

## \* Addison Trail girls track team breaks numerous school records

### Addison Braves semi-pro baseball team wrapping up 2019 season

By Mike Miazga  
CORRESPONDENT

The Addison Trail girls track team achieved a number of milestones during the 2019 spring season.

The Blazers finished fourth in the West Suburban Conference Gold Division at the varsity and freshmen/sophomore levels. Addison Trail won the Addison Trail and Westmont invitational team titles.

Addison Trail was led by Lizbeth Balbuena and Alexandra Nava.

The Blazers had a total of 12 all-conference performers, a program record. That group includes Balbuena, Juliana Tamayo, Viviana Sanfilippo, Madelyn Ford, Stephanie Avila, Pan-

lina Stachura, Francesca Scarabaggio, Kate Diego, Julia Swierz, Mia Johnson, Alaisia Hunt and Margaret O'Connell.

Stachura placed fifth in the sectional in the high jump.

Addison Trail also broke a host of school records during the season. Nava broke the indoor 300-meter school record. Nava, Tamayo, Balbuena and Sanfilippo broke the indoor 1,600 relay record. Tamayo, Balbuena, Sanfilippo and Nileena Mahesh broke the indoor 3,200 relay record. Tamayo, Balbuena, Sanfilippo and Ford broke the outdoor 3,200 relay record, while Sanfilippo broke the indoor 1,600 and 800 records, as well as the outdoor 1,600 and 3,200 records.

#### Addison Braves baseball

The Addison Braves semi-professional baseball team is close to wrapping up another season on the diamond.

Through late last week the Braves

sported an 8-16 record in the Chicago Suburban Baseball League.

In CSBL action, Addison's Neil Freeman (Triton College) was fourth in the league in hitting through late last week with a .417 average. Jake Bilotta (Waubensee Community College) also ranked among the league leaders with a .339 average.

On the mound, Addison's Chris Hawks (Waubensee Community College) had a 1.42 ERA through late last week to rank second in the CSBL, while Eric Ryan (Robert Morris University) also was among the league's best in pitching with a 1.59 ERA.

Addison also continues to compete in the Wisconsin State League. Through late last week, Addison had a 5-22 mark in WSL action. The league features seven teams, including the local Lombard Orioles team, which also is part of the CSBL.

The Braves do feature a pair of local players. Trevor Fulmer (Addison Trail, Dominican University) and Jon

Kelso (Willowbrook, UW-Platteville)

are on the Addison roster this summer.

The team continues to be under the longtime leadership of general manager Larry Kurkowski. He's assisted by Matt Kostro.

Earlier this year, a pair of former Braves players were inducted into the CSBL Hall of Fame. Pete Miceli was a player, manager and coach from the mid-1970s to 2015, while Bob Kurzka was a player, manager and coach from the mid-1970s through the early

2000s.

The Braves' website noted Miceli and Kurzka saved the Braves from folding in 1980 when the Addison Trail Club decided to not sponsor the team. Miceli and Kurzka came forward and managed as well as performed all administrative duties through 1991, the team's website explained.

The Braves have been a semi-professional baseball team since 1991. The Braves play their home games at Community Park in Addison.

## Elmhurst American Legion baseball wraps up U15 and U19 seasons

### Post 187 to host Great Lakes Regional tournament next summer in Elmhurst

By Mike Miazga  
CORRESPONDENT

The Elmhurst American Legion baseball program recently wrapped up two of its three team seasons.

The Post 187 Muddogs U19 team went 1-2 in the 11th District play-offs in Carol Stream, and finished the year with a 10-8 mark.

"We did well," said Post 187 manager Mike Biondo. "We were a good team that was very young with our pitching. Our bats were there during the regular season, but when it came time for playoffs they kind of became nonexistent."

Biondo said Post 187 will benefit in the future from the experience players such as Aidan Kress (Fenton), Dave Sykora (IC Catholic Prep) and Jimmy O'Donnell (Leyden) gained this season.

"Aiden pitched well and Dave Sykora's pitching was good," said Biondo. "Jimmy O'Donnell did well with the bat later on. He was swinging it well. It was a fun group to be around. The future looks good, especially with having established pitching coming back."

York's Ian Steinorth also is eligible to come back. He had a 1.56 ERA in his pitching appearances, while Sykora had a 1.91 ERA. "Those are very impressive," said Biondo.

Steinorth will continue his baseball career at North Central College in Naperville, while Sykora still has two seasons to go at IC Catholic Prep. Kress has two more years at Fenton.

"We were very young, which is a good thing going forward," said Biondo. "We're still looking to add four or five more solid pitchers. We'd like to have that depth, especially when we go into the playoffs."

Post 187's U15 team also wrapped up its season. The Muddogs went 2-13-1. "We struggled at times," said Biondo. "It was a tough season. The good news is we got to see kids step up and be leaders—guys like Oscar Torres (Fenton). He hit over .480 and is a very vocal kid. He was out there picking up guys as much as he could."

The U15 Muddogs also received strong play from the likes of George O'Brien (pitcher, IC Catholic Prep), Jake Marshall (catcher, IC Catholic Prep) and Matthew Maziarka (pitcher, Fenton), as well as Damian Pacheco (shortstop and second base, York).

"We had some athletic guys that we could put in certain spots," said Biondo. "It was tough for us. We were going up against programs that can pick kids from anywhere and everywhere, while we are limited by boundaries. But it's better to face this tougher competition. It makes them strive for success against these tougher teams instead of going up against weaker teams and winning trophies. And if kids are good, we're going to move them up to our other

teams. We are here so guys can get better not to stack teams."

Biondo announced Post 187 will be the host of the Great Lakes Regional American Legion tournament next year (Aug. 5-9, 2020).

"We're waiting to get things finalized in terms of fields," he said. "We'll have all that locked down come fall or over the winter break. We're definitely going to need community support and volunteers. We're asking people who would like to volunteer in any way possible to contact the Elmhurst American Legion post."

Eight teams from eight regions will qualify for the tournament. Post 187, as the host team, earns an automatic bid. "That should help us attract players with the opportunity to play on a higher platform," said Biondo. "Whoever wins the tournament goes to the American Legion World Series that usually is televised on ESPN and ESPN2, and is held in Shelby, North Carolina."

Biondo pointed out this year's World Series is Aug. 18-19 and will be televised on ESPN.

Biondo also noted the program likely will not field a U15 team next season. "I think 15 is going to go by the wayside and we will work on 17 and 19," he said. "It was a lot for me with the management of three teams. We'll focus on the 17s and 19s teams. We've had a lot of success there and we have coaches committed to working with these kids. They know how to make these kids better players and they lead by example."

## Fenton's Pietrucha improves at the plate

### Bison senior-to-be hit over .300 with Elmhurst American Legion team this summer

By Mike Miazga  
CORRESPONDENT

Fenton senior-to-be baseball player Andrew Pietrucha said he's made quite a bit of progress as a hitter over the last year.

"I got better with my hitting confidence," he said. "When I go up to the plate now I feel like I should be getting a hit. I feel confident enough now where I can say that it's less strikeouts and more hits."

Pietrucha is fresh off a strong run with the Elmhurst American Legion Post 187 baseball team this summer where he hit .333 and was named by Muddogs coach Mike Biondo for providing good defense in the outfield. Pietrucha's primary position is center field.

"Before I would go on cold streaks," he said about his hitting. "I'm hitting better now. I feel like I am putting the ball in play probably 90 percent of the time."

Pietrucha, who will enter his fourth season with the Fenton baseball program next spring, got hit by the baseball bug as a young child.

"I started as a young kid and I fell in love with the game," he said. "I like the team aspect of baseball. That's pretty cool. It's not something where one person can win a game for you. It has to go all around the team."

He's also a big fan of playing center field. "Center field, you are the captain of the outfield," he said. "You can take control of the game. To be a good centerfielder you have to have communication. If there is no communication in the outfield, balls are going to drop and you are going to run into each other. That's how injuries happen and it could create arguments. If you communicate, none of that happens."

Pietrucha enjoys watching Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout play. "I like watching a Mike Trout-type player," he said. "I would say he's my favorite to look up to. He's probably the best player in Major League Baseball and he's not cocky about it at all. He just plays the game."

Pietrucha said his time with Post 187 this summer was enjoyable. It was his second year in the program after playing on the U17 Muddogs team last year. "I met a lot of new friends," he said. "It was very enjoyable."

Pietrucha said things also are looking up for the Fenton baseball program. "It looks like we are going in the right direction," said Pietrucha, an honor-roll student at Fenton who enjoys fishing and going to the golf driving range in his spare time. "A lot of people are committed. It's just more and more practice so we can get more show for all the work we put in every day."

A goal for Pietrucha is to play the sport in college, where he is thinking about majors such as science and criminal justice.

"I would love to play in college," he said. "It would be great to keep playing baseball. One of my goals next year is to get noticed by coaches and have communication with college coaches. I'm going to keep working my butt off and practice. I'm going to get my swing even better and my mechanics better. I'm going to keep getting better."

## New principal at Ardmore School

School District 45 recently announced the school board's approval of a new principal at Ardmore Elementary School for the upcoming 2019-20 school year. Kristin Simpkins is the Villa Park school's new principal. She has 13 years of experience as a principal. Simpkins began her career in Crete-Monee School District 201-U, where she taught sixth and seventh grade and served as an assistant principal in a K-8 building. She also served as both an assistant principal and principal in Frankfort School District 157C. She was the principal of Chelsea Intermediate School for nine years. For the last four years, she held the position of middle school principal in Oak Lawn Hometown School District 123 in a building with over 1,100 students and 120 staff. Simpkins holds a B.S. in Education from Eastern Illinois University and an M.A. from Western Illinois University. She is currently pursuing her Ed.S. degree at Northern Illinois University.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

# Willowbrook's Hines reflects on prep baseball career

*Will continue baseball journey at McHenry County College this fall*

By Mike Miazga  
CORRESPONDENT

Jack Hines had himself one heck of a senior season sendoff.

The recently graduated Willowbrook baseball standout was named the most valuable player of the West Suburban Conference Gold Division, helping the Warriors mow through the seven-team loop with but one loss, an extremely tough feat to accomplish, given the length of the conference season coupled with the volatility of spring weather leading to games usually being stacked one upon the other, thus taxing pitching staffs.

Hines also earned Class 4A all-state honors by the Illinois High School Baseball Coaches Association.

"It meant a lot to me," said Hines of the honors. "I put in a lot of work and to get that type of recognition felt good."

Hines said the mental part of his game took a step forward this season. "I think the mental side of my game got stronger," said Hines, who played shortstop for the Warriors. "I had the mentality of if I make an error, everything will be alright. I slowed the game down in my mind and that helped me get stronger mentally throughout the year."

tally throughout the year."

Hines said his offensive prowess never was in question. "Hitting always has been the best part of my game," he said. "I try to put defense first, but I'm always working on hitting. I'm taking endless rounds in the cages."

Hines, who dabbles in playing a little third base and used to pitch, enjoys playing the shortstop position. "You get to see the whole game there," he said. "You kind of are the leader of the infield. You are there for everybody else so you make all the plays you can. You need to be strong mentally as a shortstop. You need quick feet and quick hands. It's a lot of responsibility playing the position. You need to have that mental strength to be that captain and lead everybody."

Hines is headed north to McHenry County College in Crystal Lake where he will continue his baseball career at the two-year school that has been a decades-old perennial power.

"The coach there presented me with a great opportunity," he said. "I really love the campus and everything about it. The coach is really nice and they have been successful the last couple years. I'm excited to head up there."

Hines said he plans on studying engineering. "I'm not sure what I want to do with that quite yet," he said. "I'm going to study there and play baseball. I haven't figured out

everything else yet."

Hines, who said MCC fall train starts Aug. 12, also was a strong student at Willowbrook, something said will come in handy at the next level. "It's always great to have a backup plan," he said. "You are going to always end up in the next level. If something like that doesn't work out, it's always nice to have something to fall back on."

Hines said he would like to continue on to a four-year school after his time at MCC ends. "I'm not too sure, whatever happens with that I know I will have a lot of support that I am sure will help me make the right decision," he said.

Hines played this summer with the Chicago Pirates team based out of Villa Park. "We ended the season about three weeks ago," he said. "I played in four tournaments and competed in all of them and had a lot of fun."

Hines, who enjoys fishing in his spare time, has fond memories of extended time with the Willowbrook varsity baseball team. "Of course I really love the campus and everything about it. The coach is really nice and they have been successful the last couple years. I'm excited to head up there." Hines said he plans on studying engineering. "I'm not sure what I want to do with that quite yet," he said. "I'm going to study there and play baseball. I haven't figured out

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## Man, 77, dies in single-vehicle crash in Villa Park

On Sunday, the Villa Park Police Department responded to the area of southbound Illinois Route 83 at Riverside Drive for a single vehicle crash with injuries.

Responding officers located a 77-year-old man who suffered serious injury. The driver was the lone occupant of the vehicle. Officers administered lifesaving attempts, and

the driver was transported to a local hospital by the Villa Park Fire Department.

The driver was later pronounced dead. The name of the deceased is being withheld, pending notification of next of kin.

The crash remains under investigation by Villa Park police detectives and the DuPage County Coroner.

Anyone who witnessed the crash, asked to contact Det. Louis Easton at 630-592-6129 or leaston@invillea.ark.com.

## Obituary

**Robert "Cowboy" Hanson, 67**  
Robert "Cowboy" Hanson, of Villa Park, passed away on July 18, 2019 at the age of 67. Visitation was held Thursday, July 25, at Steiner Funeral Home, 350 S. Ardmore Ave., Villa Park. A funeral was held on Friday, July 26 at Funeral Home, followed by burial at Ridgewood Cemetery, Des Plaines. For info, call 630-841611.

## Calendar

(Continued from page 9)

**Friday, Aug. 16**  
Library presents storytimes at Whole Foods Market

The Villa Park Public Library will hold Community Storytime at Whole Foods Market from 10-10:30 a.m. Children of all ages and their adult join library staff as they tell stories, bring their enthusiasm for reading share with all! Whole Foods Market located at 215 S. Route 83 in Elmhurst. Registration is not required. For more information, visit the library's web at vppli.info or call 630-834-1164.

## Upcoming Willowbrook events

**Aug. 5 to 10:** Registration for the 2019-20 school year (see details at [www.dupage88.net/Registration2019-20](http://www.dupage88.net/Registration2019-20)).

**Aug. 7: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.:** 2019 DuPage County Back-to-School Fair at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road in Wheaton (provides a one-stop event for health and social services and back-to-school needs for families living on low incomes in DuPage County with children ages newborn to 18 years - see details in English and Spanish at <https://www.dupage88.net/site/public/files/item=4549>)

**Aug. 12:** Institute Day; 7:30 p.m., District 88 Board of Education meeting at 2 Friendship Plaza in Addison.

**Aug. 13:** Teacher work day

**Aug. 14:** First day of school for the 2019-20 school year

**Aug. 17:** 3 p.m., Willowbrook Athletic Booster Club Annual Golf Outing at Western Acres Golf Course in Lombard (see details at <https://www.dupage88.net/site/page/983>)

**Aug. 23:** 6 p.m., Silver and Blue Community Night.

**Aug. 28:** State Sen. Tom Cullerton is recruiting Illinois employers to participate in his seventh annual job fair. Cullerton is partnering with local chambers of commerce and the Illinois Department of Employment Security to host the job fair from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Odeum Expo Center, 1033 N. Villa Ave. in Villa Park. Job seekers and employers can go to [www.SenatorTomCullerton.com](http://www.SenatorTomCullerton.com) to register.

• See details and more events at <http://www.dupage88.net/wbcalendar>  
• See information about Willowbrook athletics at <https://il.8to18.com/willowbrook>