

Examiner Notebook **Baseball**

Compiled by John Keim

DUGOUT CHATTER

Surprise Saxons deepen rotation

Langley coach Jeff Ferrell wasn't sure how one pitcher would adjust to varsity competition. He didn't even consider the other a varsity pitcher, at least not this season. In less than three weeks, those opinions have changed — dramatically.

Langley junior Bryce Morrison is 3-0 with a 2.34 ERA, while sophomore teammate Daniel Hochberg is 2-0 and hasn't allowed an earned run in 11 innings. He pitched 3 2/3 innings in Friday's 3-1 Liberty District win over Lee, leaving only because of the flu. Langley is 8-2, 3-1 in the district.

While senior Jimmy Saris (Duke) is Langley's ace, the Saxons are optimistic because of their newfound pitching depth.

Ferrell promoted Hochberg for the spring break trip to Phoenix and watched him pitch a four-hit shutout, earning a longer look. Like Morrison, he has good command and throws an effective change-up.

Meanwhile, Saris already has a no-hitter this season and is 2-0 with a 1.18 ERA and 45 strikeouts in 23 2/3 innings.

"We don't have to throw Saris as much," Ferrell said. "We can keep him fresh for the end of the year. I don't think we could have done that last year."

Saris also leads Langley with a .533 batting average and 11 RBIs. Junior third baseman Kevin Corey is second in RBIs (eight) and first in homers (two).

So far, Herndon a hit

He never worried about his team's hitting before. Turns out he shouldn't have worried this season. At least not yet.

In the first five games before last night's game at Notre Dame, Herndon had scored at least six runs. But Hornets coach Al McCullock wants to see similar production as the schedule gets tougher.

"If we can hit the ball, we're going to be pretty good," McCullock said.

A second-year starter, senior catcher Chris Nehl is batting .333 with a team-high eight RBIs. Three players — senior Eric Krznic and juniors Dan Lombardozi and Tyler Martin — are all hitting over .400.

But pitching is the reason Herndon is optimistic. Lombardozi is 3-0 with a 2.27 ERA while senior Josh Hammonds is 1-0 with no earned runs in 10 innings. He pitched a no-hitter against Yorktown.

"I've never had two guys who throw hard like this," McCullock said.

Injury updates

■ Wakefield sophomore ace George Johnson, who missed 10 games with a broken finger, pitched the final four innings in a 3-2 National District win over Yorktown on Saturday. Johnson, 6-1 with a 1.48 ERA last spring, struck out 10 for the Warriors (5-6, 2-2 district).

■ Robinson senior center fielder/pitcher Spencer Wiggins remains sidelined with a high ankle sprain he suffered in a March 31 win over Centreville. Rams coach Bill Evers said it's likely Wiggins will miss at least another 10 days.

■ O'Connell senior Kevin Crum, a pitcher/shortstop, has been relegated strictly to first base duty all season because of an injured labrum in his pitching shoulder. He'll be re-examined by doctors April 26.

Herndon's lineup has been packing quite a punch so far, led by senior catcher Chris Nehl, who leads the Hornets with eight RBIs. — Jeff Mankie/Examiner

SCOUTING REPORT

Chris Bangs Washington-Lee Senior, Center fielder

Washington-Lee coach Doug Grove said he's never had a player start off as hot as Bangs. He is batting .545 with seven RBIs, nine runs scored and nine stolen bases. In a recent four-game stretch, Bangs had 10 hits in 14 at-bats. He's part of the reason W-L is 6-3 and 3-0 in the National District.

"He hits balls to the opposite field a lot and hits the ball well in gaps," Wakefield coach George Baker said. "He has good speed and is just a real good contact hitter."

TOP FIVE

1. Westfield (8-0)

Next game: vs. Oakton, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Last game: Beat Hayfield, 13-12, Thursday

2. Paul VI (15-0)

Next game: At St. Mary's-Ryken (Md.), Tuesday, 3:30 p.m.
Last game: Beat Gonzaga (D.C.), 2-1, Friday

3. Oakton (5-3)

Next game: at Westfield, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Last game: Beat Madison, 9-2, Saturday

4. Herndon (5-0)

Next game: vs. Jefferson, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Last game: At Notre Dame Academy, Monday night; beat South Lakes, 11-1, Wednesday

5. Hylton (6-1)

Next game: at Forest Park, Tuesday, 6 p.m.
Last game: Beat Centreville, 4-2, Wednesday

Note: Records are through April 10.

GAME OF THE WEEK

Oakton at Westfield Tuesday • 6:30 p.m.

This Concorde District matchup features Oakton pitcher Evan Frederickson against Westfield shortstop Brandon Snyder, both of whom might be drafted in June. Every major league team is likely to be represented at this game.

Westfield will counter with senior John Lloyd (2-0, 3.94 ERA). Frederickson (1-1) lost twice to Westfield last spring. The Bulldogs, who homered 28 times last season, have hit only one in 2005. Snyder is batting .708. Meanwhile, Oakton has won five of six.

