

Gym space, winter weather disrupt spring sports

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Features Editor

The spring break weather gave sports teams more of a break than many wanted.

With four inches of snow on the ground on March 28, the conditions were not ideal for spring sports. To try to keep their fields in top shape, the athletes had to be proactive.

"Last week, we brought towels and buckets to soak up water off the field," junior Jessica Tackett, a varsity softball player, said.

The baseball team resorted to using couch cushions to absorb excess water off the field. But not every problem can be resolved with a little elbow grease. The lacrosse team fears that their field may be permanently damaged.

"The field is all muddy and ripped up. I don't know if the grass will ever grow back because people played on it too early," senior varsity lacrosse player Dan Greathouse explained.

In previous years, the teams have not experienced weather conditions this detrimental, according to varsity softball coach Jim Weaver.

"Usually, up until April we are in the clear, but this year it feels like it's a constant fight against the



Logue photo by Amy Liu

DANGER ZONE. Spring sports teams have to battle more than their opponents on their respective fields of play this year.

water," Weaver said.

The coaches struggled to get in any outdoor practice time. Some teams never got a chance to practice outside before their first competition.

"Our first game was the first time we were ever outside on a field," varsity baseball coach Christopher Piggott said.

Because of the sloppy field con-

ditions, teams crammed inside for practice.

"We have to fight for gym space because the indoor sports get first priority, so we have late night practices or Friday night practices from 7-10," junior soccer player Kaitlyn Kinsella said.

The boys baseball team came in as early as 6 a.m. during tryouts for main gym time.

"We do what we have to do," junior baseball player Mike Tauchman said. "We know gym space availability is low, but we have to make the best of what we are given."

With 28 different sports at various levels, the fields are in constant use, according to Athletic Director Jack Drollinger.

"Due to the fact that Fremd is

landlocked, we don't have the luxury to rest fields with the number of sports that we have," Drollinger said. "The wear and tear shows, especially when we have weather this bad."

Indoor sports have been taking the hit from the weather as well.

The boys volleyball team amends its usual practice schedule to accommodate other varsity sports that need a place to practice.

"We have had to practice late hours, or instead of practice, we will weight train in a different room," junior Cal Nolan said. "It's tough, but we understand the other teams need to practice too."

Drollinger commends the coaching staff for their constant efforts to improve the fields.

"Even as bad as the weather conditions have been, the coaches have been tremendous in continuously trying to get their fields ready," Drollinger said.

Spring in Chicago is notorious for being erratic. With a blizzard one weekend, followed by a 65-degree, sunny day, the athletes hope the forecast is more favorable.

"We are just anxious to be able to play outside for good," Kinsella said.

Next year is now for Cubbie Nation



Johnny Kent

Since 1908, there have been two world wars, the invention of television, transatlantic flight and a lunar landing.

In the last 100 years, the entire world has completely changed, yet one thing has remained the same: the Chicago Cubs have not won a World Series. Somehow, with all the advances in civilization, this one elusive prize has managed to escape one of the league's charter teams.

Last year, as the Cubs made their push into the playoffs, signs that read "It's Gonna Happen" began appearing en masse around Wrigley Field. This year, I have a new slogan "It's Gotta Happen." There's no way one team should go 100 years without winning the game's ultimate prize.

Chicago fans definitely deserve a title. What other sports team with the Cubs' annual woes could have the type of support this team has had? Despite often finishing at the bottom of the standings, the Cubs are usually among the top of the league in attendance year after year.

As a result of games being broadcast nationally on WGN, the team has a strong following across the country. Many fans fell in love during the days when Jack Brickhouse and Harry Caray were announcing games and have remained fans ever since.

It's amazing to see that, often times, when the Cubs play on the road, nearly half the visiting stadium is caked in Cubbie blue.

In this age of band-wagoning fans changing their allegiances to whatever team is at the top of the standings, the support of Cubs fans for their team has remained constant.

It's almost ironic that with every near miss, every heartbreak, fans' love affair with their team grows more and more.

Fans of the North Side team still reminisce about where they were and what they were feeling in 1984 when the Cubs blew the two-game lead against the Padres in the National League Championship Series.

And most people remember feeling the pain five years ago after the team again blew a big lead in the NLCS.

What compounds the suffering for many is that expansion teams continue to win World Series after World Series.

In only 15 years, the Marlins have managed to win not one, but two World Series. Among other expansion teams, the Angels, Blue Jays and Diamondbacks have won the title at least once.

Even the Colorado Rockies, a doormat franchise for its first 13 years of existence, were able to put together a winning streak through the last few months of the season and playoffs to get into the World Series, something the Cubs have not done since 1945.

Generations of Cubs fans have died without ever having a chance to see the team win it all.

But manager Lou Piniella has had a year to acclimate himself to the Friendly Confines of Wrigley Field, and with the addition of Kosuke Fukudome to an already stellar lineup of Alfonso Soriano, Derrek Lee and Aramis Ramirez, it looks as though this could finally be the year North Siders have been longing for. Well, it has to be.

Tennis gets solid start in spring season

As the season begins, the boys tennis team is building strength and confidence. On Saturday, the boys participated in the Hersey Invite where they faced off against three teams.

The Vikes' toughest competition at Hersey was Hinsdale Central, the defending state champions.

While all but one doubles team ended their Hinsdale matches with a loss, senior Brian Piotrowski and sophomore Kenta Shimizu played an extremely close match. Their third set ended in a tie breaker with a final score of 9-11.

One Viking duo, junior Owen Marsden and sophomore Ryan Kreis, won against Hinsdale 17-15 in lieu of a third set.

"It was a very different match. Beating them was a very good feeling," Marsden said.

Head coach Ken Goettsche is proud of

the duo.

"They played an amazing match. They are good, consistent players," Goettsche said.

The Vikes won their other two match-ups at Hersey against Freeport (5-2) and Cary Grove (6-1).

The season opener was a sweep over Jacobs on Friday, Feb. 4, with all seven match-ups finishing in Fremd's favor.

This season is looking bright for the Vikes' top players. Piotrowski and Shimizu will play singles in conference and team up for doubles at state in hopes of placing high.

"I feel like if we continue improving, we've got a good shot at possibly winning or placing in the top five," Piotrowski said. "Our goals are high."

The Vikes meet against Elk Grove was rescheduled Tuesday due to weather, and they played on Wednesday instead.

- Carolyn Kwon

Girls track places fourth at BG Invite

The girls track and field team competed in its second outdoor meet on April 5 at the Buffalo Grove Invite, taking fourth.

"There were a lot of great performances, a few standout performances," head coach Hali Henderson said. "We're still working on giving it our all, in terms of putting it on the line."

Junior Jamie Notaro took first place in the long jump with a distance of 15 ft., 11 in., and sophomore Ashley Fullerton achieved a personal record of 5 ft., 3 in. in the high jump.

The 3200m relay team, composed of junior co-captain Roxanne Miller, junior Margaret Weber, sophomore Aylla Lashaway and freshman Stephanie Resis took second place.

"Everyone that ran it got their best times," Miller said. "It's exciting because when everyone improves, this team can

hopefully reach state [in the relay]."

Junior co-captain Ashley Ruff took first place in the triple jump with a personal best result of 34 ft., 5 in., while junior co-captain Bizzy Mellado took second in the pole vault and 300m hurdles.

Medallo said she felt comfortable moving from the indoor season to the outdoor.

"Outdoors is so much easier to shave your times," Mellado said. "It's a bigger track, and for long distance there is only four laps for a mile rather than 27."

Henderson agrees with Mellado but notes there are other challenges.

"The difference is you're competing with the outdoor elements of cold, wind and heat," Henderson said.

The Vikes will participate in the Rock Island Invite tomorrow.

- Mihir Awati