

WEOL AM930 presents:

FORECAST

Volume 15 Issue 3
Spring 2014



**Elyria's
Caitlyn Minney**

**2013 Lorain County
Miss Softball**



**Midviews's
Eric Lauer**

**2013 Lorain County
Mr. Baseball**

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LORAIN COUNTY SOFTBALL PREVIEWpg. 3

FEEDING THE SUCCESS

Tim Alcorn describes the delicate balancing act that makes for a successful feeder programpg. 5

LORAIN COUNTY BASEBALL PREVIEWpg. 6

LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS PREVIEW

Andy "Bull" Barch explains why 2014 is another season of exciting changepg. 8

CLEVELAND INDIANS PREVIEW

Jim Rosenhaus shares the Indians plan for taking care of "Unfinished Business"pg. 12

BASEBALL SCHEDULES

LAKE ERIE CRUSHERSpg. 9

CLEVELAND INDIANSpg. 15

WEOL BROADCAST SCHEDULES

KOLCZUN & KOLCZUN DIAMOND DUELS . .pg. 2

THE CRUSHERS ON WEOLpg. 8

FROM THE DUGOUTpg.13

ABOUT THE COVER:

Midview's Eric Lauer had a dream senior season for the Middies before being named the 2013 Mr. Baseball award winner. The left hander compiled a perfect 7-0 record with an ERA of 0.15 with 96 strikeouts. Opposing teams hit a meager .077 against him. Eric was selected in the Major League draft by the Toronto Blue Jays, but opted to accept a full scholarship to Kent State and pitch for the Golden Flashes.

Elyria's Caitlyn Minney is the 6th Lady Pioneer to capture the Miss Softball award. She was dominant her senior year, compiling a 22-4 record, with 1.02 ERA. She fanned 129 and opposing teams hit a paltry .139 against her. Caitlyn is continuing her softball playing at the collegiate level at Youngstown State.

WEOL FORECAST MAGAZINE SPRING 2014 PREVIEW

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Volume 15 Issue 3

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"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

I can't recall how many years I've opened the spring edition of FORECAST from AM930 WEOL with these words of wisdom from Walt Whitman, but something tells me to use it again and again. Perhaps it reflects a time gone by; perhaps its signals a new time, a fresh start...time to get outdoors after this brutally cold and snowy winter.

This year, there is plenty of excitement and anticipation to go around. The Cleveland Indians, led by American League Manager of the Year Terry Francona, hope to improve upon last year's Wild Card Playoff appearance. The Lake Erie Crushers hope to return to the playoffs under new manager Chris Mongiardo and new hitting coach, the Indians' American League 1980 Rookie of the Year, Joe Charboneau.

And of course, young men and women across Lorain County have been eager to return to the diamonds to show what they can do.

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

Thanks also go to the athletic directors, managers and coaches for their support. It is indeed time to, "Play Ball!"

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Monday, April 14	Firelands at Keystone
Thursday, April 17	Avon at Vermilion
Thursday, April 24	Elyria Catholic at Midview
Friday, April 25	Elyria at Amherst
Saturday, April 26	PREBIS TOURNAMENT
	Keystone vs. Bishop Hartley
	Elyria vs. North Canton Hoover
Monday, April 28	Avon at Elyria Catholic
Tuesday, April 29	Columbia at Clearview
Thursday, May 1	Clearview at Keystone
Thursday, May 8	Keystone at Columbia
Saturday, May 10	Norwalk at Lorain
Saturday, May 10	Elyria at Avon Lake



2014 LORAIN COUNTY SOFTBALL PREVIEW

By: Todd Shapiro

Year after year Lorain County produces some of the best softball talent in Ohio and 2013 was no exception. Two of the eight teams playing on the final day of the season – Elyria in Division I and Columbia in Division III – came from the county.

Although the Pioneers and Raiders both left Akron's Firestone Stadium with a runner-up trophy their successes and their tournament runs left area sports waiting to see what 2014 has in store.

Behind the sensational pitching of senior Caitlyn Minney, Elyria won its ninth straight district title and made its third consecutive trip to the state tournament. For her efforts Minney won the both Lorain County Miss Softball and coaches association player of the year awards.

Anyone who was in attendance at the state semifinals will never forget how the Pioneers overcame a nearly nine hour rain delay to defeat Mason 5-0 thereby earning the right to face North Canton Hoover in the state finals.

Hoover denied Elyria a third state championship with



Steve Manheim/The Chronicle-Telegram

Slugger/preseason favorite Wildcat Carleigh Herrington is ready for her senior year.

a 7-0 win but with coach Ken Fenik back at the helm for his 20th season and sophomore Carly Bachna poised to follow in the tradition of great Elyria players no one would be surprised to see the Pioneers in Akron again this year on the first weekend of June.

Columbia defeated Leavittsburg LaBrae in the regional finals to earn its first trip to Akron. The Raiders then went on beat Columbus

Bishop Ready 3-1 in the state semifinals. Bloom-Carroll, led by sophomore pitcher and University of Washington recruit Taran Alvelo, bested Columbia, 3-2, in the state championship game.

The Raiders were a veteran team in 2013 but coach Ken Lugo will return pitcher Kailey Minarchik as they look to repeat as Patriot Athletic Conference Stripes Division and regional champions.

Columbia's biggest challenge in the Stripes Division this year will come from Sarah Kaya and the **Clearview** Clippers. Kaya enters her senior season with 814 career strikeouts, needing 339 more strikeouts this season to surpass Miss Softball 2001, Vermilion's Megan Meyer, as Lorain County's all-time strikeout queen. Last season Kaya averaged nearly two strikeouts per inning, fanning 340 batters in 174 innings. She also threw a pair of no-hitters against Lutheran West and Brookside.

One of the biggest changes in Lorain County softball this spring won't be seen between the lines but instead in the third-base coaches' box. Two

veteran coaches Norm Frindt (North Ridgeville) and Bill Matthews (Amherst), both members of the Ohio High School Fastpitch Softball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, retired after the 2013 season. Former Brooklyn assistant Mike Mease will take over at North Ridgeville while Amherst elevated one of its own assistants, Lacey Reichert to head coach.

After leading **Firelands** to its first district championship in school history Falcons coach Judy Dostall also retired at the end of the 2013 season so she could watch her daughter Samantha continue her softball career at Baldwin Wallace University. The Falcons also hired from within elevating junior varsity coach Phil Rawlings to the head coaching position.

Last season the Falcons did the (almost) impossible, knocking off defending state and national champions Keystone in the Division II district semifinal by a score of 1-0. It was the first time since 2000 that the Wildcats did not win a district championship.

However, veteran Keystone

See **Softball** on page 4





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SOFTBALL

from page 3

coach Jim Piazza should have his team back on top in 2014. Wildcats first basemen Carleigh Herrington earned third-team all-American honors last season after in a junior year in which she hit .474 with 37 hits, six home runs and 27 RBIs. Herrington, an Eastern Michigan recruit, is a pre-season favorite to become the 11th Miss Softball in the illustrious history of the Keystone softball program.

Keystone's annual Prebis Memorial Softball Classic will take place on April 25 and 26 in LaGrange and Wellington. This year the event has grown to 54 games over two days with 36 teams from Ohio and New York taking part, including seven teams who played in the Ohio High School Athletic Association tournament last spring. The highlights of the Prebis Classic include a rematch of last year Division I state final between Elyria and North Canton Hoover and a rematch of the Division III semifinal with Columbia and Bishop Ready. Keystone will also play Division I state semifinalist Mentor.

The Prebis has grown into one of the premier prep softball events in the nation in the past decade but it won't

be the only event to feature area teams this spring. After a one-year hiatus the JB Firestone, hosted by Black River, is back on the schedule this year. Columbia and Elyria will also be going down to Ashland the week-end of April 11-12 for the 20th Annual Wendy's Softball Classic.

Throughout the season a number of local team led by Avon Lake and Firelands will play in events hosted by the Akron Racers at Firestone Stadium.

If you prefer a sudden blast of power as opposed to a long day of softball check out **Midview** and its power hitting shortstop Amanda Beursken. Beursken, the West Shore Conference player of the year and a honorable mention Division I all-Ohio honoree, tied a Lorain County record with 13 homeruns last spring. Beursken now her eye on the state record of 18 home runs in a season set last year New Riegel's Taylor Kirian.

The Middies will be battling with **Avon** and North Ridgeville in the WSC. The Eagles, led by veteran coach Ken Matuszak, return ace pitcher Anna Edwards and two of the county's top hitters in outfielder Kaylee Morton and infielder Ally Sumser.



Steve Manheim/The Chronicle-Telegram

Clearview's Sarah Kaya will try to overtake the title of Lorain County's strikeout queen.

North Ridgeville's offense will be led by speedy leadoff hitter Marissa Caraballo.

Avon Lake went 13-1 in the Southwestern Conference last season but the Shoregals, under the tutelage of second-year coach Buzz Mullen, will be in rebuilding mode after losing nine senior to graduation.

Last season was an uncharacteristic down year for **Amherst** but they should bounce back quickly this fall with pitcher Zoe Beetler leading a group of five returning starters and one of area's top freshman in second baseman/centerfielder Madison Cruzado.

Lorain coach Pam Jackson always has the Titans in the thick of the Lake Erie league title hunt and this year should be no exception.

Keystone returns both of its top pitchers from 2013. Senior Emily Cornish, who signed a National Letter of Intent with Cedarville University, had a 12-4 record last year while Sara Lowman burst on the scene with an 8-1 freshman season that included wins over North Royalton and Twinsburg in the 2013 Prebis.

Since 2001 Lorain County has had two district champion every year but one and has sent a team to the state tournament at the conclusion of every season except 2010.

So when the days get longer and the snow finally melts away there is nowhere better for Lorain County sports fans to head than the local sandlot to take in a softball game and watch some of Ohio's finest athletes doing what they do best.



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FEEDING THE SUCCESS

By: Tim Alcorn

It's an annual trip for us at WEOL. Every year there is a local high softball team that makes the journey to Akron (and before that Ashland) to take part in the state tournament. It's a thrilling moment for the girls, the coaches and their respective communities. But why and how does it keep happening? What sets these teams apart? If you think it is great coaching, you're partly correct. If you think it is the sheer talent level these clubs possess, you are somewhat correct with that as well. Luck might even play in to the equation. But in the end, the teams that consistently make that trip to the Final 4 are there because they have been preparing for it for years. They didn't just start playing softball in high school, or even junior high for that matter. They have been on softball diamonds since they were little girls, some starting as young as six years old. These "feeder" systems at the lower level, prepare those girls for softball at high school, and hopefully, a chance to play at Firestone Stadium for a state championship.

One of the teams that seems to make the trip to Akron every year is Elyria, and their Hall of Fame coach Ken Fenik knows, it wouldn't happen without the feeder programs constantly infusing his team with girls that are ready to play. But Fenik says it goes further than the girls just learning fundamentals at a young age. "It's not just that they know how to play softball by the time they reach high school" he says. "I've

found that Elyria's more successful teams were built with girls who had played together for a long time" he said. "They form a bond or chemistry at a young age through Little League and travel ball, and that just stays with them by the time they get to high school. They are a real family".

So what makes a successful feeder program? Fenik says it is an incredible effort of combined forces. "You have to have a community that is truly committed and bought in to the success of a program" he admits. "It takes coaches willing to work and work with young kids. It takes dedicated parents willing to commit time. It takes businesses that are willing to commit money for sponsorships and support fundraisers to supply equipment. They all play a part in working towards the same goal". And Fenik knows, it's more than girls playing on fields in just the warm weather. "These girls play year round now", he says. "Obviously in the spring and summer, but also in fall ball, and they play indoors in the winter. It's real commitment".

While Fenik admits the feeder programs have helped the Elyria program tremendously, he also is very frank about the fact he thinks there can be too much softball for some girls. "I know with my team, I sometimes just give them a day off during the season. They get worn out from all the constant playing" the Lady Pioneer coach says. He also thinks girls should play more than one sport. "I still love the girls that play two or three sports



Photo: David Richard/The Chronicle Telegram

in high school, that's part of the high school experience. I want them to do that" Fenik says. "Too many girls are specializing in softball, and they don't have to. They can still play other sports, and if they are good in softball, the college coaches will find them". Fenik thinks that specialization can translate to pressure on girls to succeed on the diamond. "Kids develop at different paces, grow at different rates and so forth, and that can affect their game. All of a sudden, they worry about that, and put way too much pressure on themselves".

Another aspect of the feeder system that can prove to be challenging is there are some girls who think they should automatically play once they reach high school. "There are freshmen who think because they have been starting on a team from the time they were six or seven years old, they will automatically start in high school" he says. "They get frustrated if there is a girl in front of them or if they don't start immediately. They aren't use to that and

it can be a challenge" he adds.

As much as Fenik relishes those trips to Akron and the lifetime memories it provides his players, he also is quick to warn parents, softball cannot be all consuming. "As I get older and have daughters of my own, I understand these girls still need to be teenagers" he says. "They need to spend time with their friends, their families and do things that all teenagers do. They need to have fun".

So the balancing act is a delicate one. The need to develop a feeder system is critical to the success of the high school program overall. Whether it is Elyria, Keystone, Columbia, Midview, or any of the other schools that have had success on the diamond, their coaches will tell you, the girls need to start early. As coach Fenik said, aside from developing sheer skill level, it can build the chemistry and bonding of a group that will play together for some time. But in the end, the experience still needs to be fun, and not a "pressure cooker" for these exceptional young girls.

2014 LORAIN COUNTY BASEBALL PREVIEW

By: James Brady

After finishing 3rd in the Southwestern Conference last year, **Avon Lake** turned into last season's Cinderella story making a run to the Sweet 16 as Matt Morrisette and Brett Kiser shut down Midview and Amherst in district play before losing to St. Ignatius. Kent State recruit Brad Hamilton returns with his .466 average behind the plate after a 1st team SWC and Lorain County selection. Top returning fielders along with Hamilton are centerfielder David Winkel (.417, 9 SB), first baseman Kyle Kuhar (.359, 21 RBI) and right fielder Jeremiah Campo (.354). Logan Montague (4-0, 1.19 ERA), Logan DeLong (2-1 3.71) and Campo (2-0) provide plenty of experience on the hill.

Keystone remained one of the top teams in 2013 a sparkling 23-8 (13-3 PAC) record, but their three year run at the top of the Stars Division came to an end at the hands of Buckeye who went 14-2 in league play. The Wildcats, who were ranked 16th in the state, are primed for another big season under 2nd year coach Bert Fitzgerald as Kendle Stiner and Tyler Gullett both return with sparkling 7-0 records from last season. Gullett, a Toledo baseball recruit, was also phenomenal at the plate batting 483 with 14HR and 64



David Richard/The Chronicle-Telegram

Avon Lake catcher and senior Brad Hamilton will continue his baseball playing career after accepting a scholarship offer from Kent State University.

RBI. Pierce Young (.408) and Marcus Gunter (.375) should also provide plenty of punch for the Keystone offense. Keystone's three-year run as district champion will be tested this season after moving up to Division II for the first time since 2008.

Amherst set a school record for wins last year under rookie coach Matt Rositano rising as high as 4th in the Division I State AP poll. Despite losing three players to college baseball, Rositano's team is loaded with five players that have already committed to play college baseball. Leading the offense will be catcher Justin Mott (BGSU)

was 1st team All-SWC after hitting .313, Kody Bledsoe (Lake Erie) hit .284 from the leadoff spot and Alex Walts (Hillsdale) will hit in the middle of the lineup after batting .318 last season. Noah Skladan (Mount Union) and Shane Derricote return with three wins each from last year and both had an ERA under 1.30. Mott picked up three saves and had an ERA of 0.77 for Amherst.

After an 18-9 finish two years ago, **Midview** followed that up with an equally impressive 21-7 mark under 2nd year coach Scott Jalowiec setting a school record for wins. Middies games will be

the place to be if you want to see top-notch pitching with the senior season of Cody Callaway at hand. Callaway has committed to Bowling Green State University for football, but he very well could be a mid-round selection in the MLB draft this year. Kyle Warner will anchor the 1-2 punch on the hill after a 4-1 season earned him All-County and All-WSC honors. Callaway (.275), Tyler Leinerth (.266) and Zac Wilson (.288, 10SB) will anchor the offense.

For the second straight year **Lorain High** finished with 17 wins finishing second in the Lake Erie League behind Euclid with an 11-3 conference record. Brad Ternes returns for his 11th season in Lorain between Southview and LHS with 165 career coaching wins. The Titans will rely heavily on pitching after losing seven of nine starters from last year's team. Demon Hisle returns after a 3-0 season (0.30 ERA) with Mike Velez who had a 4-1 mark last year with 37 strikeouts. Aaron Andujar and his .384 average (.535 OBP) will pace the Lorain offense.

Avon had an average season by its standards going 14-14 in Coach Frank DeSmit's 6th season finishing 3rd in the West Shore Conference. There are a number of upper-

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classmen returning for the Eagles this year. Alex Tomko (5-3, 1.29 ERA), Ian Long (3-1, 2.80 ERA) and Scott Barnum (2-0, 4 SV) will anchor the pitching rubber. Long (.338), Kevin Maloney (.310, 14, RBI, 11SB) and Andrew Lee (.276, 8SB) are in place to lead the offensive attack.

After a 17-12 season, **Firelands** will now be coached by Doug Benzell replacing long-time coach Ted Busch. The Falcons will have a different look after four-year starter Joe San Felippo took his baseball skills to play for Wheeling Jesuit. Firelands will be leaning heavily on Cole Sklarek who went 4-2 on the mound (1.70 ERA) and batted .330 with 31 RBI at the plate. The Falcons will also need the bat of Tristan Clark who hit .314 last season.

Elyria Catholic finished 15-14 last year in Bruce Lisicky's second season as Panthers coach. EC will look to improve on a 5th place finish in the West Shore Conference with senior Joe y Begany leading the way. Begany hit .462 last season (11 2B, 33 RBI) and also went 3-2 on the mound with a neat 1.71 ERA averaging nearly one strikeout per inning. Dominic Piazza will be asked to help carry the load pitching after a 3-2 record as a sophomore last season. Senior Angelo Cruz returns after hitting .329 last year.

Two -time Stripes Division champion **Columbia** finished at 12-12 last year, but went 11-5 in Patriot Athletic Conference play to finish two games ahead of Clearview and Lutheran West beating both in 9-inning games the last two games of the league season. Coach Justin Ramsey enters his 6th season with a couple of All-PAC pitchers and a pair of .400 hitter. Michael Boey and Kevin Simon will lead Columbia on the hill, while Tyler Underwood (.446, 20 RBI) and Boey (.405, 18SB) lead the Raiders offensive attack.

Elyria High went just 1-9 in the tough NOC last year, but finished with a 14-14 mark in Coach Ed Piazza's second season. The Pioneers have offense returning in Brodie Stewart (.338, 8 2B), Jacob Csizmadia (.303, 3HR) and Marques Inman (.301, 12 RBI). The Pioneers will be searching for arms with just four wins returning in Zack Minney (3-0, 3.47 ERA) and Brad Conley (1-0, 2.19 ERA)

Vermilion had what would be considering a down year for them going 13-15 finish 5th in the West Shore Conference. Coach Jeff Keck enters his 12th season at the wheel of the Sailors after picking up his 200th win at Vermilion and should get his 350th coaching win needing 10. It could take the Sailors a little time to get going with only six returning letter win-

ners. On the mound, sophomore Caleb Waller returns with a 3-4 record (1.73 ERA) along with Josh Buchanan and Kyle Nader who both had two wins last year. This is a Vermilion team that has been to district tournament play for 12 straight years.

Clearview's Roger Engle returns after being a first-team All-Lorain County and PAC player selection hitting over .450 in conference play. Antonio Pagan (.330) and Austin Arendt (.320) will help balance the Clippers offensive attack. Sophomore Antonio Bennett will again play short-stop and look to improve on his three wins last year.

Brookside will be looking to improve on an 8-14 season under third-year coach Brad Bombback. Senior Crae Watkins went 4-1 during his summer season and will lead the young Cardinals on the mound. Matthew Seekins (.377) and Cameron Drew (.370) were both All-County selections last year for Brookside.

It will be tough for Coach Roger Sasack to replace **Wellington's** Erik Fehlan (Baldwin-Wallace) who led the Dukes in wins, innings, hits, average and RBI in an 8-17 season. The Dukes will be looking for senior right-hander Nick Carevic (3-3, 3.63 ERA) to lead on the mound and junior left-handed hitter Robbie Bliss (.282 AVG) to spark the Wellington offense.

North Ridgeville senior Matt Feierabend returns after a 4-4 season on the mound and a .330 average for 3rd year coach Mathew Ponting. The Rangers finished 13-16 and 7-7 in the West Shore Conference last season. North Ridgeville will be looking for Nolan Freeman (3-2) to help on the mound along with junior Nathan Colbert (.324 AVG) on offense.

Matt Loescher returns for his 13th year as coach at **Open Door** after the Patriots went 4-15 last season. Sophomore Tyler Haas (.365 AVG), senior Cory Kushinski (.325) and junior right-handed hitter Will Lovett (.322) are expected to lead the way for the Open Door offense. Junior Jacob Lowe could provide spark after missing last year with an injury.

This is the second year at **Lake Ridge** for Coach Jason Dimacchia and the cupboard isn't bare after a 6-13 season in 2013. Sophomore Niko Ortiz threw a perfect game in his first start last year against Lawrence Academy. Ortiz was a 2nd Team Division IV All-Ohio selection. Seniors Jack Spellman (.480 AVG, .618 OBP) and Danny Fulop (.280/.400) return to lead the offense.

Oberlin has 3 returnees with impressive stats. Matayo Wyman hit .493 with 33 hits, Tyler Buga .462 with 36 hits and Liam McMillan .384 with 28 hits.

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BATTER UP:

A Look at the 2014 Lake Erie Crushers

By: Andy "Bull" Barch
Voice of the Crushers

While the beginning of the 2013 season for the Lake Erie Crushers offered a lot of different amenities, the end result was the same, as the Crushers made it to the playoffs for the third time in five years, but fell just short in the Championship to Schaumburg.

Change is prevalent once again in Avon, as the Crushers have their third manager in as many seasons. Chris Mongiardo, the pitching coach for the 2013 Crushers, was hired as Lake Erie's new manager on January 14, replacing Jeff Isom, who left to manage the Joliet Slammers back in November.

Mongiardo, better known as "Monge" to those in the baseball world, played a pivotal role in developing last year's pitching staff into one of the best in the league. The Crushers started slowly, but ended the year with a 3.38 earned run average, which was second best in the 14-team Frontier League circuit.

Mongiardo has coached in

the Frontier League for seven seasons. He started back in 2001 with the former Richmond Roosters as bench coach where he was a part of back to back championship teams in 2001 and 2002. He then managed the Roosters during their final three seasons of existence.

The new Lake Erie skipper is a Willowick, Ohio, native, and graduated from Kent State University while playing baseball for the Golden Flashes. He is excited about getting involved in the surrounding communities and helping us build the new Lake Erie Crushers youth baseball and softball academy.

More changes were made about a month later, when the Crushers announced the hiring of Youngstown, Ohio, native, Rick Muntean, as the team's new General Manager. Muntean, comes to Avon after spending the last five years with the St. Joseph Mustangs of the MINK League.

In his five years in St. Joseph, Mo., the Mustangs won a pair of MINK League Championships, and most



Bruce Bishop/The Chronicle-Telegram

"Super Joe" Charboneau has joined the Lake Erie Crushers as a batting coach and will be working with the teams' new manager Chris Mongiardo and GM Rick Muntean!

recently, they went 28-17 this past season. He had been with the Mustangs for the previous five seasons, since the franchise launched in 2009.

Muntean has over 30 years of baseball experience. Prior to joining the Mustangs in 2009, he spent five years with the Kansas City T-Bones of the Northern League (now the American Association), where he engineered two Northern League Organization of the Year awards, one Executive of the Year award, and one Northern League

Championship. Prior to the T-Bones, Rick spent 15 years as the General Manager and Assistant General Manager for the Scranton Wilkes-Barre Red Barons, the top minor league club of the Philadelphia Phillies.

On the field, the Lake Erie Crushers expect to be Championship contenders once again. Most of the players on the 2013 Eastern Division Championship team will be invited to spring train-

See **CRUSHERS** on page 10



LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS

on

AM930 WEOL

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5/29	Traverse City
6/11	Normal
6/19	Washington
6/26	Rockford
6/27	Washington
6/28	Washington
6/29	Washington
7/01	@ Rockford
7/02	@ Rockford
7/03	@ Rockford
7/23	Frontier
7/28	@ Schaumburg
8/09	Frontier
8/10	Frontier
8/11	Frontier
8/14	@ Joliet
8/21	Gateway

2014 Lake Erie Crushers Schedule

May

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
11	12	13	14	15	16 ★ SCH	17 SCH
18 SCH	19	20 WC	21 WC MAC	22 WC MAC	23 SIL MAC	24 SIL MAC
25 SIL MAC	26	27 TC	28 TC *	29 TC	30 ★ JOL	31 JOL

MAC =



June

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 JOL	2	3	4 FLO DH	5 FLO	6 ★ EVN	7 EVN
8 EVN	9	10 NOR	11 NOR	12 NOR	13 GAT	14 GAT
15 GAT	16	17 WSH	18 WSH	19 WSH	20 TC	21 TC
22 TC	23	24 RCK	25 RCK	26 RCK	27 ★ WSH	28 WSH
29 WSH	30					

July

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 RCK	2 RCK	3 RCK	4 ★ FG	5 FG
6 FG	7	8	9 WAS DH	10 WAS	11 EVN	12 EVN
13 EVN	14	15	16 AllStar Game	17	18 ★ FLO	19 FLO
20 FLO	21 FG	22 FG	23 FG *	24 NOR	25 NOR	26 NOR
27 SCH	28 SCH	29 SCH	30 WC	31 WC		

■ = Home

★ = Fireworks

DH = Doubleheader

* = Day Game

5/28 - 10:35am

7/23 - 11:05am

August/September

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 ★ WC	2 EVN
3 EVN	4 EVN	5	6 RCK	7 RCK	8 RCK	9 FG
10 FG	11 FG	12 JOL	13 JOL	14 JOL	15 TC	16 TC
17 TC	18	19 GAT	20 GAT	21 GAT	22 ★ RC	23 RC
24 RC SIL 31	25 1	26 NOR SIL 2	27 NOR SIL 3	28 NOR SIL 4	29 RC	30 RC

All games start at 7:05pm with the exception of Sundays (1:05pm) and day games. Gates open one hour before game time.



CRUSHERS

from page 8

ing, with a few others in the mix as well to compete for a few open spots on the roster, and create completion at a few others.

A familiar face to Crusher fans everywhere, four-time Frontier League All-Star Andrew Davis is set to return for what will be his sixth season with the Crushers. Davis was Lake Erie's primary power source last season, leading the team with 17 home-runs, and his 66 RBI were third most in the Frontier League. The 2014 will be his last with the Crushers, as he will reach the league's age-limit for veteran exceptions.

While it will be difficult to replace the production of Daniel Bowman, who was one of the Frontier League's best hitters last year, earning top-10 marks in several offensive categories, the Crushers will have a few other returnees from the 2013 season, who put up very nice numbers as well.

The first of who was acquired via a trade with Schaumburg last season, in utility man, Craig Hertler. Hertler was Lake Erie's lead-off hitter, and consistently came through in clutch situations. Over 54 games with the Crushers, Hertler hit .304, with an on base percentage of .427. In addition, he hit .362 with runners in scoring position, and .344 with runners in scoring position and two outs.

One of Lake Erie's other big power sources last year, was the 2012 Frontier League Homerun Derby Champion, Russ Moldenhauer. Moldenhauer is set to return for this third season with the Crushers, after smashing 14 bombs a season ago. Like

Hertler, Moldenhauer was key in clutch situations throughout the year. He hit .275 on the year, but stepped up in pressure situations, hitting .301 with runners in scoring position, and .302 with runners in scoring position and two outs.

The pitching staff reached new heights a season ago, as the Lake Erie team ERA of 3.38 was not only second best in the league, but it was the best ERA at season's end in the five year history of the franchise. Back for the 2014 season is the ace of the staff, in lefty Matt Rein. Rein had a phenomenal season for the Crushers, posting an 8-6 overall record, with a 2.37 ERA, which was among the best in the league.

Another lefty that had a terrific 2013 season, Dave Middendorf, will be back in action for the Crushers as well. Middendorf had 12 wins a season ago, third most in the Frontier League and posted a 2.60 ERA, which was fifth best in the league as well. Back for his third season with the Crushers, is right-hander Mickey Jannis, who thrived as both a starter and a reliever in 2013. Jannis went 7-2 with a 2.42 ERA, which included four starts, and he had a pair of saves as well.

Many of the same great promotions will be back again for the 2014 season, but there will be a few changes as well. The first pitch for Sunday home games, which had been delivered at 5:05 PM for the first five years, have been changed to 1:05 PM.

Weekly promotions will lead off on opening night, Friday, May 16th with fireworks. There's always a spectacular show to be seen after every Friday home game.

Super Saturday's will feature a giveaway to the first 1,000 fans. Just as last year, on Saturdays, families can purchase 4 home box tickets and 4 perfect game vouchers for \$44.

New to the lineup this year will be Marked Down Mondays, featuring \$1 general admission tickets and \$3 box seat tickets. Two-Dollar Tuesday is in the mix this year as well, featuring \$2 specials on select concession items will be available at Stomper's Grille and Eddy's Eatery and there will be dollar hot dogs on Wednesday nights. On Wednesdays, seniors will be able to buy a Home Box ticket for \$6.

Thursdays are still \$1 beer night. College students presenting proper ID will be able to purchase a general admis-

sion ticket for \$2 on Thursdays.

Christmas in July will return to All Pro Freight Stadium on Friday, July 18. There will also be a pair of early games as well. Wednesday, May 23, will be a school day, with a 10:35 AM start, and this year's Summer Splash Day is on July 23, with an 11:05 AM start.

Our annual Pack the Park Pink will reign again this season. Come out to the ballpark on Friday, August 22 to help raise money for breast cancer research and stick around for the fireworks following.

Opening night is Friday, May 16th, and features a post game fireworks extravaganza. For ticket information, call the Crushers at 440-934-3636, or visit the Crushers website, at www.lakeeriecrushers.com.



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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

By: Jim Rosenhaus

Play-by-Play Announcer

It was late February in Goodyear, Arizona. Outside, it was another cloudless, crisp morning at the Cleveland Indians Spring Training complex. Inside, Director of Baseball Information Bart Swain was hunkered down in his office, attacking his daily responsibilities. Suddenly, the peaceful quiet of a spring training early morning was broken by the tornado of activity that is Tribe first baseman Nick Swisher.

“Yo Bart, I need more shirts bro !”, howled Swisher. “I got to have em for everybody, 5 or 6 just ain’t gonna cut it.”

The T-shirts in question were supposed to be handed out only to those players who participated in a commercial shoot promoting the team for the 2014 season. But what about the other players? As the acknowledged leader of a playoff contending team, Swisher knew what he had to do. He needed to get more of those shirts that Swain was barricading in his office. Two trips into the media room later, “Swish” filled the request and all was right in Tribe land. Why were the bright red T-shirts so special? It was the lettering on the front, the lettering that said words that capture the essence the Cleveland Indians in 2014. The words are “Unfinished Business”.

How did the Indians



Photo: Dan Mendlik/Cleveland Indians

Mike Aviles and others celebrate clinching their first playoff berth since 2007

arrive at this point? Prior to the 2013 season, the Tribe has lost 90 or more games in 3 of the prior 4 seasons. But last year under new manager Terry Francona, the Indians won 92 games and reached the American League playoffs. The 24 win turnaround was the biggest improvement from one season to the next in franchise history. Not bad for a franchise that began operations in 1901. They did it with an offense that finished 4th in the American League in runs scored, a number achieved without the benefit of a .300 hitter, a 25 home run hitter or a 100 RBI man. On the mound, the Indians showed tremendous improvement and posted the 2nd lowest ERA after the All Star Break. Despite

that success, there was a still a bitter pill to swallow in the end. The Tribe lost its Wild Card Playoff game to Tampa Bay, ending what had been a furious

September run to the playoffs. Even a manager who has reached baseball’s highest pinnacle twice, winning a World Series in 2004 and 2007, summed up what his club felt after the tough playoff loss.

“We played so well for so long, having it end so suddenly was tough to take,” said Francona three months later at Tribe Fest in Cleveland. “That playoff game stung, more than I realized it was going to. It was hard for me to talk to the team after the game. It hurt because we had played so well to get there and just like that, it’s over. Seasons

don’t wind down; they just come to a crashing halt. As proud as I was of those guys, it hurt so bad, I couldn’t believe how much it stung.”

That pain was replaced by renewed optimism as the winter moved along, replaced by the sense of purpose that comes with a new spring training. The bulk of the roster that experienced so much success is back, bolstered by some new faces that figure to play key roles as the Indians pursue another playoff spot and more in 2014.

To a man, this year’s Cleveland Indians believe that last year was just the beginning of an extended run of success. One of the

See **INDIANS** on page 13

INDIANS

from page 12

key pieces will be left fielder Michael Brantley. Inked to a new contract in early February, Brantley will be with the Tribe for four more seasons. He has become a steady offensive player and is coming off a season in which he hit .284 with 10 HR and a career best 73 RBI.

"We have such a great group in this locker room and I want to be a part of that for years to come," said Brantley. "I believe last year was just a stepping stone of what we are capable of as a team. We weren't ready to go home last year, especially the way it ended. The atmosphere in the play-off game was electric and it makes you want more of that."

On the pitching side, Justin Masterson will anchor the starting rotation

once again. Last season, Masterson won 14 games and despite a late season injury that cost him 3 weeks, still logged almost 200 innings. He says the feeling in the clubhouse is very similar to last year, when thoughts of a turnaround season developed.

"Last year, we had the excitement of Tito coming in, along with Swish and Bourn," says Masterson. "This year, it's just a continuation of what began last year. We've added a few more veterans, the younger guys continue to grow and it's a good mix. When you think back to last year, we never really played great, until the end. This year, we feel we can play great baseball and make things more special than last year."

The common theme among this year's Indians is to continue the loose, fun atmosphere that last year's team fostered. Outfielder

Ryan Raburn is coming off a tremendous bounce back season and was big key to a tremendous Indians bench. Raburn hit 16 home runs and drove in 55 runs in less than 250 at bats. He says he couldn't wait to get back to spring training to pick up where last year's team left off.

"I can't stress that enough to everyone in here, how important it is to have fun in this game," Raburn points out. "I've had years in the past that just weren't enjoyable and it makes a difference. That carries over to the field. Last year I made a conscious effort to have fun and I believe that was a big reason I had the year I had."

Looking at the day to day lineup for the Indians in 2014, there were few position battles heading into spring training. Yan Gomes will be the starting catcher after bursting on the scene a



Photo: Dan Mendlik/Cleveland Indians

Nick Swisher

year ago. A regular in the season's second half, the native of Brazil hit .294 with 11 HR and 38 RBI. He shut down opposing running games by throwing out 38% of would be base stealers. His handling of the pitching staff was also steady. Arguably the Indians hottest hitter in September, Nick Swisher returns as the everyday first baseman, looking to continue

See **INDIANS** on page 14

FROM THE DUGOUT

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4/04 vs Minnesota	7/09 vs NY Yankees
4/23 vs Kansas City	7/30 vs Seattle
5/07 vs Minnesota	8/05 vs Cincinnati
5/20 vs Detroit	8/13 vs Arizona
6/03 vs Boston	9/03 vs Detroit
6/18 vs LA Angels	9/23 vs Kansas City

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Photo: Dan Mendlik/Cleveland Indians

Terry Francona



Photo: Dan Mendlik/Cleveland Indians

Justin Masterson

INDIANS

from page 13

ue what was an outstanding finish to 2013. Jason Kipnis will man second base after an All Star season last year when he hit .284 with 17 HR and a team best 84 RBI and a team high 30 SB. Asdrubal Cabrera is once again the Tribe shortstop, looking to bounce back

from an off year by his standards offensively. In the outfield, Brantley will play left. Michael Bourn is fully recovered from a late season injury and will play centerfield, while newly acquired David Murphy will man rightfield, with Raburn filling in at the corner outfield positions on a regular basis.

The lone position in question appears to be third base. Lonnie Chisenhall was the starting third baseman coming out of spring training a year ago, but struggled with consistency and eventually spent time at Triple A Columbus. He will be challenged by former number one catcher Carlos Santana, who requested the chance to play third base following last season. Santana's case is intriguing in that he remains one of the Tribe's top run producers offensively. Last year he hit .268 with 20 HR and 74 RBI. If he is adequate defensively, it opens up several possibilities for the rest of the roster. A decision most likely won't be made until the latter stages of spring training

and manager Terry Francona says there is no rush.

On the mound, the first four slots in the rotation appear set. Masterson will be the opening day starter, followed by and not necessarily in this order, Corey Kluber, Zach McAllister and Danny Salazar. Kluber and McAllister won 11 and 9 games respectively and solidified their status as bona fide major league starting pitchers. Meanwhile, the flame throwing rookie Salazar made 10 starts down the stretch last year and got the nod in the playoff game vs Tampa Bay. The battle remains for the 5th spot in the rotation. The con-

See **INDIANS** on page 16



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2014 SEASON SCHEDULE

MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	31 • 10:05 OAK	1 • 10:05 OAK	2 • 3:35 OAK	3	4 • 3:05 MIN	5 • 1:05 MIN
6 • 1:05 MIN	7 • 7:05 SD	8 • 7:05 SD	9 • 12:05 SD	10 • 8:10 CWS	11 • 8:10 CWS	12 • 2:10 CWS
13 • 2:10 CWS	14	15 • 7:08 DET	16 • 7:08 DET	17 • 1:08 DET	18 • 7:05 TOR	19 • 1:05 TOR
20 • 1:05 TOR	21 • 7:05 KC	22 • 7:05 KC	23 • 7:05 KC	24 • 12:05 KC	25 • 10:15 SF	26 • TBA SF
27 • 4:05 SF	28 • 10:05 LAA	29 • 10:05 LAA	30 • 7:05 LAA			

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 • 10:10 LAD	2 • 3:10 LAD	3	4 • 7:05 KC	5 • TBD KC
6 • 1:05 KC	7 • 7:05 NYY	8 • 7:05 NYY	9 • 7:05 NYY	10 • 7:05 NYY	11 • 7:05 CWS	12 • TBD CWS
13 • 1:05 CWS	14	ALL STAR BREAK			18 • 7:08 DET	19 • 7:08 DET
20 • 1:08 DET	21 • 8:10 MIN	22 • 8:10 MIN	23 • 1:10 MIN	24 • 8:10 KC	25 • 8:10 KC	26 • 7:10 KC
27 • 2:10 KC	28	29 • 7:05 SEA	30 • 7:05 SEA	31 • 7:05 SEA		

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 • 7:05 CWS	3 • 6:05 CWS
4 • 1:05 CWS	5 • 7:05 MIN	6 • 7:05 MIN	7 • 7:05 MIN	8 • 12:05 MIN	9 • 7:10 TB	10 • 7:10 TB
11 • 1:40 TB	12	13 • 7:07 TOR	14 • 7:07 TOR	15 • 7:07 TOR	16 • 7:05 OAK	17 • 7:05 OAK
18 • 1:05 OAK	19 • 7:05 DET	20 • 7:05 DET	21 • 12:05 DET	22 • 7:05 BAL	23 • 7:05 BAL	24 • TBD BAL
25 • 1:35 BAL	26 • 2:10 CWS	27 • 8:10 CWS	28 • 8:10 CWS	29	30 • 7:05 COL	31 • TBD COL

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 • 7:05 TEX	2 • 7:05 TEX
3 • 1:05 TEX	4 • 7:05 CIN	5 • 7:05 CIN	6 • 7:10 CIN	7 • 7:10 CIN	8 • 7:05 NYY	9 • 1:05 NYY
10 • TBD NYY	11	12 • 7:05 AZ	13 • 7:05 AZ	14	15 • 7:05 BAL	16 • 7:05 BAL
17 • 1:05 BAL	18	19 • 8:10 MIN	20 • 8:10 MIN	21 • 1:10 MIN	22 • 7:05 HOU	23 • 7:05 HOU
24 • 1:05 HOU	25	26 • 8:10 CWS	27 • 8:10 CWS	28 • 8:10 CWS	29 • 8:10 KC	30 • 7:10 KC
31 • 1:05 KC						

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 • 1:05 COL	2 • 7:05 BOS	3 • 7:05 BOS	4 • 7:05 BOS	5	6 • 8:05 TEX	7 • 8:05 TEX
8 • 3:05 TEX	9 • 8:05 TEX	10 • 8:10 KC	11 • 2:10 KC	12 • 7:10 BOS	13 • 7:10 BOS	14 • 4:05 BOS
15 • 1:35 BOS	16 • 7:05 LAA	17 • 7:05 LAA	18 • 7:05 LAA	19 • 12:05 LAA	20 • 7:05 DET	21 • TBD DET
22 • 1:05 DET	23	24 • 9:40 AZ	25 • 9:40 AZ	26	27 • 10:10 SEA	28 • 10:10 SEA
29 • 4:10 SEA	30 • 10:10 LAD					

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 • 4:05 DET	2 • 7:05 DET	3 • 7:05 DET	4 • 7:05 DET	5 • 7:05 CWS	6 • 7:05 CWS
7 • 1:05 CWS	8	9 • 7:05 MIN	10 • 7:05 MIN	11 • 12:05 MIN	12 • 7:08 DET	13 • 7:08 DET
14 • 1:08 DET	15 • 8:10 HOU	16 • 8:10 HOU	17 • 8:10 HOU	18 • 8:10 HOU	19 • 8:10 MIN	20 • 7:10 MIN
21 • 2:10 MIN	22 • 7:05 KC	23 • 7:05 KC	24 • 7:05 KC	25	26 • 7:05 TB	27 • 6:05 TB
28 • 1:05 TB	29	30				

■ HOME □ AWAY

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THE TRIBE PLAYS HERE.

INDIANS

from page 14

tenders include in house candidates Carlos Carrasco, Josh Tomlin and Trevor Bauer along with non-roster invites Aaron Harang and Shaun Marcum.

In the bullpen, there will be changes. Gone are closer Chris Perez, set up man Joe Smith and reliable Matt Albers. Free agent signee John Axford, who averaged close to 35 saves with Milwaukee in 2010 through 2012 should replace Perez at the back end of the pen. Cody Allen and Brian Shaw, who were rock solid in late inning roles a year ago, are back. They are joined by lefty Mark Rzepczynski and then a myriad of candidates to fill the remaining spots. Like third base, it may take most of spring training for the bullpen to gain some clarity.

Another key component of the team a year ago was the bench, which became known as the "Good Squad". Jason Giambi is back in camp and looking to extend his career at the age of 43. His impact on the ballclub from a leadership standpoint was immeasurable. Statistics wise, he hit 9 home runs, including 2 walk off home runs. His game winning, pinch hit home run vs the White Sox on September 24th remains one of the great moments of any season in recent Indians history. Others in the bench mix include utilityman Mike Aviles, outfielder Ryan Raburn and then potentially veteran outfielders Nyger Morgan and Jeff Francoeur and infielder Elliot Johnson.

In summary, most of the key slots are filled and spring training will be used to fill out the roster and



Photo: Dan Mendlik/Cleveland Indians

Michael Brantley

find the right mix to create a winning atmosphere. Who better to comment on the state of the Tribe heading into 2014 than Nick Swisher.

"Hey, last year was brought excitement back to the 216," says the always charged up Swisher. "This year, I walked into the clubhouse here in Goodyear and I thought, man I'm home!" Everybody knows every-

body now, we added some veterans and young thundercats alike and it's a good environment. We are going to keep going out there and working hard and believe me, when you have a guy like Terry Francona leading your team, you are always going to be heading in the right direction."

For the 2014 Cleveland Indians, the plan is for that direction to be taking care of "Unfinished Business".



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