

COMMENTARY

Chuck Asher takes rightful place at Lehman

Back in early 1967, Miami University football coach Bo Schembechler was searching the high school ranks to fill a vacancy on his staff. Bo's finalists were both from Sidney's Miami Valley League, Middletown native Chuck Asher of Piqua and Bellefontaine's Gary Moeller who hailed from Lima.

Asher was offered the job and turned it down, reasoning that he liked high school and could make more money staying where he was and painting in the summer. Such were the economics of college athletics which is one reason why Sidney mentor Dave Haines never took such a step during that same period.



Sports Extra
Dave Ross

Moeller, meanwhile, decided to leave Bellefontaine for Oxford after just two years. In 1969 he went to Michigan with Schembechler and eventually became head coach with Illinois, Michigan, and the Detroit Lions.

Asher's decision to stay in high school eventually paid big dividends for Lehman Catholic

High School which had become a Sidney-Piqua consolidation located in Sidney in 1970. The late Charles "Chuck" Asher will enter the Lehman Hall of Fame on Saturday August 7 along with Sidney Holy Angels alums Tom Westerheide (1965) and Colonel Cole Kingseed (1967), resulting in a very deserving trio.

After his 1964-77 Piqua gridiron tenure, Chuck became Athletic Director at Bellefontaine before adding the title of head football coach from 1982-87. All the while he lived in Piqua. It appeared that Bellefontaine would be the final stop on his coaching resume' but this physical fitness nut who loved football was not done.

Lehman's coaching job opened in 1991 and the school also needed a full time history teacher. Guess who signed on for both at age 61 after not coaching since 1987? Asher gave the Cavaliers a five year commitment and stayed twice that long as his classroom duties were lessened until eventually eliminated.

He built a fine coaching staff and his teams won regularly (71-36) including three playoff appearances in his final four seasons. When he finally retired, he turned over a solid returning squad to successor Jeff Uhlenhake and the 2001 journey ended in the state semifinals. An earlier playoff contest became the highlight of Chuck's days at Lehman when his 1993 squad derailed defending state champion St. Henry, which then won the 1994-95 Ohio crowns. The Asher career mark of 203-111-10 also included an initial stop at Springfield Northwestern.

I got to know Chuck through his games with Sidney during his Piqua and Bellefontaine years. The relationship became regular when he went to Lehman and I enjoyed it immensely, even when I had to wait for him to return from jogging or pumping iron so we could do our weekly interview.

Chuck became a periodic football radio broadcaster after his permanent coaching retirement. Several times he traversed the stairs at Sidney Memorial Stadium to the pressbox where I was delighted to see him once again.

I just reviewed Asher's 2018 obituary and saw that memorial funds had been set up at Piqua, Bellefontaine, and Lehman Catholic High Schools at his passing. How appropriate.

He's one of the coaches remembered at the entry to the visitors locker room at Sidney Memorial Stadium, and is a member of the Hall of Fame of the Ohio High School Football Coaches Association. Congratulations new Lehman Hall of Famer Chuck Asher!

Maggi a big hit

Last week's column on Maggi Williams has received more feedback than anything I've ever written including in an area I don't really understand, social media. Sidney High faculty member Brett Bickel handles social media for SHS athletics and he posted the piece on four outlets, most notably Facebook. During the first 22 hours, over 9,000 hits were received.

I'm very pleased and continue to understand that subject selection is critical to what I do.

Sports Extra appears each Friday. Dave Ross authored a 438 page book on the first century of Sidney High School football that is available at the Ross Historical Center downtown.

SPORTS BRIEFS

• **SIGNUPS ONGOING FOR SIDNEY YOUTH FOOTBALL:** Sign-ups for Sidney Youth Football are ongoing through next week.

The league is open to any boy entering the 5th or 6th grade of any Shelby County school. Registration is being held daily through Friday from 5 p.m. to 7, on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Aug. 2-5 from 5 p.m. to 7 at First Christian Church at 320 E. Russell Road. Cost is \$60.

Contact Ron Burns at (937) 622-2529 for more information.

• **SIGNUPS ONGOING FOR FORT LORAMIE GIRLS BASKETBALL FALL LEAGUE:** There will be a girls basketball fall league held at Fort Loramie Schools soon. The league will run on four consecutive Sundays (Sept. 19 and 26, and Oct. 3 and 10). This league is for girls entering grades 5-12. Players will be placed on a team, and each team will play two games each day. The cost is \$50. Deadline to enter is Sept. 9, 2021. Please contact Carla Siegel for more information at carla.siegel@loramie.k12.oh.us.

• **SIGNUPS ONGOING FOR SIDNEY WOMENS SOFTBALL LEAGUE:** Signups are ongoing for the Sidney Womens Softball League for any women over the age of 18. All games are played on Sundays at 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Flanagan Fields in Sidney. The league runs from mid-August through October, with tournaments at the end of the season. There is a payout for first and second place. There is a sponsorship fee of \$300 to help with expenses and pay outs. Contact Angie Neth at (937) 726-2667 for more information.

• **SUBMIT-A-TIP:** To submit an announcement, email the Sidney Daily News sports department at sidneysports@aimeidamidwest.com or call (937) 498-8088. In addition, follow the Sidney Daily News sports department on Twitter @SidneyOHSports, or follow sports editor Bryant Billing on Twitter @topbillingsport. You can also follow Billing on Facebook @BryantBillingSDN.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Sidney Post 217 White loses heartbreaker

Squad falls 10-9 in 8 innings to Napoleon in state

By Bryant Billing

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LANCASTER — After having played solid defense for most of the season, several late errors and miscues ended Sidney Post 217 White's run in the Ohio American Legion state tournament.

The Napoleon Post 300 River Bandits scored eight runs in the last three innings to rally and beat Sidney 10-9 in eight innings in an elimination game on Wednesday at Beavers Field in Lancaster. It was the second loss for Post 217 in the double-elimination tournament.

"This was a tough one to swallow," Post 217 White coach Daulton Mosbarger said. "But overall, the summer was an enjoyable one. This is a great group of kids that love to be around the game."

The River Bandits gathered six hits in the final three innings and drew three walks. But the biggest game-changing plays were errors by Post 217 White.

With Sidney clinging to a 9-8 lead and a runner on third with two outs in the seventh, Nolan Schafer hit a line out to relief pitcher Jack Olberding for the second out. Olberding fired to third base to try for a double play, but the ball went by Aiden Booth at third base and into foul territory.

Booth tracked down the ball and fired a throw to catcher Darren Hoying. The throw was easily ahead of the runner, but Hoying had to reach to try to make a catch and couldn't. The ball tipped off Hoying's glove and rolled away from the plate, and Post 300's Kaleb Woods scored to tie it.

Another miscue in the eighth cost the White the game. Blake Altaffer hit a pop up to shallow right field with two outs and runners on first and second.

Ryan Caufield, who entered the game and took over for Olberding in right when the latter moved to the mound in the seventh, spent several seconds tracking the ball before it fell. The ball brushed by Caufield's glove and fell to the ground, and Post 300's Austin Lichty easily scored from second to give the squad a 10-9 lead.

Caufield fired a throw home and Hoying easily tagged out the runner from first for the third out, but one run was enough. Post 300 went down in order in the seventh, with lead-off hitter Ryan Schloss striking out on four pitches to end it.

"That's baseball," Mosbarger said. "It's a game of inches. You've got to make those routine plays. That's what separates good teams from great teams. Some of those routine plays we had hit to us, we didn't make."

"(Napoleon) did some of the same stuff earlier and we took advantage of it, but in crunch time, they didn't (make mistakes) and we did. You've got to make those plays in crunch time."

The River Bandits had similarly rallied late in a contest on Wednesday afternoon against Lancaster Post 11. The squad scored seven runs in the final two innings but lost 9-8 to drop into the loser's bracket.

Sidney, which lost 10-2 to Yeager-Benson Post 199 on Tuesday and beat St. Clairsville Post 159 14-3 earlier on Wednesday, couldn't prevent Napoleon from coming all the way back.

The River Bandits scored one run in each the second and third to take a 2-0 lead, but Post 217 White exploded for nine runs in the fourth and was

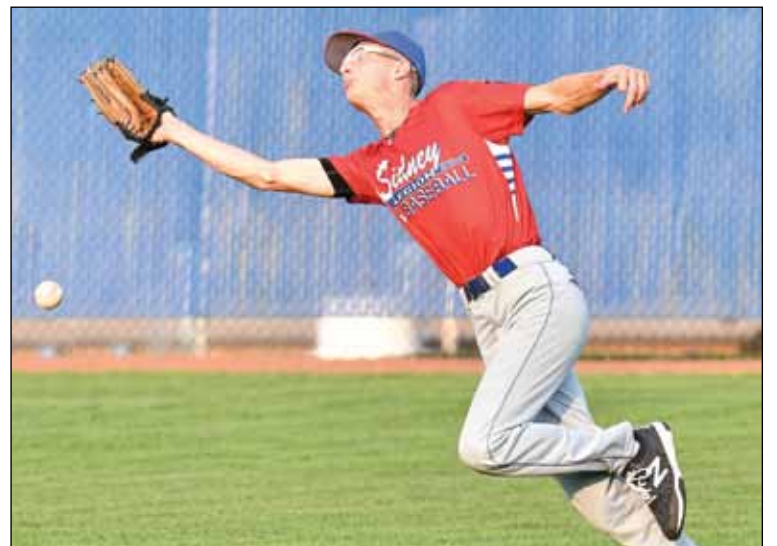


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Sidney Post 217 White's Jack Olberding, left, and Mack Fortman console Ryan Schloss after Schloss struck out for the final out in a 10-9 loss to Napoleon Post 300 in an Ohio American Legion state tournament game on Wednesday at Beavers Field in Lancaster. Post 300 scored eight runs in the final three innings.



Sidney Post 217 White's Ryan Schloss swings during an Ohio American Legion state tournament game on Wednesday at Beavers Field in Lancaster.



Sidney Post 217 White's Ryan Caufield goes for a pop up in shallow right field during the eighth inning of an Ohio American Legion state tournament game on Wednesday at Beavers Field in Lancaster. Caufield missed the catch, which allowed Napoleon Post 300 to score the winning run and eliminate Sidney with a 10-9 win.

in control until the sixth.

Napoleon scored three runs on two hits in the sixth and also benefited from one error and one hit batter.

Mosbarger, who was concerned about available pitchers on Thursday, stuck with starter Isaac Roby in the seventh.

Taylor Yahraus hit a pop out to start the seventh, but Roby then walked Breven Deckrosh and gave up consecutive singles to left field to Blake Altaffer and Caleb Frank.

Woods then hit a three-run triple to right field to cut the gap to 9-8, after which Roby was removed for Olberding.

"In this tournament, we had lost a couple of our (normal pitchers), so I had to kind of get creative," Mosbarger said. "Going into that last inning with a four-run lead, he'd been pitching pretty good. He had them off balance. ...He let off one bad pitch there with the bases loaded, and it got them right back in the game."

"Jack Olberding came in and got the job done, but we couldn't finish the play. I think a lot of our guys are frustrated right now. ...It's frustrating because of the big lead we had, but you've got to play down to the last out. ...Napoleon's a good team, and they came up with enough plays to win it."

The White finish 23-6. It's the second consecutive season the program earned a state berth. Post 217's lone senior squad earned a state berth in 2019; the 2020 season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's always good to get here. This team this year has lots of talent and lots of guys that love to be around the game and love to be around each other," Mosbarger said. "It was a tough way to end and not the way we wanted to end. But it was a great summer."

"... Last year, those kids got something taken away from them, and this year, it was pretty sweet for them to come out and have the success we did."

Post 217 White scored its nine runs in the fourth off four hits, two walks, one hit batter and two errors. Jordan Lessing hit a two-run double in the inning while Olberding hit a two-run single. Schloss and Jarin Bertke each hit one-run singles.

Post 217 White, which had five total hits, struggled to get on base the rest of the way. Its lone base runner the last three innings came as a result of a Napoleon error.

Reach Bryant Billing at 937-538-4818, or follow @SidneyOHSports on Twitter and @BryantBillingSDN on Facebook.