

The Boyertown Area Times



THE MERCURY

CHAMPS!

Boyertown wins first PIAA title in 25 years



PIAA CLASS AAAA BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Glory Days

Boyertown returns to state summit for first time since 1991

By Thomas Nash

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STATE COLLEGE » The umpire didn't even have to flinch.

The entire Boyertown bench, the fan section and the players in the field knew it was over.

Junior starting pitcher Pat Hohlfeld caught Plum's Jason Maltese staring at strike three down the plate to secure Boyertown the PIAA Class AAAA Championship with a 4-1 win over Plum High School at Penn

State's Medlar Field at Lubrano Park on June 16.

That's when the celebration ensued.

"That's probably the ideal finish," said Hohlfeld afterward of a called strike three. "I immediately started tearing up right there with my teammates around me. I mean, a full season, I don't think anyone could have asked for a better way to end it."

"I don't think I could have gotten out to the mound any quicker," said catcher Ryan Weller, among the first of the Bears to flock

their pitcher.

The win served as Boyertown's third PIAA Championship, their first since the Bears won the title in Class AAA to close out the 1991 season.

"That's 25 long years lifted off our shoulders," said first baseman Ben Longacre. "That's storybook stuff right there."

In the end, it was Hohlfeld holding the pen in his right hand Thursday.

The junior right-hander needed only 79 pitches to go the entire seven innings. He kept the Plum hitters off-balance all throughout, occasionally mixing in his off-speed but mostly painting the black of the plate.

The result served as Plum's second loss of the entire season — the Mustangs' previous coming in the District 7 Championship against Norwin.

"That's a good hitting team we went up against," said Hohlfeld. "They jump on everything and they can hit the ball hard. I tried not to leave anything hanging over the plate for them to unload on."

Hohlfeld was touched for six hits, two of which came from Plum standout first baseman Alexander Kirilloff.

Kirilloff — selected No. 15 overall in the MLB Draft by the Minnesota Twins last week — teed off on an RBI triple off the wall in the

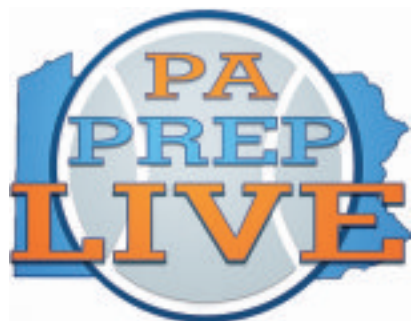
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AUSTIN HERTZOG -
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Above, the Boyertown baseball team, including Ryan Weller, left, Mitch Pinder, center, and Ben Longacre, right, hoists the PIAA championship trophy. At left, Boyertown assistant Ryan Bosch leaps into the arms of head coach Todd Moyer amid the celebration of the Bears winning the PIAA championship on June 16.



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HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

Team-first mentality crowns Bears champions

By Thomas Nash and Austin Hertzog

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STATE COLLEGE » Much to the pregame announcers' displeasure, they'd been doing it all season long.

During pregame player introductions on June 16, similar questions echoed back and forth throughout the press box at Penn State's Medlar Field at Lubrano Park.

"They know they're supposed to walk out to the third base line, right?"

Except the Bears knew exactly what they were doing.

Waiting out the entirety of individual player introductions, Boyertown then charged out to the line together as one team.

"These guys are like my brothers," said shortstop Mitch Pinder after his team's 4-1 win over Plum High School to capture the state title. "We've been

through so much together this season."

That together mentality was evident all season during what became their introduction tradition.

"They do everything together," said Boyertown head coach Todd Moyer after Monday's win over Cumberland Valley. "Every time we go somewhere, we get in trouble because they want to announce each kid individually.

"We don't do that here. Either we go together or we don't go."

Though some pregame announcers have cringed at the sometimes-awkwardness while waiting for lead-off man Pinder to toe the baseline, that team-first mentality seemed to prove wonders for Boyertown this past season.

Sleep On It

Make no mistake about it.

Starting pitcher Pat Hohfeld was wired for the ti-

tle game versus Plum.

But he was just a little bit tired before it.

With the prior game halted due to a nearly two-hour rain delay, Hohfeld could be found inside Boyertown's team suite fast asleep.

"Actually it wasn't completely planned," he admitted afterward with a laugh. "I just kind of laid down on the couch, then next thing I knew it was sunny out again."

That nap proved wonders.

The junior delivered a complete-game six-hitter where he allowed only an unearned run.

Hohfeld, an unmistakably laid-back, easy-going kid, could be found briskly walking around among the crowds waiting for the day's opening game to end.

"I was feeling pretty calm," he admitted. "I woke up and I just sort of wandered around the stadium. Even while our guys were



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Ben Longacre is congratulated after scoring a run in the first inning against Plum in the state final.

hitting BP (batting practice) before, I tried to walk around and stay loose."

Determination Factor

Standing on the concourse with a gold medal around his neck, one would think outfielder Ryan Jacobs would be basking in all his glory.

Instead, just winning a state title wasn't enough.

"Honestly, I feel like we

could have done a lot better," the senior said. "Every game we could do better. But we never broke out. We'd get a couple hits here and there, someone would hit this day or that day. We left at least one inning with bases loaded and we could have easily won this game by six or seven."

"(Plum is a) bigger team, you look at them and would think they're going to win. But we're scrappy, and we can just get timely hits."

That scrappiness was in full effect on Jacobs' favorite sequence of the final.

The Right Formula

Although their roster officially graduates 11 seniors, senior catcher Ryan Weller has already channeled some of his science classes at Boyertown High School.

"It's all about team chemistry and finding that balance," he said afterward. "Talent can only get you so far. It's about blending that talent and developing a bond with the team. That's what took us here."

"It took us some time during the season, but we found out what works and we found it at the right time."

The turning point to

Weller was the Bears' PAC-10 title win over Perkiomen Valley.

"When we won PAC-10's, we definitely showed ourselves what we're capable of," he added. "We came together and we knew we could make a run. Here we are."

The Petri dish that was Boyertown baseball blended together this season. The solution? A PIAA-AAAA Championship.



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Winning pitcher Pat Hohfeld receives his gold medal from coach Todd Moyer after winning the PIAA Class AAAA championship over Plum Thursday in State College.



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Ben Longacre hugs Mitch Pinder amid the celebration after Boyertown won the state title.

Boyertown (24-6)		
Date	Opponent	Score
3/30	OWEN J ROBERTS	L 1-7
3/31	at UPPER PERKIOMEN	W 8-1
4/6	METHACTON WARRIORS	W 2-0
4/8	PERK VALLEY	W 4-3
4/11	at PHOENIXVILLE	W 6-0
4/13	SPRING FORD	W 2-1
4/15	at POTTSGROVE	W 11-1
4/16	GOVERNOR MIFFLIN	L 3-4
4/18	at POPE JOHN PAUL II	W 7-6
4/20	POTTSTOWN	W 8-1
4/22	at OWEN J ROBERTS	L 3-4
4/25	UPPER PERKIOMEN	W 2-1
4/27	at METHACTON WARRIORS	W 8-0
4/30	at WILSON	W 7-1
5/2	PHOENIXVILLE	W 4-0
5/4	at SPRING FORD	W 4-0
5/9	POPE JOHN PAUL II	W 4-0
5/9	POTTSGROVE	W 9-0
5/10	at PERK VALLEY	L 4-5
5/11	at POTTSTOWN	W 2-1
5/17	OWEN J ROBERTS	W 2-1
5/19	PERK VALLEY	W 5-1
5/25	PENNSBURG FALCONS	W 4-3
5/27	at PERK VALLEY	W 5-4
5/31	vs PENNBRIDGE	L 0-3
6/2	at DOWNTOWN WHIFFET	L 0-2
6/6	vs OLNEY TROJANS	W 18-0
6/9	vs WYOMING VALLEY WEST	W 4-2
6/13	at CUMBERLAND VALLEY	W 3-1
6/20	at Plum	W 4-1

Bears' pair of aces deliver a state title

Bauer, Hohlfeld pitch Boyertown to greatness

By Austin Hertzog

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STATE COLLEGE » Andrew Bauer was quick to correct.

“One-one combination,” the senior right-handed pitcher quickly pointed out.

The Boyertown baseball team didn't feature a 1-2 pitching combination this season. It was '1-1' all the way with the duo of Bauer and junior right-hander Pat Hohlfeld carrying the Bears to their third PIAA championship in school history and first in 25 years.

It's a rotation of equals in part to their similarities on the mound. Neither is a dominant force in stature or stuff. They simply know how to pitch effectively by pounding the zone, keeping hitters off-balance and have the demeanor to stay calm in the eye of a storm.

“We're just like the same pitcher,” Hohlfeld said. “We throw the same pitches, have the same strengths and we just back each other up. I've closed his games, he's closed some of mine and we work together.”

After the regular season, the duo was close to going solo.

Bauer was diagnosed with colitis and pancreatitis in the winter and was placed on a series of irritable bowel syndrome pills to attempt to correct the stomach and digestive ailments. Gallbladder ailments run in Bauer's family and after meeting with a surgeon, the possibility of removing his gallbladder after the Pioneer Athletic Conference playoffs was on the table.

“After PAC-10s they were going to take it out,” he said. “So I could have just missed this whole districts and state run.

“I didn't expect to win PAC-10s. That was wow. Then they



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Boyertown's Andrew Bauer delivers to the plate against Pennsbury on May 25.

said they're going to take it out after PAC-10s. I said 'nuh-uh, I don't think so.' Not with what's happening this year. This is the team.”

Timely hitting was key, but it came down to two starting pitchers - plus Grant Fronheiser's crucial two innings of relief in the semifinal - bringing the goods.

“It's so nice. Who are you throwing in your first game of states? Just our ace. Who are you throwing in your second game? Oh, we're just throwing our ace. It's awesome knowing that as soon as I'm done Pat is going to pick things up, mow through it and it's going to come back to me,” Bauer said.

“The last couple games he's just been lights out against good teams. Wyoming Valley West was a really good team and so were these guys (Plum). And he just shut them down.”

Hohlfeld didn't need an assist Thursday in sending Boyertown past District 7's Plum, 4-1, at Penn State's Medlar Field at Lubrano Park. He hurled a complete-game six-hitter and didn't allow an earned run, the only hard hit balls against him coming off the bat of Plum first baseman and Minnesota Twins first-round pick Alex Kirilloff.

In the late innings, even as the Bears tacked on a couple insurance runs in the seventh inning, Hohlfeld sat alone in the dugout as his teammates were on the edges of their seats.

He had focus. The focus of a champion.

“I didn't say anything the whole game, just on my own,” he said. “I'll say things every once in a while, but I usually just stay by myself, drink water and chew gum and go back out for the next inning.

“I've always been known as



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Boyertown pitcher Pat Hohlfeld delivers against Plum during the PIAA AAAA final on June 16.

the calm person, don't show any emotions, straight-faced and keep throwing strikes.”

But as the personable, quirky Bauer sees it, the unassuming, steely Hohlfeld on the mound isn't the full picture.

“He's such a goofball. He's probably the biggest goofball on the team, so sarcastic,” Bauer said. “He doesn't show it on the field. But I think he's gonna go home and he's gonna freak out.”

Maybe deservedly so, but neither pitcher even appeared rattled on the mound during the Bears' state championship run, whether it was Hohlfeld in the quarterfinal win over Wyoming Valley West, Thursday's final or Bauer in the semifinal win over Cumberland Valley.

Still, they didn't recognize the weight of the occasion

“It kept getting more and more real through the state tournament, but honestly today if you told me we were playing for the

state championship I would have said, 'I don't think so.' I stayed so calm, it didn't feel real,” Hohlfeld said. “But now it does.”

The Bears' top 2 have been unmistakable for some time: Bauer with his trademark mutton chops and Hohlfeld sporting a beard and long, curly hair.

“Bauer's had his chops since we were like 15 and this is my first year that I can get most of a beard,” Hohlfeld said. “My dad lets me grow it out for school ball then I cut it in the summer. So that's why my hair is five inches long and I have a beard.

“It started at the end of PAC-10s. I would ask coach (Todd Moyer) who is pitching and he'd say, 'Fear the beard.' I'd say, 'that's me.' It was funny so I kept a playoff beard and kept it rolling.”

All from humble beginnings just hoping to win a league title.

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BASEBALL

Like Father, Like Son

Baseball a family affair with Boyertown

By Thomas Nash

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STATE COLLEGE » MJ Weller couldn't recall the last time he sat down at the dinner table with his son, Ryan.

And by no means was he complaining about it.

"These guys are at the practice field an hour before practice is even supposed to begin," said MJ before Boyertown's PIAA-AAAA Championship game against Plum at Penn State University's Medlar Field at Lubrano Park. "They do it on their own. They're the ones going in early and coming home late.

"They earned this."

Sitting in the stands, preparing to watch Ryan — Boyertown's starting

catcher — in the final high school game of his career, a proud father was taken plenty back.

A 1987 graduate of Boyertown High School, MJ was the third baseman of the Bears' 1987 Legion World Series Team. Also part of that squad was Peter Kurtz, the father of current Boyertown sophomore Noah Kurtz.

"The comparison is eerie," recalled MJ, "both teams are very, very similar to one another. The Boyertown game from over 25 years ago is still put into play today. It's amazing to sit here and see.

"Small ball — getting the hits when they're needed. Most importantly, it's putting the ball hard on the ground. When you put the ball on the ground, things

happen. All of that mixed in with some strong pitching means everything."

And how would Ryan's team stack up against his dad's 1987 team?

"We could beat them," said MJ, mixing a stern and humorous grin.

During MJ and Peter's time at Boyertown High School, current skipper Todd Moyer served as an assistant to the Bears baseball team.

Peter deemed Moyer 'a breath of fresh air,' being only a few years older than those players.

"He was only a few years ahead of us, which made him really easy to relate to as a coach. That was refreshing for all of us."

Now with a chance to watch his son play on a similar stage, Peter admit-



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Boyertown second baseman Mitch Pinder hugs his father Jeff after the Bears won the state title.



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MJ Weller, who played on the Boyertown American Legion 1987 World Series championship team, hugs his son, Boyertown catcher Ryan Weller, after the Bears won the PIAA championship on June 16.

ted the players should embrace Thursday, because it's a memory that will live forever, much like that 1987 team.

"This is a once in a lifetime game for a lot of these kids," he said. "There's only one team that makes states and wins their last game. They can be that team."

Jeff Pinder, father of Boyertown second baseman Mitchell Pinder, was part of two consecutive Junior Legion title teams with the Bear Cubs during the 1987 and 1988 seasons.

Moyer was also an assistant coach during Jeff's time with the Bears.

Having a chance to watch his son compete for a state title has given the Pinder family to end a little unfinished business.

"Boyertown won the 1991 state title the year after I graduated," said Jeff with a laugh. "It was great

for them. The culmination of them working hard for all the years they'd been playing baseball — they deserved it.

"Same with this group," he said of the current Boyertown team. "A lot of them have been playing together

since they were six-years-old. Now they're in a state title game. It's special, not just for the kids and the parents, but for the parents who came up through Boyertown and played under Todd. It's been amazing to watch."



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Boyertown outfielder John Demartino, top, leaps on to the pile as the Bears celebrate winning the PIAA championship on June 16.



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Boyertown's Mitch Pinder tags out Plum's Justin Sembower on a stolen base attempt.

Final

FROM PAGE 2

top of the third inning and ripped a double in the sixth.

The senior's base-running proved to be just a bit too greedy for his own good, though.

Kirilloff tried for home on his triple, but ran into a brick wall in Weller waiting at the plate.

In the sixth, Kirilloff advanced to third base as men stood on first and third. The next batter, he tagged up and scored on Alexander Terrell's fly ball to left field to temporarily make it 2-2.

After Boyertown's appeal



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The Boyertown coaching staff, from left, Matt Danner, Matt Matlack, head coach Todd Moyer, Mike Moyer, Ryan Bosch and Jon Kalejta, and bat boy Payton Moyer, celebrate after winning the PIAA Class AAAA championship.

that Kirilloff left the bag



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

The Boyertown baseball team hoists the PIAA championship trophy after winning the Class AAAA title.

early was upheld, the Bears could wipe their brow and get out of the jam.

"We made some really big plays to stop them from scoring," said Boyertown head coach Todd Moyer. "In the third inning, we knew he'd be coming home — he's fast and he's aggressive on the base paths. Our relay didn't panic ... they got the ball in and got it to Ryan at the plate.

"That sixth inning was huge for us, too. That killed their (Plum's) momentum."

Senior second baseman Mitch Pinder accounted for two of Boyertown's five hits

BOYERTOWN 2016 FINAL PITCHING STATISTICS

(All games Sorted by Earned run avg)

Player	era	w-l	app	gs	cg	sho	sv	ip	h	r	er	bb	so	2b	3b	hr	b/so	wp	ha	bkfs	shs	
17 TYLER HRAZ	0.64	1-0	4	2	1	0/1	0	13.0	5	1	1	4	3	0	0	1	.135	1	0	0	0	
12 NATE KLINE	0.68	3-1	11	5	0	0/6	0	31.0	17	8	3	14	28	2	0	0	.160	3	1	0	2	
9 PAT HOHLFELD	0.84	7-3	17	10	8	2/1	4	75.0	44	21	9	13	51	9	1	0	.162	6	9	1	1	
16 ANDREW BAUER	1.19	8-1	13	9	1	1/2	0	47.0	35	12	8	7	34	4	1	0	.200	4	5	0	2	
35 GRANT FRONHEISER	1.29	1-1	8	2	0	0/1	1	16.1	13	3	3	4	14	0	0	0	.213	1	2	0	0	
30 MIKE XANTHOPOULOS	2.42	2-0	7	2	0	0/2	1	17.1	13	8	6	7	15	1	0	0	.210	1	3	1	1	

32 TREVOR WALDWIN	0.00	2-0	3	0	0	0/1	0	7.0	1	0	0	4	6	0	0	0	.048	0	0	0	0	
21 MIKE HOHLFELD	0.00	0-0	4	0	0	0/2	0	5.0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	.052	1	2	0	0	
Totals	1.08	24-6	38	30	8	8/5	6	269.2	128	54	38	55	157	16	3	1	.172	17	24	2	6	14
Opponents	3.96	6-24	38	30	7	2/0	1	262.2	232	144	113	181	105	30	1	2	.295	34	26	4	11	38

PB - Team (7), R. WELLER 7, Opp (4). Pickoffs - Team (4), R. WELLER 3, XANTHOPOULOS 1, Opp (4). SBA/ATT - R. WELLER (16-20), P. HOHLFELD (8-12), KLINE (6-7), RANDALL (5-6), FRONHEISER (3-3), XANTHOPOULOS (3-3), BAUER (2-3), ROTA (1-2).

- COURTESY BOYERTOWN STATISTICIAN ROSS SMITH



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Boyertown pitcher Pat Hohlfeld sits alone on the dugout during the top of the seventh inning of the PIAA final. Hohlfeld went on to close out the game for a complete-game victory.

Aces

FROM PAGE 4

"We didn't win the PAC-10 the past two years and that was really our goal was to win that. This was a fantasy thing, a mythical 'Oh, states, a state championship. Maybe we'll go there,'" Bauer said.

"We went there and we won." Now, they'll forever be unmistakable as the 1-1 punch that carried Boyertown to a state championship.

Bears

FROM PAGE 8

The lead-off man opened the game with a hard single down the third-base line on an 0-2 pitch. Three batter later, Pinder crossed home on first baseman Ben Lonacre's two-out liner to left field.

Longacre then came around to score on designated hitter Mitchell Peers' towering triple to straight-away center field.

"That's what we've done all season," said Pinder. "We got guys on base, strung together some hits and got some runs on the board. That was definitely the start we were looking for."

With one out in the top of the seventh, Pinder gave the Bears some insurance. He knocked an RBI single to left field, scoring short-stop Mike Raineri from third base.

Four batters later with

the bases loaded, Peers was hit by a pitch to extend it to 4-1.

"I think that seventh inning really drove it home for us," said Longacre, who finished his season with a .389 batting average. "We knew we could trust Pat with a lead, especially a three-run lead going into that last inning."

Aside from Boyertown's two-run first inning to open the game, Plum sophomore stating pitcher Ryan Kircher was effective throughout. The left-hander threw six complete innings, scattering three hits and four walks to go along with six strikeouts. Reliever Ethan Winesburgh was responsible for both Boyertown runs in the seventh.

At the plate, Maltese finished with a hit and a run scored while Tyler Vivino, Terrell, and Michael Anderson each had a hit.

Now as their storybook season comes to a finish, the legacy of this Bears

team will live on forever.

"It was awesome to have that 1991 team reach out and let us know they're behind us," said Pinder. "Those were the guys we all heard about when we were kids. Now we get to be in their shoes. We're now those guys."

As the visiting dugout emptied out and piled on Hohlfeld in front of the mound, there was a team.

A team predicted by many to finish second in the Pioneer Athletic Conference. A team that many said wouldn't make it out of districts. A team that looked dead in the water headed into states after two straight losses in districts. A team that wouldn't have an answer to a hitter ranked among the top 15 across the country.

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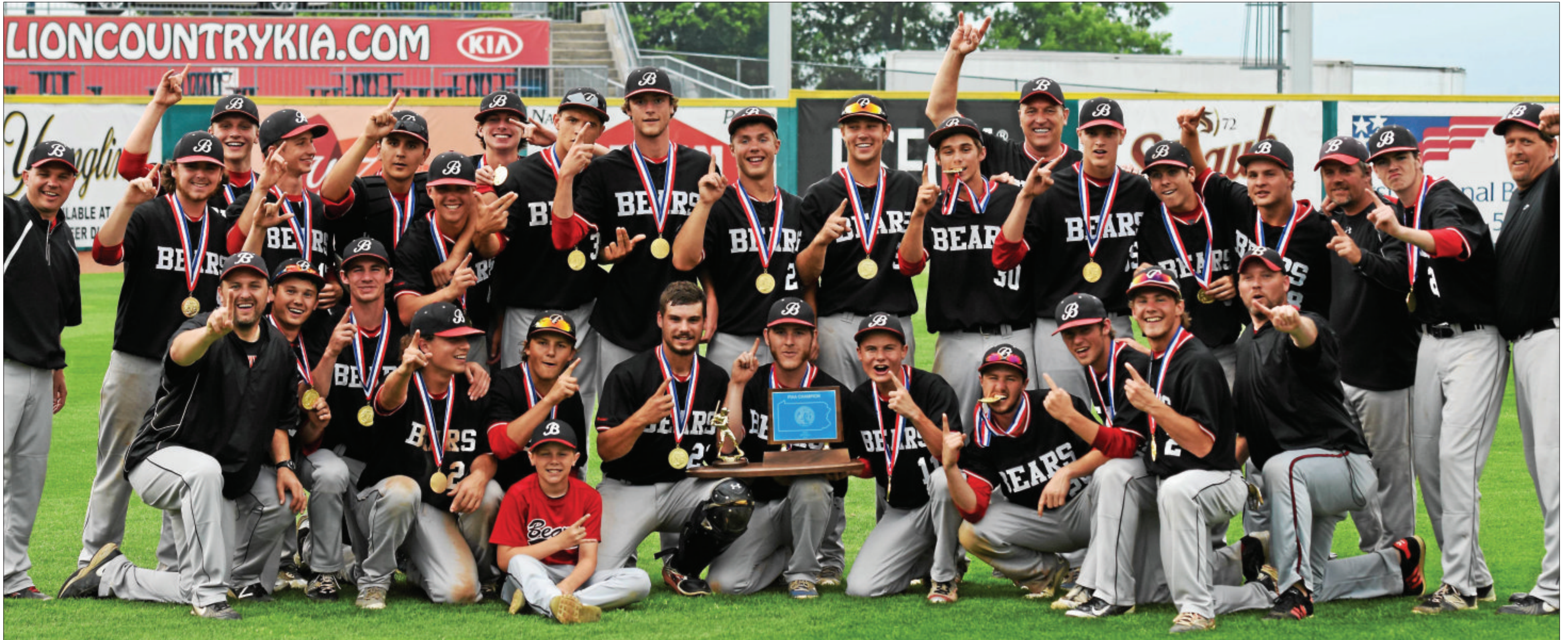
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Onward State

Boyertown clinches trip to Penn State, handles Cumberland Valley 3-1 in semifinal

By **Thomas Nash**

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EPHRATA » Mitch Pinder had a knack for making the big play on Monday afternoon.

The leadoff-hitting second baseman delivered the eventual game-winning single and made his presence felt in the field as Boyertown clinched its first PIAA Class AAAA final berth in 25 years with a 3-1 win over Cumberland Valley at Ephrata High School's War Memorial Field.

“I went to the plate looking for a good pitch to hit,” said Pinder, who ripped a fastball back up the middle to score two runs in the top of the fourth. “I wasn’t swinging at a breaking ball in that situation unless I had two strikes, so I was sitting fastball all the way.”

Pinder’s day was far from over after his fourth-inning single.

The senior was part of a key 6-4-3 double play in the bottom of the fifth inning and also fielded the fi-

nal ground out at second to secure Boyertown’s first trip to the state championship game since they won it all way back in 1991.

“Don’t let it get through, don’t let it get through,” I was telling myself,” said Pinder of the final out in the bottom of the seventh inning. “Once I turned and threw it over to Ben (Longacre) at first, I knew we were going to Penn State.”

The result sends Boyertown (fourth seed from District 1) to the PIAA-AAAA championship at Penn State



At left, Boyertown's Seth Endy (30) is congratulated after scoring the team's first run against Cumberland Valley. At right, Boyertown's Mitch Pinder makes a running play and fires to first for an out against Cumberland Valley.



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

University.

The trip to the state championship serves as just another notch to an already distinguished season for the Bears (23-6).

Coming off a PAC-10 Championship almost a month ago, the Bears overcame two shutouts in districts before putting together their state run.

“This is the type of thing

we dreamed about when we were growing up,” said senior catcher Ryan Weller. “It’s so surreal. I still can’t believe it.”

After two straight losses deep into their district run, the Bears haven’t looked back since.

“You’d think spirits would have been down and we’d be heading in the wrong direction, but

we moved past all of it,” added winning pitcher Andrew Bauer. “That’s why we’re here. That’s why we’re headed to the state championship.”

Head coach Todd Moyer echoed similar sentiments.

“This is a really special team,” he said. “I couldn’t be more proud of all of these guys and the way

SEMIFINAL » PAGE 14



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Raineri forgets fielding funk, comes up big for Bears

By Austin Hertzog

ahertzog@21st-centurymedia.com

EPHRATA » Standing in the on-deck circle in the third inning, Boyertown shortstop Michael Raineri had a moment of self-reflection ... not an especially favorable one.

“Well, I don’t think I could be playing any worse,” the junior said to his teammates on the edge of the dugout. “On the bright side, it can only get better from here.”

It most definitely did.

Shaking off an inning where he made an error and was eaten up by a hot shot from Cumberland Valley’s Drew Baughman that saw the Bears escape a bases-loaded jam, Raineri came to the plate with the bases loaded and one out in the top of the fourth.

The upbeat infielder came through with an effective

squeeze bunt that scored Seth Endy, broke the game’s deadlock, put the Bears on the board and on their way to what would become a 3-1 victory over Cumberland Valley in the PIAA Class AAAA semifinals Monday, sending Boyertown to its first state final in 25 years.

“Coach Todd (Moyer) called me over and he said, ‘You’ve got to get it down.’ I knew exactly what he wanted from me,” Raineri said. “He had faith in me, I knew my team had faith in me and if they have faith in me I know I can do it and I have to be confident up there no matter what happens in prior situations.”

Putting aside his earlier fielding woes, Raineri also started a pivotal 6-4-3 double play in the fifth inning with the Eagles’ looking threatening against reliever Grant

Fronheiser, who entered for starter and eventual winning pitcher Andrew Bauer.

“That was a big moment for us as a team. We were holding on to that 3-1 lead, they had the leadoff man on and the No. 4 man up. That could have been a big moment for them, but Grant made a great pitch and Mitchell (Pinder) and I made a nice turn.”

It was a moment of triumph in the field for Raineri, which haven’t been so easy to come by in his past couple outings and why he was feeling as though he couldn’t be playing worse. Committing three errors in the Bears’ 4-2 quarterfinal win over Wyoming Valley West and another against Cumberland Valley, the No. 3 seed from District 3, could do that to just about anyone.

But the atmosphere around

this year’s Bears, who are re-writing the past two decades of Boyertown postseason baseball, doesn’t allow anyone’s confidence to sink.

“Everyone picks each other up here. You make an error, someone’s going to be there to pick you up. That’s the mindset you have to have: you have to let it go,” Raineri said. “That’s the mindset I’ve had to have these last two games where I’ve had rough fielding plays.”

No rolled eyes, no bad body language, just teammates there to lift one another.

“Every team I’ve played on here (at Boyertown) has been very cohesive,” middle infield mate Pinder said. “We’ve been through a lot as brothers. We support each other, we pick each other up.”

“No one ever gets down on each other. We’ve all got con-

RAINERI » PAGE 15



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Shortstop Michael Raineri and pitcher Andrew Bauer do their postgame handshake after defeating Cumberland Valley.

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Semifinal

FROM PAGE 12

they've responded. They're a very mature bunch with a lot of personality."

Hardly lacking in the personality category is starting pitcher Bauer.

Donning his trademark mutton-chop sideburns and sporting a pair of gray Crocs after the win, Bauer was a key piece to the Bears' march into the state championship.

"They're so comfortable," laughed Bauer of his Crocs. "Perfect for post-game."

In the end, it was the right-hander who looked plenty comfortable and confident on the mound to give Boyertown the early difference. Aside from running into trouble in the bottom of the fourth inning where a run crossed on a bases-loaded hit-by-pitch, Bauer delivered four strong innings allowing just two hits to go with four strikeouts.

Far from overpowering on the rubber, Bauer spent the afternoon painting the corners and fooling the Eagles with his off-speed pitches.

"Movement," he said. "Anyone can hit an 85 mile-per-hour straight fast-



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Boyertown's Seth Endy slides into home plate to score the Bears' first run.

ball. But not many can hit a two-seam, 76 mile-per-hour fastball on the corner of the plate. That's what I did today and that's what I've been trying to do all season."

Grant Fronheiser came on in relief and held the Eagles to just three hits across two innings before Pat Hohlfeld came on and shut the door with a clean seventh inning.

Boyertown chased Cumberland Valley starter Joe Cuomo after scoring all three of its runs in the top of the fourth.

After a pair of walks and a hit-by-pitch with a sacrifice bunt mixed in from Weller, Mike Raineri laid down a key RBI-bunt to break open the score-

less tie. Pinder followed with a clutch two-run single to center to score Cory Melchior and Jordan Shustack while Raineri was tagged out trying to score on the play.

"That third inning was a huge inning for us," said Pinder. "Their pitcher (Cuomo) had good stuff — he had a good fastball and a good breaking ball. The thing that was really throwing us off was his pace... he moved fast in between pitches. We had to find a way to get him out of rhythm."

That inning the Bears changed the beat and are State College-bound because of it.

"We've found ways to win games all season," said Pinder. "Sometimes it's not the prettiest, sometimes it's not easy, but we find ways to win. We've got to keep that same approach with us in the championship."

NOTES » Ryan Jacobs and Ben Longacre posted two hits apiece for Boyertown. ... Mitch Hoon went the final three innings for Cumberland Valley limiting the Bears to just two hits. ... Cumberland Valley, making its first appearance in the state semis since the 2007 season, saw its run come to an end at 18-8 overall.



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Boyertown pitcher Pat Hohlfeld, right, who got the save, hugs Tyler Kreitz as first baseman Ben Longacre, rear, joins catcher Ryan Weller in the celebration after the Bears won their PIAA Class AAAA semifinal over Cumberland Valley.



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Record: 24-6 Home: 11-2 Away: 10-3 Neutral: 3-1 Conference: 15-3

Player	avg	gp-gs	ab	r	h	2b	3b	hr	rbi	tb	slg%	bb	hp	so	gdp	ob%	sf	sh	sb-att	po	a	e	fld%
34 QUINN MASON	.393	15-14	28	4	11	0	0	0	3	11	.393	5	1	2	0	.500	0	1	4-5	15	31	7	.868
33 BEN LONGACRE	.389	30-30	95	16	37	6	0	0	21	43	.453	8	4	7	2	.445	3	1	3-6	199	9	1	.995
24 MITCHELL PINDER	.365	17-16	52	14	19	1	0	0	7	20	.385	5	0	0	1	.421	0	4	5-6	3	20	0	1.000
27 RYAN JACOBS	.320	30-30	97	16	31	5	0	0	9	36	.371	6	1	10	1	.362	1	5	4-4	28	2	0	1.000
30 SETH ENDY	.310	30-26	84	18	26	4	0	0	5	30	.357	7	2	11	0	.376	0	3	7-7	34	59	7	.930
15 MITCHELL PEERS	.300	17-7	30	4	9	2	1	0	8	13	.433	4	1	4	0	.400	0	1	0-3	0	0	0	.000
28 TYLER KREITZ	.296	30-28	81	11	24	4	0	1	11	31	.383	12	5	18	2	.410	2	5	9-9	17	58	13	.852
23 RYAN WELLER	.273	29-28	77	6	21	1	0	1	13	25	.325	12	4	14	0	.398	0	2	2-2	128	24	2	.967
2 MICHAEL RAINERI	.265	27-16	49	14	13	1	0	0	5	14	.286	2	1	12	1	.308	0	2	5-5	20	30	10	.833
8 ANTHONY ROTA	.250	15-8	28	4	7	1	0	0	1	8	.286	2	0	3	1	.300	0	1	3-3	8	1	1	.900
26 TOM RANDALL	.250	20-5	12	4	3	0	0	0	5	3	.250	3	0	2	1	.400	0	1	5-6	24	4	0	1.000
4 CORY MELCHIOR	.231	29-24	52	9	12	3	0	0	9	15	.288	17	8	8	0	.474	1	4	4-4	79	4	0	1.000
29 JORDAN SHUSTACK	.231	27-23	52	13	12	2	0	0	11	14	.269	11	1	7	0	.353	4	4	7-11	38	6	1	.978
11 JOHN DEMARTINO	.125	27-15	40	6	5	0	0	0	4	5	.125	4	0	6	0	.205	0	5	2-2	20	1	1	.955
20 PAT MALONEY	.400	9-0	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	.400	0	0	0	0	.400	0	0	1-1	2	0	0	1.000
21 MIKE HOHLFELD	.000	3-0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	1	0	.000	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	.000
19 NOAH KURTZ	.000	8-0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	1	0	0	0	.500	0	0	1-1	4	0	0	1.000
16 ANDREW BAUER	.000	1-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0-0	0	14	2	.875
9 PAT HOHLFELD	.000	1-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	1	0	0	0	1.000	0	0	0-0	1	20	0	1.000
14 SAM LONGACRE	.000	1-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0-0	2	0	0	1.000
32 TREVOR WALDMAN	.000	2-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	1	0	0	0	1.000	0	0	0-0	1	1	0	1.000
17 TYLER MIRAZ	.000	1-0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0-0	1	3	0	1.000
36 MIKE XANTHOPOULOS	.000	1-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0-0	0	6	1	.857
Totals	.295	30	787	144	232	30	1	2	114	270	.343	101	28	105	9	.389	11	39	62-75	629	304	46	.953
Opponents	.172	30	750	54	129	16	2	1	44	152	.203	55	24	157	4	.249	6	14	22-28	608	316	64	.935

LOB - Team (214), Opp (166). DPs turned - Team (7), Opp (10). Picked off - RANDALL 2, RAINERI 1, ENDY 1.

- COURTESY BOYERTOWN STATISTICIAN ROSS SMITH

Raineri

FROM PAGE 13

fidence in one another no matter the situation.”

Successful squads always talk about team chemistry and the current Boyertown bunch is no different.

“It’s not a surprise,” Raineri said of reaching the PIAA final. “We knew from Day 1 that we’d have a good team and we’ve been working since January, out here every day rain or shine. We were there working with each other and we’ve become a family during this (season). We knew our one goal was to get to State College and play for the state championship and it’s worked out for us.”

No big celebrations from the cool-as-can-be Bears even upon clinching a trip to Penn State, yet the energetic short-

stop did light up when Moyer announced in the postgame that he would cede control of the bus-ride music.

“I really hope I can be the DJ. I think I play some good tunes, the team usually pumps up for it and that’s what it comes down to,” Raineri said, though he admitted he may not be the team’s first choice.

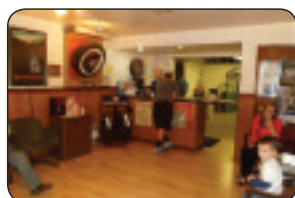
“I’m a throwback. Nowadays music’s not as good as I like, I’m more of an oldies guy. ‘Ain’t No Mountain High Enough,’ that would be my go-to track for the team.”

With a trip to the state title game in store, ain’t no mountain high enough indeed.

Austin Hertzog is the Sports Editor of The Mercury and Berks-Mont Weeklies. Email him at ahertzog@21st-centurymedia.com.

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Bears put two-decade drought to rest with 3D approach

It couldn't be true. Upon opening reporter Tom Nash's game story recapping Boyertown's 18-0 demolition of Olney on June 13 for editing, it read: 'The win serves as Boyertown's first PIAA win since the 1995 season — a 4-3 win over Coatesville in Class AAA play.'

"There's no way that's

true," burst from the editor's mouth, incredulous at such an absurd statement.

Except it was true.

Unfathomable to at least one local media member, 21 years — longer than the lifespan of any current Bears' player — had passed since the

Boyertown baseball team advanced beyond the first

round of the PIAA Championships.

Considering Boyertown is synonymous with baseball, it wasn't due to a lack of quality teams. In fact, the Bears have won eight Pioneer Athletic Conference championships in 12 seasons (since 2004), this season's title following back-to-backs in 2012 and 2013.

Yet the wider stage has not been as kind — since the Bears' PIAA champi-

onship in 1991 (this season marks the 25th anniversary of the then-District 3 champion's title in AAA), Boyertown managed to make the state tournament on four occasions (1992, 1995, 2003

and 2014) prior to this season. Only two trips since the 1995 quarterfinal run, both one-and-done. All while watching league rivals like Spring-Ford (finalist 2008, 2011; semi-

finals 2014) and Owen J. Roberts (finalist 2010) excel on the state stage in the past decade.

This spring, one wasn't enough for Boyertown.

After the comprehensive

3D » PAGE 17



Austin Hertzog
On Sports



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Boyertown catcher Ryan Weller (23) crosses home plate after hitting a solo home run against Wyoming Valley West.

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3D

FROM PAGE 16

4-2 victory over District 2 champion and defending state runner-up Wyoming Valley West to back up the rout of Olney, the 2016 Bears (22-6) have two PIAA wins to their name and counting. They'll go for three on Monday against Cumberland Valley at Ephrata's War Memorial Field (4 p.m.).

"It's funny. I didn't realize it had been so long since Boyertown had won a game in states. I found out on the bus ride home from the (Olney) game. I couldn't believe it," said senior catcher Ryan Weller, who sparked the Bears with a home run Thursday.

"I thought about it all day (before Thursday's game): we got that first game. Now we have to keep moving forward and

keep going on to make more history."

So it begs the question: why these Bears?

The answer appears in 3D: drive, detail and demeanor.

"Someone said to me early (in the season), 'You have a lot of good ballplayers.' I said, 'Right now, until you prove that you can win you're average ballplayers with a lot of potential.' Now they're proving it and they've earned it," head coach Todd Moyer said.

"There's no superstar. They act the same, they talk the same, they're a nice, close-knit bunch even though last summer they played on five different teams."

Jokes that the varsity Bears were just trying to get the season over with to get on to the summer baseball season need not apply this year.

Shaking off two straight shutout losses in the District 1 semifinals (3-0

to eventual champ Pennington) and third-place game (1-0 to Downingtown West) takes a certain mentality and belief in their development.

"We could feel ourselves coming together," Weller said. "Coming through having the best record in the PAC-10 pushed us harder to get there. When we won the PAC-10, that was a huge relief. That was the best moment in my baseball career up until this. We all have a passion for the game and we've figured out how to turn that passion into getting things done."

The Bears feature leadership that has impressed Moyer.

"Coming into this year, between Ryan Weller, Andrew (Bauer) and Ben (Longacre), whose a big kid yet real quiet, they just work on it all," the 23rd year manager said. "They focus on what they need to do. They worry about the

little things in practice. They sweat the details and they work at it. And they don't just do a couple of them, they do all of them. It's fun to watch."

Also worth watching has been the calm under pressure exhibited by the dual-ace combination - almost a prerequisite of a team trying to make a deep postseason run - of senior right-hander Andrew Bauer and junior righty Pat Hohlfield, who was unflappable while ousting Wyoming Valley West, and battery mate Weller.

"They're a great pair. They do everything perfectly," Weller said of the team's top two pitchers. "They go out there, know their job and know how to get it done. And they know we're behind them to back them up in any way we can and for the most part we've done a pretty good job of that."

"Ryan has been hurt a

couple different times during the season and he's a big bat in our lineup. He'd been on and off, had his struggles, but he's a tough out all the time, a tough kid and the other guys feed off of that," Moyer said of Weller. "He doesn't yell, he talks firmly and when he says something the other guys listen."

Any given game, the rest of the Bears are able to follow the lead of the poised pairs handling the pitching and catching duties.

With double-digit seniors, including Weller, first baseman Longacre, second baseman Mitch Pinder and outfielders Ryan Jacobs and Jordan Shustack, it's a group that has played a lot of baseball together over the years and isn't giving up their opportunity easily.

"We're all together, we love each other, we play hard and we don't take anything for granted. All

that together adds up to being a good team," Pinder said. "This is where we wanted to be from the start so it's really rewarding."

As sophomores in 2014, Pinder, Weller and the other current seniors may have taken their past visit to the state tournament - a first-round exit to eventual state champ La Salle after finishing as District 1 runner-up - for granted. But it's unquestionably shaped the motivation of their final go-around.

"Losing the first state game my sophomore year, that hurt," Weller said. "For me and the other 11 seniors, it's been our goal to get to states again and get past that first game. Luckily we have."

Luck? No, that's not one of the reasons.

Austin Hertzog is the Sports Editor of The Mercury and Berks-Mont Weeklies.



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PIAA CLASS AAAA BASEBALL QUARTERFINALS

Work of Art

Hohlfeld's masterful outing lifts Boyertown by reigning runner-up



By Jeff Stover

jstover@21st-centurymedia.com; @MercuryXStover on Twitter

POTTSVILLE » Todd Moyer had one thing he was seeking from his Boyertown squad this spring.

“Coach said at the beginning of the year he needed 12 guys who wanted to be out there,” Pat Hohlfeld said following the Bears’ PIAA Class AAAA quarterfinal game with Wyoming Valley West.

Moyer got what he was looking for over the next three months. And as a result, Boyertown stands one game away from playing for a state championship.



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Above, Boyertown catcher Ryan Weller (23) gets a fist bump from Ben Longacre (33) after reaching base safely and being removed for a courtesy runner against Wyoming Valley West. At left, Boyertown pitcher Pat Hohlfeld delivers to the plate against Wyoming Valley West in the PIAA-AAAA quarterfinals

Masterful pitching by Hohlfeld, coupled with timely hitting by the offense, fueled the Bears’ 4-2 victory over the District 2 champion Spartans.

“We’ve played a lot of close games this year,” Moyer noted, “and we did things early that panned out as championship baseball.”

Boyertown faced a Wyoming Valley West program that had been a state-level power for a decade. The Spartans (15-3) played in the AAAA title game last year — they lost to North Penn in extra innings, 4-3 — and had been in the state-level playoffs six of the past 10 years ... that in addition to winning the District 2 crown seven times in that span.

But the Bears dealt with them the way they’ve faced opponents all season long.

“We go one out at a time,” Moyer said. “We tried to focus on what we do, make them earn their at-bats. And he (Hohlfeld) did that.”

Boyertown’s junior righty did that in a big way, too. Facing a lineup that boasted six players hitting .300 or better, Hohlfeld held Wyoming Valley to three hits and issued just one walk while striking out five.

Tyler Yankosky was the primary thorn in Boyertown’s side, hitting a pair of doubles that drove in the Spartans’ runs in the fourth and sixth inning. By that time, however, Boyertown had built a 4-0 lead that proved enough to advance it to the state semifinal round.

“They can hit,” Hohlfeld noted. “Before practice Wednesday, we’d heard their 3-4-5-6 hitters were batting over .300. That’s the meat of their lineup.

“I just tried to locate my pitches.”

The Bears were able to put the Spartans down in order in three of their first five at-bats. They came close to doing that in the seventh, a baserunner reaching on an error, the lone one thwarting the plan.

But Hohlfeld came into the frame with a renewed sense of purpose. He fanned WVW’s David McCue and Justin Montalvo in the process to close out the Spartans’ season.

“He’s done that for us,” Moyer recalled. “Even with the errors, he stayed focused and controlled the damage.”

Boyertown got on the board with two out in the second inning, courtesy of a Ryan Weller home run. Weller drove a 1-0 pitch from Wyoming starter Grant Powell over the left-center field fence.

“That was a good momentum builder, a big hit like that,” Hohlfeld said.

“It was nice to see Ryan get us started,” Moyer added. “He’s been hurt and struggling, but he got a big one there.”

The Bears added two more in the top of the third ... again with two out. Mitch Pinder (2-for-3) bunted his way on base, then came around off Ben Longacre’s double. Mitch Peers then singled up the middle to plate Longacre.

Boyertown went on to load the bases in the frame, Cory Melchior singling and Weller drawing a walk.

In the fourth, the Bears padded their lead with Michael Raineri (single) coming around off Pinder’s sacrifice bunt, a stolen base and Tyler Kreitz’s sacrifice fly to left.

“It was pretty cool, the way we kept rolling,” Hohlfeld said. “Everybody did good.”



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PIAA CLASS AAAA FIRST ROUND

Bears advance by blasting Olney, 18-0

By Thomas Nash

tnash@21st-centurymedia.com
@Thomas_Nash10 on Twitter

RED LION » The last time Boyertown's baseball team won a state playoff game, Mitch Peers wasn't even born yet.

On Monday, though, the sophomore and the rest of the Bears' lineup came to life.

Making a rare start as designated hitter, Peers swung a big bat in the Bears' 18-0 five-inning rout of Olney Charter in the opening round of the PIAA Class AAAA baseball playoffs at George Washington High School.

"When I got the DH (designated hitter) spot in today's lineup, I was really excited," said Peers, who has spent most of the season nursing a labrum injury. "I wanted to come out and pull through for my teammates be-

cause I knew they've been working hard all season to get to this point."

The win serves as Boyertown's first PIAA win since the 1995 season — a 4-3 win over Coatesville in Class AAA play.

Batting in the five-hole, Peers finished with two doubles, two runs scored and a pair of RBIs in his state debut.

"He's been swinging the bat good with the JV team," said Boyertown head coach Todd Moyer, "and he's swung the bat good for us when he's gotten his chances pinch hitting. It was good to get him in the lineup and let him have more than a couple of at-bats."

"All of the practices and the BP (batting practice) has really paid off," he said with a laugh. "Coach Moyer trusted me to start and was confident in me coming



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Boyertown's Mitch Peers had two doubles and two RBI in the Bears' first round win over Olney.

into it."

Behind Peers, the Bears' 11-hit, 18-run showing came in stark

contrast to their final stretch in the District I-AAAA playoffs. After being blanked by Pennridge and then by Downingtown West in the third-place game, Boyertown crossed runs in every inning Monday, including a five-run first inning to set the tone early. All nine of Boyertown's starting hitters reached base safely as the Bears worked eight walks in the game.

"I think we felt ourselves losing a bit of momentum after districts," said second baseman Mitch Pinder. "As a team, we weren't hitting the ball well and weren't manufacturing runs. Still, we came into this confident. We knew we needed to get back on track."

Lead-off man Pinder was 2-for-4 with a run scored and an RBI along with a pair of stolen bases in the first inning. Mike

Raineri hit 2-for-4 out of the nine-hole where he scored twice and knocked in a run. Cory Melchior reached base all four times working a walk and being hit by two pitches. The right fielder scored three runs and knocked an RBI double.

"We came out and scored some runs early," said Moyer. "We weren't doing that the past few games, so that was really good to see. It's always good to get a win and break up a losing streak."

After Olney's Estanley Tejada hit a lead-off single, Boyertown starter Andrew Bauer settled in. The senior right-hander didn't let another Trojan reach base across his three complete innings of work, where he struck out five. Grant Fronheiser and Nate Kline each pitched an inning, where they each gave way to just one hit.

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