

PREP BASEBALL

# Dragons walk off with district win, 6-5

By John Henson  
Harlan Enterprise

After an 18-1 win Monday at Middlesboro, the Harlan Green Dragons had to work a lot harder in the rematch Friday as they had to rally from a 4-2 deficit for a walkoff 6-5 win.

Brody Owens walked to open the bottom of the seventh, then moved to second on Caiden Jackson's hit and took third when Jake Brewer walked. Middlesboro pitcher Isaac Harris started with an 0-2 count on freshman Cooper Thomas before throwing four straight out of the strike zone to force in the winning run.

Sophomore center fielder Jaxson Perry had three of Harlan's five hits. Jackson and Brewer had one single each.

Baylor Varner earned the win in both games of the series as he struck out all three batters he faced in the seventh inning. Owens gave up four runs on six hits with 13 strikeouts and six walks in five

innings. Chris Rouse allowed one run on two hits with one strikeout and one walk in one inning.

Senior catcher Colt Bayless led the Jackets with a double and two singles. Harris added two singles. Bryson Heck had a three-run double as Middlesboro scored four runs in the fifth inning to take the lead after Harlan scored twice in the second inning, Mitchell Capps and Parker Hampton added one single each.

Harlan (7-7) will travel to Harlan County on Monday and play host to the Bears on Tuesday in a district series. Middlesboro (4-5) plays at Bell County on Monday.

**VARNER REACHES 300**

Baylor Varner topped the 300-career strikeout mark in his no-hitter Monday at Middlesboro as the Green Dragons rolled to an 18-1 win.

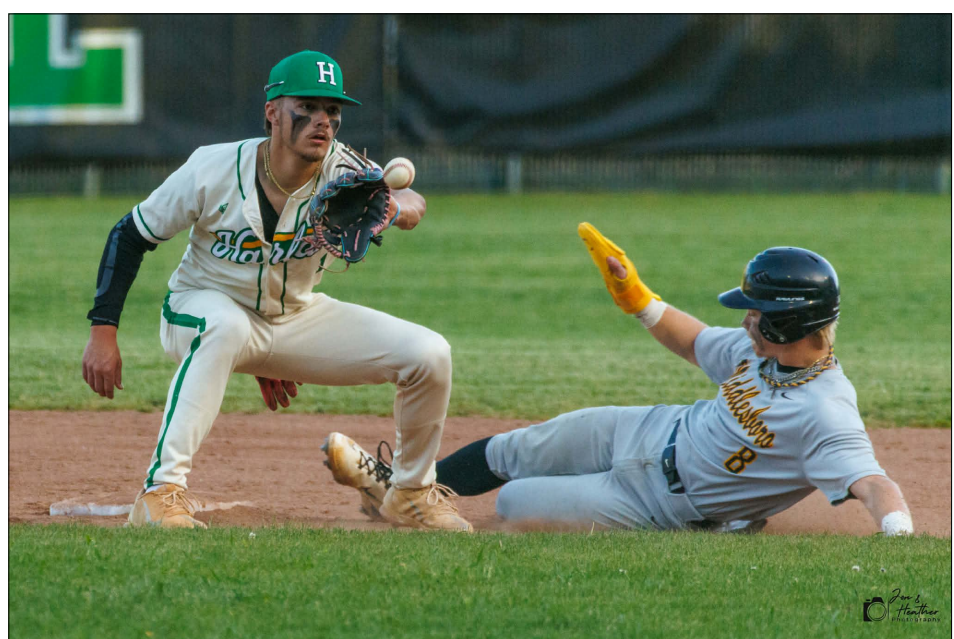
Although there are no official records available for the long history of the program, coach Lee Freyer believes his senior right-hander has a school

record for strikeouts with 303 at this point.

Baylor is the ultimate competitor," Freyer said. "I've seen Baylor pitch (in the district championship game last year with a sprained ankle that was black and blue when most people wouldn't attempt to play. He always wants the ball in big games. Since his freshman season here, he has been dominant on the mound. The consistency he shows every day is a direct reflection of the type of person he is. Any time Baylor steps on the bump he gives his team everything he's got. It's a lonely place on the mound. All eyes are on you. It's mentally tough and physically tough. For him to accomplish this over a career is a great achievement. "I'm extremely proud of Baylor."

**HARLAN 18, MIDDLESBORO 1**

The Harlan Green Dragons and senior ace Baylor Varner broke out of an early-season slump in a big way Monday in an 18-1 five-inning blowout



JON DICKENSON

Harlan shortstop Baylor Varner took a throw as Middlesboro's Mitchell Capps slid into second base during Friday's district game. Varner earned the win on the mound as the Dragons scored a run in the seventh inning to win 6-5.

Monday at Middlesboro in the district opener for both teams.

Varner tossed a no-hitter with 10 strikeouts and only two walks while giving up one unearned run in his first win of the season after pitching through some bad luck to this point.

The 6-7 Dragons pounded out 14 hits as

they scored seven runs in the first inning and eight in the fifth. Brody Owens led the offense with a double and two singles. Eli Freyer had three singles. Jaxson Perry, Chris Rouse and Jake Brewer added two singles each. Braxton Bowen had a double. Varner added a single.

Freshman Mitchell Capps started on the

mound for the 4-4 Jackets, giving up 10 runs (four earned) on nine hits with two strikeouts and three walks in four innings. Cayden Burchett allowed seven runs on three hits with three walks and one strikeout in one-third of an inning. John Hayes recorded two outs and gave up one run on two hits with one walk.

PREP TRACK & FIELD

# HCHS teams finish second at Coal Miners Invitational

By Abby Sherman  
Harlan Enterprise

The Harlan County track team hosted the Coal Miners Memorial Invitational on Thursday. The Bears and Lady Bears each placed second overall with 144 and 132 points, respectively.

"I'm proud of the kids for how hard they competed tonight. It's a meet at Harlan County, so of course, there will be rain, but I thought we came back out after the delay and competed hard," Harlan County track coach Ryan Vitatoc said. "The boys had a solid meet tonight, Vitatoc said.



KIM HENSON

Harlan County sophomore Ryan Day headed toward the finish line during the Coal Miners Memorial Invitational on Thursday.

"Middlesboro is currently the top-ranked team in Class A, and I thought we

battled them hard this evening. "The girls performed

well tonight. In my 14 years as the head track coach at HC, I haven't had as many injuries combined as we've had this season. It's been a tough start for our girls, and losing Maddi (Middleton) and Jaylee (Cochran) for the year is tough, but I am

proud of how they have responded and competed. They beat some really good teams here tonight."

The Dragons finished seventh overall with 23 points. The Lady Dragons were 10th with 20.5 points.

Event winners for

Harlan County's boys included Trevor Farley, Jacob Schwenke, Ethan Lewis and William Duncan in the 4 x 800-meter relay; Tanner Widener in the mixed 1,600-meter middle-school run; Hunter Hughes in unified shot put.

**SOUTH**

Continued from 10A

Burton said. "We got a strong performance in the circle from Lexi tonight."

The 10-6 Lady Bears travel to Whitley County on Monday.

**LESLIE COUNTY 5, HARLAN COUNTY 4**

During a seven-game winning streak, the Harlan County Lady

Bears found several sources of offense.

In losing their last two, the Lady Bears have struggled to put together hits as they fell 4-1 at Rockcastle County on Saturday and 5-4 to visiting Leslie County on Tuesday.

Kendall Brock led the HC offense against Leslie with two singles. Alexis Adams and Bella Miniard added one single each.

Adams gave up five

runs (three earned) on three hits with 15 strikeouts and eight walks.

Raegan Landa singled twice while Adams doubled and Jordyn Smith singled in the loss at Rockcastle. Adams gave up four runs (three earned) on seven hits with eight strikeouts and one walk.

The 10-5 Lady Bears face perhaps their toughest test of the season Friday at South Laurel.



**HARLAN COUNTY**  
Committee on Aging, Inc.

## INVITATION TO BID

The Harlan Co. Committee on Aging, Inc. will be accepting sealed bids for a Commercial Heating & Air Circulation System. The renovation will include replacing the existing system with appropriate duct work & ventilation.

Sealed bids should be clearly marked Circulation System and mailed to Harlan Co. Committee on Aging, Inc., at PO Box 1246 Harlan, KY 40831. Bids will be accepted until April 30, 2026. Bids will be opened at the Harlan Co. Committee on Aging, Inc. on May 01, 2026.

You may also contact Michael Saylor at 606-273-9885 or Jenell Spurlock at [jspurlock@harlanonline.net](mailto:jspurlock@harlanonline.net) or 606-573-3496 regarding any questions. Pick up a copy of the engineer's analysis & blueprint and layout of the new system at Harlan Tint or The Harlan Co. Committee on Aging, Inc. located at 105 N. Cumberland Ave. Harlan, KY 40831.

Harlan Co. Committee on Aging, Inc. reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids.



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