

Baseball Mid Southern Conference outlook for 2010

Written by Administrator

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Once again it's time to start hearing the sound of a hard leather covered ball hit either a bat or hitting a leather glove, as the high school baseball team in early April.

The Mid Southern Conference will be decided between the start of the season and the end in of the regular season in late May, and every coach has some reason for optimism in the upcoming season. Returning seniors and other up and coming players always have everyone feeling at least partly optimistic about the new season every year. You get to start anew every season.

Salem baseball coach Jamey Wilson lost only three seniors to graduation in 2009, and has several returnees from their 2009 Mid Southern Conference title winners. It was the first time that Salem has won the Mid Southern Conference in baseball in the school's history.

Wilson has three seniors returning this year, Christian Chastain, Josiah Farnsley, and Nathan Busick. Chastain will play second base, Farnsley will play short stop, and Busick will be first baseman.

Several starters will be from the junior class this season, with Nick Rainey (pitcher), Casey Spalding (third base), Brock Bush (catcher), and Hayden Burton at the ready.

Three other junior class members will join the above players in the out field, with Brent Ingram (center field), Keith Ables (right field), and Cody Crady (left field) adding their skills to the mix.

Wilson is expecting a pretty successful encore in 2009. He said, "This I'm going to say: We should be pretty good this year."

Wilson sees Charlestown, North Harrison and Austin to be contenders for the conference title this year along with his team.

Brownstown Central would have to rank as a dark horse contender in the conference race, according to Wilson. "I think they could step up and make some noise in the conference," Wilson added.

A main strength of Salem is in their offense. Wilson likes his team's bats this year. The team's main weakness is probably in the loss of Alex Potter, who graduated last year. The pitcher was 7-0 last year as a pitcher.

Despite any losses, Wilson thinks they have the players to do their part this year. "I think we've got some kids that can pitch, and play other positions, that can step up and do their job," he said.

Down State Road 60 a few miles to the east in Washington County, fellow Mid Southern Conference foe Eastern is in a position where they graduated five seniors from last year, and will have no seniors on the 2010 version of the team.

What the Musketeers do have are five juniors that will have to provide senior leadership a year early. "It is something we'll have to address," said Eastern coach Larry Ingram of the leadership issue. "It certainly does present some challenges."

Ingram said it takes for leadership is being able to take charge and being able to see things on the field during play.

The juniors consist of Todd Albertson (pitcher), Tyler Farmer (short stop and pitcher), Jacob Freeman (outfield and pitcher), Dakota Hedley (outfield), and Trent Smith (first base). Freeman didn't see as much varsity action as the other four did last year, but Albertson batted .214 in '09, with Farmer (.246) and Hedley (.261) seeing a lot of action too.

Ingram has several sophomores in the mix this season, with Trey Albertson (infield and pitcher), Austin Brown (catcher), and Josh Gillespie (infield) set to see a lot of action. Albertson batted .242 in 2009.

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Freshman expected to see action are Jacob Hornung, Kawika Glover, Jason Allen, Caleb Nicholson, Aaron Burr, and Shane Williams. The three freshman pitchers (Glover, Nicholson, and Williams) will see action on the mound, and Ingram said that "It's obvious they'll have to step in and do some pitching for us at the varsity level."

In the Mid Southern Conference, Ingram picked Salem as being very capable of defending their conference title from last year.

"They're the defending champs," he said, "I would put them right up there."

He also picked Austin, Corydon Central, and Silver Creek as being in the mix in the league race this season, and thinks that Brownstown will be in the mix too. He points out that they have three pitchers that would be able to stymie a lot of batting power from several team in the Mid Southern.

Ingram thinks that there is a real possibility that the eventual winner (or winners) in the conference will have at least one loss, if not a couple of them, and said that there is a strong chance that there could be more than one champion at the end of the year.

As for his team, Ingram said it will be difficult for them to "crack the top half. There are some very fine teams in the Mid Southern Conference.

Down south in Harrison County, North Harrison was second in the Mid Southern Conference in 2009, and be in the hunt for the 2010 league title.

The Cougars graduated catcher Will Jones, and pitcher Marcus Stone, but they have three seniors returning to the fold, one of them a first time player at the high school level. Joe Bolin played basketball for the school this year, and has decided to try his hand at baseball.

North Harrison coach Gregg Oppel said Bolin will be a utility player, and will see some action. "He's a pure athlete," said Oppel.

The other two seniors are Chad Eveslage (pitcher), who was 5-3 in 2009, and Cory Powell, who batted .400 in 2009.

"We're going to be pretty young this year," said Oppel. Still, he said that "I expect this group to step up."

Four juniors that are expected to see action and contribute to the team are Dylan Janes (pitcher), who batted .500 last year, Taylor Starcer (outfield), Jared Smith (left handed pitcher), and Kendall Wiley (catcher). Janes is having surgery on his elbow, and will be out until May 1. Starcer can really play any position needed. Starcer has been lifting weights, and Oppel said he is very versatile, with a lot of speed.

Sophomores Colin Book (short stop), Michael Cox (pitcher), and Jordan Robbeloth (left handed pitcher) will contribute as will freshmen catchers Wyatt Faith and Dalton Fessel.

During the 2009 season, Oppel's team had four starters out at one time or another, and it hurt, but they finished with a 14-10 record, and still managed to defeat Jeffersonville, Providence, and Austin.

Like Eastern coach Larry Ingram, Oppel sees Corydon Central, Silver Creek, and Austin as favorites for the Mid Southern Conference title.