

Team pushes for success

By AnnaKate Kleibohmer

A tough loss to Manhattan last spring ended the Lions varsity baseball team's chances for making it to the state tournament.

However, the loss inspired the boys to work harder this season.

"It was definitely disappointing," senior right-fielder Jacob Seratte said. "The expectation is to go to state every year and when we don't realize that goal it's always hard."

Though the varsity team lost three solid senior players and their leadership, there were still 13 returning seniors, some who had played together since t-ball and coach pitch.

"There's definitely a lot of leadership this year," Seratte said. "A majority of the seniors have been playing together for a long time, and it adds to the team chemistry. I think it helps us play better because we know that our friends are right there."

With so many seniors, the boys pushed each other to be better, throw more accurately, keep a positive attitude and stay in the zone.

"We may be good friends, but we're hard on each other," senior pitcher Brandon Bell said. "Drew (Green)'s hard on me. He makes fun of me all the time, but it's just making me a better player. We're hard on each other because we have a lot of talent, and we don't want to get lazy."

This was also true for a very talented group of underclassmen. For sophomore third baseman Parker Kirkpatrick, the seniors served as leaders and a source of inspiration.

"We have a bunch of good leaders: (Brandon) Bell, (Bryce) Montes (de Oca), Drew (Green), and Kieran (Severa)," Kirkpatrick said. "They set the expectations high, and I follow their rules because they set a good example on and off the field."

With so much talent and leadership, including six-foot-eight pitching powerhouse Bryce Montes de Oca, the Lions looked to improve on last season.

"Our goals are set high," Bell said. "Ultimately, we want to host regionals, win the Sunflower league and win the state championship."

The baseball program faced setbacks early in the season. Following two losses to lower-ranked Olathe Northwest and Olathe North, the Lions locked in and focused on their goal of winning state.

“I think that we can learn from and build on those losses,” Seratte said.

The Lions looked for the silver lining and took away the positives.

“With the loss to Olathe Northwest, there were a lot of things we did badly but there were a lot of things we did well,” Bell said. “We play a tough schedule and we’re going to face opponents multiple times, at regionals and at state. We have the chance to see these teams again, and it’s only going to make us better.”

Throughout the season, players drew inspiration from the memory of former LHS baseball player Travis Sanders. Sanders, who was struck by a car after hitting a deer on the interstate, was a second baseman for the 2009 state championship team.

The team wore a patch with his number and initials on their jerseys. At the first home game, fans and players observed a moment of silence to honor him.

“He’s an inspiration to us and we all want to play well for him,” Bell said. “He was a hard worker and a great player. Hopefully we can win a state championship for him; he was a true Lawrence Lion.”