

## **SO FAR, SO very GOOD**

Lee Stubbs  
Editor

It's a little too early in the season to make comparisons. But, with the way the Platte County baseball team has bolted out of the starting gate, one can't help but think of the Pirates' 2002 state championship team. Like that squad — which won the state title game 19-1 — this year's version of the Pirates has bludgeoned most of its foes into submission. After Monday night's 15-2, five-inning whipping of Pleasant Hill at Pirates Field, Platte County had outscored their opponents 81-14 in rolling to a 7-0 start.

Platte County coach Greg Jaros, who has seen his share of hot starts in 24 years at the Pirates' helm, isn't getting too excited about this team — yet.

"I think we need to wait and see how we handle some good pitching; we haven't seen too much of that so far this season," he said. "But, I like the look of this squad. We've got a nice mix of young players and veterans."

Monday afternoon, it was senior Tyler Ryun who set off most of the offensive fireworks. Ryun hit two doubles before launching a no-doubt grand slam home run in the fourth inning. The blast was the fifth round-tripper of the spring for Ryun, who drove in six runs in the game.

Overall, Platte County tallied 14 hits, including two apiece from Brennan Blaha and Kyle Knox, which was way more than enough for left-hander Cameron Kuhn, who picked up his third win of the season by pitching into the fifth inning. He struck out five and gave up four hits and two runs before giving way to sophomore Jeff Cline, who retired the final two hitters.

Platte County was scheduled to play at Pembroke Hill Tuesday (April 10) before traveling to St. Joseph for an anticipated Midland Empire Conference battle versus Benton Thursday (April 12). The Pirates will compete in the Northland Tournament next week.

**Pirates 15, Raytown South 9**

Platte County won a slugfest April 3 at Raytown South and had to overcome an early deficit to do it. The Pirates jumped to a 3-0 lead in the first inning on Jake Guthier's home run, but the Cardinals answered with five runs in the bottom of the first off starting pitcher Ty Bailey. Sophomore hurler Brett Slobodzian entered the game in the second and threw the final six frames, allowing four runs on seven hits.

Meanwhile, Platte County racked up 21 hits and scored 10 runs in the final three innings for the win. Nick Maxwell had three hits and four RBI, while Guthier, Ryun, Taylor Sampsell and Duncan Billings each rapped out three hits.

**Pirates 2, Smithville 0**

Platte County moved to 2-0 in the MEC with a hard-fought win on a cold blustery day at T-Bones Stadium in Kansas City, Kan. Ryun went the distance on the hill for the Pirates and allowed just one hit while striking out 10 in seven innings.

The Pirates scored both of their runs in the fourth inning on doubles by Ryun and Marty Beamer and a Smithville error. In all, Platte County managed six hits off Warriors ace Andrew Jones.

## **AGAINST THE WIND: Track teams endure blustery start**

Citizen Staff Report

After the first two weeks of the season, the Platte County track teams know what it feels like to be postal carriers. While the return-to-winter-weather in the area has been rough on all spring sports teams in the area, it has really provided hardships for track teams, who have fought through wind, rain, sleet and even a few snow flurries in recent days in trying to post personal bests in running, jumping and throwing events.

"This spring has been one of the toughest, weather-wise, that I've seen," said Platte County track coach Doug Kingery. "I'm surprised we haven't had more kids turn up sick than what we have."

Kingery said one of the goals of track teams is to set goals for specific times or distances and then try and meet/beat them as the season progresses and postseason meets near. He said that's been hard to do with the inclement weather. He also said that the KU Relays, which attracts some of the top high school track athletes in the region, pushed back its deadline for entries to later this week so athletes could better their times.

Still, he said his teams are progressing.

“Last week at Kearney, it was just brutal, but we had Cheyenne Verdoorn set her best time of the season in the 400 and Ashton Stubbs set her best time in the 800,” he said.

At the Kearney meet April 5, the Platte County girls placed sixth with 53 points, 11 points behind fifth place Winnetonka. Raymore-Peculiar won the meet with 122 points, while Kearney placed second (92), Excelsior Springs was third (90) and Park Hill South was fourth (87).

Leading the way for the Lady Pirates was Verdoorn, who won the 400-meter dash with a time of one minute, .55 seconds; Stubbs, who won the 800 with a time of 2:25.79; and the 1,600 relay team of Alyssa Crabtree, Tiffany Ryun, Stubbs and Verdoorn, which won with a time of 4:20.84.

Also performing well was Crabtree, who placed fourth in the 800; Elle Jenkins, fourth in the 3,200; Amanda Black, eighth in the 300 hurdles; Chandrika Brewton, fifth in the triple jump and sixth in the long jump; and the 800 relay team of Paige Malinowski, Alyssa Jackson, Ryun and Verdoorn which placed fourth.

On the boys’ side, the Pirates placed eighth with 38 points, 11 points behind St. Pius X. Ruskin won the meet with 118.5 points, while Kearney was second with 89.

Platte County had several boys who placed in the middle ranks of the top 10, including Gavin Frost in the 400, fourth place; Elijah Tylski, fifth in the 800 and 1,600; Dustin Menk, fourth in the 300 hurdles and sixth in the 110 hurdles; the 400 relay team of Kaleb Sherry, Seth Swope, Shawn Woolridge and Marcus Spearman, seventh place; the 800 relay team of Sherry, Swope, Spearman and Menk, fifth place; the 1,600 relay team of Menk, Woolridge, Frost and Brade Frame, fifth place; Jerome Spearman, seventh place in the shot put; and Ryan Williams, sixth place in the discus.

At Harrisonville March 29, the Platte County girls placed second, just 10 points behind Kearney with Clinton, Oak Grove, Odessa, Harrisonville, Holden, O’Hara and Louisburg rounding out the field, respectively.

Winning events for the Lady Pirates were the 3,200 relay team of Crabtree, Jenkins, Stubbs and Kelsie Blakley; Verdoorn in the 400; Stubbs in the 800; and the 1,600 relay team of Amanda Smith, Ryun, Stubbs and Verdoorn. Also scoring points were Blakley, third in the 1,600; Crabtree, eighth in the 1,600; the 400 relay team of Mariccia Spearman, Kelsie Weedin, Brewton and Ryun, second place; Weedin, sixth in the 400; Black, second in the 300 hurdles; Jenkins, second in the 3,200; Gonzalez, seventh in the 3,200; Brewton, third in the long jump and triple jump; and Rachel White and Becky Brown, second and third in the pole vault, respectively.

Meanwhile, the boys team placed fifth with 76.5 points, just six points behind No. 4 Oak Grove with Harrisonville (142) winning the meet, Kearney (128.5) placing second and Louisburg (84) third.

There were two second-place performances for Platte County — the 400 relay team of Sherry, Marccus Spearman, Woolridge and Swope; and the 1,600 relay team of Menk, Shawn Huntley, Frame and Frost. Also scoring points for the Pirates were the fourth place team of Ethan McLean, Alex Cooper, Brett Huntley and Tylski in the 3,200; Menk, fourth in the 110 hurdles and 300 hurdles; Frame, seventh in the 300 hurdles and eighth in the 110 hurdles; Sherry, fifth in the 100; Swope, tied for sixth in the 100; the third place 800 relay team of Sherry, Marcus Spearman, Menk and Swope; Tylski, third in the 1,600; Frost, third in the 400; Marccus Spearman, sixth in the 200; McLean, sixth in the 3,200; Cooper, seventh in the 3,200; Travis Cash, sixth in the discus; John Dang, fifth in the pole vault; and Matt Rhodes, sixth in the pole vault.

## **Panthers win two at home**

Citizen Staff Report

The North Platte baseball team got what it wanted last week — two wins in two games played at home in Dearborn.

The Panthers scored six runs in the sixth inning against Plattsburg April 5 and came back from behind to defeat the Tigers 7-4. It was the kind of performance that North Platte coach Dan Biermann had been looking for from his team.

“We played excellent defense all night and offensively we put pressure on them throughout the game, then broke loose in the sixth,” Biermann said. “Mitch Giger came back from some arm problems and threw extremely well, throwing plenty of strikes and keeping his pitch count down.”

The Tigers scored single runs in the first, second, fifth and sixth frames before North Platte came alive in the bottom of the sixth. Luke Boydston started the comeback with a double, then Giger walked and Jacob Homan singled. Wes Johnson and Zach Sears then followed with a pair of doubles as North Platte scored six of their seven runs. Sears came in as relief pitcher and picked up his first win. Biermann said his freshman pitcher showed a lot of poise and threw strikes which equaled ground outs.

The win even North Platte's record at 3-3 overall and gave the Panthers their first KCI Conference win after two losses. The Panthers had two more conference games scheduled for this week (at Mid-Buchanan April 10 and at home against Lathrop April 12) before heading to Faucett for the Mid-Buchanan tournament April 14, where North Platte will play in a games at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

The Panthers picked up a 4-1 win against South Nodaway April 3 as Brenden Hensley threw a no-hitter and Nate Romey had the big hit with a single in the sixth inning to score two runners. Sears led North Platte with a 3-for-3 performance at the plate.

Hensley walked the bases loaded in the second inning with one out before striking out the next two batters to get out of the jam. He finished the game with 13 strikeouts and six walks.

"We played much better defense with only one error," Biermann said. "We had nine hits but we need more contact throughout the batting order. Brenden fought his way through some control issues, but he did get the strikes when needed."