

BLUE RAIDERS SPORTS REPORT WEEK OF APR 12 TO 17

BY LARRY ETTER

At this point of the 2021 Spring season local varsity teams should be approximately halfway through their schedules. But, with health and weather-related issues in play, schedules are constantly being adjusted instead. The issues have affected nearly all schools and all sports and athletic directors are scrambling to make changes on the fly. Middletown teams, of course, have been affected as well.

As a result, the boys baseball team, the girls' softball team and the track and field teams are each behind schedule. Entering the past week, the boys and girls track teams had yet to compete in a regularly-scheduled meet. And the baseball and softball teams have postponed or canceled a number of games.

BASEBALL

Following their first win of the season at Annville-Cleona on Saturday, April 10, the boys' baseball team started off last week with a loss at Camp Hill in a game that had been rescheduled from Monday. The Blue Raiders followed that up with their second win, a victory over visiting Steelton-Highspire on Wednesday. Friday's scheduled game at Susquehanna Township was postponed.

Middletown 16, Steel-High 1

The Blue Raiders erupted for 10 runs in the bottom of the first inning on Wednesday at home and cruised to a 16-1 victory over the Steelton-Highspire Rollers. Those 10 early runs, surprisingly, came as the result of just one hit, an RBI double by Gavin Hickoff that batted in Jonah Troup. Leadoff hitter Cam Wegert was hit by a pitch, stole second and third and scored on a wild pitch. Troup walked ahead of Hickoff's double.

From that point on, Steel-High's starting pitcher Zaheim Lewis was hurt by a pair of errors and five walks that let to 6 more Middletown runs. Jayden Benner's fielder's choice drove in Tyson Leach for another run and a wild pitch from Andrew Erby, who had taken over on the hill, allowed run number 10 to light up the scoreboard.

Steel-High's Taevon Farmer led off the top of the second with a single and he made it to third with a stolen base and a ground out. But a lineout to shortstop Hickoff and a quick throw to third picked off Farmer for a double play. Erby

struggled just as much as Lewis in the bottom of the second inning and the Blue Raiders took advantage by plating 6 more runs before Erby got out of it. A. J. Stains drew a one-out walk, stole second and scored on an RBI single by Kaden Sweeney for the first run. The second run came with two outs when Erby balked with Sweeney on third. Three more hits, including a double by Max Dupes, produced 4 more Middletown runs to make it a 16-0 lead.

The Rollers did manage to score a single run in the top of the third on an infield single by Erby with Lewis on third. But they would get no more as Troup, in relief of starter Mike Tuffy, ended the game early by retiring Mike Omanovic on a groundout.

CAMP HILL 8, MIDDLETOWN 3

At Camp Hill on Tuesday, the Blue Raiders struggled at the plate and fell behind the host Lions 8-0 heading into the seventh inning. Camp Hill scored 5 runs in the third, 1 in the fourth and 2 more in the fifth for the big lead. The Raiders did manage to score three times in the top of the seventh, but would get no more.

Middletown starter A. J. Stains was stung by giving up six hits and six runs in his 3.1 innings on the mound. Nick Crognale went two innings and gave up two runs. Leach prevented further damage by pitching two innings while giving up no hits. The Raiders had just four hits, one each by Stains, Troup, Sweeney and Leach. Wegert, Hickoff and Troup were credited with one RBI each in the loss.

SOFTBALL

The girls' softball team scored a big, 18-6 victory over visiting Camp Hill on Tuesday at home but fell to Central Dauphin East in a 16-1 setback on Saturday. Friday's game with Susquehanna Township was postponed.

Middletown 18, Camp Hill 6

The Lady Raiders got off to a good start, scoring 6 runs in the bottom of the first inning, and adding 7 more in the second to stake themselves to a commanding 13-1 lead. Camp Hill rallied with a 5-run fourth inning, but the Middletown nine posted 5 more tallies in the bottom of the frame and Camp Hill came up empty in the top of the fifth as the game ended early.

Starting pitcher Carly Dupes gave up a single and nothing else in the top of the opening frame and the Raiders posted their 6-0 lead in the home half. Mehliia Rinesmith and Dupes opened up the inning with back-to-back walks and Sara Dintiman's single drove in the first run. Two more runners raced home on Luvi Balliet's hard single up the middle and Balliet scored on a hit by Cadence Lines with no outs. After Jenna Alford singled, both runners came home on another hit by Chloe Kahler that made it 6-0. Three straight outs ended the inning.

Camp Hill scored a single run in the top of the second following a leadoff double by Riley Kunkle. In the home half of the inning Dintiman walked, Balliet singled and scored on an RBI single by Lines. A fielding error allowed Lines to score. Hits by Kahler, Serena Gurm and Rinesmith pushed in three more runs. A sac fly by Dintiman and another hit by Balliet pushed the Middletown lead to 13-1 before the inning ended.

The score remained unchanged through the third inning, but the Lions broke out with 5 runs in the top of the fourth to gain some momentum, down 13-6. After Dupes pitched her way out of trouble to end the rally, the Middletown bats again came alive in the bottom of the frame. A one out double by Rinesmith, an infield single by Dupes and a double by Dintiman produced two more Middletown runs. Another hit by Lines and a pair of passed balls pushed across three more runs and the inning ended with the home team leading 18-6.

Alford took over in the pitcher's circle in the fifth. An error and a base on balls put the first two Lions on base, but a fielder's choice tag at home, a strikeout and a play at third on an attempted steal ended the game.

C.D. East 16, Middletown 1

On Senior Recognition Day the Lady Raiders had a rough outing as visiting C. D. East rolled to a 16-1 win. The Panthers scored 5 runs in the first inning but were held scoreless through the second and third as pitcher Alford and the defense settled in. Dupes singled in the bottom of the first inning and Rinesmith had an infield single in the third, but both were left stranded.

The Panthers collected 4 runs in the fourth inning and led 9-0 at that point. Lines stroked a double to right center in the home half of the fourth and Alford walked, but both were left on base as East pitcher Morgan Warner kept control of her game. Dupes came on in relief of Alford in the fifth and kept the Lady Panthers

from adding to their total. In the home half the Raiders scored what turned out to be their lone run of the game.

Cam Martinez led off with a single in the gap and Rinesmith's one-out double drove in Martinez from second for the tally. But a fly out and groundout kept the Raiders from further scoring. Dupes sat down the first two East batters to start the sixth inning, but everything fell apart after that. A single, a walk, an infield hit, and error and a double pushed in three runs. A wild pitch plated another and East really put the game out of reach on Rori Stutzman's 3-run homerun over the center field fence. Lines led off the bottom of the sixth with a hit and Alford walked to put the first two batters on base. But Warner sat down the next three hitters in order to finish the game.