

Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

With IHSA regional play kicking off, I decided it was a great time to look back at how the local teams have fared in past seasons.

The Villa Grove softball team will kick things off on Tuesday, May 14, facing the winner of the St. Thomas More/Mt. Pulaski tilt. With such a strong tradition, it's hard to believe that, according to the IHSA web site, it's been 14 years since the Blue Devils have claimed regional hardware with a 4-2 win over Paris. For the baseball team, you have to go back to 2002, when the Blue Devils shut out Westville 2-0 to claim the regional title. The previous year, Villa Grove claimed the regional title by drubbing Georgetown Ridge Farm 12-1 and Unity 8-2 in their sectional opener, they dropped a 1-0 heartbreaker to a Newton nine who would go on to claim the state title.

Heritage softball has had more recent success, riding the strong pitching of Hillary Smith to a 3-1 win over Danville

Schlarman to earn the title. The Hawks would then drop a 1-0 heartbreaker to Cumberland in the sectional opener.

Heritage baseball playing as the East Central COOP, defeated Kansas 6-0 to claim the 2013 regional. They would then fall to Salt Fork 6-3 in the sectional opener.

In 2010, Heritage, behind the stellar play of All Area performers Cole Judy and Hunter Essig, advanced to the Sectional final by defeating Tuscola in the Regional final and Sullivan in the Sectional opener before dropping a 7-3 heartbreaker on a walk off homer to Salt Fork.

According to IHSA.org, 1993 was the last time that Unity won a baseball regional. Information about who they played along the way is tough to find, so if any readers have the details, I'd love to hear about the team.

Unity softball on the other hand, is embellishing its rich softball history by establishing a mini-dynasty under the watchful tutelage of coach

Aimee Smith. In 2017, the Rockets defeated VGH 14-4 to claim the regional crown, and in 2016, UHS defeated GCMS 10-0 in the regional final and beat Eureka 6-5 in their sectional opener before falling to longtime nemesis SJO 5-3 in the sectional final.

The relative sparsity of teams on this list is a testament to the difficulty of winning post-season hardware in softball and baseball. The 2019 UHS and VG softball teams both enter tournament play after winning over 20 games, and the VGH baseball team has won 18. A young Unity baseball squad, featuring only 3 seniors, has experienced some growing pains, but counts a win over a stout SJO squad amongst its victories. Heritage, led by senior Gracyn Allen and junior Aliya Holloman, have made strides this season, as well.

The post season is the time when magic happens, and the pieces are there for one of the area teams to make some noise. I can't wait to see the results.

WEEKLY SPORTS WRAP-UP

VGH baseball Tame Panthers

Evan Wilson allowed no earned runs, fanning 3 in 4 innings, as VGH defeated Oblong 9-4 on May 6. The Hawks tallied 8 runs in the 5th inning to ice the game away. Nick Coffin drove in 2 runs and Kane Davison scored twice to lead the way offensively.

Bust Broncos Noah Davison doubled and tripled, scoring 4 times, and Ryan Cheatham drove in 4 runs to lead VGH to a 12-3 win over Cerro Gordo-Bement on May 8. Mason Wyant drove in 3 runs and pitched 6 innings of 6 hit ball to earn the win.

Unseated by Knights ALAH scored 4 unearned runs to defeat VGH 6-5 on May 9. Carson Howard took the loss, giving up 2 earned runs in 4 innings of work. Keagan Patterson doubled and drove in 2 runs to lead the way offensively.

Fall to Pirates Defensive failings were

again the Hawks undoing as they dropped a 7-3 decision to Cumberland on May 10. Evan Wilson took the loss, giving up 2 earned runs in 6 innings, while fanning 6. Ryan Cheatham drove in 2 runs for VGH.

Glared by Rockets For the third straight game, unearned runs proved to be the Hawks undoing as they fell to Unity 3-2 on May 11. Keagan Patterson took the loss, allowing just 3 runs, all of which were unearned. Nick Coffin and Kane Davison drove in runs for VGH.

VG Softball Ground Hawks Reagan Cheely threw a complete game one-hitter, as Villa Grove clinched Heritage 11-0 on May 1. Madie Burwell drove in 4 runs and Kyleigh Block doubled to lead the way offensively.

Jousted by Knights Kyleigh Block doubled twice and drove in a run, but it wasn't enough as Villa Grove dropped a 4-2 decision to ALAH on May 3. Jordyn

Ray took the loss, giving up 4 earned runs on 10 hits.

Buck Broncos Reagan Cheely smacked 2 triples, and Chelsea Harrison added a 3-bagger of her own to power the Blue Devils to a 12-0 win over CGB on May 8. Reagan Cheely drove in 3 runs, and Madie Burwell and Chelsea Harrison drove in 2 as well. Kyleigh Block scattered 5 hits to earn the complete game win.

Clean Streaks Jordyn Ray pitched a complete game 6 hitter, fanning 5, as Villa Grove clinched the LOVC SE conference title with a 9-0 win over Martinsville on May 9. Reagan Cheely, Madie Burwell and Vanessa Wright each drove in 2 runs to lead the Devils, offensively.

Junior High Track & Field The seventh grade 4x400m relay team, consisting of Braydon Dowler, Layne Rund, Gunner Cline and Brady Clodfelder sped to a 4th place finish at the IESA state track meet.

Wise or Otherwise cont'd from page 4

all playing and a group of fourth graders ended up on "the line." We stood there for a few moments watching the older kids run, jump and play in that Camelot of playground fun on the other side. Next year, it would be ours but why not now? That is when our friend bolted. He had an electric look in his eye and a huge grin on his face. One last glance and he was free.

Whistles were blaring immediately as he ran towards the first set of swings, then past

the teeter-totters he was now being pursued by the older kids who had been alerted to the intruder. After the second swings, he was almost caught by the posse but with a deft juke and roll on the ground he left them in the dust.

Past the jungle gym, around the trees, you could not hear the yells or whistles from the teachers anymore because we all stood there, on the yellow line, screaming and cheering for our classmate and friend, RUN! RUN! RUN!

He was never caught as he deftly bobbed and weaved through his would-be captors. He ran back across the ball courts, past the water fountain and four square court he came. Walter Payton would have been proud of this freedom run. He came running right back up to the teachers, one placing his hand on his back and walking silently back into the school. The teachers tried to look serious but had a glint in their eye that just maybe they had enjoyed what they

had just witnessed as well.

Our classmate had a huge smile on his face not of defiance or smugness but of exhilaration. We stood quietly now smiling back and fully understanding "the run over the yellow line." It was exhilarating!


We learned so much during our school days, I don't mean to discount any of the classroom learning as it was excellent. However it was that one day on the playground that I learned a valuable lesson. We will be faced with just such

obstacles in life which we see or we are told are huge and insurmountable.

At times, you need to break across the yellow line to make that run and at other times you must stand behind and cheer your friends on. You do it together as friends, family and

community - then the yellow line does not seem all that big when you look back.

Congratulations graduates, to you and your families! We are standing on the yellow line cheering you on! GO FOR IT!



Just a reminder of our coming move to downtown Villa Grove!
Our utility/administrative offices will soon be located at:

120 North Main Street

We will close on Monday, May 20 and will re-open at the new location on Thursday, May 23.

Our phone number will remain the same and should not be down for any extended length of time during the move. Water emergencies should still be called to 832-4721 for the office to handle during business hours or select the on-call serviceman after hours.

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2019 VILLA GROVE/HERITAGE HAWKS BOYS BASEBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Record	Result
Mar 11	SJO	0-1	0-1
Mar 12	@ Marshall	ppd	0-1
Mar 13	@ Salt Fork	ppd	0-1
Mar 14	Urbana	ppd	0-1
Mar 16	Paris	W,L 6-5, 8-11	1-2
Mar 18	@ Monticello	L	0-9 1-3
Mar 19	@ Armstrong	W	11-0 2-3
Mar 20	Sullivan	W	5-3 3-3
Mar 22	@ BH	L	8-11 3-4
Mar 26	@ Judah	W	11-3 4-4
Mar 28	Oakwood	L	1-3 4-5
Mar 29	@ Arcola	ppd	
Mar 30	@ Blue Ridge	ppd	
Apr 01	@ Pal-Hut	W	10-0 5-5
Apr 02	LSA	W	17-15 6-5
Apr 04	G-RF	W	7-3 7-5
Apr 05	@ M'ville	W	10-0 8-5
Apr 08	@ C'land	L	3-8 8-6
Apr 10	Oblong	W	12-2 9-6
Apr 11	@ Fisher	W	15-2 10-6
Apr 12	Tri-County	W	18-5 11-6
Apr 16	Schlarman	W	21-0 12-6
Apr 17	@ Hutsonville	W	12-9 13-6
Apr 18	AOC	ppd	
Apr 22	Martinsville	W	15-1 14-6
Apr 23	@ Tuscola	L	2-10 14-7
Apr 29	@ Tri-County	W	11-0 15-7
May 04	Neoga (DH)	ppd	
May 06	@Oblong	W	9-4 16-7
May 08	Cerro Gordo	W	12-3 17-7
May 09	ALAH	L	5-6 17-8
May 11	@ Unity	L	2-3 17-9
May 15	IHSA Regional vs SJO @ Unity		

HEAD COACH Jason Conn

2019 VGH Girl's Track & Field Schedule

Mar 09	@ EIU invite
Mar 13	@ Uni High (Armory)
Mar 19	@ Arcola
Mar 26	@ Arcola
Mar 28	@ Tuscola
Apr 05	@ ALAH
Apr 09	@ Salt Fork Invite
Apr 12	@ Unity (girls)
Apr 19	@ Tuscola
Apr 23	@ ALAH
Apr 26	@ Monticello
May 03	@ Arcola (LOVC meet)

HEAD COACH Heath Wilson

2019 VILLA GROVE Blue Devils GIRLS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Record	Result
Mar 12	@ MS	L	4-7 0-1
Mar 18	Tuscola	L	3-6 0-2
Mar 19	@ Unity	L	9-10 0-3
Mar 20	Urbana	W	11-2 1-3
Mar 21-24	@TENN	LLLLW	2-7
Mar 26	GRF	W	10-9 3-7
Mar 27	@ AO	W	9-0 4-7
Mar 28	Windsor	L	1-18 4-8
Mar 29	Okaw Valley	ppd	
Mar 30	@ Rantoul	ppd	
Apr 01	@ C'land	W	4-3 5-8
Apr 02	@ SJO	L	2-7 5-9
Apr 03	Tri-County	W	25-0 6-9
Apr 05	@ Oblong	ppd	
Apr 08	Martinsville	W	15-0 7-9
Apr 09	Centennial	W	16-6 8-9
Apr 10	@ Hut-Pal	W,W	16-1,9-1 10-9
Apr 11	@ Fisher	L	4-6 10-10
Apr 15	vs Heritage	W	10-0 11-10
Apr 16	@ Casey	W	2-0 12-10
Apr 17	Cumberland	W	3-2 13-10
Apr 18	@ Blue Ridge	ppd	
Apr 19	@ Tri-County W (forfeit)		14-10
Apr 22	Oblong (DH)	L,W	3-10, 9-6 15-11
Apr 23	Salt Fork	W	11-1 16-11
Apr 25	@ Arcola	ppd	
May 01	@ Heritage	W	11-0 17-11
May 02	Armstrong	ppd	
May 03	ALAH	L	2-4 17-12
May 08	Cerro Gordo	W	12-0 18-12
May 09	@ Martinsville	W	12-6 19-12
May 10	@ PBL	W	8-7 20-12
May 14-17	@IHSA VG regional		

HEAD COACH Jeana Block

2019 VGH Boy's Track & Field Schedule

Mar 13	@ Uni High (Armory)
Mar 16	@ EIU invite
Mar 19	@ Arcola
Mar 26	@ Arcola
Mar 28	@ Tuscola
Apr 05	@ ALAH
Apr 09	@ Salt Fork Invite
Apr 12	@ Monticello CANCELLED
Apr 19	@ Tuscola
Apr 23	@ ALAH
Apr 26	@ SJO (boys)
May 03	@ Arcola (LOVC meet)
May 11	@ Shelbyville



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