

SCL

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league a year ago and went on to advance to the state championship game.

"It'll be good for us to see where we need to be right away," Heine said. "It's a good little rivalry with us. They like their baseball down there, and they love to get their cracks at us."

Avon Bards

A year after going 9-9 in the South Central League and losing in the first round of the state tournament, the Bards have their eyes on improving in specific areas.

Gone from the team are veteran pitcher Bill Roach and lead-off hitter Cash Kocer, but a quality group returns for manager Dan Bures — the team's regular catcher.

"I think we'll be right there in the mix, if not a game or two better this year," Bures said. "The guys have another year under their belt, and now we're used to wood bats. Our strengths should out-weigh our weaknesses."

Among those strengths, he said, should be team speed. A youthful lineup was rather balanced last season and returns Matt Yost (IF), Bures (C), Jordan Kocer (OF), Jeff Sand (IF), Logan Tycer (IF/OF/P), Jeff Tolma (OF), Joey Cuka (IF/OF), Marshall Cihak (IF/P), Jeff Haenfler (IF) and Nate Harrington (IF/P).

The addition of Mount Marty College player Zach London and former Rapid City Post 22 star Nick Honke should provide a boost to Avon.

"They're very dependable," Bures said. "They're not going to blow you away in any one thing, but they both have tools that we need."

Joe Sees, one of the league's top pitchers last summer, will return but in a part-time fashion, Bures said. He will still likely pitch when he is available, as will other guys like Matt Eggers.

Crofton Bluejays

One of the top amateur teams in the region will have a new look its traditionally-tough pitching staff.

Crofton, which was 16-2 in the South Central League last summer, will be without veteran Bill Guenther and Mike Sturm on the mound, and will consequently

2013 South Central League Baseball Schedule

GAMES SCHEDULED TO START AT 7:30 UNLESS NOTED	Thursday, June 6	Thursday, June 20	Thursday, July 4	Thursday, July 18
Scotland at Avon Tabor at Menno Yankton at Crofton	Avon at Irene Crofton at Wynot Menno at Scotland Yankton at Lesterville	Avon at Tabor Irene at Menno Lesterville at Crofton	Lesterville at Yankton Scotland at Menno Wynot at Freeman	Avon at Wynot Irene at Crofton Tabor at Yankton
Thursday, May 23	Friday, June 7	Friday, June 21	Friday, July 5	Friday, July 19
Scotland at Avon Tabor at Menno Yankton at Crofton	Freeman at Tabor	Scotland at Wynot Yankton at Freeman	Irene at Avon Wynot at Crofton	Menno at Freeman Scotland at Lesterville
Friday, May 24	Sunday, June 9	Sunday, June 23	Saturday, July 6	Sunday, July 21
Irene at Freeman Wynot at Lesterville	Irene at Yankton Lesterville at Avon Menno at Wynot Scotland at Freeman Tabor at Crofton	Freeman at Irene Lesterville at Wynot Menno at Tabor Scotland at Avon	Tabor at Lesterville	Crofton at Lesterville Freeman at Yankton Menno at Irene Tabor at Avon Wynot at Scotland
Sunday, May 26	Thursday, June 13	Monday, June 24	Tuesday, July 9	Thursday, July 25
Crofton at Avon Freeman at Wynot Irene at Scotland Lesterville at Tabor Yankton at Menno	Avon at Yankton Menno at Crofton Tabor at Scotland Wynot at Irene	Crofton at Yankton	Crofton at Tabor	Thursday, July 25 thru Saturday, August 3 District 6B Tour. at Scotland TBD
Thursday, May 30	Friday, June 14	Tuesday, June 25	Thursday, July 11	District 6A Tour. at TBD
Freeman at Crofton Lesterville at Irene Menno at Avon Scotland at Yankton Tabor at Wynot	Freeman at Lesterville	Freeman at Avon	Avon at Lesterville Wynot at Menno Yankton at Irene	Wednesday, August 7 thru Sunday, August 18 State Tour. at Sioux Falls First Weekend of Class A TBD
Sunday, June 2	Sunday, June 16	Thursday, June 27	Friday, July 12	Sunday, July 14
Avon at Freeman Menno at Lesterville Scotland at Crofton Tabor at Irene Wynot at Yankton	Crofton at Irene Freeman at Menno Lesterville at Scotland Wynot at Tabor	Crofton at Scotland Lesterville at Menno Yankton at Wynot	Freeman at Scotland	Crofton at Menno Irene at Wynot Lesterville at Freeman Scotland at Tabor Yankton at Avon

look to others to step forward.

"You try to get a few innings to each of the young guys, but you have to be ready for the next year," said manager Carl Schieffer, the team's catcher. "Trevor Arens will see a lot more innings, and Seth Erdmann is injured right now, so we'll have to pick up the slack there too."

Guys like Scot Donner (SS/P) and Rand Thygeson (OF/P) will also see significant time on the mound, as both have been staples for a team that won the 2011 Class B state title and lost in the state championship game last summer.

Others coming back for the Bluejays are Joe Wiebelhaus (IF), Aaron Losing (OF), Nick Hegge (OF), Kyle Mueller (OF) and Schieffer. Newcomers Matt Tramp, Austin Jones and Matt Wahmberg will provide depth to a team that consistently competes.

"I feel we'll be real solid offensively and defensively," Schieffer said. "Just finding ourselves and our pitching staff will be the question mark for us. We've got a team that can score runs, so as long as our pitchers can throw strikes, I think we'll be in every game."

Freeman Black Sox

While other teams across the league may be concerned with pitching depth, the Black Sox are most focused on offense, according to manager Brett Scherschligt.

Freeman, 4-14 in league play a year ago, scored an average of 3.56 runs and allowed 9.06 runs per game last season.

"Last year we kind of strugg-

led at the plate, and that hurt us most of the way," Scherschligt said. "As long as we can stay error free, we can stay in some games. We still have some guys who can get people out."

Returning to the lineup for Freeman are the Scherschligt brothers of Brett, Lee and Allan, as well as Jake Weier, Mitch Wollmann, Chris Wollmann and Austin Smidt. Geoffrey Pfeiffer is back with the team after missing last summer following a medical condition.

Among that group will be the leaders of the pitching staff, while Pfeiffer's bat could give the offense a necessary boost.

As he looks across the league, manager Scherschligt sees the same teams such as Crofton, Tabor and Wynot fighting for the league title. He said, though, that teams like Irene and Avon are on the rise.

Irene Cardinals

The Cardinals under manager Kendall Johnke will look to improve from a second consecutive season in which they lost in the first round of the state tournament.

Irene, 11-7 in the SCL last summer, led the league with 9.28 runs scored per game and allowed 5.44 runs. It was then, however, blanked 1-0 by Lake Norden at the state tournament in Mitchell.

Familiar faces are back for Irene this season, led by some of the league's top power hitters in Simon Healy, Wes Robertson, Mike King and Jeremy Rempp.

Lesterville Broncs

After improving from zero

wins in 2011 to a 4-13 league record last summer, the Broncs are making no secret of their goals for this year.

"Everyone's talking state tournament around here," manager Kevin Bloch said. "We're putting pressure on ourselves right away. We'll be looking to pull some upsets."

"The guys want to work hard and achieve that goal." A lineup filled with young, returning talent should help that journey for the Broncs. They bring back everyone but two players from last summer.

The likes of Cody Ulmer, Tyler Edler, Cameron Schiltz, Zach Johnson, Jason Vaith, Ian Powell and Tim Kotalik will key an offensive attack that was rather inconsistent in 2012.

Lesterville will also benefit from newcomers Andy Gall, Alex Wagner and Jason Bierle, as well as legion additions Ryan Auch and Tim Sternhagen.

"I think we should have a very good shot of being .500 or even better," Bloch said. "We picked up a couple guys that will help us out quite a bit."

Pitching is an area where the Broncs could be strongest, as long as they score more runs than the 4.7 they averaged per game last year. Steven Stange, Edler, Bierle, Ulmer, Wagner, Mike Pavel and Darrin Svacina will lead the way on the mound.

"If we score six or seven runs a game, we should have a very good chance to stay in the thick of things," Bloch said.

Menno Mad Frogs

After a 2-16 record last summer, the Mad Frogs are ready to climb back up the South Central

League ladder in 2013.

Depth should be the strength for Menno, led by returning players Macon Oplinger (.365), Tyler Miller (.290), Doug Hall (.282), Tom Sattler (.275), Spencer Neuhaert, Jason Larson, Robert Schoenfish, Tyson Hasz and Ben Fischer.

"We should be a very solid team this summer," manager Ryan Liebl said. "This is the most depth we've had since I've been coaching, so it gives us a lot of flexibility."

The additions of Josh Berndt and Kevin Kunz, both former Mad Frogs, as well as Jay Thaler, Will Massey, Dylan Lehr and Will Junke figure to help the team.

"We hope to compete for one of the top spots in our league and hopefully make our way to the state tourney," Liebl said.

Scotland Highlanders

Minus only one player and plus five additions, the Scotland Highlanders are looking to climb the South Central League ranks this summer.

Scotland, 4-14 in the league last year, returns everyone but one (Tom Heisinger). New to the team this year are Mike Pietz, Jared Kloucek, Dalton Mogck, Anthony Huston and Shawn Koucek.

"The kids are all a year older; though we're still pretty young," manager Dennis Kronaizl said. "We might be alright. We should be a little bit better than last year."

The Highlanders return leading hitters Jordan Pravecek (.378), Michael Kronaizl (.352), Kraig Kronaizl (.300) and Blake Gomer (.288). Also back to a team that numbers 15-16 players — an increase from last year — are Casey Comstock, Brian Fuks and Paul Plante.

On the mound, Scotland will look to Pravecek (2-2, 3.18 ERA) and Kraig Kronaizl (4.22 ERA), as well as other.

The Highlanders will also host the District 6B Tournament after the regular season, which manager Kronaizl said "is a lot of work, but exciting for our town."

Tabor Bluebirds

Long-time South Central League faces Gary Kortan and Steve Fejar are gone from the Tabor team, so the Bluebirds will turn to some new faces in 2013.

Tabor, 15-8 last year and District 6B Tournament champion, turns to new manager Jon Vavruska, another SCL staple. He is back to assume his place on the mound for the Bluebirds

after going 4-4 last year with a 2.04 earned run average and 67 strikeouts.

"Pitching will be down for the Bluebirds, but we're looking at some of the young guys to step up and make the plays when needed," he said.

Tabor returns Doug Vanecek (IF, .336 average), Jason Humpal (IF, .330) and Rob Keppen (IF, .270) to the lineup, while Nathan Kloucek, Jeff Honner and Lance Ranek join the team this summer.

"The Bluebirds will have speed on the base paths, but will need to figure out how to manufacture the runs when needed," Vavruska said.

Vavruska and Vanecek will lead the pitching staff, and Chris Suter (1-0, 3.14, 14 K) will also see time.

Wynot Expos

With heavy hearts, the Expos are primed to have a memorable summer in the wake of their long-time manager Terry Foxhoven's death over the off-season.

Lee Heimes assumes the managerial role for a team that returns all but one player and brings in five newcomers. Wynot was 12-6 last summer and lost in the second round of the state tournament in Mitchell.

"Going through something like that I think makes us stronger as a team, and I think we're closer because of it," Heimes said. "We have a good group of guys who want to still win. We want to dedicate this season to Terry, because he was a great guy."

Back for Wynot are Justin Leise (IF/P), Ryan Eskens (OF), Scott Heine (OF/IF), Matt Hames (IF), Ryan Heimes (OF/IF), Chase Rolfes (OF), Aaron Burbach (IF), Brett Klug (IF/P), Lance Heine (IF), Scott Heimes (OF), Steve Heimes (IF/P) and Lee Heimes (OF/P).

"We have some good veteran leadership in our core and some young guys who can give us some nice depth," Lee Heimes said. "I think we have a really strong team, and we'll definitely be a contender."

Wynot will again boast one of the league's deepest pitching staff, also including Eric Hames, Scott Morrison and Brett Wiebelhaus.

The Expos added Tommy McGill, Mitchell Bruening, Cody Stappert, Ty Uhing and Stephen Carlson to the team this summer, as well.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

Tyhurst

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Rapid City Stevens and Spearfish (Harrisburg, the newest AA school, will join Yankton's district).

Skoglund guided the Spartans to a 48-67 overall record in his five seasons, including a Class AA state tournament appearance in 2009 and a Class A tournament berth last season.

"It's a good time to get in there, and hopefully I can get them on board and buy into a new system," Tyhurst said. Spearfish will have approximately 25 kids for the varsity and JV teams, he added.

Tyhurst's departure from Yankton will leave the Bucks program with assistants Arlin Likness and Jason Savey, as well as head coach Haynes. Yankton

graduated five seniors from last season's team but returns a talented group of nine incoming seniors on the varsity roster.

Though his resignation was made official Wednesday, Tyhurst said word began trickling out last week, and he received many well-wishes.

"I've already gotten a lot of great feedback from Yankton parents and other people," he said. "I met a lot of nice people in Yankton. We loved being here; my wife and I love South Dakota."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

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have a ways to go," Herbster said. "I really thought the first 50 percent would come quickly, but it's this last 25 percent where you get in the trenches and duke it out."

"Every little bit will help."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

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