

Sports

Boys look forward to a strong season

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

The Illinois Valley High School boys' baseball season is set to have their first game March 14 versus Gold Beach High School and the team is, as reported by coach Jesse Dugas, "extremely antsy to go out there and work at 100 percent and live up to their potential." Dugas has been coaching the boys' baseball team for four years and also owns a local computer repair and website design business. As it stands right now there are 22 boys in the program which is enough

to have two full teams—one varsity and one JV.

Experience wise the varsity team is in a great position with four seniors, three juniors and three sophomores. All but one of the varsity players are returning from the previous season. The JV team is comprised mostly of freshmen for a total of nine. Speaking about any changes to their coaching practices it was said by Dugas that they've done their best to build the program over the last couple of years and that they're continuously evolving their methods to meet new challenges. "We like to

play aggressively, offensively," Dugas said of their tactics, "We pride ourselves on our pitching."

However, Dugas also mentioned that how the season goes is up to the boys themselves. "They've been working really hard. There's definitely the potential to do some damage but our goals are the next game," Dugas said, making a point to emphasize their one-step-at-a-time philosophy, "We're not looking any further than that."

One point of interest brought up by Dugas was that Rock'N Soil, Rogue Truck

Body and Wheels A' Turnin all donated money to the program this year. The Illinois Valley High School league is planning on putting the money toward repairing the field which Dugas said was, "very much needed," and that, "When it quits raining our field will be the nicest field that we play on this year which is a pretty prideful thing for the boys." However, they will be spending some of the money on equipment for the JV team but, in the words of Dugas, "for the most part they're geared up and ready to go."

Dugas said of the opposition that St. Mary's

is going to be their biggest challenge of the season. Reportedly, they made it deep into the playoffs last year and they returned 90 percent of their team. However, Dugas made a confident addition by saying that, "I feel that we can compete with them. I feel that we can compete with anybody."

In a closing remark Dugas stated that they always pack the bleachers and that hundreds of people like to come out and watch the games with this year likely being no exception. "Come out and watch the boys play," Dugas urged, "they should do well this year."

Ladies hit the diamond, short on bats

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The Illinois Valley High School Girls' softball league is getting ready to have their first game which is scheduled for March 15 against Ashland High School. Beth Boatman, a life-long resident of the area, has been coaching the softball team for two seasons and before that she had been coaching the Illinois Valley Little League for around five years. All together, Boatman said that there are 25 girls on the teams this year and they are split into two teams—JV with 13 players and varsity with 12.

"We're super excited about it. Having 25 girls in a program," Boatman said. "I.V. hasn't had a JV program in

a handful of years." Last year Boatman only had 16 players because there weren't enough girls wanting to play softball.

Overall, Boatman said that the teams are quite experienced, though young with only four seniors, three juniors and one sophomore in the program. However, most of the freshmen on the team have at least two years' experience with some having up to five. Also, some of the freshmen came from the little league which made it all the way up to the Oregon state competition last season.

"I think we're looking pretty good, we're pretty aggressive right out of the gate," Boatman said. Over the off-season Boatman attended some coaching

clinics to hone her methods as a coach so that she can give the girls the best training and preparation possible. "It's looking like we're going to compete more than we did last year." Boatman said of her team's chances, "I think we only ended up winning three games." So far the Girls' softball team has 25 games scheduled for the season.

"Cascade was pretty hard last year and Lakeview was too," Boatman said of their more noteworthy opponents, "It would be nice to have a close game with them and give them some competition." Despite these intimidating schools, the team is eager to play and a new coach for the JV team will be able to prove their mettle. "We're pretty excited about this year," Boatman said before

continuing, "and being able to give the opposition a run for their money."

However, the theft of equipment by an inconsiderate burglar posed somewhat of an issue for the current season. "We're looking to get a couple more bats because our shed was broken into about a month ago," Boatman said, "they broke our lock and took some stuff so I'm slowly replacing that... Luckily we just bought new catching gear and they didn't even touch that. That was a plus since I literally had just bought it the day before." All of this notwithstanding, Boatman said that the girls have most of the equipment they need to play and will be able to hone and test their skills over the coming months.



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