

Jus' Bekoz: Jefferson baseball back in the books

By Rick Kozlowski rkozlowski@journal-news.net
8 hrs ago

Coach John Lowery and the Jefferson baseball program possess assorted records on national and statewide scale.

For instance, the Cougars' 12 Class AAA state championships is a state record; Lowery's personal victory total rank him third all-time nationally, and he is No. 1 among active coaches.

The latest honor, though, is really one for the record books.

Or, more accurately, for the book.

The book is what is being honored this time.

The annual Jefferson baseball media guide for 2018 has received the Gold Award from National High School Sports Publication Awards in the category of "public schools with 501-999 students and the publication prepared by supporters/fans."

Kathe Witt is the top supporter, fan and all of the above. And then some.

She's officially the baseball team's sports information director, having taken over the volunteer position starting with the 2007 season.

It's her pride and joy.

"I get satisfied with doing the media guide myself," Witt said. "I don't need anybody else to tell me it's great.

"But it was really, really nice, and it was nice how it made me feel."

Witt has been producing these guides for the last dozen years.

And they are great.

They were in existence long before Witt started to serve in the publicity role for Jefferson.

In the early days, the media guide was often handwritten and appeared on mimeographed and copied pages.

"The coverage was always the same," Witt said. "A preseason outlook by the head coach, a synopsis of the previous year's records and a look at current players."

That part of it hasn't changed, but there is so much more contained in the heavy-gauge glossy publication than when Curt Bury produced the first published booklet on newsprint.

You name it, and it's in there.

Seven hundred guides produced for this season are gone, however. Collector's items.

The guide is jam-packed with everything you wanted to know about Lowery and Jefferson baseball, from the very beginning during the 1972-73 school year to the current team of players.

Seventy-six pages of information.

Witt often posts an article or two from us at The Journal sports department, typically the state championship game story from the previous season because there's been so many of them.

It is certainly an honor to be included in a book that surely has no equal in the state of West Virginia.

Just like how the guide is a reflection of Lowery, who has no equal in the state of West Virginia high school baseball after having won at least 20 games every season for 42 straight years — an item, that, by the way, can be found in the book on Page 6.

Lowery had 1,305 wins, and counting, going into a pair of games on Saturday at Virginia Beach, Virginia. (Page 8)

Witt has one win and counting — she hopes.

"I'm going to submit this year's book to (try) to win the grand national award," Witt said.

She admitted to being surprised her work came away with an award from a national organization.

"When I saw the covers of previous winners, I doubted I'd have a chance — such great graphics," Witt said.

The cover that helped win was somewhat simplistic, yet it carried a complicated message if you read deeply into it.

"Respecting Our National Heritage," reads the title under a picture of an American flag stitched like a baseball.

The game of baseball has been our national pastime.

This year's guide version is electric.

Really.

Six senior players are shown on the cover with an eye-catching collection of fire and lightning.

When the media guide came out for the first time as something more than a stapled few sheets of paper, it was produced here at The Journal on newsprint. It was first sponsored by the Red Cross and now is now paid for by the booster club in conjunction with a handful of ads.

A native of Fairmont, Witt's involvement in the boosters club started when her son joined Jefferson's baseball program. Somehow she was put in charge of producing the guide, something she says takes a half-year to produce.

"It's a lonely process and an intense process," she said.

Still, Lowery makes suggestions for the booklet, and Witt tries to oblige.

"He has challenges I'd like to try out," Witt said.

No problem.

Kathe just needs to keep her "Witts" about her.