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Staying alive for regionals

Brother Rice joins Country Day baseball and softball teams with district titles

By Mike Moore
 C & G Sports Writer

There's nothing easy about this time of year, especially when one afternoon can bring either heartbreak or jubilation.

In fact, the only guarantee with the state baseball and softball districts is that jubilation or heartbreak is pretty much a sure thing.

For three local teams, this past weekend was all about the former.

Birmingham Brother Rice — the defending Division 1 baseball state champs — earned a third consecutive district title, while Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day saw its baseball and softball teams each win district titles, which earns them a spot in the regional round.

“We may be the defending state champs, but winning a district title is still a big deal,” said Brother Rice coach Bob Riker, whose team improved to 25-8.

Brother Rice defeated Birmingham Seaholm 7-1 in the district final May 30; Rice knocked off Beverly Hills Groves 6-1 in a semifinal game May 29.

“In our last nine games, we're only 5-4,” Riker continued. “So this is a pretty big deal for us.”

The Warriors will play Northville High (31-1) June 6 at Novi High in a regional semifinal.

“You start practicing and preparing in March for the chance to play in June,” Riker said. “That's what we've done, and that's what we have the chance to do. Our defense and pitching has been excellent. Finally, after a while, our hitting is starting to come around.”

Yellowjackets win a pair of titles

Country Day baseball coach Frank Orlando is no stranger to district titles, either. The Yellowjackets are now 11-7 on the season after earning the long-time coach his 12th career district title.

“Going in, I knew this wasn't going to be easy,” Orlando said after his team beat Madison Heights Lamphere 9-7 in the May 30 final. The Jackets beat Warren Fitzgerald 11-1 in the semifinals. “We had to face two pretty good ball clubs, and



Photo by Tracy Dreslinski
 Brother Rice pitcher Matt Conway and his squad earned their third straight district title this past weekend. The defending Division 2 state champs face Northville High (31-1) June 6 at Novi High.

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we're very happy to come away with this.”

Country Day advances to a Division 2 regional semifinal at Livonia Ladywood June 6.

“In a game like baseball, where everything is so unpredictable, you have to be happy with the chance to move on,” Orlando added. “We're excited with the chance to keep this season going.”

The Country Day baseball team will have some company in the regional round, as coach John Meyer guided his softball squad to its fifth straight district championship May 30. The Yellowjackets earned a district title by beating Lamphere 14-0 in the final; they beat Fitzgerald in the semis.

“The key for us was the fact we had everyone in the lineup chipping in,” Meyer said. “From the top of our lineup to the bottom, everyone contributed.”

When asked if after five straight such titles things start to get old, Meyer just laughed.

“The great thing about this is the fact we have girls who have never won a district title,” he said. “At the same time, for the seniors, they get to do it one more time. So more or less, no, it never gets old.”

Country Day, now 24-10, will also play at Ladywood June 6 in the regional semifinal.

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