

## **BLUE RAIDERS SPORTS REPORT APR 26 TO MAY 1**

**BY LARRY ETTER**

During the past week the Middletown Area High School varsity baseball and softball teams again had to work around schedule adjustments but managed to get a couple games in. The baseball team picked up one win in its three games and the softball team was victorious in both of their contests in a successful week.

The baseball team squeezed in a victory over Big Spring on Wednesday in between a pair of losses to Harrisburg and Susquehanna Township, while the girls secured wins over Harrisburg and Susquehanna for their 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> wins of the season. This week, weather permitting, will be busy for both teams as schools try to wrap up their prospective seasons by mid-May.

### **SOFTBALL**

#### **Middletown 5, Harrisburg 4**

On Wednesday at Harrisburg the Lady Raiders were again locked up in a tight game against host Harrisburg and finished with a 5-4 victory, scoring the tie-breaking, winning run in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning. In their first meeting at Middletown the Blue Raiders rallied late in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> to claim an intense 6-5 win.

Jenna Alford picked up the pitching victory this time, going 7 full innings with 4 strikeouts and giving up 7 hits against the Cougars. The Lady Raiders scored 1 run in the top of the second inning and 2 in the top of the third to take a 3-0 lead against Harrisburg ace Rori Dillard. Harrisburg scored its first run in the bottom of the fourth and tied the game at 4-4 in the home half of the fifth after the Raiders had gone ahead 4-1 with a single run in the top of the fifth.

The Blue Raiders plated a single run in the top of the seventh to break the tie and Alford and her defensive mates shut out the hosts in the bottom of the final frame to claim the 5-4 win.

Offensive leaders for the Middletown squad were: Sara Dintiman with 3 hits and Carly Dupes and Alford with 2 each. Dillard had 9 strikeouts but gave up 10 hits in the loss.

#### **Middletown 13, Susquehanna Township 12**

In a real slugfest on Saturday at Susquehanna Township the Lady Raiders prevailed with a 13-12 victory over the host Indians. The Blue Raiders, led by three hits from Dintiman and Christine Miller, and two from Dupes (two triples), pounded out 17 hits in the win. Dintiman had 4 RBIs and Quinn Dworchak had 3 to lead the way. Miller, returning to the lineup after missing some time, pitched 7 full innings with 4 strikeouts and was able to escape with the decision despite yielding 12 hits in the game.

The Raiders scored 2 runs in the top of the first inning, 5 in the fourth, 5 in the fifth and the deciding run in the top of the seventh. Susquehanna Township collected 5 runs in the second, 2 in the third and one in the fourth, but trailed by a 13-8 score heading in the bottom half of the final frame. A four-run outburst made it a one-run game as the Indians threatened to pull out a late victory, but Miller was able to end the threat and preserve the Middletown win.

## **BASEBALL**

### **Harrisburg 10, Middletown 6**

The Harrisburg Cougars are turning out to be one of the surprise teams of the Mid Penn and, for the second time this season, recorded a win over the Blue Raiders. Visiting Harrisburg used 9 hits and several Middletown errors to post a 10-6 win on Wednesday.

Thanks to a 2-run homerun by junior Ryan Souders in the bottom of the first inning, the Blue Raiders got off to a good start. Souders hit the ball over the left field fence with Gavin Hickoff on board for the 2-0 lead and the Raiders threatened to add to that lead after Tim Wagner stroked a double to left and Cam Wegert walked with two outs. But Harrisburg pitcher Steve Dalton ended the threat with a strikeout and the Middletown side was held scoreless until plating two runs in the bottom of the fourth with Harrisburg leading 6-2.

The Cougars scored 5 runs in the top of the second via a single, two errors, a sac fly, another single and three straight walks. Another sac fly and a wild pitch drove in the fourth and fifth runs. The Cougars added another run in the top of the fourth to go ahead 6-2. With two outs in the home half, Kaden Sweeney and A. J. Stains drew back-to-back walks and both scored on Jonah Troup's bloop single to center to cut the Cougars' lead to 6-4. Mike Tuffy came on in relief of starter Cam Wegert in the fifth and kept the score unchanged.

In the home half of the sixth inning the Raiders pulled to within a single run, 6-5, when Souders drew a bases loaded walk. But, Harrisburg responded to the challenge by scoring 4 runs in the top of the seventh. An RBI triple by Alejandro Escudero started it for the guests. A sac fly drove in Escudero and a pair of RBI singles around a Middletown error led to the other three. Down 10-5 at that point the Raiders tried to rally. Three walks loaded the bases with one out and another walk with Tyson Leach at the plate with two outs forced in one run. But the Raiders would get no more and Harrisburg claimed the win.

### **Middletown 9, Big Spring 8 (Eight innings)**

The Blue Raiders hosted visiting Big Spring on Friday in a game that was played in strong, gusty winds that made competition interesting. As it turned out the Middletown side won in the bottom of the eighth inning on a walk off RBI single by Wegert with Wagner on third.

Big Spring had taken a 4-0 lead with four runs in the top of the third inning, but the Raiders collected 3 of their own in the bottom of the frame to get close. Caden Paul led off with a single and went to second on an error. Stains was safe on an error that moved Paul to third. With one out Souders walked to load the bases and Hickoff's fielder's choice knocked in Paul for the first run. After Wagner walked to again load the bases, Leach beat out an infield single to drive in the second run. The third score came on a bases loaded walk by Wegert that made it a 4-3 game.

The Bulldogs, however, scored a pair of runs in the fourth on a 2-run single by Adam O'Leary. Down 6-3 the Blue Raiders rallied for three runs in the bottom of the inning. The big hit came from Wagner who ripped a double off the left field fence to drive in Paul, Troup and Hickoff. The 6-6 deadlock held up until the top of the seventh when the Bulldogs scored twice to take an 8-6 lead.

Facing a loss, the Middletown side again responded, scoring a pair of runs on a two-run single by Souders with two outs. The inning ended on fly out to right, leaving the score tied at 8-8. In the top of the eighth an error with two outs put a Big Spring runner on base, but Souders threw him out attempting to steal. In the home half, Wagner led off with an infield single and stole third to get into scoring position. Lech laid down a perfect sacrifice bunt, moving Wagner to third. Wegert, after taking the first two pitches for balls, laced a clean single to right to drove in Wagner for the winning run.

### **Susquehanna Township 6, Middletown 5**

On Saturday at Susquehanna Township the Blue Raiders were dealt a loss when the Indians' Ethan Adams drove in the winning run in the bottom of the seventh inning. The Blue Raiders fell behind 3-0 after three innings, but plated two runs each in the fourth and fifth to take a 4-3 lead. In the top of the seventh the Raiders tied the score at 5-5 and were hoping to hold off the Indians late to force extra innings. But Adams turned those hopes away with his winning hit.

Hickoff had three of Middletown's 6 hits in the game and Troup had a pair of RBIs to lead the offense. Wegert pitched 4.2 innings with 10 strikeouts and Nick Crognale had 3 strikeouts in 1.1 innings of work on the mound. The Indians were held to just 5 hits in the game.