to bring in an established team whose ownership and management have run the club for over 30 years. The Capital District has over 1 million residents and the ValleyCats have averaged over 4,000 fans during their time at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium."

One last big change for the 2021 season involves leadership. For the past 27 years Bill Lee served as the Commissioner of the Frontier League, but decided to retire and earned Commissioner Emeritus status. Bill will still serve as a consultant and will still attend league functions, but is stepping away from the day-to-day operations. Bill's work in bringing the Frontier League to where it is today is simply incredible. From playing in small college ballparks to brand new multi-million dollar facilities and playing in much bigger markets than they did when the league began nearly



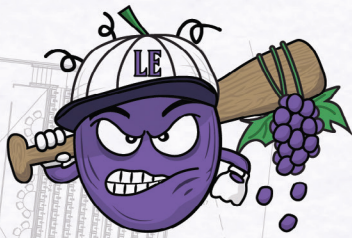
30 years ago, Bill played a huge role in leading the way for the league's incredible growth during the last 27 years. As of the publishing of this article, no commissioner has been named.

As for the Crushers, they are slated to begin play on Thursday, May 27th, when they welcome the Southern Illinois Miners to town. The Men of Crush will look to make it back to the post season under new Manager Dan Rohn.

While Rohn may be new to the Crushers, he's far from a new face in the game of baseball. He recently managed in the Frontier League back in 2018 with the Traverse City Beach Bums, who left the Frontier League to become a member of the Northwoods League, which is a summer college wooden bat league. Rohn also has Triple-A experience as a manager as well, having managed many years in the San Francisco Giants farm system.

Those who think they have what it takes to make it in the Frontier League are encouraged to attend a Frontier League try-out at Mercy Health Stadium in Avon on May 10-11. The league estimates that an average of 40 players each year sign contracts out of this event.





LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS 2021 GAME SCHEDULE



Home



Away

JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 FLO	2 FLO	3 FLO	4 SIL	5 SIL
6 SIL	7	8 WSH	9 WSH	10 WSH	11 FLO 7:05	12 FLO 6:05
13 FLO 2:05	14	15 NY	16 NY	17 NY	18 TRI	19 TRI
20 TRI	21	22 FLO 7:05	23 FLO 7:05	24 FLO 7:05	25 WC	26 WC
27 WC	28	29 JOL 7:05	30 JOL 7:05			

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 FLO 2:05	2	3 JOL	4 JOL	5 JOL	6 EVN 7:05	7 EVN 6:05
8 EVN 2:05	9	10 WSH 7:05	11 WSH 7:05	12 WSH 7:05	13 EVN	14 EVN
15 EVN	16	17 WSH	18 WSH	19 WSH	20 WSH 7:05	21 WSH 6:05
22 WSH 2:05	23	24 SIL 6:35	25 SIL 6:35	26 SIL 6:35	27 SCH	28 SCH
29 SCH	30	31 JOL				

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23	24	25	26	27 SIL 6:35	28 SIL 7:05	29 EVN 6:05
30 EVN 2:05	31 EVN 2:05					

JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 JOL 7:05	2 WC 7:05	3 WC 7:05
4 WC 7:05	5	6 FLO	7 FLO	8 FLO	9 WC	10 WC
11 WC	12	13 GAT 7:05	14 GAT 7:05	15 GAT 7:05	16 SCH 7:05	17 SCH 6:05
18 SCH 2:05	19	20 GAT	21 GAT	22 GAT	23 SCH	24 SCH
25 SCH	26	27 GAT 7:05	28 GAT 7:05	29 GAT 7:05	30 FLO 7:05	31 FLO 6:05

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 JOL	2 JOL	3 WC 7:05	4 WC 6:05
5 WC 2:05	6 WC 2:05	7 SCH 6:35	8 SCH 6:35	9 SCH 6:35	10 EVN	11 EVN
12 EVN	13	14	15	16	17	18



NJ New Jersey Jackals
OTT Ottawa Titans
NY New York Boulders
QC Quebec Capitales
SC Sussex County Miners
TRI Tri-City ValleyCats
TR Trois-Rivieres Aigles
WSH Washington Wild Things

EVN Evansville Otters
FLO Florence Y'alls
GAT Gateway Grizzlies
JOL Joliet Slammers
SCH Schaumburg Boomers
SIL Southern Illinois Miners
WC Windy City ThunderBolts
LE Lake Erie Crushers

The 2021 Cleveland Indians

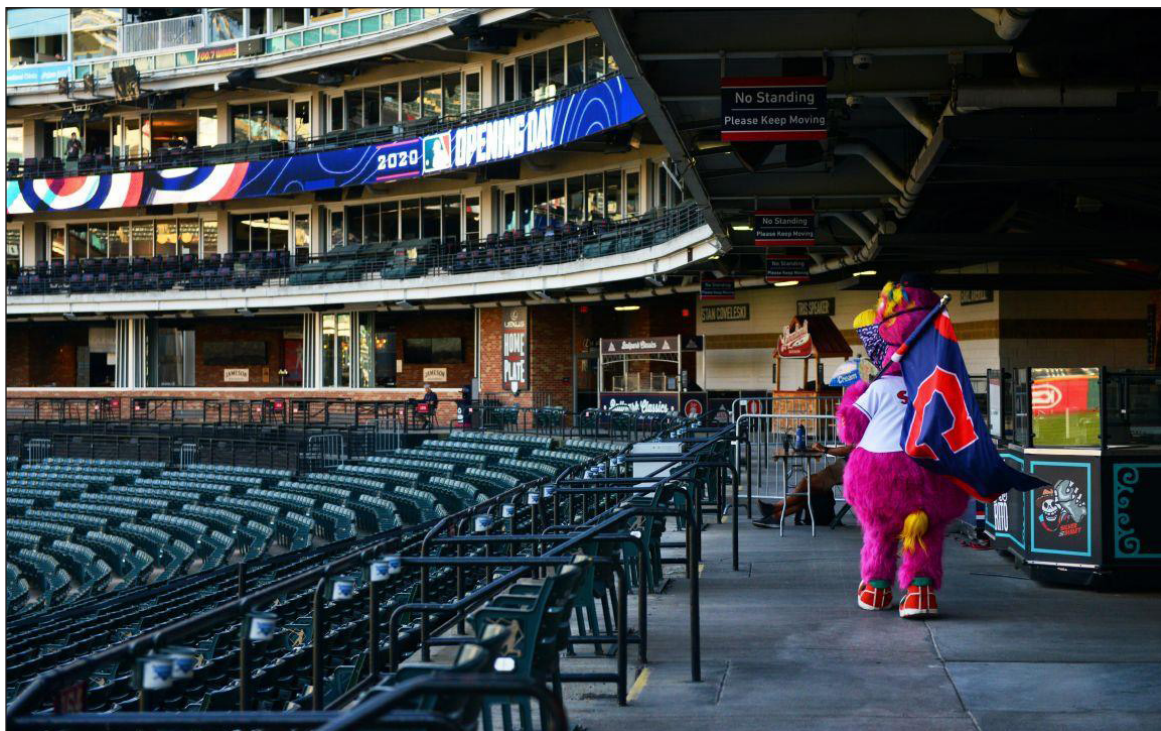
It was an offseason to forget for the Cleveland Indians. Amid continued discussions surrounding a name-change, the Tribe shipped off their superstar, Francisco Lindor, to the New York Mets. But, as spring arrives and we turn the page to warmer weather, the Indians will also turn a page. With a need for locker room leadership now more than ever, it will take a complete team effort for the Tribe to compete in 2021. This season is no 60-game sprint. We're back to the full-summer marathon!

Starting Pitching

To no one's surprise, Cleveland will once again rely on starting pitching. Shane Bieber, fresh off his AL Cy Young-winning season, will lead the group. A 1.63 ERA and 122-strikeout total were both best in the American League in 2020. His ERA+ (281), FIP (2.07), hits per nine innings (5.4), and strikeouts per nine innings (14.2) all topped the AL as well. The Yankees beat him up a bit in the playoffs, and Bieber will be looking to come back strong this year.

"I always try to go about things with some humility," said Bieber over the offseason. "I've always had a chip on my shoulder, so there's plenty to prove".

With no Carlos Carrasco this year, there's a lot of youth elsewhere in the rotation. 25-year old Aaron Civale returns after posting a 4-6 record with a 4.74 ERA in 2020. Zach Plesac will be back in the rotation after frustrating opposing hitters last season with a 9.3 strikeouts per nine inning mark. Triston McKenzie retains



his rookie status this season after appearing in eight games last season with Cleveland. An electric 10-strikeout debut against Detroit back in August has folks excited about "Sticks" for years to come. That leaves the fifth and final spot in the rotation. Heading into camp, a three-way battle is expected from Adam Plutko, Cal Quantrill, and Logan Allen. Plutko has started before in Cleveland but has done well in a bullpen role. With Allen being a bit of a "quirky" lefty, I expect Quantrill to get the nod at the fifth spot.

Bullpen

Need a hand? Well, Cleveland doesn't have one to offer as Brad

Hand signed with the Washington Nationals this winter. Other arms will need to step up, and Cleveland has the right group to do so.

Emmanuel Clase (remember him from the Corey Kluber deal?) is back this year after missing all of 2020 due to a PED-related suspension. This year, fans will get to witness that esteemed 100-MPH cutter. So will opposing batters.

Want more fire? No problem. Enter James Karinchak, the missile-throwing righty who enjoys screaming into his glove after big plays. James posted a 2.67 ERA out of the bullpen his rookie season with a strikeouts per nine inning mark of 17.7. Both Karinchak and Clase will lobby for the closer role. Regardless of who wins that battle, the eighth/ninth inning combination these two will provide will be worrisome for opponents.

Veteran right-hander Nick Wittgren returns for another go-round in the pen, as does lefty Oliver Perez. Both have been staples as Cleveland relievers the last couple seasons. Righty Phil Maton is also back for what will be his second full season with Cleveland. Bryan Shaw makes his comeback to Cleveland this year as well after splitting time between Colorado and Seattle the past three seasons.

This group is not turning a ton of heads early on, but they should be just fine as the summer goes on.

Infield

It was said many times last year that the Tribe's infield could look very different in 2021. Well, that turned out to be true. With the departure of Lindor, along with first baseman Carlos Santana, the Indians will need replacements.

Two newcomers from the Lindor trade, Andres Gimenez and Amed Rosario, can both play shortstop. Gimenez served in a utility role with the Mets last season and Rosario is more of a natural shortstop. Still, we could see these two bounce around different spots in the infield. As for who starts the season atop the depth chart, my money is on Rosario. That could be considered cheating since the Indians website has Rosario on top of the depth chart at the time this is being written. Rosario also has four big league seasons under his belt compared to just one for Gimenez. Andres does present a higher upside, however, and could find himself getting the nod more and more often as the season progresses. Plus, the Indians had Rosario working out in different outfield

See **INDIANS**, 14



INDIANS

From 13

spots throughout the spring. It's possible we see Gimenez starting at short with Rosario moving to the outfield to help out a rough-looking group (more on that in a bit) sooner than later.

First base remains a question. Carlos Santana left some big shoes to fill with his departure, but the Indians have options. One is Bobby Bradley. Bradley last appeared with the big-league club in 2019, sporting a pedestrian .178 batting average in just 15 games played. He spent all of 2020 in the alternate training site in Lake County alongside a number of other MLB hopefuls. His 20 strikeouts in those 15 games in 2019 have many concerned about his swing-and-miss rate. Elsewhere, Jake Bauers once again enters the frame of possibilities. Bauers was another Lake County-ite last season and is yet to find his footing in Cleveland. This year seems like it could be the last for Bauers to prove himself as a consistent producer for this team.

Moving to the other corner, the reigns on third base belong to Jose Ramirez. "J-Ram" quickly finds himself as the clear-cut top-dog on what is expected to be a middling Indians offense. The offense wasn't great last year, either. Jose was, though. He hit for a .292 average, drove in 46 runs, smacked 17 home runs, and finished second in AL MVP voting. There's less "protection" around him in the lineup now, so high-level production will be needed from him once more.

Over at second base, Cesar Hernandez looks to return as the starter after re-signing with the club this offseason. Hernandez was a pleasant surprise in 2020, hitting for a .283 average and leading the American League with 20 doubles. The offensive production from Hernandez has been gravy on top of his defense, which netted him a Gold Glove award last season.

Manager Terry Francona will have some bench pieces available to work with as well. Mike Freeman, the ultimate utility man for this squad last season, was dealt to the Cincinnati Reds in the spring. The man played just about everywhere on the field in 2020 and even pitched! His ser-



vices will be missed. Looking to replace him will be Yu Chang and Ernie Clement. Chang, who has 38 MLB games under his belt, has underwhelmed in his big-league appearances. Clement is yet to play with Cleveland but has done well throughout his minor league career. The 24-year-old spent last year at the alternate training site and could certainly factor into the club's long-term plans.

Outfield

Cleveland's outfield situation remains a frustrating one for fans. Zack Meisel of The Athletic penned an article last year regarding the group's poor play. Over the past decade, Indians outfielders have posted a collective wRC+ of 95, third-worst in the MLB. The current unit will hope to change the tides.

That could start with a rebound from center fielder Oscar Mercado. After an impressive debut campaign in 2019, he hit for just a .128 average in 36 games last season. Maybe in a full year his offensive numbers would have leveled out. Regardless, a sub-Mendoza line season start to 2021 might have Tito looking elsewhere. Bradley Zimmer sits behind Mercado on the depth chart. The once highly-touted prospect continues to creep towards 30 years-old. He wasn't great in 2020 either, posting a .162 batting average with just 3 RBI's.

Center field could very well be the weakest link in the Indians outfield.

In left, newly acquired Eddie Rosario looks to help the Tribe instead of terrorizing them. Coming over from Minnesota, Eddie hit 13 home runs last year and has a career .301 batting average against the Indians. "It's so nice to not hate you anymore," manager Terry Francona said to Rosario in the spring.

In right, Josh Naylor, who endeared himself to fans in the postseason, looks to have a strong 2021. He was red hot in the postseason against the Yankees, logging a .714 batting average with a home run and three RBI's. Naylor was a part of the Mike Clevinger deal last season and his younger brother Bo is a top prospect in the Indians farm system. Some question Josh's ability as an outfielder due to his size, but Cleveland needs some offensive production somewhere in the outfield.

Platooning on the bench once more will be Jordan Luplow. Despite a bit of a "down year" against lefties in 2020, Luplow posted a .320 batting average against southpaws in 2019. Should the Tribe see a lefty with an outfielder in need of a breather, Jordan should be in there.

Daniel Johnson ("DJ" as they call him) continues to work towards a more consistent role.

He recorded his first major league hit last season and appeared in just five games. Similarly, to Clement, Johnson has had consistent minor league success. He revamped his swing after coming over from the Nationals system and posted a .306/.371/.496 slash line in AAA Columbus. If given the opportunity to play consistently, 2021 could be a breakout season for Johnson.

Overview

This summer at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario will feel strange. The team is both rebuilding and trying to compete at the same time. Mixed results with some frustrating growing pains are to be expected. Plus, COVID-19 hasn't disappeared just yet. Crowd restrictions will limit capacity at Progressive Field, and while attendance issues have been noted, there will be no 30,000+ people audiences on weekend nights. Perhaps later into the summer, when the nation becomes more vaccinated, the larger crowds will return. Mike Trout, Vladimir Guererro Jr., and Christian Yelich are just a few of the opposing superstars that will come through Cleveland this summer. While the Tribe hopes to stay competitive against them, fans will have the chance to cheer them on in-person once more. Play ball!

2021 INDIANS SCHEDULE

APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 • 1:10 DET	2	3 • 1:10 DET
4 • 1:10 DET	5 • 4:10 KC	6	7 • 1:10 KC	8	9 • 7:10 DET	10 • 6:10 DET
11 • 1:10 DET	12 • 8:10 CWS	13 • 8:10 CWS	14 • 8:10 CWS	15 • 2:10 CWS	16 • 7:10 CIN	17 • 4:10 CIN
18 • 1:10 CIN	19	20 • 6:10 CWS	21 • 6:10 CWS	22 • 6:10 NYY	23 • 7:10 NYY	24 • 6:10 NYY
25 • 1:10 NYY	26 • 6:10 MIN	27 • 6:10 MIN	28 • 1:10 MIN	29	30 • 8:10 CWS	

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 • 4:05 CWS
2 • 2:10 CWS	3 • 8:10 KC	4 • 8:10 KC	5 • 8:10 KC	6 • 2:10 KC	7 • 7:10 CIN	8 • 6:10 CIN
9 • 1:10 CIN	10	11 • 6:10 CHC	12 • 1:10 CHC	13 • 10:10 SEA	14 • 10:10 SEA	15 • 9:10 SEA
16 • 4:10 SEA	17 • 9:38 LAA	18 • 9:38 LAA	19 • 8:07 LAA	20	21 • 7:10 MIN	22 • 4:10 MIN
23 • 1:10 MIN	24 • 7:10 DET	25 • 7:10 DET	26 • 7:10 DET	27 • 1:10 DET	28 • 7:10 TOR	29 • 4:10 TOR

JUNE

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

JULY

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

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 • 2:10 CWS	2 • 3:07 TOR	3 • 7:07 TOR	4 • 7:07 TOR	5 • 7:07 TOR	6 • 7:10 DET	7 • 7:10 DET
8 • 1:10 DET	9	10 • 7:10 OAK	11 • 7:10 OAK	12 • 1:10 OAK	13 • 7:10 DET	14 • 6:10 DET
15 • 1:10 DET	16 • 8:10 MIN	17 • 8:10 MIN	18 • 1:10 MIN	19	20 • 7:10 LAA	21 • 4:10 LAA
22 • 7:10 LAA	23	24 • 7:10 TEX	25 • 7:10 TEX	26 • 7:10 TEX	27 • 7:10 BOS	28 • 4:05 BOS
29 • 1:10 BOS	30	31 • 8:10 KC				

★ August 22nd vs LAA is the MLB Little League Classic at Williamsport

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 • 8:10 KC	2 • 8:10 KC	3 • 7:10 BOS	4 • 4:10 BOS
5 • 3:10 BOS	6 • 6:10 MIN	7 • 6:10 MIN	8 • 6:10 MIN	9 • 6:10 MIN	10 • 7:10 MIL	11 • 6:10 MIL
12 • 1:10 MIL	13	14 • 7:40 MIN	15 • 7:40 MIN	16	17 • 7:05 NYY	18 • 1:05 NYY
19 • 7:10 NYY	20 • 6:10 KC	21 • 6:10 KC	22 • 6:10 KC	23 • 6:10 CWS	24 • 7:10 CWS	25 • 6:10 CWS
26 • 1:10 CWS	27	28 • 8:10 KC	29 • 8:10 KC	30 • 8:10 KC	1 • 8:05 TEX	2 • 7:05 TEX

■ HOME

■ AWAY

Indians
RADIO NETWORK

WEOL
FM 93.0 • 100.3FM

INDIANS.COM

FOX
SPORTSMANSHIP

ESPN

FOX

F51

WEOL
FM 93.0 • 100.3FM

Spring 2021 Forecast Magazine

A Cleveland Indians pitcher in mid-throw on a baseball field. The pitcher is wearing a dark blue jersey with white pinstripes, white pants, and a dark blue cap with a red 'C'. A large red 'C' logo is superimposed in the upper center of the image.

C

***Your Home
For the Indians***

NEWS / SPORTS / TALK

WEOL

AM 930  100.3 FM

IT'S A DISASTER!



*...and what are You
gonna do about it?*

**Sign up for WENS • Get a NOAA weather radio
Prepare emergency kits • Apply basic first aid
Practice social distancing and good hygiene**

For more information on how you can prepare:

Call 440-329-5117

Or visit www.loraincounty.us

The Lorain County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security



Michelle Hung

**LORAIN
COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

David Moore

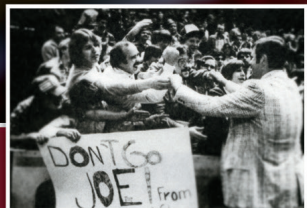
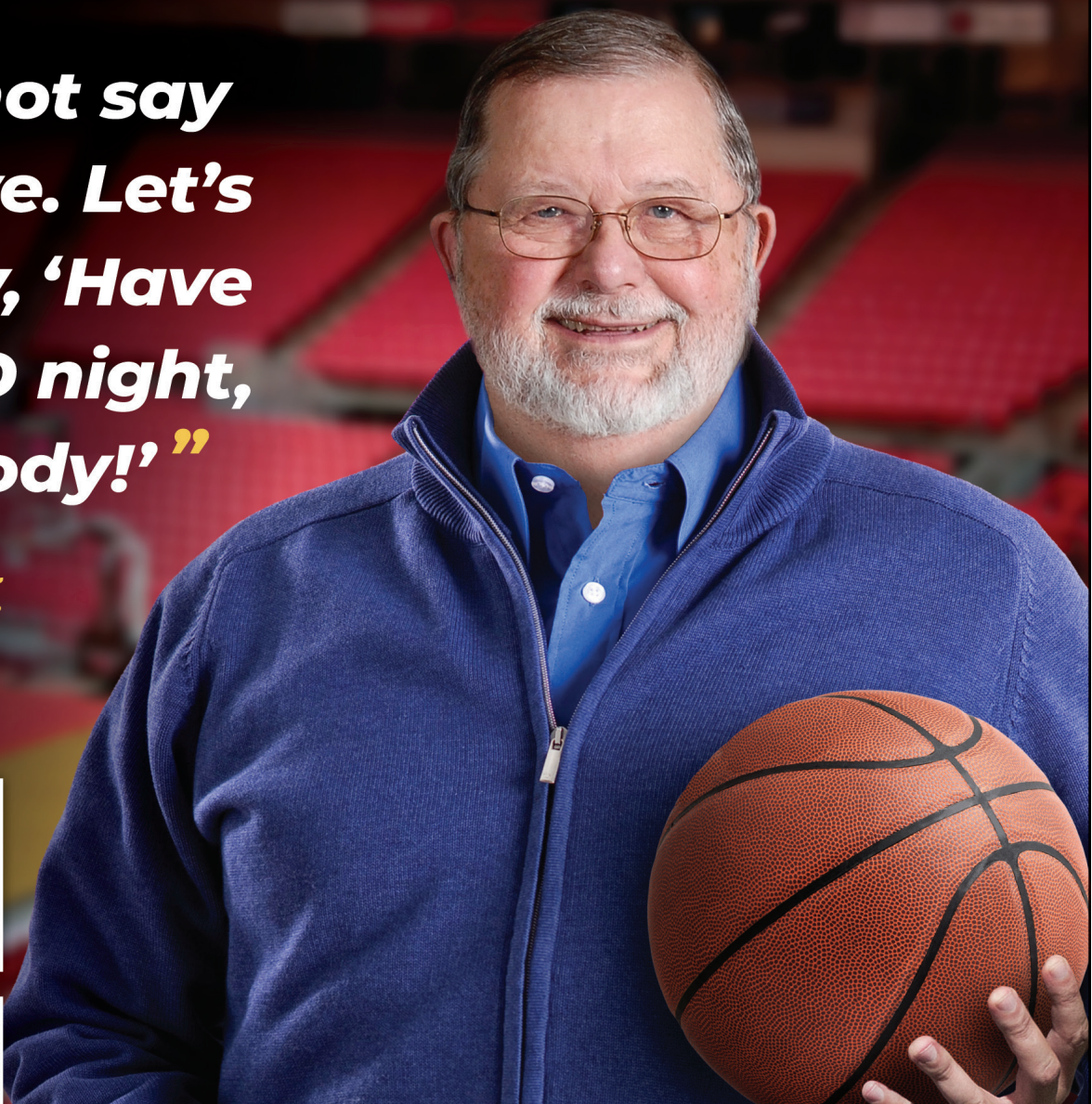


Matt Lundy

HAVE A PLAN. BE PREPARED.

***“Let’s not say
goodbye. Let’s
just say, ‘Have
a GOOD night,
everybody!’”***

—Joe Tait



We honor Joe Tait, who brought energy to our hearts and homes with each game, as he signs off one last time. His legacy will be remembered, and he will be dearly missed as part of the Life Care family.



L I F E C A R E C E N T E R S O F A M E R I C A

Life Care Center of Elyria • 440.365.5200 • 1212 S. Abbe Rd. • Elyria, OH 44035

Life Care Center of Medina • 330.483.3131 • 2400 Columbia Rd. • Medina, OH 44256

Life Care Center of Westlake • 440.871.3030 • 26520 Center Ridge Rd. • Westlake, OH 44145

L C C A . C O M

S K I L L E D N U R S I N G & S H O R T - T E R M T H E R A P Y