

# Indians working toward another 'small ball' season

**By MIKE GILMORE**  
 Larned veteran coach Chad Erway's "small ball" coaching strategy is simple – in theory. Throw strikes, the other team doesn't score; make contact in the box and run the bases, you score. You score more than the other guys, you win.

That makes a coach's job really easy, Erway said.

It starts with the mound.

"If you can't go out and throw strikes and play the game, everything we do on the sidelines could be considered over-coaching," Erway mused. "When your pitcher's walking guys, you can't do any strategy stuff. Ninety percent of baseball defensive strategy is keeping runners out of scoring position; if those runners are being walked, they're going to be in scoring position and walking across the plate and you can't do any more about it."

Of late, Erway's teams have rode the "small ball" style of play through the season to league champi-

onships and beyond. Last year, however, the Indians' win streak stopped at seven games in first-round regional play against Russell in Hoisington, ending the Tribe's season at 14-7.

Russell snapped a five-game losing streak with the 9-0 win, that Mother Nature had a hand in win an approaching spring storm. On the ground, however, the Tribe made five errors and delivered seven walks that contributed to Russell winning pitcher Kyle Farmer's cause.

In 2018, a lineup of players in new positions is joined by a sprinkling of newcomers hoping to chip their way through the season, Erway said.

Again, it starts on the mound.

"For us to be competitive this year, we're going to have to find some pitchers willing to settle into that three or four role, because of the pitch counts," Erway said. "When you don't have a three, four or a five, what you're asking your starter to do is throw

a complete game. That won't happen that often any more.

"We know that again, we're going to have to manufacture runs and we have been fortunate in the past few years to have two or three guys that could long ball it a little bit. We're going to have to bunt, hit and run to be successful."

Seniors Austin Gladow and Alex Barger will be called upon to fill starting pitcher roles, with Barger doubling in infield or outfield and Gladow at third. The bullpen also includes seniors Hunter Fitzpatrick, Mason Burris, Nick Orth Jordan Taylor and Carson Smith. Others tagged for the mound in the early going include junior Brayden Rupp, and sophomores Braydon Lemuz and Mason Perez and freshmen Dillan Smith, Adian Smith and Jack Stelter.

Also on defense, senior Shevin Martin, from summer Legion play, will be trading in track spikes for a fielder's glove, Erway said. "It looks like Shevin is going to be our every-



Senior Austin Gladow

day center fielder," Erway noted. "He's obviously got speed; he can chase the ball down; he's not new and we know he's got ability. We are going to have to work on his bat a little."

Erway and his coaching staff will be doing some mixing and matching in the early season to be

able to ink in the lineup. "Like everything else, we will be shaking the rust off early and we haven't played this early in the season in a long time. The problem with a 20-game schedule is that there's not much time to fix anything.

You wait too long and the next thing you know it's the middle of the season and it's almost too late."

Larned opened the season in a Central Kansas League twinbill against Kingman on Tuesday at Moffet Stadium.



Senior Alex Barger

**Have A Memorable Season**



Providing Insurance and Financial Services  
 Home Office, Bloomington, IL 61710

**Kale L. Erway, Agent**

621 Broadway, Larned, KS 67550  
 620-285-6955 • 1-800-790-6955

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE AREA TEAMS!**

We're Big Fans of Spring Sports!



114 W. 14th  
 America's Drive-In  
 285-6400 Larned

*Wishing all teams the best for a Good Season, Good Sportsmanship and Good Health!*

**MARTIN LAW OFFICE**  
 702 BROADWAY  
 LARNED, KS  
 620-285-3813

**GROSS FLYING SERVICE**

Serving the aerial agriculture needs of Pawnee and the surrounding counties.

**620-285-5609**

Steve & Brenda Gross  
 Locally Owned

**Honest Dependable Service!**

**Good Luck Indians!**

**Agri-Fuels LLC**  
 Total Fuel Management

112 Main St. • Larned, KS  
 • 620-285-3016 •

**GOOD LUCK to all our Larned Indians!**

As sports fans ~ we appreciate your efforts and hard work.

**DON'S MOTOR SERVICE**  
 AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR

212 W. 5th • Larned  
 • 620-285-6486 •

**Save Your Soles**

Give your favorite footwear a new lease on life. We offer a full line of professional shoe repair, resoling and restoration services, all at great prices.

We repair shoes, boots, purses, tack, chaps, saddles and even zippers!  
 Wide variety of leather accessories - phone cases, belts and wallets.  
 Used tack for sale.

**THE BOOT DOCTOR**

1306 Kansas, Great Bend  
 620-792-3008

**OLATHE BOOT CO.**  
**Jonny Lama BOOTS**  
**Justin BOOTS**

**INAPA AUTO & TRUCK PARTS**

**Cheering All Spring Sports Athletes to Victory!**

**LARNED AUTO PARTS, LLC.**  
 211 WEST 4TH STREET • LARNED  
 620-285-3195