

No more diamond in the rough

Written by MITCH MAERSCH
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With talent, experience and a record turnout, CG-B softball team is set to shine this spring

The Cedar Grove-Belgium High School softball program already hit a new high in 2013, and the season hasn't even started.



Twenty-seven girls came out for the sport this spring, allowing the school to field varsity and junior-varsity teams for the first time.

Just three years ago, the Rockets had only 12 players.

"It just continues to get bigger. That's a good thing," Rockets coach Scott Soerens said.

Now in his fourth year, Soerens has led an entire class through the program, developing continuity.

This year, the Rockets have six returning starters, including three players who will share pitching duties — juniors Kasie Feind and Hannah Dirkse and sophomore Mandy Race.

"It's a good thing to have. It makes for all the more competition in practice. Nice luxury," Soerens said.

Feind earned All-Central Lakeshore Conference first-team honors last year as a utility player, and Race received honorable mention as an outfielder.

Kaylee Juhasz, one of three seniors entering their fourth varsity seasons, will be the Rockets' starting catcher.

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Sophomore Anna Ten Haken returns at shortstop. She takes over for Kelly Hubing, who graduated after receiving honorable mention in all-conference voting last year.

Soerens said he hasn't chosen a leadoff hitter yet but expects steady offensive production from Race, Feind, Juhasz and senior Shelby Harmon.

Several freshmen and sophomores will give the Rockets speed on the bases, Soerens said.

Joining Race and Ten Haken in the starting lineup will be two other sophomores — Mariah Navis in right field and Hannah Paulson at third base.

Unlike in the past, many of the Rockets' first-year team members aren't new to softball, having played before they reached high school.

"Even the freshmen who have come in, they've been playing for a couple of years now. At least they've seen the game," Soerens said.

The Rockets are coming off a 6-13 season, including a 4-8 conference record. Soerens was pleased with the improvement his team showed last year and wants the progress to continue this spring.

Soerens said the 2013 conference race should be wide open, with defending champion Howards Grove, Oostburg and Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler expected to field solid teams.

The Rockets are scheduled to open the season Friday, April 5, with a 4:30 p.m. nonconference game at Sheboygan Falls.

Cedar Grove-Belgium's first conference game will be a 4:30 p.m. road game Tuesday, April 9, against Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler.

The Rockets' home opener will be a 4 p.m. doubleheader April 11 against Oostburg.

Image Information: JUNIOR KASIE FEIND is one of three players expected to contribute as pitchers on the Cedar Grove-Belgium softball team this season. Feind was named to the All-Central Lakeshore Conference first team last year as a utility player. Photo by Sam Arendt

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