

## **BLUE RAIDERS SPORTS REPORT MAY 17 TO 22**

**BY LARRY ETTER**

Last week marked the end of the 2021 spring seasons for both the girls' softball team and the boys' baseball team. Without any qualifying for post season play for either squad the current Blue Raiders wrapped up their times on the diamonds as the school year winds down to just a few days. For the senior players the finish also marked the ends of their scholastic athletic careers as graduation nears.

For those seniors we thank them for their time and dedication to Middletown Area High School varsity sports programs and wish them well in their future plans.

### **SOFTBALL**

The girls' softball team finished its season with a bang as the Lady Blue Raiders pounded out a huge 17-1 victory over Camp Hill on Wednesday following a non-league loss at Waynesboro on Monday. The win gave the team an overall record of 8 wins and 9 losses for the year in a season highlighted by ups and downs, but still filled with fun and competition for coach Mike Thomas' squad.

#### **Middletown 17, Camp Hill 1**

On Wednesday at Camp Hill the Lady Blue Raiders jumped out to an early 7-0 lead and never faltered after that while posting the five-inning, runaway victory. The Raiders box score read 17 runs on 11 hits and zero errors in the field. The Lady Lions recorded just one run on two hits while victimizing themselves with 10 crucial errors in the loss. Christine Miller pitched 3 innings and struck out 5 for the win and Carly Dupes threw 2 innings with a strikeout in the circle.

The Raiders wasted little time getting off to the big win by posting 7 runs in the top of the first inning. With the bases loaded following a base on balls for Chloe Kahler and two outs, Jenna Alford and Mehliia Rinesmith both walked to force in Sara Dintiman and Luvi Balliet for the first two runs. Dalayni Landis doubled in two more runs and Serina Gurm's single knocked in another pair. Gurm then scored on a wild pitch to give the Raiders the 7-0 lead.

A 4-run third pushed the Raiders up to an 11-1 lead. Rinesmith's double drove in Alford, Gurm's fielder's choice, a Camp Hill error and Dintiman's triple pushed in the runs. The Raiders plated two more runs in the fourth following a leadoff

double by Dupes, who scored on a passed ball. Quinn Dworchak was safe on an error that allowed Alford to score for a 13-1 lead. Four more runs in the top of the fifth ended the game early for the winning Middletown side. Balliet, Rinesmith and Landis each had RBI hits in the frame. Dupes sat down the Lions in order in the bottom of the fifth to end it.

### **Waynesboro 12, Middletown 2**

Things did not go all that well for the Lady Raiders earlier in the week as the host Waynesboro Indians handed the Middletown squad a 12-2 defeat. The Raiders connected for 8 hits in the game, but could produce just a pair of runs in the loss. The Raiders scored one run in the second inning on an RBI triple by Kahler that knocked in Miller from third. In the fifth inning Balliet homered to left with two outs for the only other Middletown run.

Miller had two hits for the Raiders, but suffered the pitching loss against the Indians who struck for 9 hits in the win.

Special thanks to seniors Serina Gurm, Jenna Alford and Quinn Dworchak for their contributions to the Middletown softball program.

### **BASEBALL**

The baseball team, which struggled this year, also wanted to finish strong in the final week of the season. A big 15-0 victory over Steelton-Highspire on Monday got the week started off on the right foot. But on Wednesday in the season finale the Blue Raiders could not find enough within themselves to pull off an upset over visiting Camp Hill and fell to the playoff-bound Lions 14-4. As a result of the two games the Blue Raiders finished a tough year with a 6-14 overall record.

Missing last season due to the pandemic really hurt some teams and Middletown was clearly one of them. “Starting this year, we had only one or two players who even sat foot on the field in a varsity game,” head coach Mike Lupia said early in the season. That, coupled with some nagging injuries, took their tolls on the efforts of his squad. And the results were more or less predictable. Although Lupia and his coaches did have five seniors to work with, the inexperience showed.

### **Middletown 15, Steelton-Highspire 0**

The Blue Raiders and Rollers actually met for the third time this season and all three of those games, victories for the Raiders, helped add to the number of wins

for the Middletown squad. Monday's meeting followed the script set earlier in an easy victory for the Raiders. The Rollers completed their season without a win

After senior Mike Tuffy sat down the Rollers in order to start the game, the Blue Raiders scored five runs in the home half of the first inning to grab the early lead. With two outs Gavin Hickoff and Tim Wagner walked and Jayden Benner was hit by a pitch from John Dellinger to load the bases. A balk by Dellinger forced in one run and freshman Max Dupes drove in two more with a double off the left field fence for a 3-0 lead. Caden Sweeney's single and an error off a ground ball by Ryan Thear pushed in two more.

In the top of the second the Rollers again went down in order after Tuffy got two outs and Dupes in relief got the other one. Ryan Souders led off the bottom of the second with a single, Hickoff walked and Wagner was safe on an error that allowed Souders to score for another run. Benner was hit by a pitch after a passed ball allowed Hickoff to score, and Sweeney drew a free pass with one out to load the bases. Thear's fielder's choice pushed in the third run and another passed ball let in another run as the lead grew to 9-0.

The Rollers Brandon Maddon singled with two outs in the top of the third but was left stranded to preserve the shutout and the Raiders scored three more runs in the home half. Hickoff singled with two outs and, after stealing second and third, scored on a wild pitch. Following a single by Wagner, Benner was hit by a pitch for the third time. With runners at the corners and Jason Grob at the plate, yet another wild pitch brought in run number two of the inning. Grob's infield single for an RBI gave the home team a 12-0 lead.

Steel-High's second hit of the game, a leadoff infield single by Amani Williams, came against reliever Benner in the top of the fourth frame. But he was thrown out at third on an attempted steal and Benner induced a pair of ground out to end the inning. The Blue Raiders locked up the victory by plating three runs in the bottom of the fourth to end it early. Ben Staker led off with a walk, Tyson Leach hit a bloop single and A. J. Stains hit a single to center to load the bases.

A wild pitch scored one run and a two-out walk to Caden Paul with the bases full scored another. The game ended with an RBI single to left by Sweeney.

#### **Camp Hill 14, Middletown 4**

The hopes for an upset over visiting Camp Hill got a lift when the Blue Raiders took a 2-0 lead over the Lions in the bottom of the second inning. The runs came

on a sacrifice fly by Nick Crognale after Dupes, Sweeney and Paul all drew walks with one out. The second tally came when Leach was safe on an error that allowed Sweeney to score. But Camp Hill responded by scoring 5 runs in the top of the third on four hits, an error and a pair of walks. The Blue Raiders would not score again until plating a single run in the bottom of the third and one more in the bottom of the fifth.

Meanwhile, the Lions scored four runs in the top of the fourth to take a 9-2 lead. Three hits, a hit batsman, and a walk keyed the scoring. In the bottom of the fourth Sweeney led off with a double to right, Crognale singled to left and Leach punched out an RBI single to knock in Sweeney for the run. With two outs Hickoff walked to load the bases but Lions pitcher Dom Tozzi struck out Wagner looking to prevent further scoring.

The Raiders scored another single run in the bottom of the fifth when Jonah Troup raced home on a Camp Hill error. Troup had led off with a single to right. The Lions, however, pretty much put the game away by scoring four runs in the top of the sixth on RBI hits by Peyton Shore and Ben Tyler, a balk and a passed ball. Souders led off the bottom with a single but was left stranded. The Lions scored a single run in the top of the seventh and then held the Raiders scoreless in the home half to lock up the win.

We extend our sincere thanks to seniors Gavin Hickoff, Tim Wagner, Caden Sweeney, Michael Tuffy and Jayden Benner for their efforts as Middletown Blue Raider baseball players.