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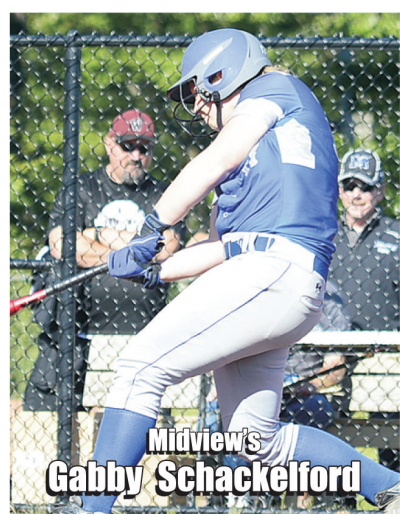
Volume 20 Issue 3  
Spring 2019

# FORECAST



Keystone's  
Madi Nunez

2018 Lorain County  
Co-Miss Softball



Midview's  
Gabby Schackelford

Amherst's  
Evan Shawver

2018 Lorain County  
Mr. Baseball

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# FORECAST

## 2019 Spring Preview

LORAIN COUNTY SOFTBALL PREVIEW .....pg. 3

LORAIN COUNTY BASEBALL PREVIEW .....pg. 7

LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS.....pg. 10

CLEVELAND INDIANS Preview.....pg. 13

### BASEBALL SCHEDULES

LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS.....pg. 12

CLEVELAND INDIANS.....pg. 17

### WEOL BROADCAST SCHEDULES

CLEVELAND CLINIC DIAMOND DUELS .....pg. 2

FROM THE DUGOUT .....pg. 15

### WEOL FORECAST MAGAZINE SPRING 2019 PREVIEW

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Volume 20 Issue 3

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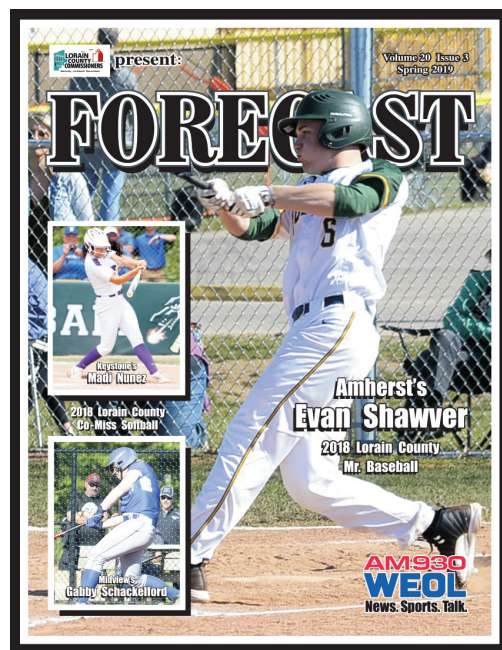
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### About the Cover:

**Amherst's Evan Shawver** The Comets ace was a batter's nightmare in 2019 earning the second straight Lorain County Mr. Baseball honor for an Amherst pitcher. On the mound, Shawver struck out 122 batters, gave up 22 hits and walked just 22 more. His earned run average was a 0.11 over 61 1/3 innings. Along with earning Lorain County Mr. Baseball honors, Shawver was also named the DI Player of the Year and was a first-team all-state pick by the Ohio High School Baseball Coaches Association. This season, Shawver is playing baseball for the University of Cincinnati.

**Keystone's Madi Nunez** earned Co-Lorain County Miss Softball honors with her tremendous play in the batter's box in 2018. During the season, the Wildcats slugger recorded 66 RBIs, a record for Lorain County and the third best performance in the state's history, while hitting .531 with seven doubles and 11 homeruns. During the Wildcats Sectional Championship game against Rocky River, Nunez made more history by hitting four home runs, tying an Ohio record and setting a new Lorain County mark.

**Midview's Gabby Shackelford** used her bat to earn a share of the 2018 Lorain County Miss Softball award. During the season Shackelford hit .537 with seven doubles, six home runs and 37 RBIs. In 2019 Shackelford will continue her playing career as member of the Cleveland State Vikings.





Welcome to FORECAST, the spring edition from AM 930 WEOL,

Remember that sub-zero weather in February? Forget about it! It's time to break out the bats, shine the shoes, and dust off homeplate.

Inside, you'll find everything you need to enjoy the game of 'ball'...from 'Diamond Duels' and previews, to schedules and other special features.

A big 'thank you' goes out to the advertisers who support FORECAST and our outstanding broadcasts, with another 'thank you' going out to the many local athletic directors, managers and coaches for their support.

Let's go...play ball!

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



# WEOL Baseball & Softball Diamond Duel Schedule

On AM930 and WEOL.com

## Baseball

4/8: <b>Columbia</b> @ <b>Clearview</b>	7pm
4/10: <b>Avon Lake</b> @ <b>Amherst</b>	7pm
4/11: <b>Avon</b> @ <b>North Ridgeville</b>	7pm
4/13: <b>Lorain</b> @ <b>Elyria</b>	2pm
4/15: <b>Buckeye</b> @ <b>Keystone</b>	7pm
4/18: <b>Bay</b> @ <b>Elyria Catholic</b>	7pm
4/20: <b>Keystone</b> @ <b>Lorain</b>	11am
4/22: <b>Avon Lake</b> @ <b>Avon</b>	7pm
4/29: <b>Keystone</b> @ <b>Firelands</b>	7pm
5/2: <b>Olmsted Falls</b> @ <b>Midview</b>	7pm
5/4: <b>Wellington</b> @ <b>Elyria Catholic</b>	11am

## Softball

4/13: <b>Elyria Catholic</b> vs <b>Midview</b>	9am
4/24: <b>Amherst</b> @ <b>Midview</b>	7pm
<b>4/27: Prebis Tournament</b>	
<b>Keystone</b> vs <b>Champion</b>	10am
<b>Amherst</b> vs <b>Mount Vernon</b>	12pm
<b>Game 3: TBA</b>	2pm

**WEOL**  
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# 2019 Lorain County High School Softball Preview



David Richard

Cats win the state title.

**By Todd Shapiro**

For the second year in a row Lorain County celebrated a state championship in softball in 2018 when **Keystone** defeated Beloit West Branch, 3-2, in 12 innings, to win the Division II state title and AM 930 WEOL was there.

The win marked the fourth state championship in the illustrious history of the Wildcats program.

Combined with Elyria's three state titles, the most recent of which came in 2017, that's seven times since 1999 that a Lorain County team brought home championship hardware.

The good news for local fans, especially those clad in purple and white, is that Keystone will have a good chance to add to those numbers and become the area's first back-to-back champion in 2019. Keystone was ranked No. 25 in the country in the preseason MaxPreps Top 50 poll.

The Wildcats return six starters from that 2018 Championship team. Pitcher Sydney Campbell and catcher Autumn Accord, both seniors who are coming off of first-team all-Ohio selections in their junior year Campbell, an

Oakland University commit, was 29-0 in the pitchers circle last season with a 0.20 ERA with 215 strikeouts. In her career Campbell is 45-3 with four saves and 0.59 ERA. Accord, who went 3-for-4 and reached base four times in the win over West Branch, hit an astounding .649 last season with seven home runs and 51 RBI's.

After a Perfect 34-0 record last year, coach Jim Piazza's team hopes to win its 13th Patriot Athletic Conference Stars Division championship in the final year of league's existence. Since 2006, Keystone has gone 183-6 in PAC play.

The Wildcats stiffest competition will come from **Wellington**, who was the only other team to win a Stars Division title, when it did so back in 2008.

The Dukes are coming off of a 19-8 season during which they were ranked as high as No. 9 in the state in Division III and advanced to the district finals. While Wellington will need to replace last year's Division III Lorain County Player of the Year, Hope Diermyer, it returns a pair of pitchers, senior Rianna Rosecrans (11-5) and sophomore Pay-

ton Regal (6-3), who had winning records a year ago.

**Firelands** is also hoping to be among the leaders in the Stars Division. The Falcons return eight letter winners including, junior Emily Stewart, who set a school record last season with 11 home runs, and junior Ashley Strauss, who hit .570 in 2018 and also put up big numbers in the pitchers circle where she recorded 206 strike outs. Despite not having any seniors on the roster, Firelands could be in position for one of its best season since it won its only district championship in 2013.

Behind a pair of all-PAC players, senior pitcher Mikayla Collins and sophomore catcher Ashlee Aliff, **Brookside** is hoping to rebound off of a disappointing 2018 season.

The Stripes Division should be a four-team race with defending champion **Columbia** leading the way with Oberlin, Clearview and Fairview nipping at its heels.

The Raiders went 16-9 last season and although Columbia had significant losses to graduation

See **SOFTBALL**, 4

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Steve Manheim

Maycee Godbolt celebrates a home run.

## SOFTBALL

From 3

including PAC co-MVP Allison Bouscher. The Raiders still return a pair of first-team all-conference performers in senior Ambriel Stair and junior Riley West. The only bad news for Columbia heading into the season is that it appears their road in the regional title has gotten tougher as they moved up to Division III, where they will have to compete against Wellington, Oberlin, Elyria Catholic and defending champion Independence at the Avon Lake district tournament.

Oberlin is expecting to do big things this season with honorable mention all-Ohio pitcher

Bryanna Rivas returning for her senior year. Rivas recorded 251 strikeouts last year and helped her own cause by hitting .562. With four returning seniors the Phoenix are hoping to close out some of the close games that eluded them in 2018.

**Elyria Catholic** finished the season at 14-11 last year with only two seniors on the roster. The Panthers are hoping that experience can lead them back to the top of the Great Lakes Conference.

**Elyria** coach Ken Fenik is beginning his 25th year at the school and what a quarter century of success it's been. The Pioneers have posted a 572-108 record with Fenik at the helm and, in addition to the three state titles, they have won 22 confer-

ence championships, in five different conferences Erie Shore, Lake Erie League, Pioneer Conference, Northeast Ohio Conference and Greater Cleveland Conference. Elyria has also won 16 district championships and made 11 appearances in the state tournament. Although the Pioneers will be young this year with just one senior, outfielder Damia Parks, they still return a lot of talent from last year's 26-5 team including junior Adrian Petrisko, who hit .533 as a sophomore, junior catcher Maycee Godbolt, who hit .464 with 39 RBIs in 2018 and sophomore Kerrigan Williams, who has already verbally committed to Howard.

It should be a wild race in the Southwestern Conference this year with Amherst (21-6) and

Midview (20-9), who split the league title last year with a 15-3 mark in the conference returning much of their top talent.

Coach Lacey Reichert's Comets have a pair of Division I commits who are both coming off of all-Ohio seasons in their junior year. Pitcher Madison O'Berg is headed to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and shortstop Kasey McGraw is going to play her college ball at Youngstown State. Both players are four-year starters for Amherst and are the last remaining pieces from the 2016 team that made history by winning the first regional championship in school history.

The **Middies** return four seniors led by honorable mention

See **SOFTBALL**, 5



# SOFTBALL

From 4

all-Ohio centerfielder Kaeli Evins. She will be joined in the outfield by seniors Angela O'Conner and Sara Liszeski. Liszeski proved she is a superstar in the classroom and not just on the ball field earlier this year when she scored a perfect 36 on her ACT test. Catcher Ella Leonard rounds out the senior quartet for Midview, which has high hopes of winning its first district title in nearly a decade.

**Avon**, with eight starters returning, is hoping it can also make a run to the top of the SWC standings. The Eagles, who were 16-9 a year ago, bring back sophomore pitcher Jessie Dean, who posted a 14-5 record when she was thrust into action in her freshman year.

**Avon Lake** is hoping it can have a breakout season with nine returning letter winners, led by sophomore Kate Kastelic, who batted .500 last season. If the Shoregals can get off to a quick start, they could be one of those teams that surprises the rest of the SWC.

**North Ridgeville** has one of the best young players in the league last year in Rachel Meese, now a sophomore, who hit .571 in her freshman season. With 10 returning letter winners the Rangers are hoping this is the year they can climb into the upper tier of the SWC.

**Lorain** doesn't always get the attention that some of Lorain County's softball powers receive but all the Titans do is quietly go out and win. The Titans went 16-5 in 2018 to clinch their third consecutive Lake Erie League title. Lorain had six first-team all-LEL players last season including



Steve Manheim

Columbia's Riley West.

conference Player of the Year Talia Harris, who was just a sophomore.

**Vermilion** was one of the youngest teams in the Sandusky Bay Conference last season, this year with 11 returning letter winners, veteran coach Bill Matthews is expecting to have a much improved team. Junior Gracie Frey hit .486 last season and despite battling injuries for most of the season senior Maggie Hoffman still managed to hit above .300.

It's going to be the beginning of a new era at **Open Door** as the Patriots play their first season in

the Lake Effect Conference. Open Door, Lorain County's only Division IV program, finished 3-14 last season but the losses didn't come from lack of offense as the Patriots scored 10 or more runs in seven of those losses.

Area fans should mark down the dates of the two biggest tournaments on the Lorain County softball calendar. On Friday April 12 and Saturday April 13, Elyria will host its annual Softball Classic at the Elyria Little League Fields.

The Prebis Memorial Tournament returns to LaGrange and Wellington on April 26-27. In

addition to eight Lorain County teams, the Prebis will also showcase eight teams that finished in the Top 10 in the respective divisions last season, including perennial state powers North Canton Hoover, Keystone, Elyria, Brecksville, Perrysburg and Anthony Wayne that advanced to the Division I Clyde regional tournament last spring.

AM 930 WEOL will be there again this season for select regular season games, then along the tournament trail and hopefully at Firestone Stadium on June 1 as another Lorain County team brings home a title.

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# 2019 High School baseball preview

By Tim Gebhardt

It was another bittersweet season of baseball in Lorain County last year. Two area teams (Amherst and Firelands) wound up in the "Sweet 16" a year ago but both feel they can be right back again this spring. Two others (Elyria Catholic and Lake Ridge) had high hopes entering last year's tournament but were eliminated in the district.

## Division I

**Amherst** (25-5) was the state's top-ranked team last year going into the tournament but was eliminated by Strongsville, 2-1, at Cuyahoga Community College regional semi-final. Amherst had shut-out St. Edward, 4-0, behind southpaw Evan Shawver to win the district but lost to Strongsville, 2-1, in the regional semi-finals. Shawver has graduated and will be playing at Cincinnati this spring. Matt Rositano (129-46 in 6 years) returns a solid team that could very well contend for a district and Southwestern Conference championship again this year. Seniors Jacob Lezon (1B .356), Kyle Dalzell (LHP 1.68 ERA), Dylan Eaton (RHP 1.54 ERA), T.J. Staton (OF .282), Connor Emch (DH .344) and Jake Hart (2B .214) return for the Comets. Juniors Justin Hritsko (2.86 ERA) and Eric Ritter (C .244) are returning lettermen as well. Rositano feels his team will battle Avon, Avon Lake and Olmsted Falls for the conference title.

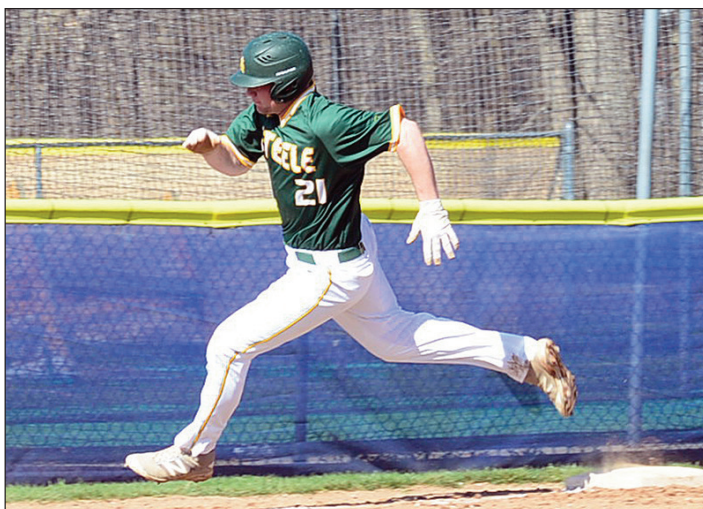
Kevin Marlow, with a 103-75 record, begins his eighth season at **Avon Lake** (16-8) and feels with

three of his top four starting pitchers returning, the Shoremen should be contenders for both the SWC and district championships this year. Jackson Armbricht (3-1, 1.72 ERA), Ryan Shinko (3-3, 1.31 ERA) and Dakota Dudgeon (5-0, 2.32 ERA) provide a formidable pitching core for Marlow. Sophomore pitcher Kevin McKinley has impressed Marlow as well. Aiden Jantz (1B, .260, 14 RBI) and Tanner Russell (OF, .296, 13 RBI) should lead the hitting attack.

**Avon** (13-13) last year under Craig Kirschner in his first season after taking over from veteran Frank DeSmit, will build around three-year letterman and Bowling Green commit Tanner Egger (C/INF) and three-year letterman Findlay commit Nate Brooks (P/INF). In addition, the Eagles will have Air Force football commit Jack Roesch (INF/P), a two-year letterman and Josh Rattay (INF/P), a three-year letterman. The Eagles have fourteen seniors on the squad.

Todd Ratice begins his fourth season at **Midview** (13-15). Ratice will have eight returning lettermen including Seth Sanders, Jacob Landers, Conner Bansek, Alex Schroeder, Anthony Pshock, Tyler Cooper, Matt Kardos and Andy Lewis. Ratice hasn't set his pitching rotation yet and realizes his team doesn't have a wealth of varsity experience but he expects the Middies to compete for the SWC championship.

**North Ridgeville** (9-16) returns 13 seniors and nine quality pitchers from last year. Matt Ponting (50-130 in seven seasons) figures his seniors are primed to lead the



Steve Manheim

Amherst's Jacob Lezon.

Rangers to a good season. Cade Riley (.410, 17 RBI, 20 SB) will patrol centerfield. Carson Schneller (P/INF) batted .347 with 12 RBI when he wasn't on the mound (3.80 ERA, 27 Ks in 25 innings). Mikey Richmond (3B, .310), Ryan Marflake (P/INF, .280, 11 RBI), Nick Birt (UTL, .310) and Ryan Calvert (P) are all expected to be leaders this year. Liam Sotak, who missed last year due to injury, returns to the outfield. All are seniors.

Ed Piazza begins his ninth season at **Elyria** (16-13). Piazza is 142-95 overall including his years at Columbia. The Pioneers play in the very rugged and deep Greater Cleveland Conference but Piazza appears to have the pitching and experience to compete for the league title. On the mound, lefty Hunter Osborne (2.17 ERA) along with right-handers Chris Willis

(2.51 ERA) and Hunter Olsen (2.60 ERA) return along with Cameron Brubaker, who missed a good deal of last year's season due to injury. Osborne will also see action at 1B (.313, 15 RBI) while Willis (OF), Olsen (INF) and Brubaker (UTL .302 16 RBI, 7 SB) will be available in the field as well. Junior Mike Knapp (OF/P) has two years of varsity experience under his belt while junior Evan Engle is a slick-fielding shortstop. Seniors Dylan Gill (LHP) and Kevin Reddinger (INF/P) are already committed to Ashland College and Mount Union respectively.

**Lorain** (14-9) last year under veteran Brad Ternes, now in his 17th year as a head coach in Lorain, expects to once again win the Lake Erie League championship. Ternes' team isn't loaded

See **BASEBALL**, 8

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Steve Manheim

North Ridgeville's Cade Riley.

## BASEBALL

From 7

with experience but does have potential. Seniors Rahman Ahmas (1B), Jalil Kender (P), Andres Ramos (C), Cory Thompson (P), Justin Winland (P/1B) and junior David Coleman (INF/P) are the most promising Titans. Ternes is also excited about the prospects of juniors Amaurion Mitchel (P), Tyrus Brewer (P/INF), Anthony Miller (OF), George Pena (P), Xavier Velazquez (C/INF) and sophomore Dominique Thompson (INF). Ternes is 233-166 as a head coach.

### Division II

One horrific inning cost Elyria Catholic (19-8) the Division III district final to Kirtland. The Hornets sent 15 batters to the plate in the fourth inning and scored 10 runs in route to a 15-7 upset of the Panthers. Coach Bruce Lisicky promises to turn that around this year although EC was

bumped up to D-II competition in baseball. Lisicky, 136-60 in seven seasons, is on the verge of becoming the winningest coach in EC history. With just four more wins, Lisicky will surpass legendary Andy Pavlenda as the All-time coaching leader. Pavlenda started the Elyria Catholic baseball program and is a member of the Elyria Sports Hall of Fame. The Panthers return Nebraska bound Leighton Banjoff (.519, 5 HR, 21 RBI, 26 SB) to centerfield and pitcher Jack Laird (7 wins, no earned runs allowed during the regular season) to the mound. Both were All-Ohio a year ago. Jack Walsh (3B/P .326), Jace Drwal (2B/P .284), Max Menner (P/INF .282), Cameron Engrish (OF .261), Brendan Holley (1B .280) and three-year starting catcher Grant McClure all return for the Panthers. All are seniors except Holley (junior).

Last year, Vermilion (18-8) saw its season end prematurely in the sectional opener, 2-0, against Clear Fork but veteran coach Jeff Keck, who is 433-285 in 31 years and 318-170 in 16 years at Vermilion, returns 11 lettermen this spring including a strong pitching staff. Senior Mason Montgomery, the leading scorer for the basketball team, returns to the mound where he was 4-0 with a pair of saves a year ago. Montgomery posted a 1.92 ERA and has 8 career pitching wins for Vermilion. He'll pitch and play shortstop for Bowling Green next year. Senior Ridge Clark (5-2, 1.02 ERA) struck out 59 hitters last year. Both seniors are outstanding infielders and hitters too. Montgomery batted .357 with 33 runs scored and 26 RBI a year ago. Clark is slated as Vermilion's lead-off hitter after batting .396

with 10 extra base hits and 11 stolen bases a year ago. Sophomore right-hander Jacob Krausher showed a lot of promise at the end of last year as just a freshman. Other returnees include senior 1B/OF Reese Miller (.297, 16 RBI), senior catcher Sterling Benko (.378, 16 stolen bases), senior OF Noah Cacciatori, senior 2B Sam Heron, senior DH/1B/C Ryan Habermehl, senior RHP Mark Morris, junior OF/2B James Matheson, sophomore 1B/3B Jacob Krausher (.299, 23 RBI) and sophomore OF Ethan Young.

Firelands (26-3) was the state's third ranked D-II school and won the Patriot Athletic Conference under veteran coach Dan Ransom. Firelands beat Padua to win the district but lost to state runner-up Wapakoneta in the regional semi-finals. It was Firelands first-ever trip to the "Sweet 16". The Falcons return seniors Alex Brill (SS) and Austin Urban (2b). Brill, an Ohio Dominican recruit, was All-Ohio and led the Falcons in batting average, home runs and stolen bases. Urban (3-0) and headed to Marietta, should be the Falcons ace on the mound. Seniors Riley Bayus (2B), Jake Newman (P), Adam Lacy, Matthew Kovach, and Gavin Markel are all expected to bring big things for the Falcons. Juniors Grant Price (3B), Jake Mullins (OF) and sophomore Aaron Urban (1B) also return. Ransom has returning veterans everywhere but catcher and designated hitter. Ransom said his team is hungry and chomping at the bit to get outside and play ball.

Keystone (17-10) brings back a good number of returning players for Bert Fitzgerald, who starts

his seventh season for the Wildcats. Fitzgerald is 115-52 in his career at Keystone but the district championship has eluded him the past couple years and he'd like to rectify that this season. Keystone will return pitchers Michael Mileski (RHP/3B 4-2, .335), Kevin Mealwitz (RHP/SS 4-0 .353) and Cameron Emerick (RHP/2B 4-0 .333). In addition, Matt Mealwitz, Kevin's twin brother, returns as well giving Keystone four four-year lettermen. Junior Nick Compton (OF .341) is a lefthander. Fitzgerald believes this group is the best he's had since the 2014 district champions but it needs to show it can win the big games on the schedule. Last year, the Wildcats lost twice in the regular season to Firelands by a combined three runs and lost the sectional final to Rocky River.

Clearview (18-6) is inexperienced coming into the season but coach Dennis Pihlblad, who is 130-87 in nine years, has maintained a competitive program. Senior infielder/pitcher Damacio Martinez (.400, 24 RBI) is one player Pihlblad can build on. Senior Avry Cruz (OF/INF), junior Kuly Petrov (OF/P), junior Kian Ortiz (C), sophomore Josiah Moon (1B/P), sophomore Julian Mendez (P/SS) and sophomore Tyler Green are others who should help the Clippers.

Brookside (10-10) always fields a competitive baseball team and second-year coach Bill McCleave is working hard to get the Cardinals prepared for the season. The Cardinals lost in the district semi-final a year ago to Padua but returns a number of lettermen off last year's team including three-year starter Matt Thompson.

See **BASEBALL**, 9



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# BASEBALL

From 8

son (1B/P) and two-year starter Connor Baughman (P). Other returning lettermen include Brandon Minn, Caleb Perry, Mike Weber and Devin Blotzer.

## Division III

Roger Sasack, 185-177 in 20 years overall begins his fifteenth year at **Wellington** (17-12) with seven returning lettermen. Senior Eric Suckow (C/P 15 RBI) is the lone senior on the team. Junior Ben Bliss (P/INF) was 4-4 with a 2.44 ERA last year. Junior outfielder Mason McClellan batted .354 with 18 stolen bases and 17 RBI. Ben Higgins, another junior, batted .325 with 14 steals and 25 RBI while junior Noah Diemyer was 2-0 with a 2.40 ERA. Junior DH Nick Laposky (.325) and sophomore pitcher/infielder Jacob Shaver (.255, 2.86 ERA) are also figured in Sasack's plans.

## Division IV

At **Columbia** (11-9), Dan

Durante begins his first year as the head coach of the Raiders after serving as an assistant for the past 10 years. Junior Carson Heidecker (RHP/C/1B) is the one player Durante expects to build around. Durante hopes his team can develop and compete in the final season of the Patriot Athletic Conference but couldn't elaborate without seeing his team in outside in practice.

**Lake Ridge** (24-3) lost to Cuyahoga Heights in the district semifinals after being top-seeded in D-IV. Michael Burke takes over the reins from Jason Dimacchia, who won 45 games over the past two years. Dimacchia didn't leave the cupboard bare for Burke. Returning are senior right-hander Neil Robertson (3.50 ERA, .410 batting) who is committed to attend Hiram College next year. Brayden Snezak is another pitching prospect (2.39 ERA last year) who can hit (.286). Matt South batted .365 a year ago and contributed on the mound. Other returning starters include John Harrington (Jr., .333) and Will

Cunningham (Sr. .286). Burke expects his team to hit and field very well.

**Open Door** (12-8) coach Matt Loescher (151-172 in 17 years) expects a good season from the Patriots. Sophomore James Green (SS/P) hit .538 with 29 stolen bases last year as a freshman. Juniors Alex Lloyd (1B/P, .508, 24 RBI) and Josh Zaborowski (SS/P, .480, 4-4, 40K in 33 innings) are expected to contribute. Sophomores Mitch Abram (OF/P, .407, 4-1 Pitching) and Bailey Loescher (C, .333, 15 SB) also return. Loescher feels his team's strengths are its speed and defense.

**Oberlin** (0-20) a year ago should be improved under first-year coach Mike Perry. Seniors Jackson Schaum (LHP), Hunter Clawson (SS/2B/P), Gavin Horning (P/C/3B), Sander Ferrazza (2B/SS/P), Logan Rivera (OF) have taken ownership of the Phoenix this year and all have shown improvement. Seniors Jackson Baker (OF), Adam Doll (OF), Devin Randleman (OF/INF)

and Cole Thompson (OF) also are expected to contribute. Underclassmen include Six-foot-7 Sam Thompson (Jr., P/1B), Thomas Elchert (Jr., 3B/OF), Quinn Krueck (Jr., OF/P), James Thomas (Jr. OF) and Dominic Clawson (Fr., 3B/1B/P) have impressed Perry as he gets his team ready.

## Outlook

Overall, it appears the Division I district tournament will be up for grabs among several teams. In D-II, if Elyria Catholic proves it can compete, don't be surprised if the Panthers make a deep post-season run but they'll face plenty of good competition right here in the county. Wellington is the lone D-III school but the Dukes have proven to be competitive over the years. In D-IV, any of the four schools could surprise but Columbia appears to be the strongest. Overall, it should be another exciting baseball season in Lorain County. Now if only Mother Nature would cooperate with some baseball-like weather!

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# Catching up with a Crusher Legend



Tom Mahl

Andrew Davis makes the throw from short stop during a 2011 game.

## By Andy "Bull" Barch

Long before the "Men of Crush" wore purple and became the "Grapest show on turf" in the greater Cleveland area, they had a player who was a perennial All-Star and eventually became a Frontier League Hall of Famer. He was a household name in Lorain County during the early years of the Crusher franchise and was a part of the team's only Frontier League Championship squad.

If you've followed the history of the Crushers in any form or fashion, you know by now I'm talking about infielder Andrew Davis. To date, he's the only Crusher currently in the Frontier League Hall of Fame.

His career began long before he suited up at the corner of I-90 and Route 611. He was originally recruited by a few NCAA-II and D-III schools, but when Kent State came calling to play baseball, it was an offer he could not turn down.

Davis went on to have a terrific career with the Golden Flashes, hitting .334, with an .867 OPS while driving in 186 runs and 88 extra base hits over his four-year college career. That was enough to get the San Francisco Giants to draft him in the 12th Round of the 2007 Major League Baseball Draft.

The Chillicothe, Ohio, native spent two years in the Giants' system, hitting .262, and drove in 102 runs with 55 extra base hits. He was also a terrific defender at third base, and helped the Augusta GreenJackets claim a 2008 South Atlantic League Championship.

His Crusher resume speaks for itself. In six seasons with the Crushers, Davis set every possible offensive record there was to be set. He finished his Crushers career with a .292 batting average, an .851 OPS, 71 homers, and 387 RBIs over 545 games.

I had the opportunity to catch up with Davis this winter. We talked about what he's been up to

since he retired, and went over some of his finest moments on and off the field in his time with the Crushers.

**BB=BULL BARCH, AD=ANDREW DAVIS**

**BB- Take us through the process behind how you became a Crusher, beginning with Spring Training in 2009 with the Giants, to the very first workout in Avon.**

**AD-** Me being a crusher started when the Giants made a huge mistake and released me in spring training of 2009. I went home and figured my career was over and started working for my cousin's lawn care and landscape business. I received a few calls from Frontier League Managers but did not answer since I didn't recognize the numbers. John Massarelli was the first one to call me the same day I was home from Arizona. Then Fran Riordon from Kalamazoo called and someone from Florence. I had previously spoken with Mazz in 2007 when I gradu-

ated college while he was with the Washington Wildthings. He wanted me to play if I didn't get drafted. So long story short I went with Mazz mainly because he had contacted me before and he was the first one to try to get a hold of me after being released. The factor of new stadium and all the stuff going on in Avon had a little influence but I really just wanted to keep playing baseball

**BB- When you were in High School, you had the opportunity to play football and baseball. Who recruited you and what kind of football player were you?**

**AD-** Kent state for baseball of course. I spoke with Muskingum for baseball and football as well as Baldwin Wallace and John Carroll for baseball. I also spoke with Ohio University briefly. The thing about it was that I wasn't very highly recruited I don't think.

**BB- Looking back on that first season with the Crushers back in 2009, what were some of the more memorable moments to you during that magical run?**

**AD-** The top one for me without a doubt is hitting the grand slam in the championship series to turn around the whole series. Another big one is just how close the whole team was. We were always together on and off the field. We were all coming together and pushing each other to be the best. Everyone worked harder than the next guy and we all wanted to win and hated to lose. I think a big part of that season as well was the stadium crown and atmosphere. Every single night was sold out it felt like. Home field advantage is a lot of the crowd's doing and that played a big part in our success too.

**BB- Do you believe the series against Joliet in the playoffs during the 2011 season would have been different if you had been healthy?**

**AD-** I definitely think it would've been different. It was so hard to watch it from the dugout. We were beat up all year though, and I think everyone was hurt at some point, but that's life. Overcoming adversity is probably the best thing I've learned from playing sports. But also in baseball you never know what is going to hap-

See **CRUSHERS**, 11



# CRUSHERS

From 10

pen!

**BB- The 2009 team aside, what were some of the other teams you played on in Avon that you thoroughly enjoyed both on and off the field?**

**AD- 2013 and 2014 were really fun. But I think it was mainly because I knew I was going to be done playing soon and really just tried to have more fun. I was doing more stuff on and off the field than in the past that I normally wouldn't.**

**BB- You got into coaching as soon as your career ended, heading to the Washington Wild Things, how would you describe that experience?**

**AD- I would say it was a good experience. I wish I would've had a chance to coach in Avon, and I'm still confused about what the hell happened there. It was hard to transition to the coaching role since I knew all the players before hand. However, I knew I had their respect and they knew I was actu-**

ally a good hitter so it was easy to talk to the guys about hitting. The hardest part was separating myself as a 'friend' or 'buddy' with some of the guys given our previous encounters and history. Overall I had a great time though. I wish I would've had a chance to go back for a second season.

**BB- Have you ever thought about getting back into it?**

**AD- I have thought about it but I'm not sure if I want to. I have a good job now that I like and if I did get back into coaching I would have to put some time in before I would be a manager I think so financially it just wouldn't work for me. But I would consider it if the opportunity was presented to me.**

**BB- What have you been up to since you finished your baseball career?**

**AD- Since baseball ended I have been a Budweiser sales rep in southern Ohio. This is the start of my fourth year. Other than that, just relaxing and seeing my family more than I used to.**

**BB- You became a Frontier League Hall of Famer last year,**



David Richard

Davis' grand slam against River City in Game 5 of the Championship Series.

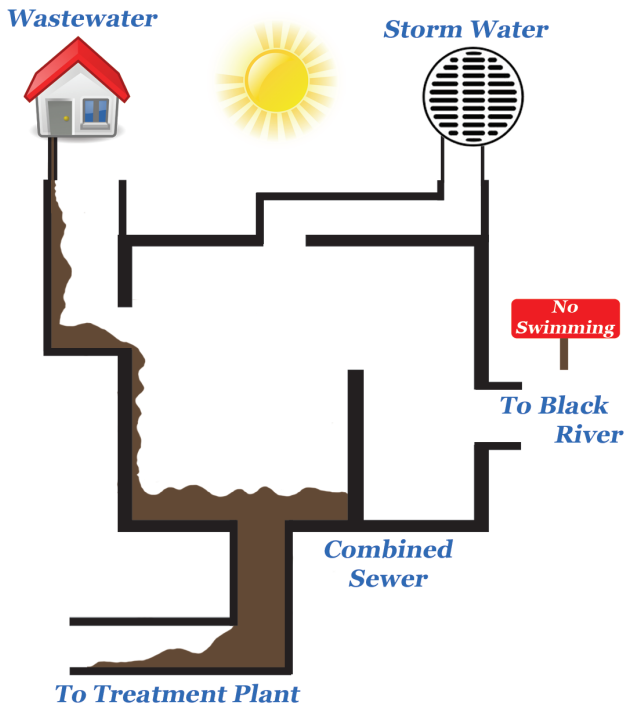
**what was that experience like?**

**AD- It was an awesome experience. I was surprised I had been**

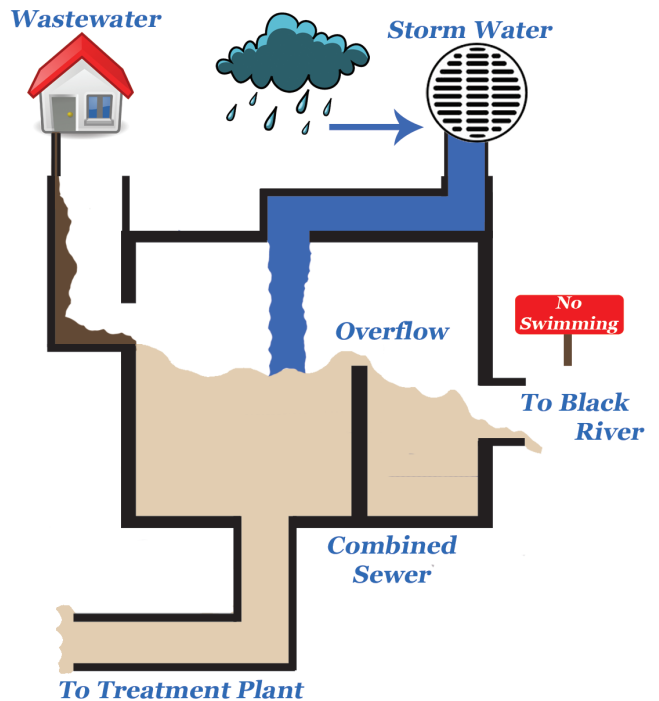
**out of the league long enough to be inducted but was very honored to be selected!**

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# 2019 SCHEDULE

## MAY

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

			1	2 WSH	3 WSH	4 EXHIBITION GAME/FAN FEST
5 FLO	6	7	8	9 FLO	10 WC 7:05 AM930 WEOL News, Sports, Talk.	11 WC 6:05
12 WC 2:05	13	14 SIL 11:05 AM	15 SIL 11:05 AM930 WEOL News, Sports, Talk.	16 SIL 11:05 AM	17 WSH	18 WSH
19 WSH	20	21 SCH	22 SCH	23 SCH	24 WC	25 WC
26 WC	27	28 SCH 6:35	29 SCH 6:35	30 SCH 6:35	31 JOL 7:05	

## JUNE

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

						1 JOL 6:05
2 JOL 2:05	3	4	5 RC	6 RC	7 SIL 7:05	8 SIL 6:05
9 SIL 2:05	10	11 JOL	12 JOL	13 JOL	14 FLO	15 FLO
16 FLO	17	18 GAT 7:05	19 GAT 7:05	20 GAT 7:05 AM930 WEOL News, Sports, Talk.	21 EVN 7:05	22 EVN 6:05
23 EVN 2:05	24	25 WSH	26 WSH	27 WSH	28 WC	29 LEGENDS GAME

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FLO FLORENCE FREEDOM  
GAT GATEWAY GRIZZLIES  
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## JULY

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

	1	2 WSH 7:05	3 WSH 7:05	4 WSH 7:05 AM930 WEOL News, Sports, Talk.	5 FLO	6 FLO
7	8	9	10	11	12 EVN	13 EVN
14 EVN	15	16 FLO 7:05	17 FLO 7:05	18 FLO 7:05	19 WSH 7:05	20 WSH 7:05
21 WSH 2:05	22	23 GAT	24 GAT	25 GAT	26 RC	27 BEER FEST
28 RC	29	30 EVN 7:05	31 EVN 11:05 AM930 WEOL News, Sports, Talk.			

## AUGUST/SEPT.

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

					1 EVN 7:05	2 RC 7:05	3 RC 6:05
4 RC 2:05	5	6 EVN	7 EVN	8 EVN	9 JOL 7:05	10 JOL 6:05	
11 JOL 2:05	12	13 GAT 7:05	14 GAT 7:05	15 GAT 7:05	16 SCH	17 SCH	
18 SCH	19	20 WC 6:35	21 WC 6:35	22 WC 6:35	23 SCH 7:05	24 SCH 6:05	
25 SCH 2:05	26	27	28	29	30 JOL	31 JOL	





# A look at the 2019 Indians

By: Andrew Gruman of the Cleveland Indians

Over the past six seasons few teams in baseball have been as consistently successful as the Cleveland Indians.

Cleveland carries the best winning percentage in the American League since 2013 (.562), including capturing three consecutive American League Central Division crowns. The run of success should continue in 2019, as the Tribe heads into the new campaign with one of the best starting rotations in baseball and two Most Valuable Player candidates in its lineup.

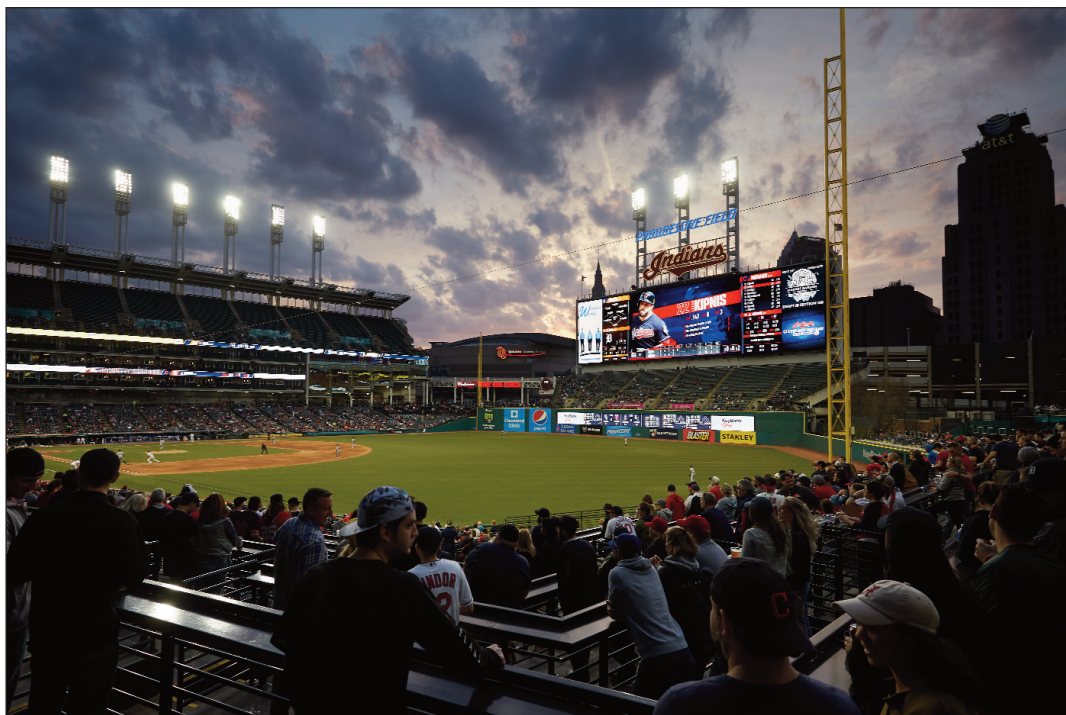
Here's a look around the diamond at what the roster could look like heading into the season.

**Starting pitching:** The strength of the Indians again will be its starting rotation, as Cleveland returns the entirety of its staff from a year ago.

Cleveland starters led the Majors in innings pitched at 993.2, 38.1 innings more than any other team, while finishing second in strikeouts at 1,066 and third in ERA at 3.39. In 2018, Carlos Carrasco (231), Corey Kluber (222), Trevor Bauer (221) and Mike Clevinger (207) all recorded 200 or more strikeouts, leaving the Indians as the first team in Major League history to have four pitchers reach that plateau.

Clevinger and Kluber became just the third duo in franchise history to reach 200 innings and 200 strikeouts, joining Sam McDowell and Luis Tiant in 1967 and 1968 and Carrasco and Kluber in 2017.

"We know that our starting



Andrew Mascharka | Cleveland Indians

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pitching, that's where it starts," Indians manager Terry Francona said.

Most likely to join the prolific foursome is Shane Bieber, who went 11-5 with a 4.55 ERA with 118 strikeouts in 114.2 innings over 20 appearances (19 starts) in his rookie campaign.

**Relief pitching:** The bullpen will have a new look in 2019, as longtime stalwarts Cody Allen and Andrew Miller left in free agency.

Assuming closer duties will be Brad Hand, who was acquired by the Indians from San Diego last

July. The two-time All-Star posted a 2.75 ERA with 32 saves in 69 appearances between the Padres and Indians last season. The Tribe acquired Adam Cimber in the same trade and expect the right-hander to play a big role after the 28-year-old pitched in 70 games with a 3.42 ERA for San Diego and Cleveland as a rookie.

Cleveland re-signed left-hander Oliver Perez in January, adding the veteran back into its bullpen mix. The 37-year-old led the Indians in holds with 15 last season after signing with the team in June. Perez posted a 1.39 ERA in

51 appearances, recording scoreless outings in 46 games while carrying the best inherited runs scored percentage (9.3, 4-of-43) in the American League.

Competition to round out the bullpen will take place in spring training with right-handers Dan Otero, Neil Ramirez, Nick Goody, Nick Wittgren, Jon Edwards, Adam Plutko, Jeffry Rodriguez, Ben Taylor, and left-hander Tyler Olson battling for roster spots.

"We're going to have some really tough decisions to make

See **INDIANS**, 14



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# INDIANS

From 13

because there are some guys out there that can pitch a little bit," Francona said. "They may not be household names yet, but that doesn't mean they can't help us win."

**Catching:** The Indians made a pair of offseason trades that impacted the catching position, sending Yan Gomes to Washington before acquiring Kevin Plawecki from the New York Mets.

Roberto Perez returns and is expected to lead the Indians pitching staff for the first time in his career. Tribe pitchers recorded a 3.76 ERA and a 35-20 record in his 55 starts behind the plate in 2018. "We all feel like with more regular at-bats he's going to hit better," Francona said. "If he doesn't hit like (Yan) Gomes, we still believe in the way he runs the game. He's kind of a standout in that area. That's first and foremost for a catcher."

A former first-round pick, Plawecki played in a career-high 79 games for the Mets last season, hitting .210 with career highs in home runs (seven) and RBI (30).



Andrew Mascharka | Cleveland Indians

## Oliver Perez

Eric Haase made his Major League debut in 2018 after hitting 20 home runs with 71 RBI for Triple-A Columbus.

**First base:** Another position that will have a new look in 2019

is first base, where a newcomer and a familiar face are expected to replace Yonder Alonso, who was traded to the Chicago White Sox in December.

Carlos Santana is back with the Tribe after a year in Philadelphia where he hit .229 with 24 home runs and 86 RBI with 110 walks in 679 plate appearances, playing in a career-high 161 of the Phillies' 162 games. The Indians reacquired Santana in a three-team deal that sent Yandy Diaz to Tampa Bay and Edwin Encarnacion to Seattle. Also acquired by Cleveland in the deal was 23-year-old Jake Bauers.

Bauers, who hit 11 home runs with 48 RBI in 96 games as a rookie with the Rays, will provide the Tribe versatility with an ability to play first base or a corner outfield spot.

**Second base:** After shifting to the outfield following the Josh Donaldson trade last August, Jason Kipnis will shift back to second base. Kipnis got off to a slow start in 2018 but rebounded to hit .260 with 40 runs, 14 doubles, 14 home runs and 50 RBI over his final 83 games.

**Shortstop:** Francisco Lindor put forth a historic season in 2018, becoming the first shortstop in Major League history with at least 35 home runs, 40 doubles, and 20 stolen bases. The 25-year-old set

career highs in hits, runs, home runs, RBI, stolen bases, and walks and was named an American League All-Star for the third consecutive season. Lindor's status for Opening Day is unknown after he suffered a calf strain in early February that was expected to keep him out seven-to-nine weeks.

**Third base:** Jose Ramirez will shift back to third base after ending last season at second base following the Donaldson trade. Having emerged as one of the best players in the game, Ramirez finished third in the American League Most Valuable Player voting for the second straight year after hitting .270 with 39 home runs and 105 RBI. Ramirez added 34 stolen bases to join Grady Sizemore (2008) and Joe Carter (1987) as the only three Indians players with at least 30 home runs and 30 stolen bases in the same season. His 39 home runs set a franchise record for a switch-hitter.

**Outfield:** The Indians go into the season with numerous options in the outfield with returners Tyler Naquin, Greg Allen, and Leonys Martin along with offseason acquisition Jordan Luplow. Bauers and Santana could also see time in the outfield, which will be boosted at some



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Corey Kluber

Andrew Mascharka | Cleveland Indians

## INDIANS

From 14

point with the return of Bradley Zimmer. Zimmer was expected to be restricted at the start of spring training while continuing to

recover from a July surgery on his right shoulder to repair his labrum.

Acquired from the Tigers at last year's trade deadline, Martin

played just six games for the Tribe before a bacterial blood infection adversely affected the functionality of many of his internal organs and ended his season. Martin is fully recovered and will factor into the center field mix with Allen, who hit .257 with 21 stolen bases in 91 games last season.

Naquin was Cleveland's Opening Day left fielder in 2018 but was limited by two stints on the disabled list, including a stress reaction in his right hip that required season-ending surgery on August 2.

The Indians added Luplow to their outfield mix in a November trade with the Pittsburgh Pirates. Luplow has appeared in 64 games for Pittsburgh over the past two seasons, playing all three outfield spots. The 25-year-old hit .287 with eight home runs and 49 RBI for Triple-A Indianapolis in 2018.

"We probably had more turnover this year than we have had since I've been here," Francona said. "It actually gets a little exciting. You start talking to these guys in the one-on-ones, and you start thinking how we are going to pull this together team-wise. It gets kind of exciting."



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5/7 vs White Sox	4p	8/6 vs Texas	5p
5/21 vs Oakland	4p	8/13 vs Boston	5p
6/5 vs Minnesota	5p	9/4 vs White Sox	5p
6/25 vs Kansas City	5p	9/18 vs Detroit	5p

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# 2019 SEASON SCHEDULE

## MARCH/APRIL

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

## JULY

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

## MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 ● 7:10 MIA	2	3 ● 7:10 SEA	4 ● 4:10 SEA
5 ● 1:10 SEA	6 ● 6:10 CWS	7 ● 6:10 CWS	8 ● 6:10 CWS	9 ● 1:10 CWS	10 ● 9:37 OAK	11 ● 4:05 OAK
12 ● 4:07 OAK	13 ● 8:10 CWS	14 ● 2:10 CWS	15	16 ● 6:10 BAL	17 ● 7:10 BAL	18 ● 4:10 BAL
19 ● 1:10 BAL	20 ● 6:10 OAK	21 ● 6:10 OAK	22 ● 1:10 OAK	23 ● 6:10 TB	24 ● 7:10 TB	25 ● 4:10 TB
26 ● 1:10 TB	27 ● 4:05 BOS	28 ● 7:10 BOS	29 ● 7:10 BOS	30 ● 8:10 CWS	31 ● 8:10 CWS	

## AUGUST

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

## JUNE

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

## SEPTEMBER

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

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