

# Wildcats varsity team regroups with juniors

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HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

“We play sports to have fun. If they aren’t enjoying it they shouldn’t be playing sports,” said Oshkosh West baseball coach Tony Gerharz, who is entering his 32rd season at the helm of the program.

Gerharz has seen a lot of baseball but one thing that stands out about his squad is the ability to remain loose and stay focused at the same time while many coaches run a tighter ship.

## BASEBALL PREVIEW

“Last year (14-8) (11-7 in conference) we were the team that people were shooting for.

I tell them just go out there and have fun and enjoy what you are doing. The score will take care of itself if you’re playing smart, executing and hustling,” he said. “And they are so hopefully that continues.”

Heading into this year one thing the Wildcats are lacking is the dominant senior leadership that propelled them to the WIAA D1 sectionals before a 3-0 loss to West De Pere. The Wildcats graduated 12 and are relying on its new core of five seniors along with 12 juniors.

“This team likes each other and has a genuine love for each other,” said Wildcats senior Reid Oleson. “We are a young team, but as long as we stay focused and it



The Oshkosh West High School baseball team is led by coach Tony Gerharz.

Oswald Photography

doesn’t matter how much experience you have because at the end of the day it’s zero-zero and if you can play hard and consistent that day you will most likely win.”

One pitching arm Gerharz is relying heavily on is Riley Frey, a left-handed reliever transformed into starter and a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee prospect.

“You got to have that winners’ mentality. You have to come in every game thinking you’re going to win.” Frey said. “I don’t feel any pressures because it’s not healthy. I thought I was better off in the relief role. I don’t think I was ready to be a starter yet.

Towards the end of the year I felt more comfortable coming into the game late to get outs.”

One factor that can play a major role for any club is a good relationship between pitcher and catcher as junior duo of Frey and Carter Mosloski have demonstrated.

“Mosloski has been catching for me for a while. We have great chemistry. It started from freshman and now the varsity level,” said Frey.

“You always have to have trust in your catcher knowing that he always is going to have your back if you’re not hitting your

spots. Catchers are there to sacrifice and I think he is very good at it.”

With many juniors Gerharz has the luxury of flexibility and is eager to see what he has in his young group after losing two four-year starters.

“A lot of those guys can play multiple positions, which is nice especially with the new pitch count rule. We got nine or 10 guys that can get some innings on the mound. Yes we have to replace some guys we lost from last year such as moving Joe Rebholz from left field to center. I really like our makeup. They are hard-working kids and didn’t get the playing time last year,” said Gerharz.

One stat the Wildcats would like to polish up on from last season is the ability to drive in runs as they stranded 167 baserunners. Seniors Jordan Steinbeck (12 H, 2 RBI, .267 AVG), Alex Grey (2 H, 1 RBI, .118 AVG), and Rebholz (10 H, .233 AVG) look to make strides from last season’s varsity experience.

The Wildcats have gotten off to a rough start this season with a 9-2 opening loss at Appleton West on April 2 followed by a 20-0 drubbing Thursday by Kimberly.

Besides winning the FVA crown and contending for a state championship, another Wildcats goals this year is being respected in the community while excelling inside the classroom.