

Baseball from page D1

for a lot with the way he covers the outfield."

Junior Drew Stanton should be a great addition if he plays baseball like he does football. An All-Oregon quarterback who helped the Hawks win the Division 3 state title, he plays short-stop and pitcher.

He was a varsity starter for two seasons at Lake Oswego High School in Oregon and batted .488 last year.

"I think he can be one of the top baseball players in the area," Harrington said. "He's an outstanding shortstop; he has good power, a strong arm and a quick bat."

The Hawks lost All-Oregon pitcher Jim Kay (8-2) to graduation, but they return their next two hurlers in terms of innings pitched and record.

Doig and left-handed senior Matt Zatklin were 5-0 each with respective earned run averages of 2.57 and 1.68.

Of the 16 players on the team, 11 are listed as possible pitchers. The others most likely to see time on the mound are junior Rob Whipple, sophomore Mike Sachs and senior Brent Porhola.

"Pitching could be fairly strong, although Jim Kay will be missed," Harrington said. "I think we're going to use a lot of different pitchers."

"Until we get started, it'll be tough to tell who's going to step up. While Stanton is the only power pitcher on the team, the other guys have some good stuff. "If we don't make Stanton a starter, he could be a short reliever. That's what he did last year, and that's where we'll start him out."

Senior Brad Hocking will play first base when Doig pitches, and sophomore Andy Wingert will play shortstop until Stanton returns from a bout with pneumonia next week.



Running time: Nick Vitanis and his Harrison teammates run wind sprints at the end of baseball practice Monday. The Hawks hope to win a third consecutive Western Lakes Activities Association title.

STAFF PHOTO BY BOB DEZELLE

Harrison has young but experienced players in sophomores Nick Vitanis and Jake Ghannam at second and third bases, respectively.

Vitanis (243) took over when Matt Lee, who isn't playing baseball this year, was injured, and Ghannam (.292) was the regular at the hot corner from early in the season.

"The infield should be very solid," Harrington said. "It's still fairly young, but it has the potential to be a good infield."

Whipple has shown a lot of improvement, according to Harrington, and might start in left field.

The right fielder could be either Sacha, Wingert when Stanton returns or one of two catchers — junior Bill Richeson or sophomore Kevin Zerbo.

Senior Sean Sutton and Zerbo will begin the season sharing the catching position.

"Sutton is a solid catcher and a good hitter," Harrington said. "Zerbo has terrific potential, but he's hindered by a sore arm."

Besides winning a third consecutive WAAA title, the Hawks hope to add a Division 2 district championship, too.

"Harrington ended the regular season last year ranked No. 1 in the state, but it lost its first district game to Birmingham Seaholm, 11-10.

"That was a huge disappointment," Harrington said. "I thought last year's team was one of the best we've had here."

"The fact we played our worst game of the year in the district is in the back of our minds. We really want to do something in the state tournament."

sore arm.

Fortunately for the Falcons, they had junior Bob Houchins, another pitching veteran, to face defending state champion Warren DeLaSalle.

Houchins pitched the first six innings of a 6-5 victory Monday.

"Bobby threw well enough to keep us in it," Finn said, adding it was a huge win for Farmington. "The kids were happy we scheduled it, and you have to schedule some tough teams to find out where you're at."

Lutman, who was 3-1 as a pitcher, is one of the team's top returning hitters. He batted .389 with six doubles, three triples, five home runs and 27 RBI.

Sophomore Andy Brown, who worked the final inning of the opener to earn a save, and senior Brett Brown have varsity pitching experience, too.

"We only graduated a couple pitchers, and we used a lot of pitchers, so that's positive on one side," Finn said.

"I think if we can stay focused, we can be competitive. I don't want to predict too much unless past performance has been there. The only one who has a lot of experience is Ian, because he's senior."

The Falcons have a first-rate catcher in senior Nick Hippler, a 6-foot-3, 200-pounder who can hit but excels defensively.

"He does a great job behind the plate," Finn said. "I think he's the best defensive catcher in our league; I thought he was last year, but you don't get the all-league honors unless you hit. But we hope he'll have a good year."

Farmington also has a solid infield with a veteran player at every position.

Seniors Kyle Burecar and Brad Baranick begin their fourth year on the varsity and will start again at first and second base, respectively.

"Those are two guys who've played a long time," Finn said.

Pardonnet is the shortstop with freshman Jeff Fischer playing there when Pardonnet pitches. Houchins and fellow juniors Chris Chesney and Brian Bosler will rotate at third base.

"Any time you have a freshman playing a major position a couple days a week, you always



Tim Dolg senior first baseman, Marcus Mencotti senior center fielder, Drew Stanton junior shortstop

have a reserved approach, but (Fischer) has been pretty good," Finn said.

"I think we just need to have some experience. Obviously, we're experienced on the right side (of the infield). Once the kids get some repetitions, they'll be OK."

NORTH FARMINGTON

How well the Raiders hit the ball will determine just how successful they are this year, according to veteran coach Irv Horwitz.

He believes North has the pitching and defense necessary to do well, if only the Raiders can produce at the plate.

"If we can hit the ball this year, I think we'll do all right," Horwitz said. "I think we have the pitching."

"We're not that experienced, but in the preseason we got the ball over the plate. If we can continue that, I think we'll be all right."

The pitching staff is led by senior left-hander Jeff Granat, who was the winning pitcher in North's 6-4, upset victory over Canton in a district tournament game.

Horwitz has been impressed with sophomore Bryan Smith, who will be the starting second baseman.

Junior Eric Odmark did well pitching at the JV level and has looked good in scrimmages, according to Horwitz, and seniors Pat O'Connell and Scott Stein might also contribute as pitchers.

The receiver will be sophomore Matt Clark, who was on the varsity last season and will do nearly all the catching this year.

Senior Ethan Goodman was the catcher last year but agreed to move to center field.

"He's a great kid to do that," Horwitz said, adding Goodman's sore knees were partly the reason for the switch. "I don't know if he could have caught the whole time, but he will do some catching. He's a good leader."

Around the infield, North has O'Connell at first base; senior Mike Sack moves from second to shortstop, and senior Jeff Vieder returns at third base.

Vieder was voted the best underclassman on the team and was the only player to hit above .300. He had a .310 average with 11 RBI.

"I think my infield is going to be very good," Horwitz said. "It could possibly be one of the best I've had in a long time."

Horwitz said the North infield from the 1998 WAAA championship team might've had better hitters, but this year's group matches up favorably as far as defense.

A pair of varsity returnees will play on both sides of Goodman — junior Mike Rosenberg in left field and junior Aaron Drury in right.

Rounding out the varsity roster are junior outfielder and pitcher Justin Prinestine, junior third baseman Matt Gurka, junior outfielder Jason Berthine and senior second baseman Dan Canvasser.

The Raiders, who were 2-8 in the WAAA Lakes Division and 6-16 overall, start the season Saturday afternoon with a home game against Fraser.

"If our inexperienced pitchers come through, the defense holds up and we get to hitting, we can do all right," Horwitz said. "I'm not saying we're going to win the league, but we can do better than we've done the last couple years."

CC sweeps Dakota, routs Utica for 3-0 season start

Redford Catholic Central opened the baseball season with a 3-0 mark by taking a doubleheader from Macomb Dakota on Saturday, 4-1 and 3-2, and trouncing Utica on Monday, 18-2.

"It's a good start, especially on Saturday," said CC coach John Salter. "Our pitching was solid with Charlie Haeger and Jeff Niemiec around the plate and Kevin Entsminger throwing well. And we came from behind in both games on Saturday. It's good we could do that."

The Shamrocks didn't need to come from behind against Utica, scoring nine runs in the top of the first inning, led by Jake Viano's grand-slam homer. Viano also added an RBI double. Phil Marone was 3-for-4 with four RBI; Mike Wadowski had a two-run homer; Entsminger was 2-for-3, and Niemiec and Anthony

Coratti had two RBI each. Entsminger took the win, giving up two walks, two hits, two runs (both unearned) and striking out three.

Haeger threw a one-hitter against Dakota in the first game Saturday, but CC didn't take the lead until the fifth inning with a three-run rally.

After Haeger hit a solo homer to tie the score at 1-1, Entsminger doubled home pinch-runner Derek Brooks with the go-ahead run in the fifth. Dave Tovey had a double for the only other CC hit, while Haeger earned the win with his one-hitter to go with three walks and 10 strikeouts.

Entsminger also got the save in the second game in the relief of Niemiec. CC led 3-2 with one out and two on when Entsminger came in. He gave up an infield single to load the bases but struck out the next two batters to end the game.

FARMINGTON

The Falcons have the potential to put together a good pitching staff if only coach Pete Finn can get everyone healthy.

Two of Farmington's most experienced pitchers have yet to pitch. Senior Ian Pardonnet is sidelined by bronchitis and left-hand junior Tony Lutman by a

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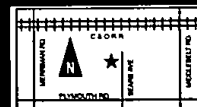
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