

Grizzlies seek HCAC baseball championship

FC starts season today in Florida

Special to the Daily Journal

Franklin College hopes the third time is the charm in its quest for a berth in the NCAA Division III tournament in the spring baseball season. Last year was another near-miss for the Grizzlies. Compiling one of its best victory totals ever, they won the regular-season championship in the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference,



CLARK



VERDEYEN

earning the privilege of hosting the league's tournament. But as happened in 2002, Manchester College claimed the tournament title and the league's automatic bid to the NCAA playoffs. The Grizzlies finished 15-6 in the HCAC and 29-15 overall, the

second-best win total in the program's history. Franklin led the league in team batting average and team earned-run average and earned its highest-ever national ranking, No. 24, among Division III schools as rated by the American Baseball Coaches Association. Franklin also was rated a best-ever third in the NCAA III Mid-east Region, and eighth-year head coach Lance Marshall was honored as the league's top coach for the second time. Despite losing three power hitters and a veteran pitcher to graduation, the Grizzlies are favored in a poll of conference coaches to

win the HCAC championship. The top returning player is HCAC Player of the Year and Rawlings/American Baseball Coaches Association Division III All-Mid-east Region First Team honoree David Verdeyen, a third baseman and one of six seniors. A three-time all-NCAC selection, Verdeyen led the HCAC in batting average (.434), home runs (seven) and RBIs (21) while playing in 16 league contests. In conference games, he finished with 12 runs scored, 48 total bases and a .906 slugging percentage. Also returning to the lineup are senior second baseman Nate Roberts, senior catcher Ben

Werner, junior center fielder Lance LaBonte and junior shortstop David Federoff. The Grizzlies bring back the bulk of their experience on the mound. The pitching staff will be led by sophomore Andy Clark and senior Brandon McWhorter. Clark, last year's HCAC Freshman of the Year, completed the conference schedule with a 5-2 record and a 2.34 earned-run average. McWhorter compiled a 7-2 record and finished with a 2.36 ERA, giving up 20 earned runs in 76-1/3 innings pitched. He had 25 walks and 54 strikeouts and was named the National College Base-

ball Writers Association's Pitcher of the Week after posting two consecutive shutout victories in key HCAC contests. Other returning pitchers who started games last year include junior left-hander Dustin Eck, who was 4-3 with a 4.56 ERA; senior right-hander Dan Shearin, who was 1-2 with a 4.84 ERA; and senior right-hander Brian Rejer, who was 2-0 with a 4.50 ERA. Franklin begins its season today against Rose-Hulman in the Port Charlotte Invitational in Florida. The Grizzlies open their home schedule at 1 p.m. March 4 with a doubleheader against North Park University.



PERFECT SEASONS

The Edinburgh sixth-grade boys basketball team recently won the Tri-County Tournament at East Side Elementary School in Edinburgh to complete a 14-0 season. The Lancers finished 12-0 last season. Members of the team are, front row from left, Corey Burton and Zack Burton; second row from left, Andrew Burroughs, Kyle Wuest, Trenton Browning, Nick Litchfield and manager Nathan Bacha; and back row from left, coach Ronnie Burton, Tyler Golden, Jake Emerson, Braydon Hill, Jordan Burton, Josh Swallows and Derrick Coleman.



TOURNEY CHAMPS

The Edinburgh fifth-grade boys basketball team recently won the Tri-County Tournament at East Side Elementary School in Edinburgh. Members of the team are, front row from left, Tyler Bailey, Kaleb Giles, Blake Durbin, Trae England and Christian Sutt; second row from left, Ryan Blaker, Shawn Chandler, Trent Tatlock, Dustin Sharp, Austin Wilhite and Nathan King; and back row from left, Jamie Phillips and coach Shaun Rosser.



COUNTY WINNERS

The Center Grove Middle School Central seventh-grade boys basketball team recently won the Johnson County Tournament championship. Members of the team include, front row from left, cheerleaders Brooke Watkins, Jessica Edelman, Brittany Terhune, Alex Smith, Sam Rush, Jamie Christy, Emily Quakenbush, Alyssa Bray and Brittany Waldo; second row from left, Ben Whitehead, Craig Lotz, Jonathan Marlin, Brian Jansen, Tyler Evans, Mark Kwiatkowski, Nick Stoner and Nathan Cook; and back row from left, coach Jim Williams, Isaac Cartwright, Kyle Paddock, Andrew Gudeman, Bryce Krebs, Joel Hale, Brad Menke, Steven Flaherty, Jon Clawson, Isaac Duke, Brad Robley, Brandon Gridley and coach Bill Wickham. Not pictured are players Brandon Leap and Davis Wentland, managers Yuta Nakamura and Ryan Starr, and cheerleader Lydia Ward.



CHEER CHAMPIONS

Tiffany's Cheer & Dance Studio Pee Wee Silver Cheer Champions recently competed against seven other teams at the Super Jam Jamfest Competition in Dayton, Ohio, and took first place. It was the team's sixth first-place finish of the season. Tiffany's Cheer Champions also were awarded the Most Entertaining Award for choreography at the Jamfest competition. Members of the team are, front row from left, Skylar Rathz, MaKenzie McAtee, Alexis Harris, Michela Wilson, Katie Reynolds, Joanna Moran and Gwen Feldmeyer; and back row from left, Linsey Sullivan, Jordan Wood and Alex Bilbrey.

Houston's Bagwell set to play

By CHRIS DUNCAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KISSIMMEE, Fla.

Jeff Bagwell made his anticipated arrival at spring training Friday, ready to test the surgically repaired shoulder that has created a multimillion-dollar dispute with the Houston Astros.

The 37-year-old slugging first baseman is guaranteed \$17 million this season, but the Astros filed an insurance claim in January and can recoup \$15.6 million if Bagwell retires or is deemed too disabled to play.

Bagwell, who has played 15 seasons for the Astros, has said the team wants him to quit and that the situation has created a rift that may never be resolved.

Owner Drayton McLane addressed the NL champions before Friday's workout and made a special point to shake hands with Bagwell. McLane said the two talked briefly and that he wanted to meet with Bagwell during the next few days.

"It's like everything in life: Close relationships have different experiences as you go," McLane said. "I've been closer to Jeff than any other player in my history of the Astros. This is a difficult time for him, and that's where friends help friends, and that's what I'm here to do."

Bagwell is Houston's all-time leader in home runs (449), RBIs (1,529) and runs scored (1,517).

But he missed 115 games last season after surgery on his deteriorating right shoulder in June. He returned late in the season and could bat but could not throw. He went 1 for 8 with an RBI and a run in the World Series.

New book takes swings at some of baseball's myths

By MARK PRATT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON

The story has been repeated for decades. It perhaps reached its peak during the 2004 playoffs when the Boston Red Sox beat the New York Yankees and went on to sweep St. Louis for their first World Series title in 86 years.

It goes something like this: Red Sox owner Harry Frazee sold Babe Ruth to the Yankees in 1920

because he needed the money to finance a Broadway musical, "No, No Nanette."

As a result of the deal, the Yankees became baseball's dominant and most storied team, winning 26 championships in the next 81 years. The Red Sox, shackled by the Curse of the Bambino, became baseball's lovable losers, reaching the World Series every decade or so, only to find some bizarre and heart-breaking way to lose.

The problem is, it's not true. At least according to a new book by Michael Kun and Howard Bloom, "The Baseball Uncyclopedia," a series of vignettes that challenges myths of the game.

Frazee did not need money to finance his Broadway musical, Kun said. He was already wealthy and a successful Broadway producer. "No, No Nanette" had not even been written at the time of the deal and would not debut for another five years.

Frazee simply did not like Ruth and wanted him off the team.

The authors also pontificate on the worst team nickname in the major leagues and worst uniforms in baseball history. They argue over whether Nolan Ryan and Cal Ripken Jr. were great players.

"People are supposed to read it, maybe learn a little bit, maybe have a chuckle, and then have an interesting conversation," Bloom said. "If that's what we do, we've accomplished our purpose."

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For more information call:
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