

PVC schools raise nearly \$37,000 for charities

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

Not only have Penobscot Valley Conference players, coaches and schools been busy pursuing success on the field of play, they also have been busy helping others.

HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

PVC president Brian Gaw, athletic administrator and a teacher-coach at School Administrative District 4 in Guilford, recently solicited information from member schools regarding their charitable fundraising efforts during the 2015-2016 school year.

"I told them, even if your school only raised a hundred bucks, let me know," he said, "because somebody, I guarantee you, was very appreciative for a hundred dollars."

Not all schools responded to the request for information, but Gaw said "a very good percentage" did, and those reported fundraising efforts alone totaled \$36,876 to be donated to local, state and national charitable organizations.

"Not that anyone is looking for their name in the paper or prizes or awards or recognition," Gaw said. "I genuinely think people do this because it's the right thing to do. It's a feel-good thing, and you know at the end of the day that you've helped somebody in a tangible way."

Groups receiving funds raised by PVC student-athletes, coaches and schools include the Aliza Jean Family Cancer Foundation, All In For Addie, American Cancer Society, Bangor Area Homeless Shelter, Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center, Pennies for Pa-

tients, Relay for Life, Sarah's House of Maine, Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance and the Susan G. Komen foundation.

"I think this just highlights how powerful sports can be outside of a court or a field," Gaw said. "This is just one more thing that's not an athletic achievement but shows that athletes can have a lot of power to influence and help a lot of people they don't even know."

Three north teams suffer first loss

Monday was a rough afternoon for undefeated high school baseball teams in the northern part of the state, as three of the six clubs in the region that began the day with unblemished records left the diamond with their first losses of the spring — all on the road.

Class B Winslow fell to once-beaten Oceanside of Rockland/

Thomaston 4-2. Class C George Stevens Academy of Blue Hill lost at Mattanawcook Academy of Lincoln 9-4, and Class D Fort Fairfield was defeated at Class C Fort Kent 9-5.

Fast starts were key to each of those victories, with 7-1 Oceanside jumping out to a 3-0 first-inning lead, 5-3 Mattanawcook building a 6-0 lead through two innings and 3-4 Fort Kent taking a 4-0 first-inning lead.

Those results halved the number of undefeated teams remaining in the four North classes.

Two of the remaining unbeaten teams are in Class A, with Edward Little of Auburn and two-time defending state champion Bangor ranked 1-2 with identical 8-0 records entering Wednesday's play.

Both teams won their games Monday, with Bangor earning a

9-2 road win at Camden Hills of Rockport while EL topped visiting Lawrence of Fairfield 7-3.

Should those teams remain unbeaten, Bangor is scheduled to host EL in Game 14 of their respective seasons on Monday, May 23.

The third remaining unbeaten through Tuesday's game was Class C leader Houlton, also 8-0 after a 14-3 victory at Lee Academy on Monday. Coach Jim Castner's Shiretowners, with just three seniors on a 17-player roster, have averaged 9.5 runs per game through the midpoint of their schedule.

Four baseball teams from the southern part of the state also were unbeaten through Tuesday's play: Falmouth (7-0) and Portland (6-0) in Class A and Monmouth Academy (7-0) and Madison (8-0) in Class C.

Coutts

Continued from Page B4

who had always thought about coaching softball with her husband.

When assistant Kevin Welch left after one season, she reached out to her husband.

"When he was an assistant [baseball] coach at Maine, I knew someday when I coached, my goal was to get him over to the softball side," she said.

Mike Coutts said he had no reservations about joining his wife and switching over to softball.

"I had tried for the longest time to get back into college baseball, but I could never get back in," he said. "Coaching is coaching whether it's softball or baseball. I looked at it as an opportunity to help build the softball program into a very competitive program in the Northeast."

Coutts said the biggest adjustment was how much quicker softball is because the field is significantly smaller than a baseball diamond.

"How quickly ground balls get to the shortstop ... how quickly you have to get rid of



UNMAINE ATHLETICS
University of Maine softball coach Mike Coutts (left) and his wife, Lynn Coutts, senior associate director of athletics at UMaine.

the ball. That was a challenge for me. I also had to understand the game in terms of bunting and first-and-third strategy," said Coutts, who doesn't like to bunt.

"He learned that turning a double play in softball is very difficult," said Lynn Coutts. "The cutoffs [on throws from the outfield] are a little bit different."

"A girl can throw from center field to second base without needing a cutoff,"

Mike Coutts said. "It's almost like going back to Little League [dimensions] with how you play."

He also had to learn how to coach women.

"I had to learn tone [of voice] and body language. And you have to explain things more to them, but that has made me a better coach because I've learned to explain things better," Coutts said. "Girls don't have egos, and they don't question you

as much [as guys]. They're like your daughter ... they want to please you.

Coutts has an open-door policy. He encourages his players to come and chat with him about anything at any time.

And he takes time to communicate with them about life away from the softball field.

"There are two different types of coaches," said senior catcher Janelle Bouchard, the America East Player of the Year. "You have the type of coach who pisses you off to the point where you want to play well to prove them wrong. The other coach is the one that genuinely cares about you and you'll run through a brick wall for them. He is the latter of the two."

"He has been phenomenal for this program and for us as individuals and athletes. He is a great hitting coach and, aside from the game, he is such a great life leader. The way he conducts himself on a daily basis is something everybody looks up to," Bouchard added.

The Black Bears are hitting .314 as a team. Over the previous 13 seasons, the highest previous average was .282 in 2007.

"He has been awesome," said junior catcher-outfielder Rachel Harvey. "We all have a really good relationship with him. He is always there for us."

"He has been an inspiration," said sophomore pitcher Molly Flowers.

"He has shown a lot of confidence in me. He pushes me hard, but he always wants the best for me. He has taught me how to be tough and how to keep going," she said.

"They know I care about them away from the field," said Coutts. "It also helps me to understand them as people so when they're on the field, I have an understanding of where they are in their lives [and how it may impact their performance]."

He has a leadership council made up of six players from all four classes with which he meets during the season.

"We got away from having captains. Captains are usually your best players, but they aren't necessarily your best leaders," said Coutts. "Since I'm not in the locker room, they have to tell me what's going on. Is there a problem I have to address? Are they going to address it? What changes do they feel I need to make?"

When Coutts was an assistant baseball coach at UMaine, the expectations were high since the program had made five College World Series appearances in a six-year span during the 1980s.

It was a high-profile program. Even though softball isn't considered a high-profile sport, Coutts treats it the same.

"I still want to win [just as much]. I know we're not going to go 44-0, but every time we go to the field, I expect us to win," said the Auburn native. "It's tough to get to the [softball] College World Series, but why can't we play in [NCAA] Regionals? Why can't we win this weekend and go to a Regional? Lynn and I are trying to build something great here, and if we build a good program, people will come and watch and support us."

Would he ever consider going back to baseball?

"I would never say never because I never thought I'd be coaching softball," said Coutts. "But I have no thoughts about going into baseball right now. I'm pretty locked in."

"I really enjoy softball, coaching the girls and the new challenges I face," he added.

Softball

Continued from Page B4

the right-center-field gap.

Authoritative doubles into left-center by Emily Gilmore and Megan Conner made it 5-1 in the fourth.

Singles by Madeline Doble, Brooklynn Scott and Paige Yost (RBI) produced a sixth-inning run for Hampden Academy but winning pitcher Sarah Bragg gave herself some breathing room with her fifth homer of the season, a three-run shot

to left, in the bottom of the sixth.

Senior right-hander Bragg went the distance, scattering six hits while striking out three and not walking anyone. She threw 82 pitches of which 61 were strikes.

"My fastball was working today. I threw my fastball most of the time," said Bragg. "Our defense was awesome. They really helped me."

The Rams made a number of impressive plays behind her, including a terrific catch by catcher

Emma Payne, who darted out of her crouch and dove full-length to snare Emily Dysart's pop-up down the first-base line as she rolled over.

Shortstop Kes Lavoie and third baseman Conner also shone defensively.

Bangor took a 1-0 lead in the first inning on Payne's slicing, opposite-field triple to right and Bragg's infield hit.

The Broncos tied it in the third on singles by Courtney Duntun, Abby Lord and Julia Sicard (RBI).

Bragg's sixth-inning

homer followed singles by Conner and Payne and the Rams added another run later in the inning on Drake's RBI single.

"I knew it was going to go out when I hit it," said Bragg, who will attend Bangor's Husson University in the fall.

"That (homer) was a real game-changer for them," said Hampden Academy's Lord, a senior second baseman and tri-captain.

Bangor pounded out 16 hits.

In addition to Drake's four hits, Bragg had a sin-

gle to go with her homer and she knocked in four runs. Payne had a single to go with her triple and Gilmore, Conner and Bishop each had a double and a single.

"They really put a lot of pressure on you with their bats. They have a lot of strong hitters," said Hampden Academy coach Rodney Wells. "They wear you down."

Hampden received singles from six different players and all of the Broncos' hits came in the third and sixth innings.

Romeo

Continued from Page B4

best-of-three, first-round series and then making 27 saves in a 3-2 overtime loss in game three.

He decided to transfer in order to get more opportunity to play.

"It wasn't the year I had hoped to have," said Romeo. "I don't know happened. It was coach's [Red Gendron] call and he decided not to play me. That was that."

Romeo, who was recruited by former Maine coach Tim Whitehead and his coaching staff, wound up visiting Ohio State and said it was "the best fit for me."

"I loved the coaches and the school," he said.

Gendron called Romeo "a

great human being, a great student and a very good player.

"I wish him the best of luck," added Gendron.

Romeo was a scholarship player at Maine and said he will be getting scholarship money from Ohio State but preferred not to discuss the terms of the arrangement.

Romeo came to the Black Bears from the Youngstown Phantoms of the United States Hockey League, where he compiled a 3.42 GAA and a .891 save percentage in 30 games.

Morris appeared in 23 games for UMaine last season and had a 3.54 GAA to go with a .901 save percentage and 6-10-3 record. McGovern had a 2.78 GAA and a .905 save percentage along with a 2-14-3 record.

The 6-4 McGovern appeared in 20 contests.

Baseball

Continued from Page B4

team they are they'll capitalize on them."

Bangor was aided by two Hampden errors while taking a 2-0 third-inning lead, with DeLaitte also hitting an RBI single to drive home Stevenson and later scoring from third on the back end of a double steal with Peter Kemble.

The Rams added four runs on four hits in the fifth, including an RBI triple to deep center by DeLaitte, a run-producing infield hit over second base by Jesse Colford and a two-out, two-run single by Cowperthwaite.

Bangor closed out the game with four runs off

Hampden reliever Billy Campbell in the sixth. Derek Fournier had the second of his two hits in the game, an RBI single to right, while Gary Farnham doubled, George Payne popped an RBI single to left and Cowperthwaite drew a bases-loaded walk before Ben Crichton drove home the game-ending run with an infield groundout.

Andrew Gendreau paced Hampden offensively with two singles.

"I know (former Bangor coach) Bob Kelley used to say if you score three or four runs you win almost every game in high school baseball," said Fahey. "I don't know if that's 100 percent true, but I know with Trevor on the mound if we score three or four runs our chances are pretty good."

Bengals sign Epps as college free agent

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

The Cincinnati Bengals signed offensive tackle Aaron Epps on Wednesday as a college free agent.

The 6-foot-6, 305-pound Epps was a team captain for the University of Louisville last season and made 14 starts in his career. He participated on a tryout basis in last weekend's rookie minicamp.

To make room on the 90-man offseason roster, the Bengals waived offensive tackle Darryl Baldwin, a first-year player from Ohio State.

Baldwin had signed with Cincinnati as a free agent on Feb. 8.

Stalcup

Continued from Page B4

2016 schedule for the school's JV football team that includes six regular-season games against subvarsity opponents.

The Windjammers will host a preseason scrimmage against Medomak Valley of Waldoboro on Aug. 22 and an exhibition contest against Telstar of Bethel on Aug. 27.

Those contests will be followed by the following regular-season JV games: Sept. 3 vs. Deering of Portland, Sept. 9, 7 p.m., at Medomak Valley, Sept. 19 at Maine Central Institute of Pittsfield, Oct. 1 at Telstar, an Oct. 7 homecoming game at 7 p.m. against a Presque Isle-area club team, and a tentative Oct. 17 game against Oceanside.

Camden Hills played its first season of varsity football in 2009 and qualified for the playoffs in 2010, but had a 2-25 record from the start of the 2012 season to its 0-3 start in 2015.

In the Maine Principals' Association four-class varsity football format, Camden Hills is a Class B school by enrollment but had received approval to play down in Class D (and forfeit postseason eligibility) last fall in an attempt to salvage its program.



DEMO DAY

SATURDAY, MAY 14

- SPECIAL SAVINGS on 2016 bags, shoes, putters, balls, GPS, lasers, accessories and apparel*

- JOIN OUR ALL-STAR REWARDS PROGRAM and earn points with every purchase for life, plus enjoy exclusive member benefits



WIN
A \$2500 GOLF
SHOPPING SPREE

Over \$11,000 in total prizes.
Register to win in
our 4 stores or
online today!

- CLUB DEMOS ON THE NONESUCH RIVER DRIVING RANGE
Saturday 10:00 am-4:00 pm

- SWING THE NEW 2016 CLUBS and be custom fit by experts from all the leading manufacturers

- VISIT OUR SCARBOROUGH STORE AND SAVE

*Certain restrictions apply. See store for details.

Scarborough, ME - 207-883-4343
Payne Rd, Exit 42 off I-95

www.golfskiwarehouse.com

Scarborough, ME & West Lebanon, Greenland & Hudson, NH