

Optimism high for Williamsville East baseball

There is reason for Williamsville East to be optimistic heading into the 2007 season.

Coach Jerry Gasz returns 10 players from the Flames' 2005 team, which went 25-4 and appeared in the New York State Class "A" Tournament, and from last year's 17-8 team, which beat Class "A" state finalist, Williamsville South, twice.

Gasz said his team has plenty of experience but must find replacements for Dave Convertini, Steve Kanutsu, Steve Kaiser and John Quartironi, who were all ECIC Division II first-team selections. Kaiser also was an All-Western New York Honorable Mention pick; Quartironi made the first team.

Here is a breakdown by position of this year's team.

Pitching

Gasz has 12 kids who can pitch but will rely mainly on juniors Mark Guenther (ECIC Division II second team), Jordan Karnath and Josh DiMarco. Seniors Zach Miller, Nick Kanutsu (ECIC II second team) and Justin Andreozzi can also throw. This group accounted for nine victories last year. Miller and Kanutsu are two of three East captains.

Filling in when needed will be Mike Zeoli (ECIC II second team), Eric Charlton, Nick Weigel, Gary Styn, Carl Lew and the team's only left-handed pitcher, Dominic Missana.

Catching

Mike Terryberry, Kyle Smith and DiMarco will battle for the starting catching duties. Terryberry was the backup a year ago. Smith, whom Gasz said can play anywhere, hit .304. DiMarco hit .340 on JV.

"All three have good defensive skills and are savvy enough to be the field general behind the plate," Gasz said.

Styn, primarily an infielder, can catch as well, he said.

Infield

Probably his team's area of greatest depth, Gasz returns four-year player and captain Mike Ferguson at first base and three-year players Kanutsu (.338, 28 RBIs) at second base, slick fielding shortstop Chris Schiumo (.354, 24 RBIs) and Miller at third. Andreozzi will start at first.

Charlton, a versatile player, will



Williamsville East's Zach Miller scrambles back to first base on an attempted pickoff play by West Seneca East during a league game last Friday at West Seneca East. Miller is one of three East senior captains. East won 7-1 and is 2-0 this season.

Photo by John Normile

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push for a starting job somewhere, said Gasz. Andrew Steel and Mike Toscano move up from JV, as well as Missana.

Outfield

Zeoli (.390, 17 RBIs), a senior who has started since the last seven games of his freshman year, anchors the Flames' center-field. Also in the outfield are Guenther (.273, nine RBIs), Matt Graci (.304, eight RBIs), Wiegel (.439 on JV), Dan Tyx (.364 on JV), Lew (.333 on JV) and Karnath.

Utility

Gasz said this is the first time in East history that he has five players who can fill in at many positions and play them well. Charlton, Kyle Smith, DiMarco, Styn and Karnath give Gasz plenty of options.

Outlook

Gasz thinks ECIC Division II — Lake Shore, Amherst, South, Hamburg, Iroquois and West Seneca East — will be competitive from top to bottom.

"We'll rely on our experience, but Mark Guenther (ECIC II second team), Nick Kanutsu (second team), Chris Schiumo (honorable mention), Zach Miller (honorable mention) and Mike Zeoli (second team) must elevate their games along with everyone else to have a shot," said Gasz.

Gasz said to circle May 11, as it is the last scheduled league game this season between East and South.

"It could have a significant bearing on the conference standings," said Gasz.

East opened its season on Friday with a 7-1 win over West Seneca West.

Karnath, Miller, Andreozzi, Kanutsu and Guenther limited the Indians to three hits. Miller got credit for the win, pitching three innings of one-hit ball and striking out four. He also scored a run, stole three bases and had two hits.

Lady Tigers return mixed bag

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

Amherst Central softball combines a mix of youth and experience heading into the 2007 season.

Lady Tigers' coach Mike Chatelle returns four-year player and ECIC Division II second-team selection Mollie Lang at second base and three-year player Rebecca Masters, who moves from the outfield to third base. Other returning players include seniors Liz Reid in center field, Julie Halm in right field, Sam Sweeney, who will replace Michelle Paul at catcher, and sophomore Eva Lankes at shortstop. Lang and Masters are co-captains.

Chatelle had many positive thoughts about each of these players.

"Mollie brings a lot of experience and good skills, Liz had good speed and is a leader in the outfield, Becca has a pretty good bat, Julie has speed and can do a lot on the bases, and Sweeney has come a long way since last year and can also play at first," said Chatelle.

Other starting positions will be

Ferguson chipped in with two hits and Guenther doubled as the Flames had seven hits.

East actually trailed 1-0 in the top of the fifth but went to the bunt game and scored seven times.

Terryberry handled the Flames staff superbly and played an outstanding defensive game.

East improved to 2-0 after beating Iroquois, 6-5, on Monday in their home opener at the Pepsi Center.

The Flames had to play at the Pepsi Center due to the collapse of their backstop from the October storm and because East's field is not playable yet.

The Flames jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first as Zeoli, Schiumo, and Guenther all had hits. The lead increased to 4-1 but the Chiefs battled back to make it 4-3 and finally took the lead, 5-4, in the top of the seventh.

In the bottom half of the seventh, Karnath walked with two outs and was lifted for pinch runner Styn. Styn stole second with two strikes on leadoff batter Zeoli. Zeoli reached first on an error with Styn coming to third. With no count on Kanutsu, Zeoli

stole second. The three-year veteran Kanutsu, with a one-ball, two-strike count, drilled a single to left, scoring Styn and then Zeoli for the winning run.

Karnath got the win in relief. Iroquois' Matt Jimenz picked up the loss.

Williamsville East 2007 Schedule

4-16 Maryvale 4:30 p.m. (Amherst Pepsi Center)
4-18 Hamburg 4:45 p.m. (ECC North)
4-20 at Lake Shore..... 5 p.m.
4-21 at Orchard Park..... noon
4-23 at John F. Kennedy 4:30 p.m.
4-25 at South..... 4:30 p.m.
4-27 at Iroquois..... 4:45 p.m.
4-30 W.S. East 5 p.m. (Amherst Pepsi Center)
5-2 at Maryvale 5 p.m.
5-4 at Hamburg..... 5 p.m.
5-5 at W.S. East..... 3 p.m.
5-8 Lake Shore..... 4:30 p.m.
5-11 South..... 4:30 p.m.
5-12 at Charlotte Valley noon; at Oneonta..... 3 p.m.
5-14 John F. Kennedy . 4:30 p.m.
5-16 W.S. West..... 5 p.m.
5-17 Orchard Park..... 4:30 p.m.
5-18 at North..... 4:45 p.m.
5-21 North..... 4:45 p.m.
5-22 Sweet Home 4:30 p.m.

Amherst finished 12-7 last year and lost 2-1 to Williamsville East in the Section VI Class "A" pre-quarterfinals.

Amherst Central 2007 Schedule

4-4 at South..... 4:30 p.m.
4-16 at East 4:30 p.m.
4-18 at Iroquois..... 4:30 p.m.
4-19 at Lake Shore 4:30 p.m.
4-20 at North Tonawanda Tourn.
Lew-Port 4:30 p.m.
4-21 at North Tonawanda Tourn.
Frontier 8:30 a.m.
4-23 at W.S. East..... 4:30 p.m.
4-24 at Hamburg 4:30 p.m.
4-28 at North Tonawanda .. TBA
5-1 South..... 4:30 p.m.
5-2 East..... 4:45 p.m.
5-4 Iroquois..... 4:30 p.m.
5-7 at Tonawanda..... 4:30 p.m.
5-9 W.S. East 5 p.m.
5-11 Hamburg..... 4:30 p.m.
5-15 Lake Shore..... 4:30 p.m.
5-16 John F. Kennedy . 4:15 p.m.
5-17 at Sweet Home.... 4:15 p.m.
5-18 Sacred Heart..... 4:15 p.m.
5-22 W.S. West..... 4 p.m.
5-23 Clarence 4:45 p.m.

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