

MIFFLIN COUNTY BASEBALL

Depth will play key role in Huskies' first season

By **NICK WAGNER**

Sentinel sports reporter
nwagner@lewistownsentinel.com

LEWISTOWN — Any time two schools come into one, there are going to be some good and bad things to come out of it.

In the inaugural Mifflin County baseball season, manager Travis Zook is happy to see only the good so far in his Huskies.

Mifflin County had a whopping 72 kids report to the first practice prior to cuts being made. Once they got down to the right number, Zook realized that his depth will carry the team in its first season.

“We’re going to be very, very deep,” Zook said. “A lot of times you have your best nine or 10 guys and then there is a deep drop off. It’s not like that for us. If they take a day off, someone can step in and fill a role.”

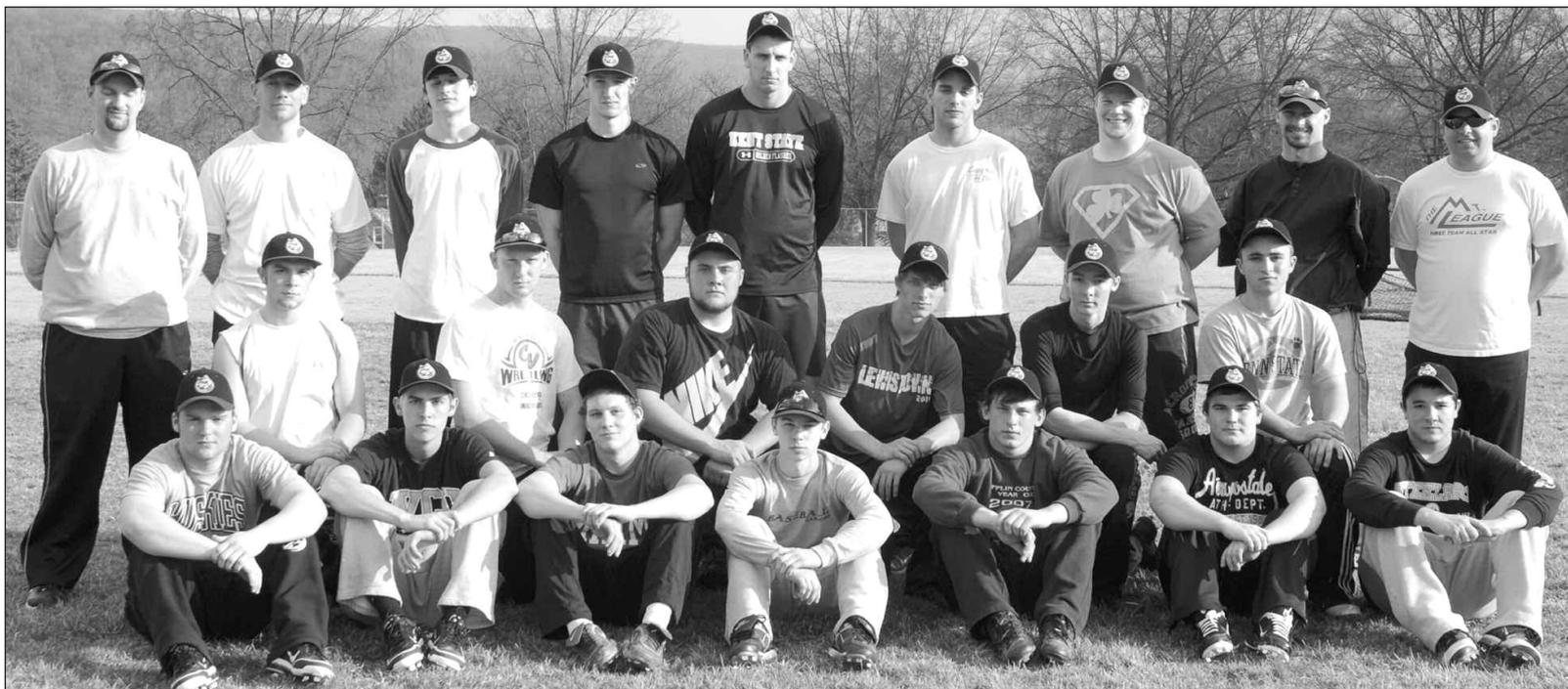
The Huskies lost a few key players from last year’s Indian Valley squad and brought back a core group of kids from Lewistown. Former Indian Valley standout Cody Heane will be missed, along with teammate Joe McElwain.

Zook had trouble picking out a few impact players for this year’s team. At every position there will be competition. He said that’s something that he will have to deal with all season long.

“It will be a little testing at times for me,” Zook said. “I’ve tried to stay fairly consistent with my lineups. It’s not difficult to have them comfortable in the position, but it will be difficult to say how long I’ll stick with a guy.”

Zook couldn’t point one player out that he will be able to lean on for the upcoming season.

“To be honest I can’t pick



Sentinel photo by BUFFIE BOYER

Members of the Mifflin County High School baseball team are, from left, front, Kirby Moist, Chris Wilson, Hunter Walker, Levi North, Tanner Kibe, Josh Rosefsky and Dakota Macknair; middle, Jack Wagner, Logan Swineford, Trevor Peachey, Evan Pupo, Dalton Long and Aaron Michaels; back, coach Aaron Bubb, coach Keith Yoder, Rodney Patterson, Cy Treaster, Seth Wagner, Ted Wilson, Brady Specht, coach Travis Zook and coach Kyle Cramer.

AT A GLANCE

MIFFLIN COUNTY HUSKIES

District 6, Class AAAA

Coach: Travis Zook, assisted by Kyle Cramer, Aaron Bubb, Keith Yoder, Travis Matter, Ray Klinger and Larry Wolfe

anybody,” he said. “I think they are all going to be impact players. Sometimes you have a wild card that will step in but everyone seems comfortable in their roles.”

The Huskies will be an all-around solid team this year. Moving to Class AAAA may be tough next year, but Mifflin County does play State College and Central Mountain twice each, and Williamsport, in their inaugural quad-A slate.

Mifflin County will be fea-

turing a few unproven arms on the mound. A pair of sophomores will be called on to fill some gaps for the Huskies.

“Our pitchers are a little but untested,” Zook said. “We have some young arms like Heath Hidlay and Isaac Strohecker that have both saw some varsity time. They will be able to fill some roles for us.”

Defensively, Zook said he has a group of all-stars. And all he asks for from his team is to limit the opposition to about four or five runs per game so he can let loose his offense — an offense that will be very tough.

“I think we’re going to lean more on our offense,” the coach said. “Our pitchers and defense will keep us where we need to be, but we’ll make it up on offense.”

As far as a legitimate weakness goes, the Huskies are hard-pressed to find one.

Maybe their pitching, but other than that they will be an absolute force to reckon with. From one through nine, Zook knows that he will find production out of the entire lineup day in and day out.

“I would really not want to be a coach on the opposing team to figure out where our weakness in the lineup,” he said.

Mifflin County has implemented a style of practice that isn’t the norm for the high school level. Zook and his coaching staff have been using film sessions to study their players’ swings.

Zook said it’s something he was doing at Indian Valley and wants to continue the tradition at Mifflin County. While watching tape, the kids are really engaged in what their coach is telling them.

“I think it’s something that’s gets neglected at times,” Zook said. “We talk to the

kids about their swing, but sometimes it’s difficult to put that in perspective without seeing their swing.”

With the spring season being the final of the school year, the merger question is almost something in the past. Most of these kids have already played sports with kids from their former rivals. Zook doesn’t see any issue and thinks that the competition may help fuel some of his players to push their team-

mates to try their best.

“I think being a spring sport helps with these kids being used to it,” Zook said. “I never really thought it would be an issue.”

“They have really taken to it. They’ve played together in all-star teams and junior Babe Ruth. Even though they’re from ex-rivals they have really come together.”

Mifflin County opens at home with Philipsburg-Osceola today.



RICK SMELTZ
BROKER
248-8525

501 Electric Avenue
Lewistown

717-248-2122 Fax 717-248-6031

www.SA-RE.com

