

Northern Region baseball tournament quarterfinals preview

Note: all games Monday

WEST SPRINGFIELD (15-8) vs. HERNDON (15-6) 1 p.m. at MADISON

Preview: Senior Josh Hammonds was the victim of bad luck in his last outing. He just happened to face Evan Frederickson on a day when he pitched a no-hitter, striking out 18 and handing Hammonds a tough-luck loss. But Hammonds is a quality pitcher, evidenced by his 6-2 record with a 2.87 ERA and 72 strikeouts in 53 2/3 innings. The Hornets' lineup is led by seniors Chris Nehl (.394, six homers, 27 RBI) and Eric Krznaric (.400, three homers, 21 RBI). West Springfield hasn't settled on its starting pitcher for today, though senior ace Kiernan Whitworth (7-1) is ready. Junior Matt Weaver has pitched well of late and could get the nod, thanks to his effective changeup. But the hard-throwing Whitworth, a second-team all-region performer, is coming off a district championship win over Lake Braddock. The scrappy Spartans have won five straight games.

First-round standouts: Senior outfielder Dan Finerfrock has played well all season for West Springfield, batting .440 with more than 20 stolen bases. In Friday's 9-0 win over Falls Church, he stole five bases. Senior pitcher Chris Peacock threw five shutout innings. Weaver hit a two-run homer. Herndon junior Daniel Lombardozzi (6-2, 3.06 ERA) pitched a complete-game two-hitter, striking out 11, to lead the Hornets to a 5-1 win over McLean. Nehl homered while junior Tate Swanson (.411 batting average) had two hits and scored two runs. Herndon scored three runs in the sixth to break open a close game.

LANGLEY (19-4) vs. HAYFIELD (12-11) 4 p.m. at MADISON

Preview: Hayfield likely will start sophomore left-hander Mike Graham (4-1, 2.47 ERA). The Hawks must field well, reversing a season-long problem. They've allowed 52 unearned runs, compared to 13 for Langley. Also, Hayfield's pitchers have walked 145 batters (87 more than Langley). But the Hawks can hit, with six regulars batting .359

or higher. They've scored at least six runs 13 times this season, including six of the last eight games. Seniors Matt Townsend (.429, 6 homers, 21 RBIs) and Steve Lloyd (.413, 22 RBIs) and junior Mike Marion (.359, four homers, 25 RBIs) lead the offense.

Langley junior Bryce Morrison (6-0, 3.02) will start, coming off a no-decision in the Liberty District final against Woodson. Morrison has pitched well all year, using a slider he learned from Saxons' ace Jimmy Saris. Langley's pitchers have been helped by an improved defense, on display in a 7-1 win over Westfield in the first round. Junior second baseman John Dammer and junior right fielder Daniel Brown both made outstanding plays to kill rallies.

First-round standouts: Marion had two hits, including a homer, to help Hayfield to a nine-inning 7-4 win over Washington-Lee. Senior Matt Lawler had three hits, including a two-run homer to tie the game at 4 in the fifth inning. Townsend pitched a complete game, striking out 14. Langley's Jimmy Saris pitched a complete-game as the Saxons used a seven-run second inning to beat defending champion Westfield, 7-1. Senior Alex Dadisman hit a three-run homer and senior Kyle Fraser hit a solo shot in the inning. Brown had two hits. Saris (6-0, 1.14) struck out seven and allowed eight hits.

OAKTON (18-5) vs. LAKE BRADDOCK (18-5) 1 p.m. at ROBINSON

Preview: The Bruins must compensate for the loss of senior all-district outfielder Patrick Clark, who broke his thumb after getting hit by a pitch in the Patriot District championship. He was batting .400 with 22 RBIs and playing well defensively. Junior Joe Infante is a strong defensive replacement. Lake Braddock will start senior Jared Campbell, a left-hander was 4-1 in the regular season. Oakton senior Evan Frederickson is coming off an 18-strikeout, no-hit performance in the Concorde District final over Herndon. He'll face a team capable of applying pressure, especially if he makes a mistake. But Frederickson, when on, is very tough to beat. One key for Oakton is the play of freshman catcher Keith Werman. He might be small but blocks pitches well and has

solidified the Cougars' defense. These teams met in the 2000 Northern Region championship, won by eventual state champion Oakton. The Cougars have advanced to the semifinals in three of the past four seasons.

First-round standouts: Senior Jason Kennedy pitched 4 2/3 innings for the win as the Bruins beat Mount Vernon, 4-2. Campbell pitched 2 1/3 innings of scoreless relief and delivered an RBI single in the sixth for an insurance run. Seniors Brett Garner and Greg Hoyt had RBI singles in the first. Oakton scored two runs in the bottom of the eighth, courtesy of one hit and four walks, to beat Marshall, 8-7. The Cougars had to rally from deficits of 4-0 and 6-3, the latter occurring in the sixth. But junior Curtis Eward tied the game in the bottom of the sixth with a single. Eward scored the tying run in the eighth. Senior Rollin Lynn had three hits, including a single in the eighth. Werman drew three walks, including one with the bases-loaded in the eighth to end the game.

ROBINSON (17-5) vs. W.T. WOODSON (18-5) 4 p.m. at ROBINSON

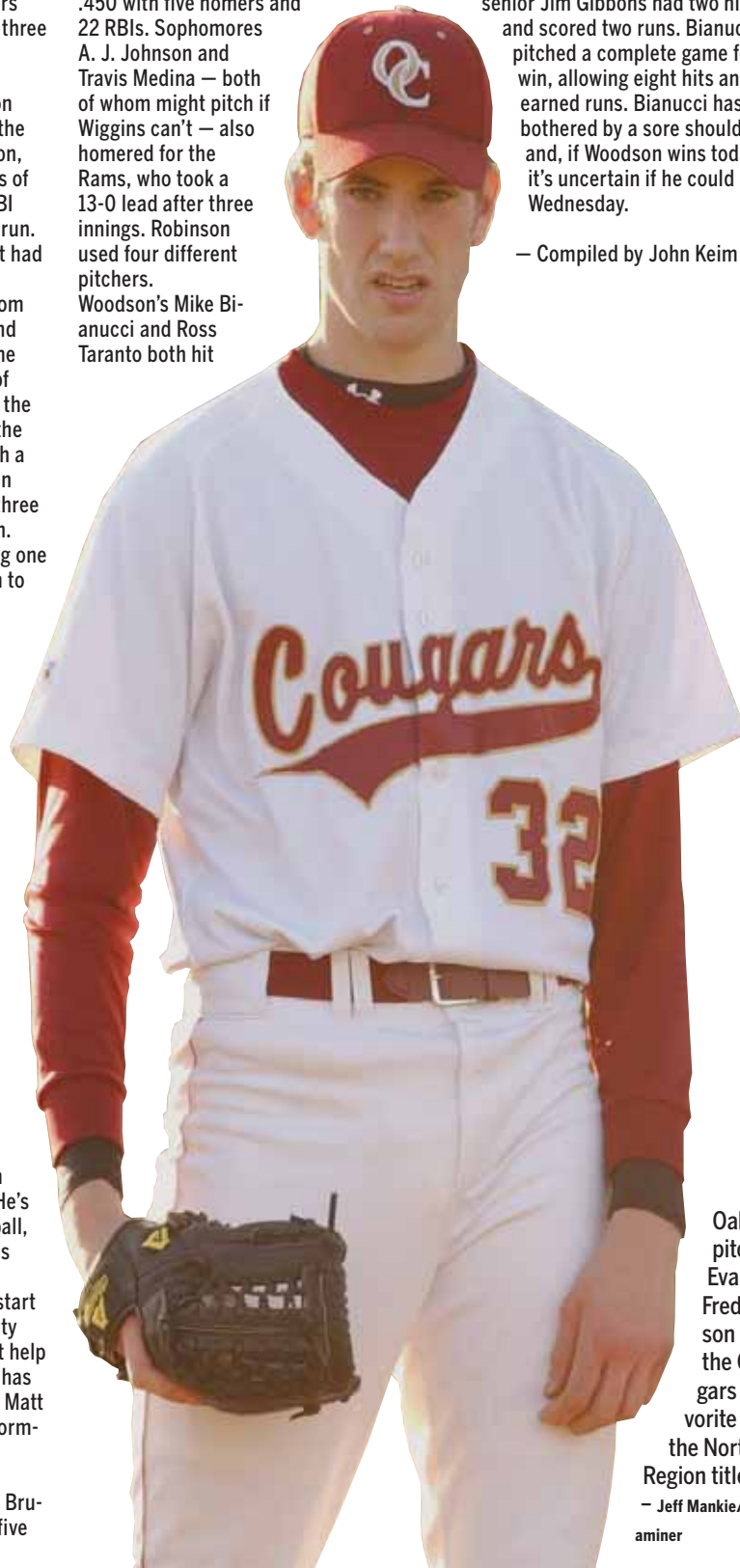
Preview: Robinson received bad news Friday when senior Spencer Wiggins aggravated a thigh injury, likely ending his season — at least in the field and at the plate. There's a chance he could pitch Wednesday if Robinson wins today. Wiggins was batting .450 with 15 steals and 19 RBIs from the leadoff position. But the Rams were helped Friday when senior Brad Kledzik (7-3) only threw two innings against Edison, saving him for today. After two rough outings to open the season, Kledzik has settled down and pitched well, with an ERA of 1.30 since those starts. He's trimmed a couple mph off his fastball, leading to better command of all his pitches. Woodson's Ross Taranto (7-0) will start today, coming off a win in the Liberty District championship. He must get help from the Cavaliers' defense, which has slipped the past two games. Junior Matt Noble, a first-team all-district performer, is hitting .360 with 22 RBIs.

First-round standouts: Senior Billy Brubaker hit two homers and drove in five

runs in Robinson's 14-5 win over Edison on Friday. Brubaker has quietly put together a strong season, batting .450 with five homers and 22 RBIs. Sophomores A. J. Johnson and Travis Medina — both of whom might pitch if Wiggins can't — also homered for the Rams, who took a 13-0 lead after three innings. Robinson used four different pitchers. Woodson's Mike Bianucci and Ross Taranto both hit

three-run homers in the first inning as the Cavaliers beat Chantilly, 9-7. Freshman Jacob Morley had three hits while senior Jim Gibbons had two hits and scored two runs. Bianucci pitched a complete game for the win, allowing eight hits and four earned runs. Bianucci has been bothered by a sore shoulder and, if Woodson wins today, it's uncertain if he could pitch Wednesday.

— Compiled by John Keim



Oakton pitcher Evan Frederickson makes the Cougars a favorite to win the Northern Region title.
— Jeff Mankie/Examiner

Area teams heating up the Northwest Region baseball tourney

BY JOHN KEIM

Special to The Examiner

One team scratched its way back to the top, spurred by the return of two players several weeks back. Another team survived a scare or two. And the other two teams enter as regular season champs, but upset victims in the tournament, though it only hurt one of them.

These four teams — Stonewall Jackson, Hylton, Gar-Field and Osbourn — begin play in the Northwest Region baseball tournament

Monday.

Cedar Run champion Stonewall (13-10) plays at Cardinal District tournament champion Hylton (15-8) at 1 p.m. and Gar-Field (13-8) plays at Osbourn (17-4) at 6 p.m.

In other Northwest games Monday, Halifax plays at Albemarle at 6 p.m. and Colonial Forge plays at G.W.-Danville at 6 p.m.

Osbourn retained the No. 1 seed, and the district banner, from the Cedar Run courtesy of its regular-season finish. Junior ace Tony Pasquariello is 8-1 with two saves

and is batting .353. Senior Colin Dunleavy, whose brother, Brian, played on the 2002 team, is batting .375 with six homers. Sophomore Kevin Kirk is hitting .386 and sophomore Brett Howell, son of coach Keith Howell, is batting .375 with a team-high 21 RBIs. Howell also is 3-2 with a 2.97 ERA.

Osbourn starts four sophomores and one freshman.

Gar-Field was upset by Woodbridge, 11-7, in the Cardinal District tournament. The Indians led 7-2 when junior ace pitcher Eddie

West, bothered part of the year by an elbow injury, was hit in the leg by a line drive. Later, he fouled off a pitch in the same area and left the game.

The Indians, winners of 10 of their last 13 games, have been led by senior pitcher Justin Martin (6-2).

Hylton beat Woodbridge, 2-1, for the district tournament championship, getting a game-winning single from Justin Kraft in the bottom of the seventh. Bulldogs pitcher Trevor Scott is 6-4, picking up

the win against Woodbridge, and has helped offset the loss of senior pitcher Ryan Wood to an injury. Wood can still play shortstop, however.

Stonewall is among the hottest teams entering the tournament, having won nine of its last 10 games. The Raiders received a boost when senior Garrett Smith (injury) and junior Chris Boggs (suspension) returned midseason. Both have pitched on the varsity for three seasons — Smith picked up the win over Potomac in the district final.