

Area ball teams prepare for season

Both Birmingham coaches know it's on the schedule. Neither one thinks the game will be played.

Seaholm's baseball team is scheduled for a season opening doubleheader at cross-town rival Groves, 1 p.m. April 8.

Unless there is a lot of dry weather and winds between now and opening day, Groves' field will probably be too wet to play the game.

"Every time I look at our field I cry," said Groves coach Jim Crosby.

When the two cross-town rivals do battle it will be a meeting of opposites. Birmingham Groves is two-time defending Metro Suburban Activities Association champion. Lost to graduation, however, is almost every starting infielder and outfielder.

As in the past Groves' biggest advantage will be the strength of its pitching corps.

SEAHOLM on the other hand has returning lettermen or starters at every position except pitcher. The Maples will play defense like vacuum cleaners and hit the ball well.

"Our pitching will be a question mark," Seaholm coach Don Sackett said. "I lost my three starting hurlers to graduation. Everything hinges on how our new kids come along."

Sackett is in his 18th season as Seaholm head coach. His Maples were 16-5 last season, second in the Southeastern Michigan Association to Royal Oak Kimball.

Returning at first base is league

home run champion Jeff Maher. The senior Maher clouted six roundtrippers last season.

Also back are two starting outfielders, seniors Karl Ring and Steve Boston. Ring led Seaholm in hitting last year, with Boston right behind him. Steve Schubeck and Scott Curry, Seaholm's senior double play combination, returns at the short stop and second base positions respectively.

Junior third sacker Jim Maertens was a starter one year ago, and Andy Little, who was a reserve catcher last season, will handle the receiving duties this spring. Both are seniors.

Juniors Todd Murphy and Brian Young, along with senior Roger Goods, are the pitchers Sackett is banking on improving. Goods is the only hurler with varsity experience.

"Our toughest competition will come from Hazel Park this season," Sackett said. "Kimball of course will be very good."

"We'll have good hitting. We have four left handers and five right handers. We also have a lot of speed. This is a warning to our competitors—catchers beware, we're going to be really rolling around these bases."

BIRMINGHAM GROVES coach Crosby has a completely different coaching task. Eleven seniors graduated last spring, including his starting first, second and third baseman, short stop and top three outfielders.

"That's a lot of holes to plug in one year," Crosby said. "We were fortunate that a lot of kids got experience

last year, even though they weren't starters."

Les Garrett is the most solid spot of this spring's Falcon lineup. The senior returning catcher, who was an all-state football player last fall, was first team All-Metro Suburban Activities Association and all-regional one year ago.

Besides being an excellent receiver, Garrett is also a strong hitter. Garrett batted .395 one year ago. He hit five home runs and drove in 26 runs.

With pitchers Mark Pomorski and Carl Brettschneider graduated, it also looked like the Falcons would need some help at the mound. Pomorski was 17-4 and Brettschneider 15-3 last spring.

"We could have a better pitching staff than we've ever had," Crosby said. "We may not have two pitchers as outstanding, but we'll have four almost as good. I won't run into the problems in doubleheaders I had last season."

Jeff Goudie, a junior, was a starting pitcher last season. He had a 2.2 earned run average.

Another hurler with varsity experience is senior Dan Bertelson. Bertelson, an all-area football selection last fall, had a 2.1 earned run average last year.

"Bertelson grew four inches and put on 30 pounds last spring," Crosby said. "When he grew he had coordination problems. As a pitcher he had control problems. He's put everything together this year."

Supporting those two pitchers is junior Kurt Garrett, Les' brother. Kurt was the top JV pitcher one year ago. Another junior, Jeff Brayton, pitched for the junior varsity last spring.

The other starting positions at Groves are: First base, senior Steve Haywood; second and short stop, junior Bill Eberhardt and Byron Onisko will both start, but Crosby hasn't decided where yet; third base, senior Tim Bass; catcher, junior Jon Noonan.

"We sound OK on paper," Crosby said. "Right now the question mark is going to be on defense. Lahser should be real tough in our league because they've had two excellent JV teams in a row. Dondoro is always tough."

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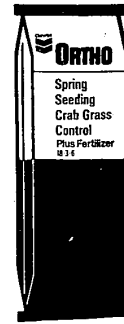
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