

Gorham - Berlin

# Spring Sports 2021

The Berlin Daily Sun





# Spring Sports Preview

*Editor's note:* In order to put together a newspaper, including my column and the following sports preview, it takes cooperation from many people. In this case that includes athletic directors, coaches and photographers. They all make my job that much easier, so all I end up doing is taking all of the information, putting it together and sending it off to Lloyd Jones and his crew for them to proof and print. Thanks to all for helping to make this supplement happen. Enjoy! — *Steve Enman*

## Mountaineers off to fast start in baseball

BY STEVE ENMAN  
THE BERLIN SUN

BERLIN — Coach Dan Mackin begins his first year at the helm of the Berlin High baseball team, with assistance and JV coach coming from BHS alumni and student/athlete Travis Houle, also in his first year.

The Mountaineers came out of the gates swinging red-hot bats in the opening week of the season as they notched an 8-2 home victory over visiting Laconia on April 14 and then scored a 20-1 road win at Colebrook on Monday behind a no-hot effort by pitcher Jeremyha Dow.

**"I am really looking forward to getting back on to the field after losing last season to COVID-19. It was certainly a letdown, gearing up for what would have been my first season on the bench before the pandemic put a screeching halt to all things including sports."**

Mackin will call upon seniors Tyler Rousseau and Dom Paradis to be the leaders of this year's squad and will depend on upperclassmen Jake Mercier, Carter Poulin, Ben Estrella, Kam Huntoon and Griffin Melanson to provide keys to the team's success.

Freshman Kolin Melanson and sophomores Brody Duquette, Keija Morton, Jeremyha Dow and Isiah Maddox will be called upon regularly to contribute to the team's success both now and in the years to come.

Junior Jorge Horter, along with a slew of freshmen, including Jamison Walsh, Jason Sweat, Brady Poulin, Evan Poulin, Hayden Poulin, Brian Perry and Dylan Borders will be getting some very valuable varsity experience during this 2021 season.

Berlin High has a 14-game regular-season schedule and according to Coach Mackin, "Key matchups will come against the White Mountains Regional Spartans, Kennett Eagles, Gorham Huskies, Colebrook Mohawks, Newfound Bears and Littleton Crusaders."

As has been the case throughout the 2020-21 high school sports seasons, last fall and this winter, all Division III teams will make the postseason, which will be randomly drawn for seeds at the end of the regular season.

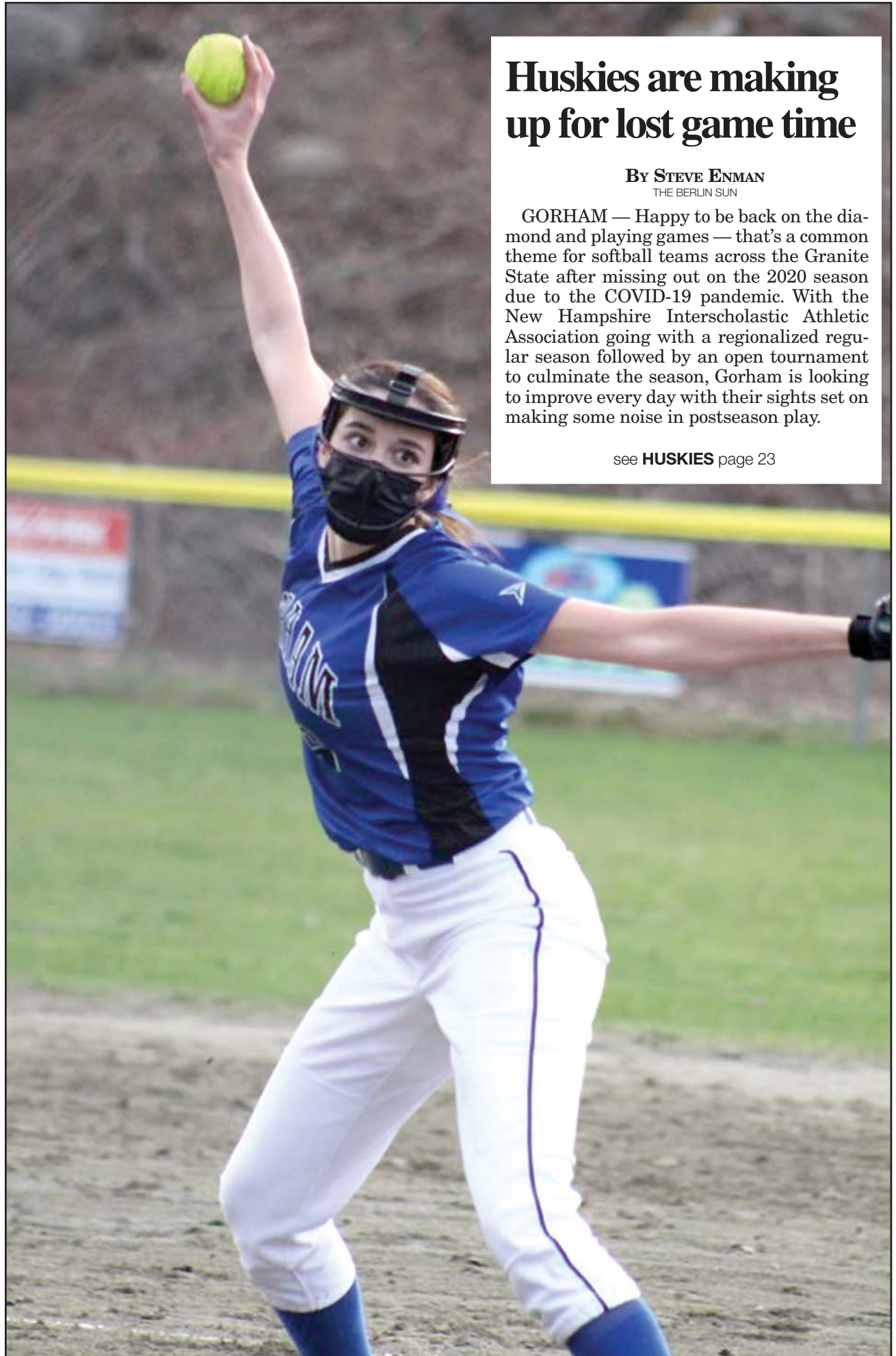
see **MOUNTAINEERS** page 20

## Huskies are making up for lost game time

BY STEVE ENMAN  
THE BERLIN SUN

GORHAM — Happy to be back on the diamond and playing games — that's a common theme for softball teams across the Granite State after missing out on the 2020 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association going with a regionalized regular season followed by an open tournament to culminate the season, Gorham is looking to improve every day with their sights set on making some noise in postseason play.

see **HUSKIES** page 23



Bry Poirier prepares to throw a pitch in Gorham High's 16-4 win over Profile. (KIM POIRIER PHOTO)



# Mountaineers are serving up aces to open their season

By STEVE ENMAN  
THE BERLIN SUN

BERLIN — The Berlin High girls' tennis team is serving notice — when you play the Mountaineers this season, expect to have your hands full.

The Mountaineers are already nearly a third of the way through their season, having played four matches in just six days. Berlin topped Moultonborough Academy 5-4 on the road to kick off a home-and-home series on April 13; won the rematch in Berlin the following day 6-3; topped Profile 7-2 at home on April 15; and fell 8-1 at White Mountains Regional on Monday.



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**Good Luck to all the Sports Teams from all of us here at Bryant Funeral Home.**



Members of the Berlin High girls' tennis team include (back row, from left) Amaya Bledsoe, Leilah Horne, Emma Bergquist, Tiah Turmell and Emmelia Letendre; (front row, from left) Redyn Munce, Kandence Gendron, Mickailey Walsh, Becca Pouliot, Kelly McCormick and Myah Henry. (ANDY RANCLOES PHOTO)

Coach Andy Rancloes has a tennis team with some great senior leaders, including Kelly McCormick, Mickailey Walsh, Becca Pouliot and Emma Bergquist. The top four have been playing for three years and Emmelia has been with the team for two years.

Berlin has a lot of experience returning but as Coach "R" said, "Unfortunately, they missed last year, so we have a lot of work to do as the season progresses. We are going to treat every match this season as a way to self-reflect. We want to be ready when the postseason season starts."

With five of the top six returning with experience, he "Believes we can really begin to work on the areas we are weak in. I want these girls to end their high school sports experience on a high note."

There are two juniors and four freshmen, and the current seniors will be great leaders for the young girls.

In the first match of the season, that being the 5-4 advantage over Moultonborough, wins in singles came from Becca Pouliot, 9-8; Emma Bergquist, 8-4; and Emmelia Letendre, 8-1.

In doubles, the tandems of MicKailey Walsh and Kelly McCormick won 5-4, and Tiah Turmel with Letendre won handily 8-1, to give the Mountaineers the season-opening win.

Coach Rancloes said, "It was great to see the girls out there playing since it has been 2 years since they got to compete. We had first-game jitters but overall they played hard. Becca went into a tie-breaker and was able to hold on, 9-8. We also had four girls who made their varsity team debut."

The 6-3 win the following day, against Moultonborough, again, had Pouliot, 8-0; Bergquist, 8-3; Kadence Gendron, 9-7 (she was down 4-0 at one

**"It was great to see the girls out there playing since it has been 2 years since they got to compete. We had first-game jitters but overall they played hard."**

point but came back nicely); and Letendre, 8-1, all winning their singles matches with Becca and Kadence 8-4 winner in doubles and Turmel/Bergquist won 8-2 to help cement the team's win.

The third game in three days, last Thursday, resulted in a much easier 7-2 win over Profile, thanks to big wins by McCormick, 8-4; Pouliot, another tough 9-8 match-winning in a tie-break; Bergquist, 8-0; and Letendre, 8-6.

Three wins in the double's competition secured the victory for the Mountaineers, and they came off the rackets of Walsh/McCormick, 8-6; Pouliot/Gendron, 8-5; and Bergquist/Letendre 8-1.

"The girls were super-tired after three games in three days but they played hard," said Rancloes. "We need to work on serving but every day we are making progress, and have had a great start. I am proud of the girls."

He added: "Becca had two tie-breaking wins in three matches, which was impressive. The double's teams have been quite successful thus far, having won seven and lost two in those three games."

Rancloes wants his team "to understand that we are a family and when this is their team they will continue that tradition. I know our seniors will be excellent role models for the young girls. I believe



# Mountaineers are happy to return to the diamond



The Berlin High softball team is off to a 2-1 start after splitting a home and home series with Laconia and topping Colebrook 21-3 on on Monday. Members of this year's team include (front row, from left) Ava Bartoli, Emily Coulombe, Aubree Poirier, Grace Bradley and Julia Coulombe; (back row, from left) Aeris Constine, Kyra Woodward, Alexa Goulet, Kaedynce Boucher, Kenna Balderrama, Jill Hallee and Makenna Peare. (ROLLIE POIRIER PHOTO)

By **STEVE ENMAN**  
THE BERLIN SUN

BERLIN — Berlin High School Coach Rollie Poirier is more than happy to be back on the softball diamond with his team ready to go. The Mountaineers opened up the season losing to Laconia, 9-6 on the road on April 12, before bouncing back with an exciting 12-11 win in a rematch against the Sachems in Berlin on April 14. The team followed that up with a 21-3 win at home over Colebrook on Monday.

Coach Poirier has seniors Grace Bradley, Aubree Poirier, Makenna Balderrama, Emily Coulombe, Aeris Costine, Kyra Woodward, and Nicole Reynolds; juniors Jill Hallee and Kaedynce Boucher; sophomores Makenna Peare and Alexa Goulet, as well as freshmen Ava Bartoli, Julia Coulombe.

The outlook for the 2021 season is as Coach P. said, "Tough to predict how we will be considering we did not play at all last year. Fortunately, we have the benefit of having girls that love the sport and have played a lot of summer ball. The downside is that we have only two starters back from the 2019 season but have a total of five girls who experienced being part of that 16-2 season."

Poirier's pitchers will be led by Peare, with Costine and Julia Coulombe seeing some action.

Emily Coulombe will do the bulk of the catching along with Bartoli, who will also see action.

The infield will consist of Balderrama at third base, Hallee at shortstop, Bartoli at second and Woodward at first base.

Those patrolling the outfield will include Bradley in left field, Poirier in centerfield and Julia Coulombe in right field.

The Mountaineers also have Reynolds, and Goulet as backup outfielders and Infielder Boucher.

"Offensively I think we will be OK," said Poirier. "We have a mix of speed and pop. We hope to be playing our best as we head into the open tournament in June. If things don't go our way it won't be because of a lack of effort. These girls are always wanting to stay after practice to work on their game."

Berlin split with Laconia in the opening home-and-home series, losing on the road, 9-6 and bouncing back for a thrilling 12-11 win at home.

In the loss, Makenna Balderrama had a solid game at the plate, reaching base three times, including a two-run home run; Makenna Peare had three hits, and freshman Ava Bartoli had two base knocks.

"The girls were a bit nervous at the plate in this their first game in two years," said Poirier.

The second encounter was a good old-fashioned slugfest with the winning pitcher being Peare in relief. She allowed just four hits and two runs while striking out five in 5 and 1/3 innings. Offensively, she reached base four times on a pair of hits and two walks.

Balderrama had another great game with the bat, getting on base four times while driving in 2 runs. Jill Hallee walked, had a single and then a long three-run homer to help her team to victory.

Poirier was quick to point out, "The girls were a bit more comfortable offensively in this second game, and I am happy with the progress and work they are putting in to improve every day."

He added: "Pitching depth is something we are working on. We need to score our share of runs to stay in games. We have the potential but I don't think we have the power hitters in the past, but we will make up for it in other ways."

In the win against Colebrook, Grace Bradley led the offensive attack with three hits, two were doubles, five RBI and four runs scored. She was followed

by Kyra Woodward, who had two hits and two RBI, and Julia Coulombe, who came through with a big two-run double to get things going for Berlin in the second inning.

Makenna Peare pitched three scoreless innings with five strikeouts with Aeris Constine finishing up on the mound, giving up three unearned runs, with four Ks in her two innings of work. The Mountaineers took advantage of 15 walks issued by Colebrook pitchers.

There are some tough teams in Division III that Berlin will have to deal with including Bishop Brady, Campbell and Monadnock. And, of course, and, as always. White Mountains Regional and Belmont will be a handful.

In conclusion, Poirier said, "After 22 months since having a game, we, including myself, my assistant varsity and junior varsity coach, Carissa Dupont, and the girls, are just happy to be playing ball."

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# Berlin track and field team dealing with several COVID-19 protocols

By **STEVE ENMAN**  
THE BERLIN SUN

BERLIN — The Berlin High track team has waited more than 600 days to get back into the starting blocks to compete in a meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While there will be several protocols in place this spring, the Mountaineers will be able to run, jump and throw in 2021.

**“This season is a total mystery, having lost a whole season last year, plus the mask rule for runners will be a killer as kids have to run with less oxygen while sucking in their expelled carbon dioxide and trying to breathe while a soaking wet mask gets sucked into their mouths.”**

Coach Bob Lord spoke highly of his girls team saying, “We have a good group of girls this season with plenty of good speed and I will actually field two 4x100 relay teams while we sort things out.”

Those speedsters include Gwen Pelchat, Emily Roy, Mya Wedge, Megan Bernier, Gianna Bouchard, Brooklyn Rainville, Mia Letourneau, Aliyah Paquette and Ashley Baldrige.

Lord also expects good things from Baldrige, Becca Host and Allysa Delafontaine in the discus.

Pelchat is a Meet of Champion qualifier two years ago in the 100-meter hurdles and should continue her dominance in that event. She, along with Cora Treiss, will be a force in the 300-meter hurdles.

As for the boy, Coach Lord expects great things from Brayden Landry, who will be a force in the 3,200-meter run, while Jace Arsenault, Victor

Morales and Malachi Plociennic are looking fast for the 200 and 100 meters this season.

Add to that mix Adam Hodgeman, Joe Zimmerman, Richard Hernandez and newcomer Hayden Munce are looking good in the throws. David Young is very strong this year, and Lord “expects him to fly in the 400 meters.”

The long-time, veteran track and field coach shared, “This season is a total mystery, having lost a whole season last year, plus the mask rule for runners will be a killer as kids have to run with less oxygen while sucking in their expelled carbon dioxide and trying to breathe while a soaking wet mask gets sucked into their mouths.”

“We have run into this in practice. This will especially hurt the distance kids. There are no mask breaks in the 1600 and 3200.”

He added: “Thankfully, the throwers are exempt, which is a mystery to me and fellow coaches. I would like to see the state leaders put on a mask, hit a track in 80- or 90-degree weather, run hard for eight laps, and let us know how it works out.

“I will have to monitor my runners once the heat hits and yank them out of races if things go south. I personally think oxygen should be available at our meets.”



**Coach Bob Lord**

**MOUNTAINEERS** from page 17

Mackin added: “Even though wins and losses will not technically count towards playoff seedings, I am still looking for my boys to improve

on a game-to-game basis. I am really looking forward to getting back on to the field after losing last season to COVID-19. It was certainly a letdown,

see **MOUNTAINEERS** page 22

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# Gorham's bats come to life as Steady no-hits Profile

By **STEVE ENMAN**  
THE BERLIN SUN

**GORHAM** — First-year Gorham High Coach Pete Girouard, along with assistant coach/JV coach DJ Johnson, welcomed 26 players out for the baseball program this spring, and thanks to the strong turnout, the Huskies can field both varsity and JV teams this year, something that hasn't happened for several years.

Gorham is off to a 1-1 start to its season, opening with a 5-0 road loss to White Mountains Regional on April 12, but rebounded nicely with an 11-0 victory at Profile behind an Ean Steady no-hitter on Monday.

Girouard is "very excited to see how this group of talented players stack up against the rest of the North Country clubs this season. Having five games versus Division III opponents and against well-coached Division IV teams such as Colebrook and Littleton on the schedule, we will be tested often."

The downside to the team is that more than half of the players have no varsity experience, so, as Coach explained, "Our main goal is to get them used to the speed of the game and to continue to improve every day. The boys have been working hard at practice and are starting to see some results already."

He added: "Pitching will be a determining factor as to how successful our season will be and could potentially be one of our strengths this year as we have five players with mound experience."

Senior Ean Steady is the only pitcher on the staff with any varsity experience, so he will be relied upon to give the Huskies some quality innings on the mound and in the infield.

Sophomores Landyn Croteau and Chase Carder will both see mound time and also fill roles in the infield.

Freshmen Brendan Saladino and Kody Lemieux-Thibodeau round out the pitching staff and will be relied on to contribute significantly on both offense and defense.

Wyatt Deblois has come back for his senior season and has shown a solid glove that will be utilized all over the field.

The Huskies also have junior Dawson Steady, who can play multiple positions and the willingness to play wherever he is needed, and then fellow juniors Lex Mayerson and Cody Pike will likely man out-



Members of the Gorham High baseball team include (front row, from left) Lex Mayerson, Kody Lemieux-Thibodeau, Brendan Saladino and Ean Steady; (back row, from left) Wyatt Deblois, Anthony Pizzuto, Liam Cairns, Chase Carder, Landyn Croteau, Cody Pike and Dawson Steady. Missing from photo is Ethan Favreau. (COURTESY PHOTO)

field positions.

Classmate Liam Cairns is new to the game but has shown the athleticism and coachability necessary to become a key contributor, according to Girouard.

Sophomore Anthony Pizzuto will see a lot of time behind the plate and will be counted on to provide leadership on both offense and defense, and sophomore Ethan Favreau who will be used in multiple roles.

In Gorham's 11-0 win against Profile, the boys got things going early with three runs in the first inning

and continued to add crooked numbers all afternoon. Hitting stars included Anthony Pizzuto who was 3-3 including a 375-foot double, and had three RBI, while Landyn Croteau, Wyatt Deblois, Chase Carder, Brendan Saladino and Ean Steady had key hits.

Steady pitched a no hitter for six innings, issuing three walks along with 11 strikeouts. He got some help from the defense throughout, including a very

see **GORHAM** page 23



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TENNIS from page 18

that girls tennis is on a very strong path and we will be able to compete at high levels for a while.”

As a final statement, Rancloes said, “Our goal will always to push as far as we can; we will continue to work on doubles. This is where matches are won or lost. The girls will build confidence and grit as the season progresses. I’m very excited about this next chapter. It’s been two years since these girls have been part of the tennis team but it feels like we have never skipped a beat!”



Seniors on this year’s team include (from left) Emmelia Letendre, Kelly McCormick, Mickaliev Walsh, Becca Pouliot and Emma Bergquist. (ANDY RANCLOES PHOTO)

“It was nice to get that first win of the season. The boys really focused during the preseason and it paid off as did working the count on both of Laco-

nia’s pitchers. Kam pitched a strong game for us and the bats woke up when we needed them to.”

MOUNTAINEERS from page 20

gearing up for what would have been my first season on the bench before the pandemic put a screeching halt to all things including sports. Nonetheless, this is a solid group of boys who I believe have the right mix of experience and youth to be a solid ball team. The preseason has gone very well, with players practicing six days a week in preparation for our first game and the remainder of the season.”

And finally, as Coach Mackin explained, “Quality pitching will be a key to success for this group and we will look to Carter Poulin, Griffin Melanson, Kolin Melanson, Kam Huntoon and Jeremyha Dow to provide us with solid innings to keep us afloat. Dom Paradis may also be called upon at times to throw.

“Offensively, look for Ben Estrella to utilize his speed at the top of the order, while Tyler Rousseau, Dom Paradis, Griffin Melanson and Jake Mercier will round out the first half of the Mountaineer lineup.”

Berlin opened its season on a positive note with a solid 8-2 win over Division II Laconia. The visiting Sachems opened things up with a run in the top of the first inning, but Berlin came right back when Tyler Rousseau doubled and scored on a Kam Huntoon RBI single.

Laconia scored another run in the top of the second and held that 2-1 lead until the Mountaineers tied it up in the bottom half of the fourth with Jacob Mercier scoring on a defensive lapse.

The bats came alive in the last half of the fifth when the hosts scored three runs, started by a Ben Estrella walk, a stolen base, an RBI triple by Rousseau, a Dom Paradis walk and a Huntoon RBI double.

The Mounties continued the offensive onslaught in the next frame with three more runs, when Estrella singled, stole second and advanced on a Rousseau sac bunt. Paradis walked again and both scored on a Griffin Melanson hit, followed by a double by Mercier which plated Melanson.

Kam Huntoon not only threw seven innings of two-run, seven strikeout ball but also went 2-4 at the plate with a pair of RBI.

Coach Mackin, enjoying his first varsity team win, said, “It was nice to get that first win of the season. The boys really focused during the preseason and it paid off as did working the count on both of Laco-

nia’s pitchers. Kam pitched a strong game for us and the bats woke up when we needed them to.”

Along with Huntoon, other stars at the plate were Rousseau, 2-3 with an RBI; Estrella, 1-3; G. Melanson, 2 -4 with two RBI; and Mercier, 1-3, with an RBI.

Dow threw a no-hitter against Colebrook in the five-inning shortened by the 12-run mercy rule with the Mountaineers finishing on top 20-1. Dow had trouble in the first inning with 3 walks and a hit batter to give Colebrook its only run of the game. He walked eight on the day but struck out 12 to go along with his no-no.

Berlin scored eight runs in the first inning before the Mohawks recorded an out. Jake Mercier hit a two-run double off the top of the fence, just missing a home run, to get things going. Hitting stars were Ben Estrella, 1-3; Tyler Rousseau, 3-5, with three



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Members of the Gorham High softball team include (back row, from left) Amber Wilson, Emma Bernier, Zoe Grondin, Bryanna Poirier and Sarah Godin; (front row, from left) Kanelei O'Connell, Ellie Roberge, Jessica Burton, Halery Desilets and Madi Buteau. Missing from photo Olivia O'Neal. (KIM POIRIER PHOTO)

**HUSKIES** from page 17

The Huskies ran into a buzzsaw in the season-opener at home, falling 20-0 to Division III powerhouse White Mountains Regional on April 13. Gorham rebounded nicely with a 16-4 victory over fellow Division IV school Profile on Monday.

Coach Chris Partenope is "Really excited that

**GORHAM** from page 21

nice catch by outfielder Saladino on a hard-hit, sinking low line drive, that he not only caught but was able to double-up the runner at first.

"The guys were ready to play, and it was great to get our offensive finally going, scoring runs in each inning," said Coach Girouard. "It was a fantastic day for Ean, who recorded not only his first win of the season but also his first career no-hitter. It was great that his defense came through when they needed to. The season is still young and even though we had a few mental lapses, we will continue to work on them and overcome."

from preceding page

scored and three RBI; Dom Paradis, 3-3, four runs scored and three RBI; Kam Huntoon, 2-3, three runs scored; and Griffin Melanson, 3-3, with four runs scored and four RBI.

Kolin Melanson, Brody Duquette and Haden Poulin all recorded their first career varsity hits.

"It was a great all around effort for my boys today," Coach Mackin said. "We hit the ball extremely well and it was exciting to be part of Jeremyah's no-hitter. We continue to improve each and every day."

we have a season and it is nice to finally get back into the swing of things (pun intended!). But I won't sugarcoat things as we lost a year of development for these kids and though they are doing good things, I do notice the loss. We shall overcome, as they are working hard and sweeping out the cobwebs."

Seniors on this year's team include three of the four captains in Bryanna Poirier, Emma Bernier and Madi Buteau. Poirier will be on the mound, pitching and will be in the infield when not on the mound. Bernier is being counted on to hold down the middle of the outfield, patrolling centerfield. Buteau gives the Huskies lots of versatility with her ability to play second and third base.

Juniors include team captain Halery Desilets and Zoe Grondin. Desilets is another player that might move around a bit, filling many roles for the Huskies including seeing action behind the plate at catcher as well as playing some second base.

Partenope sees Grondin, primarily at first base but also can play in the outfield if needed.

Sophomores include Jessica Burton and Kanelei

O'Connell. Burton will play mostly in the outfield but could see action at second base, while O'Connell is an outfielder.

There are four freshmen on the squad in Amber Wilson, Ellie Roberge, Olivia O'Neal and Sarah Godin. Wilson will play primarily in the infield, mostly at shortstop. Roberge is another versatile player who will see action in the outfield and behind the plate catching if needed. O'Neal is a pitcher but is also capable of playing in the outfield or infield. Godin is another utility player capable of playing third base and catching.

Coach "P" has five returning players in Poirier, Bernier, Buteau, Desilets and Grondin, and six rookies in Burton, O'Connell, Wilson, Roberge, O'Neal and Godin.

"We are a work in progress but I'm liking the effort that's being put forth as well as their flexibility of moving around to different positions," she said.

The team looked sharp in its 16-4 win over Profile in six innings due to the 12-run mercy rule. The Huskies outthit the Patriots 18-5 on the day.

Bryanna Poirier pitched the 6 innings with Halery Desilets behind the plate," said Partenope. "Bry walked two, struck out seven and all five runs were unearned. Bry also had a good day at the plate going 4-5 with a home run, triple and double with 5 RBIs. We had good productions offensively up and down the lineup and were able to capitalize on errors that Profile committed."

She added: "Defensively, we did all right. Bry had timely strikeouts. We did commit five errors, so some things to work on, but everything is moving in the right direction. Madi Buteau had a busy day over at second with five assists. Emma Bernier had a great catch in center field to end a Profile threat in the sixth inning. I was pleased with the overall performance of everyone."

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