

Pioneer glovemen outlast Reynolds

by MARK FLOYD

It's only one week into the season, but the Sandy High baseball team is already on target.

Coach Curtis Heath predicted in preseason that his club could hit the .500 mark with consistent play, quite an improvement over the 2-12 mark Sandy had in league play last year.

Of course, this is preseason and, after three games, Sandy doesn't quite have the rest of its wins in the bag. But in compiling a 1-1-1 record, the Pioneers have proven to their coaches and fans that they are packed with potential.

Sandy won its opening game against Reynolds, Thursday, holding on to beat the Lancers 4-3 on the Pioneers' field. Sandy opened up a 4-0 lead, then gave up three counters in the middle innings. But the Pioneer defense, despite its inexperience, tightened and shut the Lancers down in the late frames.

The Pioneers picked up a couple of runs in the first as Dave Kirkland walked and advanced on a single by Keith Powell. Sophomore catcher Mo Contreras then belted a triple to score Kirkland, but Powell was called out for missing third base. Contreras then scored on a John Martin single.

Sandy also picked up a pair of runs in the second. Troy Bangs started the rally with a single. Randy Martin singled and the runners advanced on a fielder's choice. Second baseman Mitch Paola then sent them both home with a solid single.

That gave Sandy a 4-0 lead and it looked like a runaway. But, "after that, our offense just didn't do much," Heath said.

Meanwhile, John Martin gave up a couple of runs on the mound and retired in favor of Randy Martin. The latter pitched the final three innings, giving up one run and picking up the save. John Martin got the win.

"I was pleased with that as a first game," Heath said. "We hadn't beaten Reynolds since I've been there and it's especially good to win the first game. It should give the kids confidence in close games."

"Last year we would have lost that ball game."

Sandy traveled to Lake Oswego, Tuesday, for a doubleheader with the traditionally tough Lakers and gained a split of sorts. Lake Oswego won the first game 12-8, then the teams tied 10-10 in the second before the game was called



Sandy's Dave Kirkland unleashes a sprint to first but gets nipped by the Reynold's throw.

Photo by Mark Floyd

on account of darkness.

Obviously, the games weren't pitching duels. Sandy fell behind 3-0 in the first game, then jumped all over the Lakers for eight runs in the top of the third. Matt Falgout led off the rally with a single, then the Pioneers got hits from Randy Martin, Kirkland, Contreras and John Martin. Again, it was the sophomore Contreras who had the power hit, a double.

The big inning put Sandy up 8-3, but John Martin couldn't find the plate in the bottom of the third and Lake Oswego came back. Heath finally opted for reliever Kraig Gifford, but the Lakers came up with eight big runs in

the inning to go up 11-8.

"After that, things quieted down," Heath said. "Gifford only gave up one more run and I commend him for coming in and picking up the tempo. He did a good job in there."

Gifford gave up just one more run, but the Pioneer bats went silent in the late innings. Martin sustained the loss.

The nightcap, and it was a nightcap by the time the game was called, was also a slugfest. Again, the Lakers took an early lead, going up 4-0 with the help of a pair of unearned runs.

But Sandy made a rally and it was Contreras who pulled the trigger.

Powell singled and Paola walked to set the stage for the soph, who pulled a double down the line to score two runs. John Martin then singled to score Contreras.

Sandy tied it up in the fourth as Bangs singled, stole second, advanced to third on a fielder's choice and scored on a sacrifice fly by Frank Borges.

Contreras singled in Powell in the fifth, but Lake Oswego came right back with four runs to take an 8-5 lead in their half. Sandy scored two more in the top of the sixth and Randy Martin got out of a jam in the bottom of the inning by fanning two as the Pioneers went back on top, 8-7.

In the seventh, Chris Davis and Randy Martin walked, advanced on a passed ball and scored on Paola's double to left center. Paola scored on a single by Contreras.

Unfortunately for Sandy, the 10-8 lead didn't hold up. The Lakers picked up two runs in the bottom of the inning to force the tie and that's the way the game ended.

Martin pitched six-and-a-third innings and fanned 11 batters, giving the Pioneers a solid threat from the mound.

Sandy will be at home this Friday for a 12 p.m. doubleheader against Glencoe.

Barlow claims softball wins

The Sandy High girls softball team opened its season with a pair of losses to Barlow, Tuesday, but coach Gary Curtis was nevertheless pleased with his team's performance.

Barlow won the first game 14-3, then held on to win the second 17-13 in extra innings.

"Barlow is a pretty fair team and I was very pleased with all aspects of play," Curtis said. "We're much improved this year and the girls are hitting the ball. That's got to be encouraging when you consider that our team batting average was under .200 last year."

The Pioneers actually outthit the Bruins on the day, but Barlow made good use of Sandy wildness from the mound. Barlow's Shelly Patrick went the distance in the first game and stopped the Pioneers on five hits.

A quartet of Sandy pitchers gave up just six hits to the Bruins in that first game, but also yielded a number of free passes to first base.

"We tried some different pitchers in that first game and gave up some walks," Curtis said. "We had four girls we wanted to throw and we threw them all. They had some early season control problems. I thought Patty Gray threw well for the first game of the year, though."

The loss overshadowed the fine defensive play of rightfielder Carlene Clark, who made a pair of diving catches of twisting lines drives down the line.

Sandy outthit Barlow nine to six in the second game and had a chance to win it in the bottom of the sixth. The Pioneers got a runner to third, but left her stranded and the game went into extra innings.

A couple of throwing errors in the seventh paved the way for four Bruin runs and Barlow escaped with a 17-13 win.

Curtis was pleased with the pitching of Debbie Rudisill, who threw six-and-a-third innings and showed good speed and pretty fair control. She also made a nice play, getting knocked down by a line drive and throwing the Bruin runner out at first from a sitting position.

The Pioneers had several opportunities to get in the driver's seat in that second game, but they left 12 runners stranded on base.

Dawn New was four-for-six in the game, and Chris Coleman and Jill Dahlager were three-for-six.

Sandy has big shoes to fill, but talent to be competitive

by MARK FLOYD

Duplicating the success of last year's Sandy High girls track team will be no easy task; especially with some very large shoes to fill this season.

The Pioneers lost Michele Cleland and Christie Elliott to graduation and those two girls accounted for five individual first place finishes at district, as well as helping in a relay win.

Six first places will be hard to make up, even harder since Oregon City is once again a power. But things are not dismal for the Sandy girls. An awesome corps of distance runners, some good returning athletes and a horde of newcomers will make the Pioneers more than competitive in the Timber Valley League.

"I began the season with feelings that this would not be a strong team," Sandy coach Randy Hutchinson said. "That was until we started working out. The more time we spend practicing, the better we look. We're working hard, everyone has a great attitude and we're stressing the team concept. I'm going from pessimistic to optimistic in a hurry."

"It's going to be tough to duplicate last year," he added. "It will be a real challenge. It's a young team and I don't want to put the pressure on them. We have the potential to do it, but we won't fall apart if we don't repeat."

The strength of the Pioneers will be their distance runners, who placed sixth in the state in cross country and dominated the TVL. Gayle Roth is the defending 800 meter champ at district and has a best of 2:17.7, which should be in the top few at state this year.

Sophomore Laura Stringham qualified for state in the 1,500 meters last season and should be tough to beat. The much-improved soph could run anything from 400 to 1,500 meters. Another sophomore, Donna Nelson, was fourth in the 1,500 and third in the 3,000 at district last year and should be one of the top two in the latter event.

Depth is plentiful in the distances as Renee Hess, Darby Binder and freshman Sharon Jensen are all strong runners and capable of winning races.

The sprints looked to be a weakness this year after the graduation of Elliott, but freshman Crystal Caulkins has emerged as a solid threat. She was timed in 13.6 in the 100-meters in the first time trial of the year and should get faster with time.

"At this point, she is one of the most promising sprinters we have ever had," Hutchinson said. "Her present workouts are very good and so are her times, especially for a freshman. She's going to be very competitive in our league."

A large group of sophomores will provide depth. Lori Shelton, Jenny Kelner, Sandra Peterson and Margaret Blackburn will run the short sprints and relays. The freshmen Jensen and other distance runners will comprise the mile relay team and run the 400.

Sandy has no returning district qualifiers in the hurdles, but there should be "dramatic improvement" in the times of Kelner, Kecia Harris, Blackburn and Shelton. Roth, with a 47.4, is the school record-holder in the intermediates and a district threat.

The field events will depend largely on the development of a number of untested people. Shelton is the leading returner with a 15-4 in the long jump and Blackburn and Peterson should also develop. Roth has a best of 5-0 in the high jump and hasn't worked at it all that much.

The throwing events should be a Sandy strength. Cleland is gone, but a couple of quality performers remain. Stephanie Hagstrom was second in the TVL in the javelin (behind Cleland) with a 148-2 throw, by far the best returning mark in the league. Hagstrom, in fact, has the fifth best mark in the state among returners, but she has been plagued with a sore arm for much of the winter and is just now able to throw.



GAYLE ROTH

Bonita Connelly and Paige Daugherty were both over 100 feet last year which should put them near the top of the league.

Daugherty is the leading shot and discus returner, but Hagstrom will triple this year and Roth will toss the shot. With the addition of a couple of freshmen prospects, the throwing events look strong for Sandy.

Oregon City will still be the team to beat, with its returners and depth. West Linn and Canby are also strong. But the Pioneers have their best depth in quite a while and a number of young athletes who could develop.

Sandy also should have some of the pressure off since it obviously won't be favored to win district, with the loss of Cleland and Elliott.

The schedule is tough for the Pioneers with just three home dual meets and the rest on the road. The TVL district meet is also at Sandy.

The first meet will be March 26 on the SUHS field against Jackson. It will begin at 3:45 p.m.



Photo by Mark Floyd

Stephanie Hagstrom, who had a best throw of more than 148 feet last year, will be one of the top returning javelin

throwers in the state this season. She finished second in the Timber Valley League last year.