

Community Sports



Tuscola's softball team's seniors show the way

By Lenny Sementi

It was a busy final week of the regular season for Tuscola's softball team, with five games on the slate, three ranked teams, two in 2A and a senior night to celebrate. The Warriors opened the week dropping games to St Joe and Unity on Monday and Tuesday and closed it with three straight wins on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The seniors shined on Thursday on their night to be honored, upending Cumberland 11-1 in a run rule-shortened 6-inning affair. The Pirates scored first in

the top of the first and then watched the Warriors take the lead in the bottom of the second and never look back. Singles by freshman Alaina Smith and Kayleigh Bales set the table for a 2-RBI triple by Zoey Thomason, who then scored on a double by Ava Boyer, who in turn scored on a single by senior Isabelle Wilcox, making it 4-1 Tuscola. They added five more in the third highlighted by a Boyer 2-run dinger and put it away with one in the fifth and another in the sixth.

Wilcox collected the win in the circle, going the dis-

tance allowing just one to cross the dish on just 1-hit while striking out 8. Boyer and Thomason led the way at the plate, both adding 3 hits and 3 RBIs to their season stat sheet. Senior Ella Boyer banged out a pair of hits, scored a run and swiped 3-bags. Smith had a pair of hits as well and senior catcher Makenna Fiscus and Addy Ring each singled.

There was a power surge one night later on the road at Georgetown as the black and gold ran away and hid, notching an 18-5 win over the Buffaloes on the back of

home runs from both Boyer's, Wilcox and Emily Czerwonka. Those 4 accounted for 13 hits, 15 RBIs and 12 runs scored. Czerwonka was a perfect 4 for 4 on the evening, while the other 3 all donated 3 hits each to the box score. Thomason had a perfect night as well, going three for three at the plate, scoring every time. Wilcox took the win

Just over 12 hours later on Saturday morning, they ended their week with a signature win over a very good-ranked Salt Fork squad 5-4, notching the program's 20th win of the season. Tuscola

went up 3-0 as the Boyers and Wilcox played long a short ball, all three scoring in the first frame. The trio delivered all 7 of the Warrior's hits and scored all 5 runs.

Ella Boyer led the way going 3 for 3 on the day, pushing 3 runs across. Both Ava Boyer and Wilcox delivered both a pair of hits and a pair of runs. Wilcox was charged with a no-decision working 3 and 2/3's, allowing 3 runs on 3 hits and 4 walks while reaching the century mark in strikeouts on the season, leaving in the fourth with it knotted at 3. Bayleigh Taylor

collected the win in relief, allowing 1-run on 1 hit and a walk, striking out 3.

On Monday at St Joe, the Spartan's offense blew it open late with a barrage of long balls in a 12-1 win, limiting the Warriors to just 4 hits. One of those was a long ball by Czerwonka, another was a triple by Ring and the 2 others were singles by Wilcox and Smith. One night later, a solid Unity team erupted early and slammed the door on the victory, giving up just one hit. Thomason singled in the third but was left and Wilcox was issued the loss on the bump.

Warriors track runs to podium

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola's boys track team found their way to the awards stand in nearly every event and took over the top spot in five individual events and three relays, finishing behind only a very strong St. Theresa squad in the Central Illinois Conference Championships. Coach Ryan Hornaday and his staff squeezed every point they could out of the team, dominating the distance events and the relays while throws coach Stan Wienke's group secured 32 points in field events.

"These guys outperformed their pre-seeds," stated Hornaday. "They exceeded expectations and we couldn't be more proud."

Chris Boyd collected a pair of conference crowns, winning both throwing events and donating 20 points to

the cause. The senior and Arkansas State commit won the shot put with a toss of just over 55 feet and then launched the discus over 160 feet. Aiden Weaver ended his day in the third in the shot, firing a personal best 45.3 feet and Sawyer Woodard took home third-place honors in the discus.

The Warriors swept the distance races winning the 800, the 1600 and the 3200 with three separate runners keeping everyone fresh for the relays. Josiah Hortin broke a school record set in 1933 by Wayne Rideout, crossing the line in 1 minute and 55.25 seconds in the 800. Boyd Brewer PR'd in the event as well with a 2:07, adding third-place points to the team totals. Jackson Barrett and Blake McLeese did the same in the 1600. Barrett secured

all-conference honors with first place, while McLeese ended his day in third. It was first and fourth in the grueling 3200-meter run, with Will Foltz taking gold with a 9:36 and Xander Neamtu a few steps behind.

Hortin showed up in a pair of winning relays, joining with Foltz, Ben Hornaday and Bryce Graves to win the 4x400 and then Barrett, McLeese, and Brewer in the 4x800. Hornaday and Graves found gold in a second relay as well, passing the baton to Alan Robello and Camden Flenner in the 4x200. Hornaday and Dylan Graves contributed to the point totals with a fourth-place finish in the 100 and 400, respectively. David Hornaday found his way to 2-points with a fifth-place effort in the 110 high hurdles.

Lady Warriors set to defend title

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola's girls track team will look to defend their state title from a year ago. Coach Drew Sterkel's squad is sending six athletes in ten events 30 or so miles south to Charleston at the end of this week following a solid outing on the new track in Bethany at the IHSA Okaw Valley Sectional. The Warriors captured second out of over 20 schools and will enter the state championships after securing five first-place medals at the Sectionals.

Lia Patterson qualified in four events securing 36 points and collecting two golds and a pair of silvers. She edged Meridians Kaylin Moreland in the 200 by a tenth of a second to win, crossing the line in 25.51 seconds. Moreland returned the favor, nipping the super soph by a mere 100th of a second in a virtual dead heat.

Patterson found her way to the top of the podium in the 300-meter low hurdles breaking the tape in 45.66 and finished in the runner-up spot in the 100-meter high hurdles by less than a half second, clocking in at 15.15.

The freshman distance phenom will be looking to add to her state medal collection after collecting one this past fall in cross-country. She won both the 1600 and the 3200, touring the track four times in 5:26 and eight times 11:10. And then linked up with Rylie Vanausdoll, Mia Hausmann and Kenna Clodfelder in the 4x400-meter relay turning in a 4:20 securing them a spot on the big blue oval in Charleston.

Natalie Hasting was the sixth qualifier earning state berths in both throwing events. The junior thrower won the discus with a toss of

just over 114 feet and finished in second in the shot with a personal best throw of 36.94 feet. Olivia Wallace PR'd in the discus and added 2-points to the team totals with a fifth-place finish, while Clodfelder and Bella Notaro combined to deliver another 6-points with a fourth-place finish in the triple jump and a fifth-place finish in the pole vault, respectively.

Patterson enters the state meet with the fourth-best time in the 100 and the second-best time in the 200 and owns the second-best sectional time in both hurdle races. Foltz is seeded in the top ten in the 1600 and top three in the 3200, while Hasting is the fifth seed in the disc and the seventh seed in the shot put. Both will look to deliver team points in both events.

Near miss for Warriors baseball

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola was a near miss in the baseball version of the Cola Wars falling at home this past Thursday to the Purple Riders in a thriller 5-3. Caden Russo took the loss despite a solid 4-innings of action. The freshman scattered 4 hits and a walk during his time on the hill allowing just one to cross the dish. Cooper Lyons and Isaac Halverson fired the final three frames.

Tuscola jumped out with a 2-spot in the bottom of the first on the back of a 2 for 2 night at the plate by JJ Reyn-

olds that included a home run, 2 RBIs and a run scored. Colton Musgrave posted the only other hit for the black and gold and scored on a hit by Reynolds, while Jacob Waugh reached on a walk and scored.

One night earlier, coach Caleb Englehardt and his staff celebrated Musgrave their lone senior. The Blackhawk College commit reached on a hard-hit ball and scored, giving the Warriors a 2-1 lead heading to the second frame. The Storm tied it up in the next half inning and took full

advantage of a few miscues in the third to blow it wide open with a 10-run frame collecting a 15-5 non-conference win.

Reynolds provided some pop at the plate, pounding out a double and 2 RBIs, hitting safely two of the three times he had the bat in his hands. The junior also took the loss on the bump, working 2 and 2/3's, giving way to Halverson and Austin Cummings. Waugh was one for one on the evening, scoring twice while Nate Thomson drove in and scored a pair of runs.

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Baseball

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Wed., 5/24 IHSA Sectionals

Sat., 5/27 Sectional Championship

Mon., 5/29 IHSA Super-sectional

Fri., 6/2 IHSA State @ Peoria

Softball

5/20 Regional Championship

5/23 IHSA Sectionals @ Home vs TBA

5/26 Sectional Championship @

Home vs TBA

5/29 IHSA Super-Sectional

6/2 IHSA State @ East Peoria