



Elkton/Yoncalla Baseball



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Austin Luzier prepares a pitch on a rainy day that forced the team into the Elkton gym.



Jeff Tibbetts works through a fielding drill at practice.

Team Rundown:

It is no secret that pitching can make or break a team. Last year, Elkton/Yoncalla was broken.

"Last year we got to a point in time where we paired everybody up and we worked on pitching mechanics as a team. I had 15 guys working on how to step in and out of the rubber. How to make a move to first base. Crazy stuff," said head coach Bill Shaw. "I put people on the mound who couldn't throw a strike to save your soul. We did some crazy things to survive that."

After finishing 7-16 and in the bottom half of the league, this year's team – complete with experienced pitchers that Shaw has confidence in – is primarily made up of freshman and juniors with a handful of players who are new to the sport and are looking for a path to catch up to

the Oaklands and North Douglas' of the league.

While inexperience is a central part of the team, success for them came last season via the play of Jaydn Woody. In his first year of playing baseball Woody caught on quickly and made second-team all-league.

"It just kind of happened. It was pretty cool but it just kind of happened," said Woody.

As the Elks, who are co-opted with Yoncalla, try to make more happen, Shaw is working to find ways to put together the puzzle that is this team.

"I'm putting together pieces and parts. I've got a lot of guys that have played baseball before but they haven't played together. So we've got some work to do as far as figuring out who our middle infield is and transitions and communication. And finding a catcher," he said.

Team Perspective with Jeff Tibbetts:

On travelling from Yoncalla to Elkton

I enjoy it a lot because you get to go to another school with new friends. I got one of my best friends here in Elkton just because of us co-opting last year. I enjoy it a lot. You get annoyed with a lot of people that you have to go to school with all day, come to another school, new friends and new faces throughout the day.

It gets to you a little bit. Like for me it's hard because I don't always get to see my family as much as I would like to because it's an hour commute.

On their league

Our league is always tough. Good baseball teams. We got Oakland which is returning almost everyone.

We got Monroe, oh gosh, they're a baseball program. I strive to be like Monroe. They're a good program. North Douglas is always good.

Oakridge is pretty decent always. We got to come out and play. We're returning quite a bit from last year but even with what we're returning three or four first-year guys that started for us last year. I mean, we're real junior heavy and freshman heavy which is fun to see some young guys step up. And I think we're gonna have some young guys really step up for us this year.

On how they will get better this year

For us it's just going to be focus. We all have the skill, we're all talented enough. It's just staying focused and work on the stuff we need to work on. Trying to get that experience for us and take that and put it on the field.

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