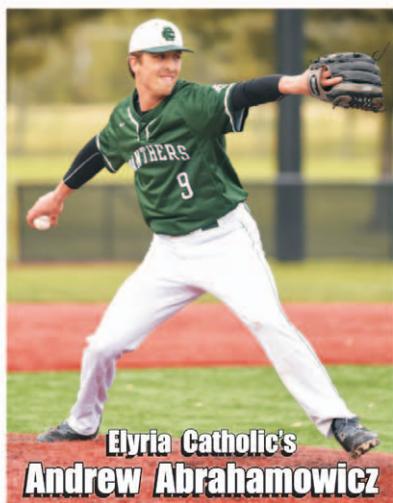




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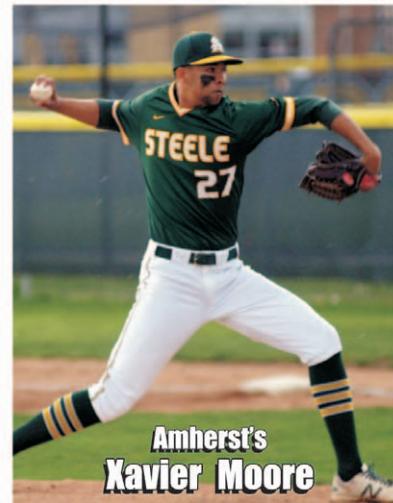
Volume 19 Issue 3  
Spring 2018

# FOCUS CAST



Elyria Catholic's  
**Andrew Abrahamowicz**

2017 Lorain County  
Co-Mr. Baseball



Amherst's  
**Xavier Moore**

2017 Lorain County  
Co-Mr. Baseball

## Keystone's **Sammie Stefan**

2017 Lorain County  
Miss Softball



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FROM THE DUGOUT .....pg. 15

**WEOL FORECAST MAGAZINE  
SPRING 2018 PREVIEW**  
A Publication of AM 930 WEOL  
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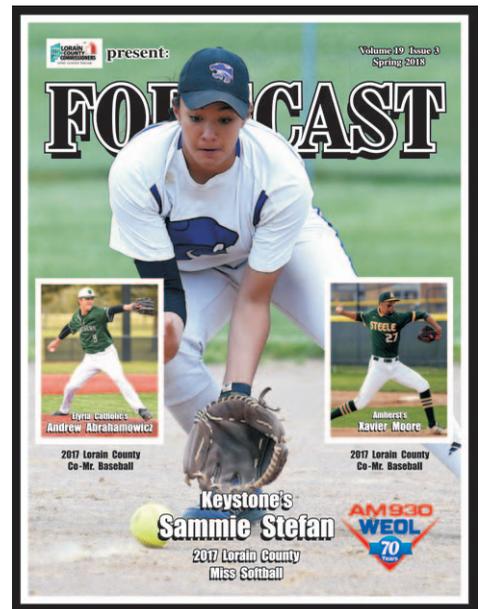
**Publisher**  
Source3Media

**About the Cover:**

Keystone's **Sammie Stefan** is the 13th Lady Wildcat to capture the Lorain County Miss Softball Award. In her senior season Stefan hit .549 with nine home runs, 28 extra base hits and 53 RBIs. Stefan set the school record at Keystone high school with 34 career home runs. Along with the Miss Softball Award, the Wildcat's third baseman took home Division II All-Ohio First team honors in 2017. Today she can be seen on the diamond at the University of Maryland.

Elyria Catholic's **Andrew Abrahamowicz** accomplished a goal he had set for himself his freshmen year when he was named as co-winner of the 2017 Lorain County Mr. Baseball Award. The Panthers ace helped his squad win 20 games last year. On the mound he was 7-1 with a 0.52 ERA and 83 strike outs. At the plate he was equally productive driving in 16 runs and nabbing 12 basses. This year Abrahamowicz is pitching for the Nebraska Cornhuskers in the Big Ten Conference.

Amherst's **Xavier Moore** shares the honor of Lorain County Mr. Baseball with former Lorain Longhorns teammate Andrew Abrahamowicz. Outstanding doesn't even begin to describe the numbers that Moore posted in his senior season at Amherst. The Comets go-to-pitcher won eight games on the hill and had miniscule 0.31 ERA. He paired his defensive play with a solid bat, hitting .359 at the plate with 28 hits and 21 RBIs. Last summer Moore was drafted by the Texas Rangers in the MLB Draft. He is currently working his way through the organizations minor league system.



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*Craig R. Adams*  
Operations Manager/News Director  
WEOL AM 930

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# **Cleveland Clinic** **Diamond Duel Schedule**

On AM930 and WEOL.com

**Baseball**

**Softball**

**4/7: Amherst @ Lorain 11am**  
**4/14: Elyria @ Lorain 11am**  
**4/16: Westlake @ Amherst 7pm**  
**4/19: Firelands @ Clearview 7pm**  
**4:21: No. Ridgeville @ Ely. Catholic 11am**  
**5/2: Keystone @ Ely. Catholic 7pm**  
**5/3: Amherst @ Avon 7pm**  
**5/7: Avon Lake @ Midview 7pm**

**4/28: Prebis Tournament**

**Keystone vs St. Francis DeSales 10am**  
**Amherst vs Anthony Wayne Noon**  
**Keystone vs Midview 2pm**  
**5/5: Elyria vs Columbia 9am**

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# 2018 Lorain County softball preview

By Todd Shapiro

The 2017 softball team ended like so many before it with a Lorain County team hoisting the state championship trophy at Akron's Firestone Stadium.

Elyria High School won its third state champion, defeating Lebanon, 4-3, in a wild Division I state title game that ended with junior Macy Taylor scoring the game-winning run on an obstruction call in the bottom of the seventh inning.

When you add in Keystone's three titles it was the sixth time since 1999 that a Lorain County team brought home a state championship trophy.

While there is no guarantee that a local team will be clearing room in its trophy case come June one thing is certain: some of the best softball in Ohio will be played in our backyard this spring.

The Pioneers, under the tutelage of veteran coach Ken Fenik, who is the seventh winningest coach in Ohio softball history with 546 wins, could be poised to make a return trip to Akron.

Taylor, a Truman State commit, leads a group of seven returnees that includes seniors Kearrah Williams, Cassie Miller and April Howser.

Elyria, which went undefeated in Greater Cleveland Conference play last season, has won its league championship 10 of the last 11 years and the Pioneers have won 20 or more games each season since 1998.

Keystone also made the trip to Akron last June, its 16th trip to the state tournament. The Wildcats lost 5-1 to Akron Hoban in



ANNA NORRIS / CHRONICLE

Elyria softball team.

the Division II state semifinals. The Wildcats, state champions in 1999, 2006 and 2012 have won the district championship each year, except one since 2000.

The Wildcats have two seniors, Val Broschk and Madi Nunez, who signed National Letters of Intent to play Division I college ball, at Cleveland State and Wright State respectively. The team also has four underclassmen — Marlie McNulty, Autumn Accord and Ali Pyles and Sydney Campbell, who have orally committed to Division I programs.

McNulty was named a National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-American after a freshman year during which she hit .489

with eight extra base hits and 37 stolen bases. Wildcats coach Jim Piazza comes into the 2018 season 12 wins shy of becoming the winningest coach in Keystone history, in any sport.

Elyria and Keystone will be among nine local teams showing off their skills at the 13th Annual Prebis Memorial Classic on April 27 and 28.

Keystone and Wellington will co-host the Prebis again this year and Avon, Columbia, Vermilion, Amherst, Elyria Catholic and Midview will also be taking part. As usual, the top softball programs from across Ohio will also be represented at the Prebis, 10 teams who won district championships

last spring will be a part of the 34-team field. While the Prebis is the highlight of the local softball seasons, it's just one of many local tournaments that will be taking place this spring.

Vermilion will host his own tournament for the first time this year the weekend of April 20-21. In addition to the Sailors, the field will include New Reigel, Buckeye, Woodridge, Perry, Pemberville Eastwood and Bellevue. That same weekend Black River will host the J.B. Firestone tournament.

The Pioneers will host their Elyria Softball Classic on May 4 and 5. Elyria and Elyria Catholic

See **SOFTBALL**, 5

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# SOFTBALL

From 4

will be joined by Avon, Columbia, Edison and Fairview in a final tune-up before district tournament play begins the following week. Elyria will also play in Wendy's Spring Classic.

When conference play gets underway, Amherst will be looking to win a share of the Southwestern Conference Championship for school-record third year in a row. Coach Lacey Reichert's teams have gone 45-15 over the past two seasons. The Comets have a pair of Division I recruits in junior shortstop Kasey McGraw (Youngstown State) and junior pitcher Madison O'Berg (University of Maryland-Baltimore County), both of whom were all-district selection last season. With six starters, including SWC Player of the Year Lauren Kachure, returning Amherst will again be among the favorites in the league.

Midview shared the SWC title with Amherst last year and will be looking to make a run at another league title of its own in 2018. The Middies are a veteran team led by Cleveland State commit Gabby Shackelford. Seniors Faith Hamilton, Hailey Ivan and Gabby Zerbini are also among Midview's 10 returning letterwinners. Midview is coming off of a 20-win season and could easily win 20 or more games this spring.

North Ridgeville will have a young team this season led by sophomore Kaleigh Rukavina and Chloe Simko. The Rangers are excited to show off their brand new field on campus after playing its home games off-campus in recent seasons.

Despite dealing with some off-

season injuries Avon will find a way to be a factor in the SWC and Avon Lake will look to improve on a difficult 2017 season under first-year coach Jana Peachman.

For most of its existence the Patriot Athletic Conference has been the private playground of the Keystone and Columbia softball programs. Since the league began play in the 2005-06 school year, the Wildcats have won all but one Stars Division championship while the Raiders have won 10 of the 12 Stripes Division titles.

Columbia is returning eight letterwinners from last year's team that finished 15-6. The Raiders will rely heavily on a pair of four-year starters in pitcher Allison Bouscher and catcher Natalie Wilkins.

The Raiders should expect to be challenged for the Stripes title by Oberlin. The Phoenix advanced to the Division III district final last year and return senior pitcher Bryanna Rivas. Rivas, a second-team all-Ohio selection last year and a Malone University commit, had a 1.86 ERA and 234 strikeouts last season.

First-year Clearview coach Mark Majoras has a young team with only six returning letterwinners but the Clippers return a pair of juniors, Marissa Bowser and Katelynn Janis, who hit over .400 last spring.

With 12 returning letterwinners, many of whom have played in two state tournaments it will be hard for anyone to unseat Keystone in the Stars Division, but Wellington and Black River have the returning talent to give the Wildcats a run for their money.

The Pirates are coming off a 20-win season with 10 returning let-

terwinners including seniors McKenzie Hendershot and Grace Spencer. Coach Larry Toth said Black River had a great off-season and has a tremendous influx of young talent coming into the program. Keep an eye on the Pirates as they could be one of the favorites to come out of the Division III Creston district.

The Dukes have a trio of all-district players — seniors Hope Diermyer and Makaylin Moore and sophomore Brooklinn Damiano among their 11 returning letterwinners. Wellington has a deeper pool of talent than it has had in recent years and beefed up its schedule to include more Division I opponents in hope of making a run at Elyria Catholic in the Division III North Ridgeville district.

Brookside only brings back five letterwinners but second-year coach Ken Collins returns all-PAC shortstop Tori Aliff and senior outfielders Leanna Barnhart and Taryn Sabo.

Elyria Catholic finished second in the Great Lakes Conference last season before going on to win the Division III district championship. The Panthers will count on all-GLC pitcher Ashley Cascio along with twins Kaylie and Stephanie Griffin to lead the way along with all-GLC right fielder Meghan Allegretto.

Lorain is the defending Lake Erie League champions and is favorite to repeat in 2018 with four returning starters who batted over .400 in 2017, led by sophomore Talia Harris, who hit for a



KRISTIN BAUER / CHRONICLE

Amherst's Kasey McGraw.

remarkable .652 average and senior Katherine Mills, who hit .461.

Vermilion coaches Bill Matthews and Norm Frindt, both of whom are beginning their 35th year of coaching, will enter Sandusky Bay Conference play with a young team with only five returnees. The Sailors hopes may rest on junior Maggie Hoffman, who was 8-3 in the pitchers' circle last year and also hit .506 with 40 RBIs.

Open Door, Lorain County's only independent team and one of its only two Division II teams, return two seniors, Hannah Kardar and Lauryn Brown, each of who hit over .400 last year. The Patriots struggled on the field last season with only four wins but they excelled in the classroom winning an award from the state coaches association for the team's academic performance.

The 2018 softball season is sure to produce a number of league champions, district champions and maybe even another state champion. The only thing that is certain is that AM-930 WEOL will be on-hand to follow your favorite team along the tournament trail.

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Post-Game Team Autographs

# 2018 High School baseball preview

By Tim Gebhardt

Last spring may have left a bittersweet taste in the collective mouths of some Lorain County High School baseball teams. Avon finally broke through to win the Division I district championship behind a veteran senior-laden team as the Eagles beat conference rival Amherst, 2-1, at The Pipeyard in Lorain to end many years of frustration. However, Avon lost a heartbreaking 14-inning marathon to Medina, 7-6, in the regional semi-finals. It was coach Frank DeSmit's final game at the helm of the Eagles. Avon finished the year 23-5 and ranked among the best teams in Ohio.

In Division II, top-seeded Keystone (22-4) lost, 1-0, to Buckeye in its opening round game. Firelands wound up in the District final but lost to Padua for the second year in a row. Vermilion was 2nd seeded at the Heidelberg D-II sectional but lost a 1-0 sectional final to Kenton.

Elyria Catholic (20-4), in Division III, figured to advance a long way in the tournament after getting to the regional finals the year before, but the Panthers lost in the district semi-finals to eventual champion Lutheran West. EC was hoping to ride the strong right-arm of pitcher Andrew Abrahamowicz, a Nebraska recruit, as it did the year before.

After setting a school record for wins in a season (21), Lake Ridge bowed out in the Division IV district semi-finals after putting together an outstanding regular season.

Area coaches are optimistic again this spring as the baseball season gets underway.

Coach Jason Dimacchia figures



Amherst's Evan Shawver (center) after a no hitter against Midview.

Lake Ridge (21-6 last year) is primed and ready to pick up where it left off last year. The Royals return virtually its entire team from a year ago. Lake Ridge has good pitching depth headed by senior Cole Bramhall (6-1, 1.42 ERA). Leading hitters are senior Of Jake Roach (.431) and 1b Ian Ashby (.442). Dimacchia feels his defensive infield is the best he's ever coached and his team has the potential to go very deep in the playoffs. Other returning starters are Jarrett Cromling, Neil Robertson, Brayden Snezak, Will Cunningham, Austin Bramhall, Matt South, Davin Amy, Ethan

Cayton and John Harrington.

John Carter takes over at Oberlin, who struggled to a 2-19 record last year. Carter returns six lettermen off that team including 1b/C Matt Rassmussen, P Jackson Schaum, SS/P Chris Palmer, SS/P Hunter Clawson, 3b/P Gavin Horning and 2b/P Sander Ferrazza. Carter wants the Phoenix to be aggressive on the bases and in moving runners. The biggest obstacle is teaching his team to become winners.

Jeff Keck won his 300th game as coach of Vermilion a year ago and is now 415-277 in his career that spans 31 high school sea-

sons. Keck is in his 16th year with the Sailors and once again should field a very strong team. Junior Mason Montgomery (4-1, 1.32 ERA), senior Evan Ozman (2-1, 1.27 ERA), junior Ridge Clark (1-0, 0.47 ERA) and senior Max Walker all return to the mound for Vermilion. Montgomery was also an outstanding hitter (.375) a year ago. Other returning lettermen are juniors Reese Miller (1b/3b/Of), Sterling Benko (C/Inf) and Noah Cacciatore (Of).

Keystone manager Bert Fitzgerald is determined to get the Wildcats back to the Sweet 16 level it

See **BASEBALL**, 8

*Nick Abraham*

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# BASEBALL

From 7

enjoyed a few seasons ago (four straight district titles from 2011-2014) and he has the tools to do just that. Fitzgerald needs two wins to reach the century mark as coach of the Wildcats. Keystone returns its entire infield with Matt Kelling (1b), Kevin Mealwitz (SS), Mike Mileski (3b) and Jaret Bender (2b). Cameron Emerick is back in the outfield and will see duty on the mound also. Sophomore Kyler Yusko is a promising sophomore pitching prospect. Nick Gregory, Nick Compton and Nick Twining will help the offense and the pitching depth.

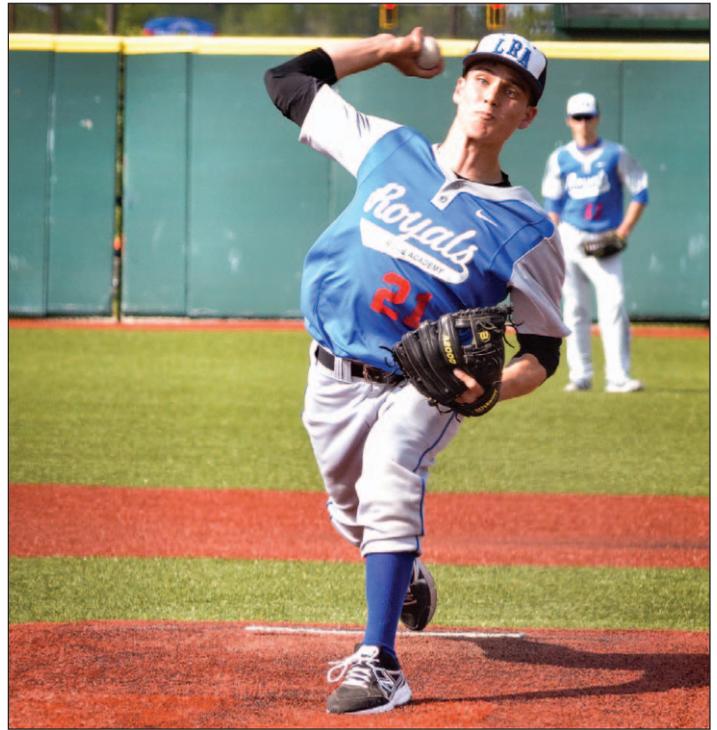
Kevin Marlow's Avon Lake baseball team finished 12-13 a year ago but the Shoremen are always competitive in the very tough SWC. Marlow expects big years from Mike Sacco (.355 Cf), Aidan Flinn (.375 Rf), Jacob Krukowski (.340 P/3b), Jason Gregovits (.325 P/SS), and Jacob Carraballo (2b). Marlow hopes to take advantage of his team speed but knows his young pitchers will have to develop quickly.

At North Ridgeville, Matt

Ponting expects to improve on last year's disappointing 4-18 finish. Ponting returns all but one starter in the field and has nine pitchers that should give the Rangers depth on the mound. Seniors Jeremy Jackson, Cody Refert, Evan Truelson, Nate Waugeman, Zack Chrosniak, Andrew Naso, Cannon Kerr and Cameron Parham have taken their lumps the past couple years but are primed to breakout this season. Juniors Cade Riley, Ryan Marflake, Mike Richmond, Liam Sotak, Carson Schneller, Ryan Calvert, Nick Birt and Matt Steinmetz are also returning. Sophomores Nate Kisel, Trent Miller, Ryan Stefancin and Shane Swindig are also in the mix.

Ed Piazza is hoping a strong junior class can create a winning environment at Elyria, who finished 13-14 a year ago in the tough Greater Cleveland Conference. Seniors Devan Nail, a Kent State shortstop commit, Carter Hyde (Of headed to Ohio Christian University), Tristan Arno (Wellington 3b transfer), and Michael Benetto (P) all have experience. Juniors Hunter Osborne (1b), Kevin Reddinger (Inf), Cameron Brubaker (P, Inf) along with sophomores Mike Knapp (Of) and Evan Engle (Inf) give Piazza a strong nucleus.

Elyria Catholic expects to be as good as it was a year ago when it finished 20-4 and among the state's highest rated teams. Bruce Lisicky has kept the Panthers atop a very competitive in the Great Lakes Conference the past few seasons. Although losing one of the area's top pitchers in Andrew Abrahamowicz, who is now at Nebraska, Lisicky expects EC to be very good on the mound again this season led by junior Jack Laird. Junior Leighton Banjoff (P/Cf), who will join Abrahamow-



Lake Ridge's Cole Bramhall.

icz upon graduation, was second team All-Ohio last year. Senior Ryan Strittmather (SS), junior Jake Drwal (2b/Of/P), junior Grant McClure (C), sophomore Brendan Holley (3b/1b/P), junior Gavan Hrobat (C), senior Daniel Peacock (Of/C), junior Jack Walsh (Of/1b/P), and junior Nate Gawlik (P/Of).

Matt Loescher begins his 17th year guiding the Open Door Patriots, who were 6-10 overall a year ago. Loescher has 25 candidates out for the baseball team this spring. Junior southpaw Carter Wright (Cf/P), junior Caleb Daniel (Of), sophomore Josh Zaborowski (SS/P), senior Eliott Souers (Of) along with sophomores Alex Marcaly (Inf/P), Alex Lloyd (1b/P), Ryan Emilio (2b/C) and Caleb Sheets (Inf/P) are all returning lettermen.

Amherst (23-6) continues to be an area power under the guidance of Matt Rositano and should be considered one of the area's best again this year headed by senior left-hander Evan Shawver. Shawver was second team All-Ohio, first team SWC and first team Lorain County a year ago. He threw a 4-0 no-hitter at Midview in last year's District semifinals. In addition, seniors Ryan Glowacki (SS), Hunter Cassidy (C), Jack Faight (P), Anthony Berrios (P), Cameron Karnik (2b), Kyle Mantin (Of), Gabe Solak (Of), and Aaron Gonzalez (C) return for Rositano.

Justin Ramsey at Columbia (9-11) expects the Raiders to be competitive in the PAC this spring. Seniors Jacob Aniol (SS),

See **BASEBALL**, 9



Vermilion's Mason Montgomery

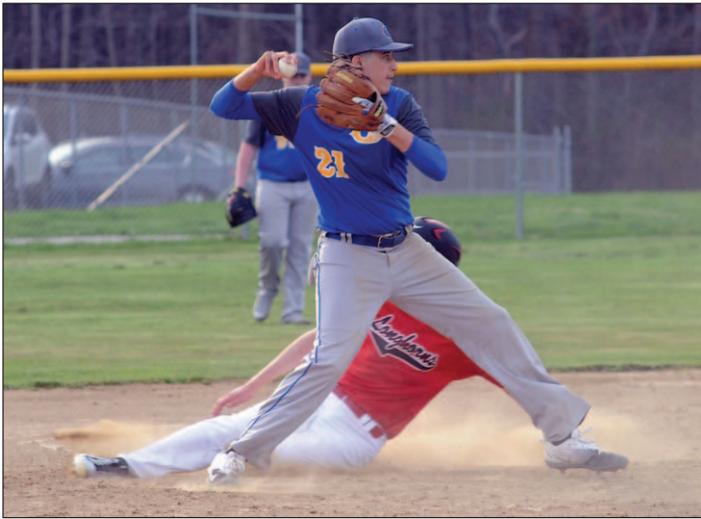
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Clearview's Evan Berrios.

## BASEBALL

From 8

Alec Paine (C) and Matt Caraballo (1b) along with junior Billy Turner (Of) and sophomore Carson Heidecker (3b) all return to the lineup.

Roger Sasack returns for his 16th year as head coach at Wellington (17-9) and 20th over-

all. Sasack, who has won 168 games in his coaching career, will rely on seniors Everett Kropff (C/Of, .316), Mason Wright P/Of, .310), Cole McLean (P, 2.70 ERA), Ben Bliss (P 6-1, 3.57 ERA) and Randy Sizer (P, 2-1 4.45 ERA). Ben Higgins returns at shortstop after missing most of last year after breaking both his arms on a freak play vs. Brookside. Justin Skinner

also is back after sustaining a football related injury in 2016. The Dukers will miss senior Trevor Arno, a middle-of-the-order hitter, who transferred to Elyria.

Several schools haven't had time to organize their rosters or outlook.

Avon (23-5) graduated a ton of talent off its district champion team from a year ago and with veteran coach Frank DeSmit announcing his retirement, the Eagles figure to have a new look this season under Craig Kirschner who has been busy evaluating and getting his team ready for the upcoming season.

Bill McCleave takes over at Brookside this year. Returning seniors include Devin Houdeshell (C), Owen Rozanc (P/2b), Stephen Williams (3b) and Christian Fields (SS/Of) along with junior Matt Thompson (1b/P).

Dennis Pihlblad, begins his ninth year at Clearview (10-11) with well over 100 career wins. Seniors Jaquez Moon, Justin Lilley and Evan Berrios along with junior Avery Cruz gives the Clippers some veteran leadership.

Dan Ransom promises to have

his Firelands (17-8) baseball team ready to go this year. Firelands has been in the district final the past two seasons but couldn't get past Padua either time. Seniors Evan Lacy (P/Inf.), Aaron Myers (P/Inf.), Colin Ransom (C/Inf.) and Calvin Stull (P/Inf.) and juniors Alex Brill (SS) and Austin Urban (2b) return to the Falcons' lineup this year. Gone is hard-throwing lefthander Trevor Damon.

It's almost hard to believe that Lorain's Brad Ternes is beginning his 16th year as head coach in Lorain. He started his career at Southview, replacing his legendary father Dan at the helm. Ternes will have a young, inexperienced team this year but expects to be competitive nonetheless. The Titans were 10-13 a year ago.

Midview (15-9) coach Todd Ratica will put a premium on good pitching and solid defense. Sophomore Jacob Landers is one of the returning starters for the Middies.

All in all, it should be an interesting baseball season in Lorain County.

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**THE CHRONICLE**  
TELEGRAM

## Lake Erie Crushers:

# Celebrating 10 incredible seasons

By: Andy "Bull" Barch

Sure, there have been some peaks and valleys along the way, but there's something to be said for a professional sports franchise to make it 10 years. That's the kind of benchmark that should certainly be celebrated, and this year the Lake Erie Crushers will do that, celebrating their 10th year in business.

Over the last 10 years, the Crushers have been to the playoffs four times, and they've reached the Frontier League Championship twice, with one Frontier League Title, which they won during their inaugural season back in 2009.

Both on and off the field, the Crushers have had some marquee moments that have helped to define just how successful they've been. Here's a list of the Top-10 moments in franchise history, dating back to the very beginning in 2009.

10-May 22, 2009, The First Game in Franchise History

The Crushers played their first game in franchise history on the road against the Washington Wild Things in Washington, Pa., which was the start of an 11-game road trip. It was done to make sure that there was enough time to finish construction on the new stadium, and assure that they would be ready for opening night. The Crushers won, 10-7, with four players knocking in multiple runs, including Drew Saylor who led the way with three RBI.

9-June 2, 2009, The First Home Game in Franchise History

The facility formerly known as All Pro Freight Stadium, or "The



KRISTIN BAUER / CHRONICLE

Jacqueline & Tom Kramig.

Freight" officially opened its doors for the first time in franchise history. In front of a sold out crowd of 5,058 fans, the Lake Erie Crushers defeated the Windy City Thunderbolts 5-2, on the strength of an incredible pitching performance from Paul Fagan. Fagan allowed just a pair of runs on six hits while fanning four to score the victory.

8-March 15, 2017, Purple Reign

After using the same logo and color scheme for the first eight years of the franchise's existence, the Crushers decided to change their logo and color scheme. The current logo, that of an angry grape, giving the impression of a grape crusher, replaced the older more traditional logo. The switch to purple received mixed reviews initially, but team executives state the new color scheme has cer-

tainly become more popular.

7-September 3, 2011, Laboring their way into the Post Season

The Crushers entered the final weekend of the season tied with the Traverse City Beach Bums for the final wild card spot. In order to punch their second ticket to the post season in just three years of existence, the Crushers needed to go on the road shorthanded to defeat the Beach Bums on their home turf. Naturally, they split the first two games of the series on Labor Day weekend, before winning the season finale against the Beach Bums, without the services of All-Star and future Frontier League Hall of Famer Andrew Davis, who missed most of the final weekend of the season with an infection in his foot. Lake Erie was able to seal the deal on the final day of the regular sea-

son, with a 3-1 victory over the Beach Bums. The Crushers would go on to play the Joliet Slammers in the first round of the playoffs.

5-July 13, 2011, The Stars Align  
The Lake Erie Crushers hosted the Frontier League All Star Game for the first, and to date, the only time in franchise history. The final result was a 4-2 victory for the Eastern Division over the West.

4-June 21, 2010, The Official Offer to LeBron James

The summer of 2010 was a very interesting one in the Greater Cleveland area, as most of us were on pins and needles waiting to see where LeBron James was going to end up. The Crushers earned all sorts of national media attention, when they decided to enter the madness as well, as they made an official offer of \$1,600 per month to LeBron. That was the maximum amount they were allowed to offer under Frontier League rules, and they celebrated a "Keep LeBron in CLE Night" at the ballpark as well. Anyone named LeBron was able to get in free of charge, they re-named the ballpark LeBron James Field and all Crusher players wore the No. 6, to honor LeBron's jersey switch from No. 23. LeBron of course took his talents to South Beach, which he announced a few weeks later.

4-TIE-July 10-September 1, 2011, Half-N-Half

Andrew Davis went wild offensively, turning in one of the greatest second half performances in the history of the Frontier League.

See **CRUSHERS**, 11

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# CRUSHERS

From 10

Over the final 48 games of the season, Davis hit .383 (71-for-185) while driving in 51 runs, and tallied 33 extra base hits, including 24 doubles during that stretch. He was the catalyst in the middle of a batting order on a team that made up a ton of ground in the second half to cement a playoff berth. This incredible run included 26 multi-hit games as well. He also had hitting streaks of 12 and 14 games in the final two months of that season. Davis finished the season with a .339 batting average, 12 homers, 87 RBI, and had 39 doubles as well. He was the runner up that year for league MVP.

4-TIE-August 8-18, 2013-Gone Streaking

The Crushers set a franchise record with a 10-game winning streak which began with a 5-1 victory over the Florence Freedom, and eventually came to an end with a 4-1 loss to the Normal Cornbelters. Not only did the Crushers set a new franchise record with 10 wins, but it also

capped a stretch where the Crushers won 17 of 18 games from July 31-August 18.

3-September 12, 2013, A trip to another Frontier League Championship Series

After falling behind two games to one in a best of five series against the Traverse City Beach Bums in the first round of the playoffs, the Crushers rallied with a 13-3 victory in Traverse City in game four to even the series, setting up their 3-2, rain soaked victory in game five to punch their second ticket to a Frontier League Championship series. The victory also marked their first Frontier League Eastern Divisional Title outright. The Crushers hit .278 in the series, and offensively, they were led by Max Casper, who hit .529 (9-for-17) and Daniel Bowman, who hit .526 (10-for-19) with three extra base hits.

2-March 2, 2016-Power Shift

After operating under the ownership of Steven Edelson/Avon Baseball LLC for the first seven years, the sale to Tom and Jacqueline Kramig and Blue Dog Baseball LLC became official. Tom and Jacqueline took over the day-to-day operations in October of



STEVE MANHEIM / CHRONICLE

Tyler Johnson holds the Championship trophy for fans.

2015, before the sale became final in March of 2016.

1-September 23, 2009, The Frontier League Champs

After falling behind 2-0 in the series, the Crushers won back-to-back games at home, defeating the River City Rascals, 3-1 and 4-1 in games 3 and 4 respectively, pushing the Championship series back to River City for the decisive fifth and final game. Game five

included 23 runs and 30 hits, and the Crushers used an incredible, 7-run fifth inning to push their way past the Rascals, and claim the 2009 Frontier League Championship in their first season. Five players hit safely multiple times, while the bottom of the order combined for eight hits and drove in six runs. Fagan tossed two innings in relief to score the victory.

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- Service Connected Disability
- Survivors Pension
- Aid & Attendance and Housebound Pension
- Ohio War Orphans Scholarship
- Notice of Disagreements & Appeals

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- H.S. Diploma for War-time Vets
- Upgrading Discharges
- Requests for Discharge (DD 214)

Benefits may also include but not limited to:

- Widows' Benefits • Burial Benefits
- Education Benefits • VA Home Loan

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# 2018 GAME SCHEDULE

CONTACT THE CRUSHERS  
FOR YOUR NEXT GROUP OUTING!

## MAY

S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
					SIL	SIL
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
SIL		11:05AM NOR	11:05AM NOR	11:05AM NOR	7:05 WSH	6:05 WSH
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
2:05 WSH			GAT	GAT	GAT	RC
		MAC	MAC	MAC	MAC	MAC
27	28	29	30	31		
RC		6:35 TC	6:35 TC	6:35 TC		

## JUNE

S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
					SCH	SCH
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
SCH		JOL	JOL	AM930 WEOL 7:05	7:05 SCH	6:05 SCH
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
2:05 SCH		NOR	NOR	NOR	7:05 RC	6:05 RC
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
2:05 RC		7:05 SCH	7:05 SCH	7:05 SCH	WC	LEGENDS GAME
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
WC		TC	TC	AM930 WEOL 7:05	TC	JOL

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SCH SCHAUMBURG BOOMERS  
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WC WINDY CITY THUNDER BOLTS  
WSH WASHINGTON WILD THINGS

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SIL SOUTHERN ILLINOIS MINERS

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WEOL  
70  
GAMES BROADCAST ON  
AM930 WEOL

## JULY

S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
JOL		7:05 EVN	7:05 EVN	7:05 EVN	7:05 FLO	6:05 FLO
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2:05 FLO	AM930 WEOL 70 GAME 2018		ALL-STAR BREAK O'FALLON, MO		WSH	WSH
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
WSH		AM930 WEOL 70 EVN	AM930 WEOL 70 EVN	AM930 WEOL 70 EVN	7:05 SIL	6:05 SIL
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
2:05 SIL		TC	TC	AM930 WEOL 70 TC	7:05 WC	6:05 WC
29	30	31				
2:05 WC		7:05 GAT				

## AUGUST / SEPT.

S	M	TU	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
			11:05AM GAT	7:05 GAT	FLO	FLO
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
FLO		WC	WC	WC	7:05 TC	6:05 TC
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
2:05 TC		7:05 JOL	7:05 JOL	7:05 JOL	SCH	SCH
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
SCH		6:35 JOL	6:35 JOL	6:35 JOL	WSH	BEER FESTIVAL
26	27	28	29	30	31	
2:05 WSH		6:35 WC	6:35 WC	6:35 WC	7:05 WSH	6:05 WSH

### SPECIAL EVENTS



MID-AMERICAN  
CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP  
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● CLEVELAND SPORTS  
LEGENDS GAME  
SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2018

● ALL-STAR BREAK IN O'FALLON, MO  
JULY 9-12, 2018

● CRUSHERS CRAFT BEER & WINE  
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SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2018

# 2018 Tribe: The goal remains the same

By: Jim Rosenhaus

As a new baseball season is upon us, the highly regarded Cleveland Indians are gearing up for another run at an elusive World Series title. It's been 70 years since the Indians won the Fall Classic. Last season had all the earmarks of the first title team since 1948. 102 regular season wins. A record 22 game winning streak. 5 All Stars! But it all came crashing down in a gut wrenching 5 game American League Division series loss to the New York Yankees. Does that defeat hamper enthusiasm for the new season?

"We still have 28 days, but I can't wait to get to spring training to get this thing started. I love our team!"

Those were the words of Indians manager Terry Francona at Tribe Fest in late January. Always optimistic, the two time AL Manager of the Year since joining the Tribe in 2013 admitted the early playoff exit was a punch in the gut. But despite some changes, Tito feels there is a lot to like about the 2018 edition of the Tribe.

"We have a core group that's been here going on 6 years now so that's good," said Francona. "We've lost some key guys, but we've made some additions too. No one should be pessimistic. This has been a good run of baseball and I don't see that changing. We have a good team in place."

When he says good run of baseball, he can stand by an Indians team that has the BEST record in the American League since 2013. When he says changes, he means the loss of first baseman Carlos Santana, outfielders Jay Bruce and Austin Jackson, relief pitchers



Bryan Shaw and Joe Smith and pitching Coach Mickey Callaway. Former Indians pitching Coach Carl Willis returns for a second stint, armed with 4 Cy Young Award winners under his guidance. Heading into spring training the Indians had signed Yonder Alonzo to take over Santana's spot at first base.

So where does the roster stand at the outset of a new season? Let's take a look.

## Around the Diamond

Starting pitching: Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco, Trevor Bauer, Mike Clevinger and Josh Tomlin all won 10 or more games a year ago. All are back in 2018 and that has been, and once again will be, the founda-

tion of the Tribe's success the past 5 years. The starters combined for 81 wins, most in MLB and posted the second lowest ERA of 3.52.

Kluber won his 2nd AL Cy Young award with an 18 win campaign and became the first Indians pitcher since Mike Garcia in 1949 to lead MLB in ERA at a remarkable 2.25. Two un Kluber like outings in the post season raised concerns about his health. Is he ready to go in 2018?

"I think most pitchers have some issues when they reach October based on innings pitched in the regular season," Kluber said shortly after winning the Cy Young award in November. "I tried to manage that but

the results just weren't there. I took a little time off to recover, and then returned to the gym to try and find ways to stay stronger through the end of the season."

Carrasco finished 18-6 with a 3.29 ERA, while Bauer had his breakout season, winning 17 games. Clevinger won 12 games in his first full major league season, while Tomlin was steady again at the back of the rotation. Heading into spring training, Danny Salazar bears watching. The flame throwing right-hander was hampered by elbow and shoulder issues a year ago, limited to 19 starts.

Relief pitching: The bullpen

See **INDIANS**, 14



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13

# INDIANS

From 13

posted an MLB best 2.89 ERA in 2017, led by closer Cody Allen's 30 saves. For Allen, it was his 3rd straight year of 30 or more saves. Andrew Miller also returns to the Tribe pen after a frustrating year due to a knee injury that limited his time in the 2nd half of the season. He still posted a ridiculous 95 strikeouts in just 62 innings to maintain his status as one of baseball's best relievers. The Indians pen did lose stand-out relief iron man Bryan Shaw and reliable Joe Smith. Heading into spring training, those roles will be filled by the likes of Dan Otero, Zach McAllister, Nick Goody and the remarkable Tyler Olson, who burst on the scene with 30 scoreless appearances a year ago.

Position player wise, the Indians return the bulk of a team that finished third in the American League in runs scored. In 2017, Cleveland showed a solid blend of power and speed and that should continue in 2018.

Catching: No team in baseball



Yan Gomes steps on home plate as teammates celebrate.

can boast as solid a catching combination as the Tribe. The tandem of Yan Gomes and Roberto Perez produced 22 HRs and 94 RBI between them, while

guiding the top pitching staff in the Major Leagues with tremendous game calling skills and the ability to control the running game. The Indians allowed just 50 stolen bases, the lowest total in baseball for the second consecutive year. Gomes received slightly more playing time last season, but Perez was Terry Francona's catcher of choice more often down the stretch. Will Perez or Gomes be the true number one backstop in 2018 or do they share the position again? Stay tuned in spring training.

1st base: The Indians front office had a gap to fill at first base heading following the departure of Carlos Santana. They moved swiftly and replaced him with AL All Star Yonder Alonzo. The 8 year major league veteran posted a career best 28 HR season in 2017 with the Athletics and Mariners and is ecstatic to be with the Tribe.

"When I was playing for other teams against the Indians, you always noticed a bond between the players and a win at all costs attitude," said Alonzo shortly after signing with Indians. "It was always 35 to 40 guys strong who are ready to play, help each other out and get after it."

Also seeing time at first base will be Edwin Encarnacion, who spent most of last season as a

hard hitting designated hitter. Steady Eddie did what he does best in his first season with the Tribe a year ago. He hammered 38 HR and 107 RBI, amazingly an average year for him over the past 6 seasons.

Shortstop: When you talk about the best young players in the game today, you can start and perhaps stop the argument with Francisco Lindor. Playing 2018 at just 24, the 2 time All Star is one of the best all-around shortstops in MLB. In 2017 he took a major step offensively, blasting 33 HR, driving in 89 and collecting 81 extra base hits.

Why the power surge:

"I'm a little stronger, sure," said Lindor late last season. "But really it's just learning my swing with experience. I know where I need a pitch to be to drive it for power and I've done a better job recognizing those pitches this season."

2nd and 3rd base: There is still some uncertainty regarding these two positions. One thing we know as of our publication date: Jose Ramirez will be playing one of the two positions and playing them at a high level. Another of the Indians 5 All Stars in 2017, Ramirez hit .318 with career highs of 29 HR and 83 RBI. The reason for the position

See **INDIANS**, 15



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# INDIANS

From 14

uncertainty is the status of Jason Kipnis. Hampered by a variety of injuries from the get go last year, the 2 time All Star just never got rolling. By seasons end, he was moved from second base to centerfield for the ALDS. However, manager Terry Francona did mention at Tribe Fest in January, that Kipnis would begin the year at second base, pending developments in spring training in the outfield.

Outfield: Those developments in the outfield revolve around left fielder Michael Brantley. What began as a promising, bound back season from injury in 2017 with an All Star game appearance, ended in frustration as Brantley missed most of the final two months with a right ankle injury that required post season surgery. If healthy, he will start the season in left field and everything else falls into place. If he is slow to return, perhaps Kipnis sees time in left. The rest of the outfield features youngster Bradley Zimmer, who

burst on the scene as a rookie and made highlight reel catches in centerfield a regular occurrence. At the plate, he finished his rookie season hitting .241 with 8 HR and 39 RBI plus 18 stolen bases. In rightfield, look for Lonnie Chisenhall to get the bulk of the playing time. He too was hampered by injuries in the second half of last year after compiling his best numbers over the season's first half. Rounding out the outfield depth are Brandon Guyer, who missed the bulk of the season with wrist injury that required surgery and perhaps veteran Melvin Upton, who was signed as a minor league free agent.

Outlook: The Indians will be the favorite to win the AL Central Division for a 3rd straight year in 2018, and deservedly so. The Tigers, White Sox and Royals are all in various stages of rebuilding. The Twins could pose a serious threat if their pitching continues to improve. One thing that is guaranteed, every season is a roller coaster ride of emotions and surprises and 2018 should be no different. Enjoy the ride!

# FROM THE DUGOUT

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4/11 vs Detroit	4p	7/24 vs Pittsburgh	5p
5/1 vs Texas	4p	8/7 vs Minnesota	5p
5/29 vs White Sox	4p	8/29 vs Minnesota	5p
6/5 vs Milwaukee	5p	9/4 vs Kansas City	5p
6/19 vs White Sox	5p	9/19 vs White Sox	5p

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# 2018 SEASON SCHEDULE

## MARCH/APRIL

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

## JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 4:05	2 8:15	3 8:15	4 8:15	5	6 7:10	7 4:10
DAK	KC	KC	KC		DAK	DAK
8 1:10	9 7:10	10 7:10	11 7:10	12 7:10	13 7:00	14 7:15
DAK	CIN	CIN	CIN	NYN	NYN	NYN
15 1:10	16	17	18	19	20 8:05	21 8:05
NYN	ALL-STAR BREAK IN WASHINGTON, D.C.				TEX	TEX
22 3:05	23 7:10	24 7:10	25 1:10	26	27 7:10	28 6:10
TEX	PIT	PIT	PIT		DET	DET
29 1:10	30 8:10	31 8:10				
DET	MIN	MIN				

## MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 6:10	2 1:10	3	4 7:05	5 1:05
		TEX	TEX		NYN	NYN
6 1:05	7	8 7:40	9 1:10	10	11 7:10	12 4:10
NYN		MIL	MIL		KC	KC
13 1:10	14 7:10	15 7:10	16 1:10	17	18 8:10	19 4:10
KC	DET	DET	DET		HOU	HOU
20 8:05	21	22 7:05	23 8:05	24 6:10	25 7:00	26 7:15
HOU		CHC	CHC	HOU	HOU	HOU
27 1:10	28 4:10	29 6:10	30 1:10	31 8:10		
HOU	CWS	CWS	CWS	MIN		

## AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 1:10	2	3 7:00	4 7:10
			MIN		LAA	LAA
5 1:10	6 7:10	7 7:10	8 7:10	9 1:10	10 8:10	11 7:10
LAA	MIN	MIN	MIN	MIN	CWS	CWS
12 2:10	13 7:10	14 7:10	15 7:10	16	17 7:10	18 4:05
CWS	CIN	CIN	CIN		BAL	BAL
19 1:10	20 7:10	21 7:10	22 7:10	23 1:05	24 8:15	25 7:15
BAL	BOS	BOS	BOS	BOS	KC	KC
26 2:15	27	28 7:10	29 7:10	30 1:10	31 7:10	
KC		MIN	MIN	MIN	TB	

## JUNE

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

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

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

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