SPORTS

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Pirates to remain in 4A classification

The Arkansas Activities Association released its new athletic classification numbers last week and, to no surprise, more changes are on the horizon for the 2014-16 seasons.

To the dismay of Pirate fans, Dover will remain in 4A after seeing an increase in student population from 296 in the last cycle to 308.33. The AAA classification cycle reoccurs every two years and is based upon October 1 enrollment in grades 9-11, reported the Arkansas Department of Education. Public school enrollment figures are on a three-year average. Schools with only one gender are double, while private schools are only based off one-year numbers. Any school with more than 80 students in 9-11 grades is moved up one class.

Dover High's conference 4-4A saw some of the biggest changes in the state with Maumelle moving up to 5A and longtime member Booneville moving down to 3A, opening two spots for new schools.

Good fits would be Ozark and Clinton. Ozark was a member of the conference in the 2010 cycle and resides in the conference's footprint. The Hillbillies would make a good fit geographically and bring some strength to what is deemed a weak conference. They are especially strong in football, after making it to the state championship last year.

The Yellow Jackets are traditionally on the same level as the Pirates in most of their athletics. They would be a good geographic fit, as they joined the 4-4A with the Pirates in 2006.

However, there is a wild card in place with Little Rock schools Joe T. Robinson, Central Arkansas Christian and Arkansas Baptist, considering they are in closer proximity to Mena and Waldron.

Either one of the 4A Little Rock schools would make sense to replace Maumelle. Most likely it would be the weakest of the three in Arkansas Baptist though.

Things should remain the same for the Hector Wildcats, as their entire conference remains in 2A. The Wildcats did decrease in their average population from 149.67 to 142.

Conference affiliations will be release later this year, with changes taking affect in the 2014-15 athletic season.



Photo by Joseph Brown

Shawn Lusk works from behind home plate for the Wildcats.

Big inning lifts Wildcats to state

A six-run fifth inning enabled the Hector Wildcats to finally put away the Magazine Rattlers and capture a berth in the 2A State Tournament with a 10-5 win in the opening round of the 2A West Regional Monday afternoon at Linton Park.

The Wildcats used four hits and a few Magazine errors to break open a 3-1 lead, getting a two run double by freshman Rustin Hays as well as an RBI single from J.W. Mackey.

Hector build a small lead early on in the game with a Shawn Lusk double, followed by a Bryant Haralson walk. Karson Lee singled in the first run to give Hector the opening lead.

Magazine would respond in the bottom of the frame as they crossed one run off an error to tie the game.

The Wildcats started to break away in the third inning beginning with Hays crossing off a passed ball. Mackey ripped an RBI single in the fourth inning to score Lee giving Hector a 3-1 advantage.

Lusk and Haralson started the fifth inning with a mission on back-to-back singles, Haralson came into score a couple batters later off an error. Mackey followed scoring Jordan Chisum off a single, followed by Lee scoring off a bases loaded walk and Mackey off a passed ball. Hays finished off the scoring in the fifth off a double crossing Colton Foster and Jacob Chronister.

Magazine tried to make a game of it in the sixth inning as they scored four runs off one single and five walks. They couldn't put up enough however, as the Wildcats claimed a 10-5 victory.

Lee lead the Wildcats at the plate with three hits. He was followed by Mackey and Lusk with two each along with one hit from Hays and Haralson.

Haralson got the win on the mound with five solid innings of work including nine strikeouts, two hits and two walks. Hays, Lusk, Chisum and Foster combined for two innings on the mound with three strikeouts and four walks.

The victory qualifies the Wildcats for the 2A State Tournament which includes sixteen of the state's top 2A schools. The tournament will begin tomorrow (3/9) with first pitch time dependent on games played Tuesday night. Semi-final, championship and consolation games were unavailable by press time. Check next week's paper for report.

Pirates fall in regional tournament

Claim district tournament title

By Joseph Brown

The long layoff from regional tournament postponement seemed to have a negative effect on the Pirate baseball squad as they fell in the first round of the 4A-North Regional Tournament for the third straight season Monday afternoon.

Ozark used a stellar pitching game and nearly perfect defense to hold the Pirates to only three hits and end their season Monday afternoon.

The Hillbillies put pressure on the Pirates from the start with an opening single followed by an error to put runners at the corners with one out. Pirate freshman ace Christian Ewing held his composure with two consecutive strikeouts, letting the Pirates out of the inning without relinquishing a run.

Ozark would capitalize on Pirate mistakes in the third frame though, after an infield single and two errors allowed the Hillbillies to load the bases. Ewing held the damage to minimal allowing only one run off a sacrifice fly.

The Hillbillies continued with timely hitting in the fourth as a double to center field, followed by another sacrifice fly brought in the second run.

Ozark broke the game wide open in the seventh when three hits and two Pirate errors allowed the Hillbillies to scrape across four runs, making the score 6-0.

But the Pirates refused to fade into the limelight starting with Dalton Van Horn and Bryce Sparks drawing walks along with Garrett McKown reaching on an error to load the bases. Keeton Shaw brought in one off a walk, followed by Corey Hottinger crossing two off a single to center field. However, that would be the last of the Pirate threat after a ground ball to short forced an out at second base bringing a close to the Pirates season with a 6-3 loss.

Ewing pitched 6 1/3 innings with five strikeouts and one walk. He allowed six hits and two earned runs. Ethan Davis marked off 2/3 an inning in relief with no strikeouts and one walk. Hottinger led at the plate with two hits, followed by Taylor Moudy with one.

The Pirates finished the season with a final record of 14-12.

Pirates 7
Booneville 3

Pitching got Dover and Booneville into last Tuesday's 4-4A Conference Tournament title game, but the Pirate bats are what knocked out the Bearcats.

Dover battered two Booneville pitchers to the tune of 10 hits and cruised to a 7-3 win, marking Dover's third 4-4A tournament title in school history.

Both the Pirates and Bearcats used up their aces in the semi-finals round, forcing the Pirates to send Ethan Davis, who performed well with three strikeouts, allowing three earned runs.

The Pirates built an early advantage in the top half of the opening frame, when Keeton Shaw reached on a single followed by a Luke Price double. Davis helped his own cause with a shot to left field, scoring both Shaw and Price. Ty Morphis brought in Davis' courtesy runner, Austin Turner, on an infield single to give Dover a three-run lead.

Two home runs in the second inning pushed the Pirate advantage to seven runs. The first of which was a 2-run shot over the left field fence from Chance Stines; the other was a Price smack, which also scored two, making the score 7-0.

Booneville attempted a comeback with one run in the fourth and two in the fifth, but was unable to overcome the insurmountable lead as the Pirates grabbed the conference tournament crown with a final score of 7-3.

Price led the Pirates at the plate with three hits, followed by Garrett McKown with two. Five other Pirates added one hit each to round out their attack.


Photo by Joseph Brown

Senior Corey Hottinger eyes a pitch in the Pirates loss to Ozark Monday afternoon.



Photo by Glenn Parrish, Booneville Democrat

The Dover Pirates baseball team poses with their new hardware after claiming the 4-4A Conference Tournament Title. They were also regular season runners-up.

Commission sets 2013-14 deer hunting seasons

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission set the state's deer hunting seasons today, with modern gun deer season opening Nov. 9, archery season opening Sept. 28, and muzzleloader season opening Oct. 19. The deer season dates are part of the 2013-2014 general hunting regulations approved today during the Commission's monthly meeting.

Season dates for the 2013-14 deer hunting season:
Archery – All zones: Sept. 28-Feb. 28, 2014.
Modern Gun - Zones 1, 1A, 2, 3, 6, 6A, 7, 8, 8A, 10 and 11: Nov. 9-Dec. 1.
Zone 4: Nov. 9-10.
Zone 5: Nov. 9-10 and Nov. 16-17.
Zones 4A, 5A, 14 and 15: Nov. 9-Dec. 8.
Zones 4B and 5B: Nov. 9-17.
Zones 9, 12 and 13: Nov. 9-Dec. 15.
Zone 16, 16A and 17: Nov. 9-Dec. 25.
Muzzleloader – Zones 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4A, 5A, 6, 6A, 7, 8, 8A, 10, 11, 14 and 15: Oct. 19-27 and Dec. 14-16.
Zones 9, 12, 13, 16, 16A and 17: Oct. 19-27 and Dec. 29-31.
Zones 4, 4B, 5 and 5B: Closed.