Shepherd unbeaten in WVC baseball

With basketball season a not-so-distant memory, spring sports have taken center stage throughout the West Virginia Conference.

**WVC NOTEBOOK**

WVC baseball and softball teams begin the heart of their league schedules this week, leading up to May’s championship tournaments in Princeton and Vienna, respectively. But before conference play intensifies, here’s a look at who’s hot entering the season’s home stretch:

**Baseball**

▲ Shepherd: The Rams own the league’s lone unblemished conference record (6-0) and sit at 12-8 overall. Shepherd has won eight in a row and nine of 10.

▲ Joey Besl, Concord: At 6-foot, 200 pounds, the Lions shortstop isn’t likely to be mistaken for Barry Bonds. But his numbers compare favorably to those put up by the Giants’ slugger. Besl leads the WVC in practically every offensive category — hitting (.553), slugging (1.000), on-base (.600), runs scored (31), hits (42), runs batted in (31) and total bases (76). Oh, he’s also second in home runs with seven and tied for fourth with nine doubles.

▲ Jonathan McDowell, W.Va. State: The 6-3 senior is providing plenty of pop in the Jackets lineup, including a WVC-best eight home runs. He’s also second in slugging (.831) and RBIs (26) and third in runs scored (24).

▲ Alex Santiago, UC: The speedy shortstop is a perfect 9-of-9 in stolen base attempts. He’s also hitting .392 with 13 RBIs for the University of Charleston.

▲ Ryan Flanigan, D&E: The junior right-hander has helped key the Senators’ fast start with a 4-0 record and 1.83 ERA. In 39 2/3 innings, he’s surrendered just 31 hits — only seven for extra bases.

**Softball**

▲ Shepherd, Wesleyan, W.Va. State, A-B: The foursome is a combined 14-0 in WVC play. Despite their successes against other WVC foes, only the Rams have a winning overall record at 10-5 (Alderson-Broaddus is 6-6).

▲ Tiffany Martin, West Liberty: The junior center fielder leads the league in batting average (.429), slugging percentage (.657) and on-base percentage (.545). She’s also swiped six bases in eight attempts.

▲ Casie Waskey, A-B: The Ripley grad has allowed a WVC-low 12 runs in 45 innings. She ranks among league leaders in earned-run average (1.09), strikeouts (42) and opponents average against (.233).

▲ Sammi Kinder, W.Va. State: Despite a 1-4 record, the Jackets’ hurler has been strong with a 2.60 ERA and .186 average against. Walks — she’s issued 24 in 43 innings — have been her Achilles’ heel.
AREA ROUNDUP

Rams softball sweeps Tech

MONTGOMERY — The streaking Shepherd softball team made it 14 straight wins on Saturday, drilling West Virginia University-Tech 15-0 and 14-0 at Martin Field in West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference action.

The Rams won the first game in five innings and then finished off the second in two innings on the artificial turf.

Shepherd (15-6, 8-0 WVIAC) leads the conference, while Tech has yet to win in 15 games.

Shannon Leighty limited the Golden Bears to five singles in the opener, while Megan Hall didn’t yield a hit in the second-game win.

Mia Zappacosta and Julie Scherpf went 2 for 3 each to pace the Rams in the opener.

Bridget Mercereau went 2 for 4 for Shepherd, which had 11 first-game hits, and Stephanie Sims belted a pinch-hit home run.

No other offensive information was available about the second game, other than Shepherd had eight hits and was well on its way to victory during a 13-run first.

Shepherd’s scheduled doubleheader for today at West Virginia State was postponed. The Rams visit Shippensburg for a Tuesday doubleheader.

Shepherd baseball

WEST LIBERTY — Shepherd’s scheduled baseball doubleheader Saturday against West Liberty was postponed.

The Rams have also announced action slated for Monday against St. Vincent has been canceled.

Shepherd next plays 1 p.m. Thursday when it hosts Mount Olive.

— Compiled from staff reports
COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Shepherd 15-14, WVU Tech 0-0

MONTGOMERY, W.Va. — Shepherd University racked up 19 hits and scored 29 runs to easily sweep WVU Tech in a WVIAC doubleheader.

In the first game for the Rams (14-5, 8-0), Mia Zappacosta, Julie Scherpf and Bridget Mercuorio each had two hits, Stephanie Sims homered and Shannon Leighty (3-0) pitched a five-hit shutout.

Shepherd's Megan Hall (2-1) pitched a no-hitter in the second game, which only lasted two innings.
Shepherd wins first regional golf title

WHEELING - The Shepherd University golf team won its first regional title in school history Monday when it captured the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Northern Regional Golf Tournament at Speidel Golf Course.

David Bradshaw, who took medalist honors, sank a lengthy putt to save par on the 18th hole to help the Rams to a one-stroke victory against Fairmont State.

Bradshaw shot a 2-under par 69. Shepherd's aggregate total was a 295. Fairmont shot a 296 and Ohio Valley was third in the 13-team field with a 303.

Others who helped Shepherd to victory were Jesse Hoffman, who took third and shot a 73, Bryan Snow, who took seventh and shot a 75, and Trevor Hedges, who shot a 78.

"I'm tickled that we won," Shepherd coach Jim Carpenter said. "I don't think any other school down here gave us a chance to win, but we pulled it out."

Carpenter said he was particularly impressed with Hoffman, his No. 5 golfer.

"He beat a couple of our other guys on Friday to qualify," he said. "For our No. 5 to post a 73 is something."

Joining Bradshaw and Hoffman on the all-tournament team were Fairmont's Will Gautreau, who shot a 71, and Micha Morrison, who shot a 73; Ohio Valley's Justin VanHeukulum, who shot a 74 and Charleston's Mike Todd, who shot a 75.

Shepherd men's tennis

SHEPHERDSTOWN - The Shepherd University men's tennis team won a pair of West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference matches over the weekend.

Shepherd (11-3, 4-0) knocked off the University of Charleston 8-1 and later defeated previously unbeaten West Virginia Wesleyan by a score of 7-1.

Shepherd 7, West Virginia Wesleyan 1
Singles - 1. Tim Halter (S) d. Paul Nelson 6-1, 6-2; 2. Brian Clarke (S) d. Dominick Mack 6-2, 6-3; 3. David Seifarth (S) d. Neal Saluja 6-2, 6-0; 4. Casey Moser (S) d. Josh Ocolt 6-3, 6-3; 5. Luiz Gomes (S) d. Mike Higgins 6-1, 6-0.

Shepherd 8, Charleston 1
Singles - 1. Adam Flintoff (UC) d. Halter 4-6, 6-5, retired; 2. Clarke (S) d. Michael Bumgarner 6-0, 6-1; 3. Seifarth (S) d. Justin Leadmon 6-1, 6-0; 4. Moser (S) d. Ed Craft 8-1; 5. Gomes (S) d. Daniel Judy 8-4; 6. Sherman (S) d. Jordan Gilliam 8-2
MEN'S GOLF

Shepherd wins regional

WHEELING, W.Va. — David Bradshaw, of Harpers Ferry, W.Va., led Shepherd University to its first West Virginia Athletic Conference North Region title. He saved par on the 18th hole with a long putt to clinch the title.

Bradshaw tamed the tough Speidel Course at the Oglebay Resort with a 2-under-par 69 to lead the Rams to a 295-stroke total, one shot better than Fairmont State in the 13-team field. The tournament was reduced to one day.

Jesse Hoffman, of Williamsport, chipped in with a 2-over 73, Bryan Snow added a 75 and Trevor Hedges, a freshman from Martinsburg, W.Va., rounded out the team score with a 78.
Shepherd softball

SHIPPENSBURG — Powerhouse Shippensburg swept Shepherd 5-2 and 9-1 in college softball Tuesday afternoon.

The Red Raiders (26-1) were paced by Liz Corr and Fawn Gaidos, who had two hits each, in the first game. Caitlin MacPherson (3-0) got the win with six innings of work while Danielle Shields picked up the save.

Shepherd’s Karen Burnette (4-2) took the loss. Shepherd’s runs came on a Brooke Small single in the third and in the sixth when Stephanie Sims singled and later scored on an error.

Jessica Miller went 2 for 2 with three RBI, Sarah Costa had a hit and three RBI and Ali Morris had a hit and two RBI to lead Shippensburg in the nightcap. Jill Kirby (2-1) went the distance to get the win.

Rams starter Mia Zappacosta (2-3) took the loss. Alyssa Rowe singled home Megan Zahnow for the Rams’ only tally.

Shepherd (13-7) returns to action Friday for a noon doubleheader at home against Ohio Valley.
WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Shippensburg 5-9, Shepherd 2-1

SHIPPENSBURG, Pa. — Mia Zappacosta went 3-for-3 for Shep-
herd University in the nightcap of a doubleheader against Ship-
pensburg, but the Rams were swept by the Red Raiders.

Brooke Small had an RBI single for the Rams (13-7) in the first
game. The Red Raiders (26-1) scored four runs in the fifth inning to
put the game away.
Comeback in Nightcap
Gives Shepherd Sweep

With a sweep of well-regarded Charleston, Shepherd kept its perfect WVIAC women's softball record intact and ran its winning streak to 12 straight games.

The Lady Rams used the shutout pitching of Karen Burnette to blank the Lady Golden Eagles, 8-0, in the mercy rule-shortened opener, and then used another comeback to take a 4-3 decision in the nightcap.

Shepherd was 12-5 overall and 6-0 in WVIAC games, while Charleston slipped to 15-10 overall and 6-4 in league games.

Burnette whitewashed the Lady Golden Eagles on just three hits and struck out five in the rule-curtailed first game.

Megan Zahnow had three hits and Mia Zappacosta added two hits to Shepherd's 11-hit attack. Both of Zappacosta's hits were doubles.

The Lady Rams scored two runs in the first, second, third, and fourth innings.

Both Zappacosta and Stephanie Sims drove in two runs each in the first game.

Sims also scored twice.

Charla Wacker added a double to the on-going Shepherd offense.

Burnette won her fourth game. In the second game, Shepherd found itself trailing, 3-2, in the fifth as Sims was its pitcher.

Julie Scherpf singled to give Shepherd a start in the sixth.

With pinch runner April Przygocki on third base, Sims tied the game at 3 with a single to right field.

When Charleston couldn't score in the top of the seventh, the Lady Rams got a one-out single from Jamie Griffin, who immediately stole second to push Shepherd's potential winning run into scoring position.

Scherpf was walked . . . and Sims sent a drive over the third baseman's head that easily plated Scherpf with the game-winning run.

Shepherd's first two runs in the nightcap came on Jennifer Canby's infield single off the Charleston shortstop, Brooke Small's RBI groundout, Scherpf's single and an infield error by the Lady Golden Bears.

Shepherd collected nine hits in the nightcap.

Sims went seven innings and spaced seven Charleston hits. Sims improved her record to 2-1.

Shepherd committed only one error on the 49-degree day that was made nastier by a full-throated wind from the west.
Lady Rams Romp; Blast WV Tech 15-0, 14-0

MONTGOMERY — Shepherd outclassed homestanding West Virginia Tech in WVIAC women's softball by blasting the Lady Golden Bears, 15-0 and 14-0, in a conference doubleheader.

Shepherd's twin shutouts gave the Lady Rams 14 wins in a row and boosted their WVIAC record to 8-0.

The Lady Rams are 14-5 overall.

Shannon Leighty authored the first-game shutout, allowing the Lady Golden Bears just five hits in a game that was botched to just five innings by softball's eight-run mercy rule.

Shepherd scored two runs in the third to snap a scoreless tie. Then in the Shepherd fourth, the Lady Rams scored eight times and had another five runs in the fifth inning.

When West Virginia Tech couldn't score eight runs in its half of the fifth, the game was ended on the mercy rule.

Shepherd had 11 hits and the Lady Golden Bears committed seven errors.

Mia Zappacosta, Julie Scherp, and Bridget Mercerio all collected two hits in the opener for Shepherd.

Stephanie Sims drilled a home run.

The nightcap lasted only two innings with Shepherd plating 13 runs in the first inning and another run in the second.

Megan Hall got the six outs needed for the conference win by not allowing a hit in the se-
Shepherd's offense bogs down in clutch during home doubleheader.

By MATT POLING
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Clutch hits have been elusive for the Shepherd baseball team of late.

So, too, have wins.

After an eight-game winning streak, the Rams (12-10) have lost four straight after Thursday's sweep at the hands of visiting Mount Olive at Fairfax Field. The Trojans took game one 5-2 before outlasting Shepherd 8-6 in 12 innings.

The Rams, who scored just one run in two losses to Slippery Rock last week, had no problems getting hits with 12 in each game. Yet only Collin Brown's solo home run in the bottom of the seventh to send the nightcap into extra innings would qualify as a timely hit.

"No, I don't have any answers, don't have a clue," Shepherd coach Wayne Riser said about his lack of offense. "I've had multiple lineups, moved people up and down the order, given a bunch of people opportunities to pinch hit. I even got to the point of running out of players (in the second game) because I'm giving so many people a chance."

In the first game, despite outhitting the Trojans 12-7, Shepherd left nine men on base.

Phillip Pennington (4-1) scattered eight hits in 5 1/3 innings to get the win for the Trojans (20-22-2). Stephen Nor- dan went 2 for 4 with two RBI, while Dustin Richardson had a solo homer. Travis Muraw (1-2) took the loss.

The Rams stranded 11 in the second game, including three in the eighth — the Rams' best chance at victory.

With one out, Joe Cook reached on a throwing error by the third baseman that allowed him to go all the way to third base. Trojans coach Earl Lancaster elected to walk the next two batters to load the bases, and it worked to perfection.

Reliever Bryan Corbett, who hurled 8 1/3 innings to get the win, struck out pinch hitter Matt Noll and Jerry Jubb to escape.

Riser was certainly going for the win in that inning as he replaced Dirk Webb with a pinch runner and Brian Lowry with Matt Noll as a pinch hitter. The moves didn't pay off offensively and cost the Rams defensively later on with players out of position.

"We're on a three-game slide, (so) you're darn right we're selling it out in the eighth," Riser said. "I think it was the right move."

First, though, Shepherd's bullpen got out of its share of jams with the toughest coming in the 11th when Nordan and Josh Carter led off with singles against Austin Bowie. After intentionally walking the bases loaded, Bowie got a force play at home and then got Richardson, who had a homer in each game, to ground into a 6-4-3 double play.

Bowie faced the same predicament in the 12th, but wasn't as fortunate. Lance Martin led off with a single, but when Anthony Williams attempted to bunt him over, an error on Noll, normally a catcher who was playing first base, allowed both runners to move into scoring position.

Bowie intentionally walked Ricky Davis before walking in the tie-breaking run with Santos Estremena at the plate. Nordan then roped a two-run single to right field. Josh Carter also drove in a run in the five-run 12th frame.

Shepherd nearly mounted a rally, but fittingly left the tying run on base.

"We're still trying to learn how to produce offense," Riser said.

Shepherd will get another chance at 1 p.m. today in the final game of the series.

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COLLEGE BASEBALL
Mount Olive 5-8, Shepherd 2-6

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Collin Brown went 4-for-5 with a solo homer for Shepherd University in the second game for the Rams, who were swept by Mount Olive in the doubleheader.

Ryan Harju added two hits for the Rams in the nightcap.

In the first game, Nicky Brown, Ryan Brady, Dirk Webb, Collin Brown and Harju each had two hits for the Rams (12-10).