

SCL 2010

From Page 3

Derek Wieman (C/IF), Zach Dicus (P/OF), Kyle Stewart (1B) and Doug Halverson (IF).

Scotland did suffer a number of key losses with Arin Boschee (P/OF) moving to Huron.

The team also lost Arin Boschee (IF), Shawn Kocourek (IF) and Kraig Kronaizl (P/3B).

But Scotland does have six players returning from last year's team, lead by Jareth Kaup (OF) who batted .290 last year. Also back is Kelly Gordon (IF), Dan Janssen (OF, .275), Fuks (P/OF, .272) and Dante Fuller (IF/OF, .275).

"If you can get five players back from the previous season, you are going to have a strong core I feel," Fuks said.

Even though the team had just a 2-16 year, Fuks said the team's record was worse than it looked.

"We had a few games that if we cut down on the errors, we probably could've been at least 6-10," he said. "We were right in there and in the late innings, we had a few mishaps and ended up losing."

Now the team will turn to hometown players like Vaith and Kronaizl to help turn the Scotland program around.

"My priority is to get more hometown players to come in, and add a few out of town peo-



TABOR: Cory Uecker (center)

"We will be more aggressive on the bases," Fuks said. "A lot of these kids ran track. We aren't a huge team, so we are going to use our legs a lot and take the power when we get it."

kind of an unknown. This year, we know he can get people out and he will be one of our starters."

Tabor was no slouch at the plate either as the Bluebirds scored 9.67 runs per game.

The offense may also see more of a boost with the return of Brandon Tycz (DH/OF), who missed last year because he was part of an internship in North Dakota.

In 2008, Tycz led Tabor in at-bats (103) and batting (.350). Brandon won't be the only Tycz joining the team as Logan and Adam will be newcomers to the Bluebirds.

Kortan said having all three Tycz's should give the team a nice mix of veteran and younger guys.

"Adding Brandon back and getting some of the younger guys will help our speed a bit, and help us score runs in different ways," he said. "We are going to get a couple guys that can swing from the left side too."

Kortan added the team has a good amount of veteran power, and the added speed will bring a new mix to the team.

"Speed is always important," Kortan said. "If you can find a way to score runs without getting a hit with a walk or stolen base, that's always good."

Kortan said the goal this season is to once again be the top seed in the District, which is important with the number teams from the District who will make it to state dropping from five to four.

"The top seed will be as big as it always has been, maybe even bigger this year," he said. "Our district is pretty balanced with four or five teams that could win it, and we hope to be one of them."

Some of the returning players to Tabor's team include Nick Kortan (RF), Brett Sime (DH/3B), Dean Kaul (OF), Greg Rothschild (OF/P), Jason Humpal (CF), Cory Uecker (2B), Steve Fejar (C), Chad Hovorka (OF), Jim Koupal (IF) and Rob Keppen (1B).

Wynot Expos

Despite losing two of its top pitchers before the year even

began last year, Wynot was still able to put together a solid rotation which helped the Expos make it to the state tournament.

Led by Scott Morrison and Brett Wiebelhaus, Wynot went 12-6 last year before losing in the first round of the state tournament.

"We competed well, but we maybe needed just a little more depth in the pitching department," Wynot assistant manager Lee Heimes said.

Even though Cliff Kephart won't be back to help bolster the rotation, Eric Hames, who missed all of last season, will be back to hopefully eat up some innings again.

Heimes said the coaching staff will be careful with how they use Hames this year.

"Eric will be back and will do a little more pitching as the season goes along," he said. "We are going to start him out easy to protect him, and then hopefully get him back to form."

Wynot did get a pleasant surprise last year from its top starter Scott Morrison, who was expected to be the third to fourth starter before the Expos lost their top two starters.

Heimes said the team will once again lean on Morrison this year. "Scott did an outstanding job, and we are going to count on him again this year," he said. "He and Brett Wiebelhaus did a very good job for us."

The team will also count on Steve Heimes to pitch a few innings as well.

Heimes said one of the most important factors to putting together another successful season is keeping the core of the team, which Wynot did again this year.

"We have the same players who have been together for five to 10 years now," he said. "That helps, especially on the defensive side, because everyone gets used to each other. We should have a very strong team again



SCOTLAND: Ryan Auch

this year."

The team does add two Legion players to the roster with Ryan Heimes (OF/IF) and Ryan Eskens (OF/IF).

"Both of them have a lot of athletic talent and speed that we can use," Lee Heimes said. "Plus we have another newcomer Don Whittmeyer who is a good infielder and a good hitter from the way it looks. They will definitely add some things to the team."

With the core group of players returning again this year, Wynot should have no trouble scoring runs again.

Last year, the Expos were second in the South Central League after scoring 9.78 runs per game.

"We have a pretty good offense against this year, and we are deep at every position," Heimes said. "Matt Hames leads off and sets the table for us, and

Scott Heimes is a good hitter who we count on a lot. Plus the bottom of the line-up hits well so we don't have to worry about a drop-off."

Heimes said if the team does have to clean up one thing, it's that the team has to be more consistent than they were at the end of the year.

"Last year, we had some guys miss games, but this year we will have more guys around and that helps with chemistry," he said. "If we are more consistent with our pitching and defense again, then we can play with anyone in the state."

Other returning players to Wynot include Drew Lawrence (IF/P/C), Kyle Wiepen (OF/IF), Chase Rolles (OF), Todd Pinkelman (IF), Aaron Burbach (IF/OF), Fred Robinson (P/IF/OF), Lance Heine (3B/DH) and Steve Heimes (IF/P).



WYNOT: Scott Morrison

ple for the numbers," Fuks said. "I want to make sure the younger guys get plenty playing time so they can be competitive and keep this going."

Scotland will be young, but Fuks said that doesn't mean the team won't roll over.

"We will be young, but I think we can still be competitive," he said. "These kids like Vaith and Kronaizl are from baseball families. They know how to play baseball, so we won't be hurting in a baseball sense."

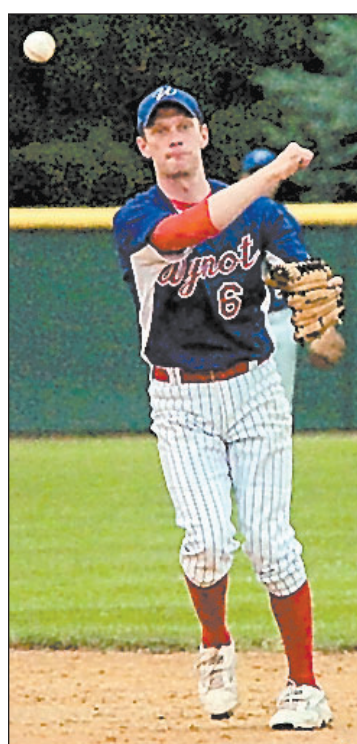
Fuks said the biggest adjustment for the younger players will be getting used to the South Central League veteran pitching.

"It's a big jump from Legion to amateur because you have the Gary Kortan's and the Bill Guenther's who are well established pitchers and these kids will have to adjust," Fuks said. "The first round will be a learning experience. These kids might be thinking fastball like they see in Legion, but there is more off-speed here."

Talent wise, Scotland will need some pitchers to step up with the loss of Arin Boschee.

"Our pitching is going to take a toll, but we are going to have to lay strong defense behind the pitchers this year," Fuks said.

Offensively, Fuks said he is going to rely on the speed the younger players are bringing to the team.



WYNOT: Matt Hames

Tabor Bluebirds

Once again, Tabor was carried by its pitching for another successful season.

The Bluebirds finished the year with a 12-6 record, but lost in the first round of the state tournament to Garretson.

"We had a good year last year, but we didn't play as well as we hoped at the state tournament and we had a first round loss," Tabor manager Gary Kortan said.

Tabor will look to repeat the pitching success the Bluebirds have had in the past after posting one of better pitched seasons in the South Central League last year as they only gave up 5.89 runs per game.

"Pitching has always been one of our strong points for the

Irene Cardinals

last 10 years, and this year it will be the same," Kortan said.

In fact, Tabor might be able to add even more pitching to its team.

The Bluebirds are consistently led by Joe and Jon Vavruska along with Kortan, but second-year player Chris Sutura will see more time on the mound this year.

"Chris will have a bigger role," Kortan said. "Last year we worked him in there and was

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