

Vernonia Sports Report

by Ben Schorzman

SOFTBALL

The 2006 Vernonia High School softball team is on a mission. After ending the 2005 season on a disappointing loss in the first round of the State Tournament, the girls are ready to prove that getting to State last year was just the beginning.

Their start has been everything they expected, riding the outstanding pitching of 2005 All-State selection Joreigh Landers. Landers made the team as a Sophomore, and she is continuing her dominance as a Junior. Through four games, Landers has pitched 21 innings, struck out 48 batters (of 63 batters), given up two runs, and had only four hits; for a 4-0 record. Along with these unbelievable numbers, Landers and Junior Brittney Lindauer combined for a five-inning perfect game, and Landers pitched a six-inning perfect game herself. That's only pitching. Hitting, she's gone 11 for 12 in four games with four homeruns and 12 runs batted in (RBI).

The dominance started against a pretty good Gaston team on March 15. The Loggers played a very good game, and with Landers pretty much a one-girl wrecking ball. She pitched the complete game one hitter, striking out 15 of the 18 batters. Landers also provided all of the offense for the Lady Loggers, going 3-3 with three home runs and six RBI.

March 18, the team traveled to Gervais and unloaded 16 runs on the Cougars. Behind another solid pitching performance from Landers, who struck out 13 and gave up three hits, the Loggers racked up hits with Lindauer going 3-4 with one RBI, and Juniors Erin Gehrke, Christy Staggenborg, and Christina Sohler each getting two RBI with one hit. Landers went 4-4 with three RBI.

In the first league game of the year, the Loggers squared off at home against the Portland Christian Royals. The combination of Landers and Lindauer was overpowering, with the two throwing a perfect game. Lindauer led the team with five RBI, and Junior Cassandra Gunter helped with an RBI triple. Senior Kristin Cota anchored a very solid defen-

sive performance with some nice plays at first base. On a rainy day, Athletic Director Gordon Jarman, along with some parents, worked on the field for hours just so the girls could play the game.

In a switch on the schedule, De La Salle came to Vernonia after deciding that their field wasn't playable. Home or away wouldn't have mattered. The Loggers again flexed their offensive muscle, piling on 10 runs. Junior Miranda Nutting went 2-4 with a home run and three RBI, Landers was 3-3 with another homerun and three RBI, and Staggenborg contributed, going 2-2 with a two RBI triple. On the mound, Landers struck out 15 batters in six innings, and gave up no hits for a perfect game.

After canceling the Jefferson Tournament from March 30 – April 1, the team replaced the spot with a double header against North Douglas on March 29. In the first game, two excellent pitchers squared off, with Landers throwing for Vernonia. After seven innings, the score was tied at zero. The game went to extra innings, and by international tie breaker rules, both teams get a chance to score by placing a girl on second base to start the inning. In Vernonia's half, Cota was placed on second. Landers hit Cota to third, and after Lindauer got out, Sohler hit a groundball to shortstop, getting Cota home. Nutting followed with a single to right field, scoring Landers. In North Douglas' inning, they scored the runner from second, but Landers closed out the game 2-1. In the second game, the Loggers won 11-1, with Lindauer getting the win.

BASEBALL

The baseball team has started off the year strong, posting a 4-2 record through their first six games. Led by the solid pitching of Senior Russell Lende, the Loggers are looking to make the playoffs for the first time since the 2003 season.

March 15 marked the first game of the season, and the Loggers easily beat a weak Gaston team. Putting up 12 runs, Vernonia's first four batters went 11-14 with all 12 RBI. Junior Brent Thompson and Senior Ben Schorzman went a

combined 7-7, scoring three runs each. Lende added a two run home run. On the defensive side, Lende went the five innings, striking out nine batters and giving up only three hits.

The next games were a double-header, March 18 in Gervais. In the first game, the Loggers got all 13 of their runs in the third inning, with Senior Mike Hyser getting a two RBI double as a highlight. Sophomore Cody Davis started the game for the Loggers, and gave up two runs in three innings. Freshman Byron Schorzman came in relief, and closed out the game, giving up no runs in two innings. The second game of the double header saw Vernonia struggle from the plate until the last inning. Gervais' pitcher threw six scoreless innings, giving up only three hits over those innings. With the Loggers trailing 1-0 going into the top of the seventh, Vernonia needed to score at least one run to keep their hopes alive. Thompson led off the inning, getting on base because of an error, then Ben Schorzman reached after being hit in the left elbow. Lende followed with a hit to left field, scoring Thompson and tying the game. The very next batter, Senior Tim Hein, got the game winning hit, scoring Schorzman from third. The Loggers added another run on a single by Senior Eric Lawhead.

The team traveled to Banks on March 20 to play the 3A Braves. The Loggers matched the Braves, and were up 2-0 after Lende hit a home run. But the bottom of the fourth inning proved to be the downfall for Vernonia, with three key errors helping Banks score four runs. The Loggers couldn't score again, and fell 4-2 for their first loss of the season.

League games started on March 22, with the Loggers hosting Portland Christian. Ben Schorzman started pitching for the Loggers and after the first inning you could tell it was going to be an offensive affair. The Royals scored three runs in their half of the inning, but Vernonia immediately answered, scoring three runs of their own, marked by a solo home run from Schorzman. After holding them, the Loggers added another two runs in the third inning, before everything

let loose. In the top of the fourth inning, Vernonia lost focus, and PC got six runs, four of which were unearned. Error after error by the Loggers cost them the lead. Down 9-5, the Loggers scored three runs in the bottom of the fourth, cutting the Royals' lead to one. But PC answered again, getting another three runs in the fifth to make the score 12-8. After a scoreless inning by both sides, the Loggers added two runs in the bottom of the sixth on a two run home run by Ben Schorzman. But Vernonia couldn't score again, and the final ended up 12-10.

The team entered spring break on a winning note, winning 14-0 at Portland Lutheran on March 24. Lende pitched a complete game one hitter, striking out 12 of the 15 batters he faced. Hein and Junior Luke Johnston each had three RBI to lead Vernonia.

TRACK

After losing three state placers from last year's team, the 2006 track team is ready to start anew, with only Junior Nicole Franz having been to state. Franz went as a Sophomore in the 3000 meter run, and after going to state this year in Cross-Country, she wants to continue her success this spring.

The team's first meet of the year was the massive Grizzly Bear Open, held March 17 in McMinnville. The Open is for teams from 2A-4A, with over

100 athletes in the major events – throwing and sprinting. In such a big meet, Vernonia wasn't worried about placing, they just wanted to get some competition in before League meets start on April 13. The only Logger to place was Freshman Alanna Ogden in the Long Jump, with a jump of 13'8".

March 21 was a different story for Vernonia when they traveled to Warrenton to participate in a Junior Varsity meet. Again, it was to get reps in before real competition starts. Foreign exchange student Rob Champion from Guadalupe performed very well. He placed first in the 100 meter, 200 meter, and then anchored the men's 4x100 relay, which he won by coming from last to first in a great finish. Senior Laura Brookins also did well, winning the Shot Put, and Discus, and placing second in the Javelin.

Spring has sprung - we are now open until 7pm

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