



Staff photo by Bob Leverknight

Somerset All-County girls basketball first team members are, from left: Conemaugh Township's Stephanie Straka and Jamie Gennett, Berlin's Brittany Pryde, Conemaugh Township's Megan Maurer and Shanksville's Emma Berkey.



Staff photo by Bob Leverknight

Somerset All-County girls basketball second team members are, from left: Shade's Casey Roberts, Conemaugh Township's Lisa Byer, North Star's Nicole Pelesky and Brittany Danel. Missing is North Star's Cara Studer. Players were recognized Wednesday by the Exchange Club of Somerset.

# Maurer, Prosser net top basketball awards

By CHRISTINA DUNMYER  
Daily American Sports Writer

SOMERSET — The Exchange Club of Somerset honored the county's top girls varsity basketball players Wednesday with its 27th Annual Recognition Luncheon.

Conemaugh Township junior Megan Maurer earned MVP honors while Berlin first-year head coach Rachel Prosser earned Coach of the Year honors.

Maurer, a second team all-county selection last year, was flattered she was named Most Valuable Player.

"Usually a senior gets it," she said. "It was totally unexpected. It was a good feeling. I was just excited to hear my name."

Prosser, who was unable to attend the luncheon, said in a telephone interview, "This means so much, because it comes from my peers. I respect everyone who puts the time in as a coach."

"It means a lot to have them think of me in high regard," she added. Prosser was assistant coach last year and also coached the junior varsity team. But had no varsity coaching experience.

Berlin won the WestPAC South and was District 5 Class A runner-up under the guidance of Prosser. They finished the season with a 20-9 record. The Lady Mountaineers lost 53-47 to Mount Alvernia in the first round of the PIAA Class A state playoffs.

"I want to build on the foundation we have established," Prosser said. "I have already set the goals and standards for next year, but it will be up to the girls to work hard this summer if they want to do as well as and even better than this past season."

Conemaugh Township's accomplishments under head coach Dr. Joe DiBartola, were outstanding. The team finished the season with a 27-2 record. The Lady Indians won the WestPAC North and championship game



Staff photo by Bob Leverknight

Conemaugh Township's Megan Maurer was named Most Valuable Player during the Exchange Club's 27th Annual All-County Girls Basketball Recognition Luncheon Wednesday at the Quality Inn.

along with their first District 5 Class AA title. They lost 55-49 to state-ranked Westmont in the second round of the PIAA Class AA state playoffs. Not bad for a team that switched from A to AA this season.

"We were happy with this season," Maurer said. "We accomplished everything we set goals for. We all worked hard and supported each other all year."

"We lose two great seniors but gain two other good players," she added. "Me, Jamie (Gennett) and Steph (Straka) will be expected to lead the team. We are well-rounded and look to set bigger goals for next year."

Maurer thanked her family for all the support they have given her over the years.

"I have five brothers and sisters who come with my mom and dad to every game," the 6-foot center said. "My mom (Lisa, a former player and North Star assistant coach) has helped with my foul shooting and layups. She is my worst critic but my biggest supporter. My dad (Matt) is very vocal and is always yelling at the games."

The three-sport athlete plays volleyball and runs track for the Lady Indians as well as posting a double-double average in points and rebounds on the basketball court.

Straka, Gennett, Shanksville junior Emma Berkey and Berlin's Brittany Pryde join Maurer as first team selections.

Pryde and Berkey both reached the 1,000 point plateau this past season.

Pryde will continue her education at UPJ, where she will play soccer.

"She has been through a lot as a player," said Prosser. "I think she took control early this season and that contributed to her and the team's success."

A trio of North Star players were named to the all-county second team. Senior Cara Studer and juniors Brittany Danel and Nicole Pelesky were joined by Conemaugh Township senior Lisa Byer and Shade freshman Casey Roberts.

Six of the seven players awarded honorable mention were first-time recipients. Windber's Sierra Steele has an honorable mention in 2005-06. Berlin's Brooke Snyder, is only a

freshman.

"She should be proud of honorable mention," Prosser said. "But she can't settle. She has so much more to accomplish in her career."

Three Somerset Area High School seniors were also recognized by the Exchange Club. (Christina Dunmyer may be reached at christinad@dailyamerican.com)

## 2006-07 All-Somerset County Girls Basketball Team

**MVP** — Megan Maurer, Conemaugh Township, junior  
**Coach of the Year** — Rachel Prosser, Berlin

### First Team

Megan Maurer, Conemaugh Township, junior  
Emma Berkey, Shanksville, junior  
Brittany Pryde, Berlin, senior  
Jamie Gennett, Conemaugh Township, junior  
Stephanie Straka, Conemaugh Township, junior

### Second Team

Brittany Danel, North Star, junior  
Nicole Pelesky, North Star, junior  
Cara Studer, North Star, senior  
Lisa Byer, Conemaugh Township, senior  
Casey Roberts, Shade, freshman

### Honorable Mention

Brooke Snyder, Berlin, freshman  
Kara Yutzy, Meyersdale, junior  
Caroline Sanner, Rockwood, junior  
Susie Kimmel, Shanksville, junior  
Alexis Lapinsky, Windber, junior  
Laura Deyarmin, Windber, junior  
Sierra Steele, Windber, junior

### Somerset Area High School Outstanding Players

Nicole Hemminger, senior  
Jenna King, senior  
Anja Troy, senior

# Sanchez sees first game action since March 6

By ALAN ROBINSON  
AP Sports Writer

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP) — Freddy Sanchez pulled up after hitting a line drive single to right field, not taking a wide turn at first base or gambling that he could stretch the hit into a double. When he reached first base, he headed back to the dugout and a pinch-runner replaced him.

A setback for the National League batting champion in his first game action in three weeks? Not at all. Sanchez, the Pirates second baseman who had been out since spraining a right knee ligament March 6, was told by the Pirates to take it easy before going 3-for-8 in a Class AAA exhibition game Wednesday.

A few hundred feet away, his Pirates teammates played the Reds in a spring training game. It was obvious where he would rather be.

"It's not a good sign that I'm here and everyone's over there," Sanchez said.

The rest of the Pirates disagreed. If Sanchez is playing again, despite still having discomfort from his sprained right medial collateral ligament, it likely means he's that much closer to returning to their lineup. It might not be for opening day Monday in



AP Photo

Freddy Sanchez plays in a minor league spring training baseball game Wednesday against the Cincinnati Reds in Sarasota, Fla.

Houston, or any game in the opening three-game series, but it should be soon.

Sanchez, one of majors' surprise stars of

last season with his .344 average, also fielded ground balls and ran the bases during a pregame workout — the first time he's done that since he was hurt. He still has pain in his knee when he pivots and goes to his left on ground balls, and when he accelerates around the bases, but he insisted that's not a problem.

Since getting hurt while turning a double play during the opening week of exhibition games, the only other time Sanchez faced anything except batting practice pitching was during a Pirates camp workout last week.

"I was able to swing and run down to first; it wasn't as hard as I can, but it was something," Sanchez said. "I can play through discomfort and pain because they said it's not going to get worse. Eventually it's going to go away and I can't hurt it any more. ... Hopefully, I can push it harder and harder each day."

The next step will be accelerating out of the batter's box and playing in the field. He expects to get more at-bats Thursday at the Pirate City minor league complex in Bradenton, Fla.

"We're close hitting-wise to where I want

to be; I was making some contact, seeing pitches — seeing live pitching, that's what I need right now," Sanchez said. "But it's going to take a lot more than a day of at-bats and, hopefully, I'll use these next 4-5 days to get as many as I can."

Manager Jim Tracy said he was pleased with Sanchez's return, though he's not yet ready to predict when he can write Sanchez's name in the No. 3 spot in his batting order.

"It was a very, very good workout," Tracy said. "He did everything — he ran the bases, he ran to the bases. He looked like Freddy Sanchez, and that didn't surprise me."

It seems unlikely Sanchez can be ready to play Monday. But if they decide by Sunday he is nearly ready to play, they could carry him on the 25-man roster for a few days knowing he won't play in the field.

First, Tracy wants to see how Sanchez responds to his first full day of spring training in weeks before he starts weighing when Sanchez might be ready to go.

"He got a lot of exercise today, so let's see where he's at (Thursday)," Tracy said. "Maybe we can get him 8-10-12 at-bats, let him see a lot of pitches."

## Windber nets 6-1 victory over McCort



WINDBER — The Windber boys tennis team dominated Bishop McCort Wednesday in a 6-1 victory.

The Ramblers swept the singles matches. Number one player Andy Gula defeated Steve Mowery 10-3. Brandon Shetler defeated Sean Rick 10-1. Dom

Balash defeated Dave Clark 10-2, Darren Rowles defeated Nolan DiFrancesco 10-1 and Jesse Jodon defeated Steve Wainwright 10-3.

The Crushers' lone win came from the number one doubles team of Chris Kawchak and Ali Saadat. They defeated Zach

Penrod and Rick Aufman 11-9. The team of Travis Weaver and Mike Dobson defeated Chris Cartwright and Hassan Saadat 10-4 to round out the match.

Windber improves to 2-1 while Bishop McCort falls to 0-1. The Ramblers host Richland on Monday.

