

Sports

Baseball team finds swing, sits atop league standings

■ JON HELMKAMP

co-Sports Editor

Loaded with talented players, the Varsity Baseball Team has only improved with experience, and the coaches were salivating at the thought of what this team could accomplish.

It wasn't a goal for them to win the Three Rivers League title. In their minds, that was a given. It wasn't a goal for them to win Districts; that was a given too.

Getting off to a slow start, dropping two of their first four games, the players regrouped beating Clackamas, a tough team, in a close game by a score of 3-2 on April 4.

"That game was a hard fought, come from behind win. We expect a lot more games like that this year in the Three Rivers League," Mike Lord, Varsity head coach, said.

The following day, coming off the Clackamas win that moved them to 2-1 in league, they completely destroyed Lakeridge, 22-1. Ryan Barnes, sophomore, and Colby Martzall, senior, each had six

runs batted in, while Barnes and Mitch Bailey, senior, each scored a home run.

"Their pitchers had a lot of trouble throwing strikes," Reed Nicholson, junior, said.

After a solid offensive display against a weak Lakeridge team, the Lions faced off against Milwaukie at home. After battling back and forth for four innings in the cold and the rain, the bats came alive for West Linn. Bailey, Martzall, Barnes and Justin Monahan, junior, each had home runs, leading the Lions to a nine run inning.

The second the ball left Martzall's bat on his home run, the team jumped up off the bench to watch it soar, yelling and cheering knowing immediately that this hit was long gone. Blasted to left field with two men on base, it hit the back of the school three quarters of the way up the wall. If it was 10' to the left, it would have crashed through one of the windows of the auxiliary gym. The first base coach for Milwaukie was heard saying that he thought it was going to land on top of

the school.

Martzall went 3-4 on the day, hitting a homer, a double and a single, scoring three runs and earning two RBI's.

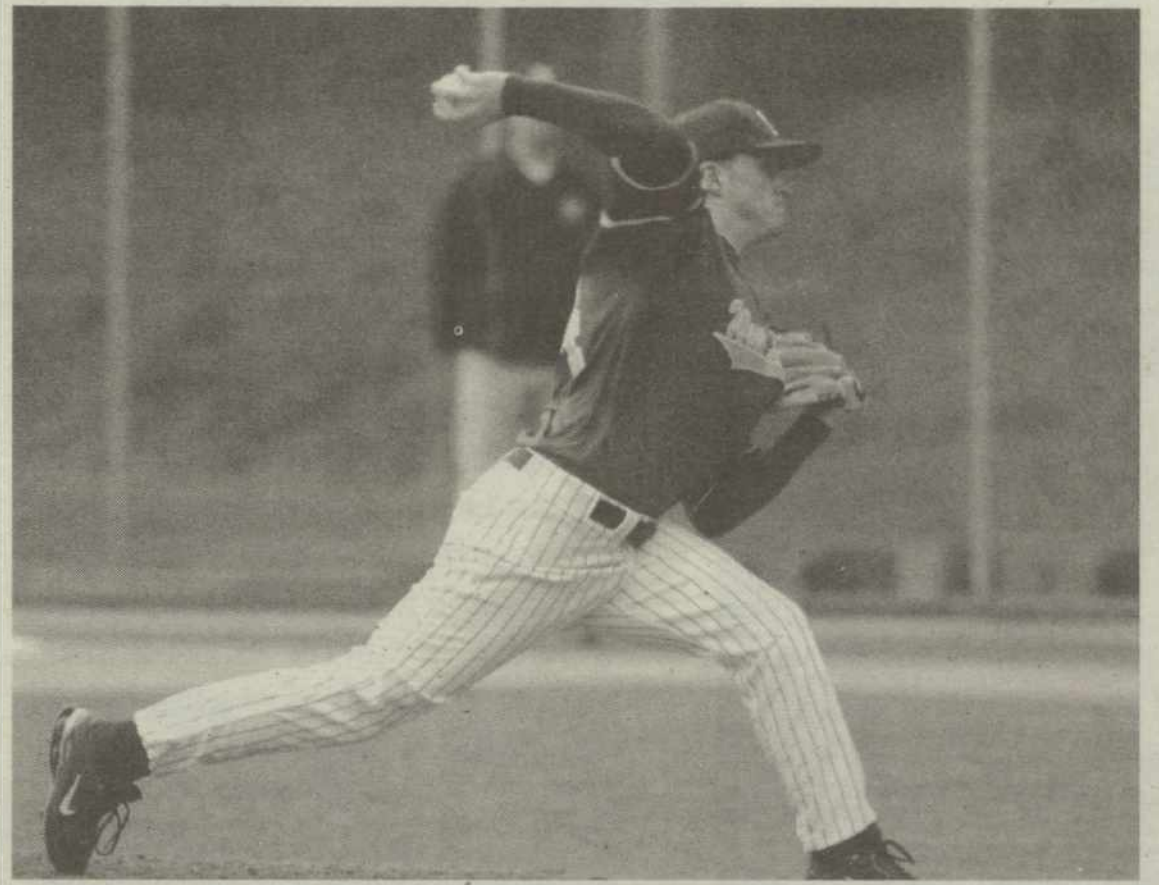
Playing through the bad weather, West Linn took the game 13-2, moving them to 4-1 in the league, tying them for first place in the TRL with the Putnam Kingsmen.

On April 11, the Lions played at Oregon City, battling not only their opponents, but the weather as well for a spot at the top of the leader board.

The number five seems to be a lucky number for West Linn, considering they put up six runs in the fifth inning against Oregon City and nine runs in the fifth inning of their match up with Milwaukie, led by number five Martzall. Oregon City, prior to Wednesday's game, was in third place in the TRL with a 3-1 record.

"We're sitting in a really good spot right now," Nicholson said.

West Linn is sitting



Kyle Kraus, junior, delivers a pitch in his start against Lake Oswego on March 22. The Lions won 10-3, earning their first home win of the season.

Photo by Jon Helmkamp

comfortably on a lead in the TRL, and their bats are only getting hotter. Martzall is batting .391, has scored 17 runs and has 16 RBIs, while Barnes is batting .420 with 17 runs and 16 RBIs. In their

last four games, the team has put up double digit hits.

West Linn will play the Putnam Kingsmen at home today, Lake Oswego at home on Wednesday, and at Clackamas on Friday.

Debs improve to sixth in State

■ KELSEY SCHRADER

Page Editor

For the first time in three years, West Linn Debutantes had a shot at the top five at the State competition in March. With four third place trophies and one first place trophy under their belt at past competitions, the Debs were ready to take home some well-earned hardware.

Up until State, the Debs had been ranked in the top three for numerous weeks, with only Parkrose and Clackamas above them. Unfortunately, the Debutantes did not get a top five trophy. So why aren't they complaining?

The Debs took sixth place out of 11 teams, nearly tying with the fifth place team, Glencoe. In past competitions this year, West Linn and Glencoe had been neck and neck, with West Linn prevailing most of the time.

Unfortunately, at the last competition at Liberty High School, the Debutantes received a violation for their "booty shorts" showing too much junk in the trunk. Five points were docked from their score of 80.6, which brought them down to a 75.6. Although they still earned third place at the Liberty competition, their overall score dropped them down to fifth place in the overall team ranking.

Jenny Worcester, senior and team captain, expressed her thoughts about this year's season and placing sixth at State.

"I'm actually not at all disappointed because I feel that we all worked so hard this year that we didn't even need a trophy to validate how much we all improved," Worcester said. "The season itself was just as good as placing at State."

According to Worcester, this year was a really special year. "I'm actually not at all sure [why]. I think it might have been the unity throughout our team and the fact that we all were willing to work that much harder and push ourselves that much more to come out with such a good product."

This year, the Deb's theme was simplistic, with a plain black floor and white-outlined boxes as a background. They danced to "Enjoy the Silence" by Depeche Mode with minimal props: hot pink flags and turquoise fabric. Next year's theme is a mystery, as always, and the team is excited to start another year, yet happy to finally have a break from the stress.

Tryouts for next year's team are May 7-9 and 11. This will include across-the-floors and a short routine performed for the coaches. The coaches and returning members are looking forward to a great season next year and are optimistic about placing next year.

"I think we all know we can do it," Kelsey Bradshaw, freshman, said. "This year we learned we are capable, and next year we're just going to kick butt and be amazing."

Rugby teams take on role as favorites for State

■ MAX HAYS

Page Editor

This year's Rugby season has started with all four teams, two boys teams and two girls teams, playing spirited, hard-nosed rugby in hopes of making the State finals.

Both girls' teams are playing well in their respective leagues; the Gold Team is currently in third in the North Division with a 1-2-1 record, and the Green Team is currently sitting pretty atop the South Division with an undefeated 4-0-0 record.

On the boys' side of things, the West Linn A team is in third place and racing for first place in the North/East Division. The boys' B Team has a flexible roster so that players can go back and forth between the B and A teams but this has resulted in a 0-5-1 record because they have been forced to forfeit all games.

"They are a great bunch of players that consistently give everything that they have out on the pitch," Tim Medearis, boys head coach said.

The boys' A Team has started the season off very strong, according to Medearis. This year's team is the most technical, skilled teams that he has ever

coached.

"The only teams that we have lost to were the number one and two teams (Eastside and Vancouver) from last year and I feel that we can beat both teams the next time we meet during the State playoffs," Medearis said.

Even though the team is having great success this year, Medearis still thinks that there is room for improvement because they are making some fundamental mistakes. They have returned to the basics of ball handling, tackling and team support. The team is currently sitting in third place entering the State finals and will probably face Ashland in the first round of the playoffs.

"I feel that we have a great chance to move quickly up the bracket and face Eastside and Vancouver again. Right now we need to hold together, limit injuries and stick to our game plan," Medearis said.

On the girls side of the ball, Ernie Espinoza, head coach, thinks that the team has a good chance of winning State and possibly competing at Nationals in Milwaukee, Wisc. in May. He believes that the team is doing a great job coming out and competing every game and trying to improve from week to week.



Micheal Gorgone, senior, and Robbie Brady, sophomore, lift Jason Comfort, senior, into the air to go for a loose ball. Both teams are heading to State.

Photo courtesy of Karri Garfield

"We just need to keep improving every week and continue to work on the fundamentals and eliminating the little mistakes. That way we can continue to play well and compete," Espinoza said.

Even though the team is playing very well, there is always room for improvement in the fundamentals of rugby like communication and ball handling according to Espinoza.

Boys and girls State quarterfinals began April 21, but results were not available