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Baseball News Release

Cedarville University

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7 March, 1987

For immediate release:

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- The Cedarville College baseball team is scheduled to open its 1987 season on Tuesday afternoon at home against the University of Cincinnati. The single game is slated to begin at 3 o'clock.

Third-year coach Dan Coomes has only 14 Yellow Jackets on the roster, but he's been used to carrying a line-up that has little depth. Cedarville, who was 14-18-1 last spring, was 18-11 in Coomes' first year as the NAIA District 22 runner-up with just 13 players in uniform.

"Since we don't have many players, our freshmen play an important part," said Coomes pointing to six rookies on the roster. "Hopefully, they will catch hold by mid-season and maybe will end up playing .500 baseball. Anything better than that is a plus."

Coomes expects to be strong in the pitching department where three of last year's top four return. Seniors Tom Pratt and Sam Springer, plus junior Dan Erlandson head the list along with freshman Steve Hester. Pratt was 3-5 in '86 with a 4.82 ERA, Springer was 2-3, while Erlandson was 3-3. Hester has been clocked near 90 mph with his fastball on occasion and has looked strong in early season workouts. All four hurlers are righthanders.

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The veteran players will have to be consistent if Cedarville is to be successful this spring. Senior Danny Olinger batted .341 with a team-leading 31 hits a year ago and will move from the outfield to second base. Junior Ken Horton (.338), senior Finny Rajchel (.264), and junior Brian Marburger (.314) also must produce.

"Individually, I think the hitting will come around," said Coomes. "Defensively, we have a number of changes. People will be playing positions where they have not had a lot of experience. The infield has had the biggest shake-up and its the infield that has been one of the stronger parts of our defense in recent years."

The schedule is the toughest the Yellow Jackets have ever had to face which features six games against NCAA Division I schools. Every team in the district is also on the list. The Mid-Ohio Conference should be another tight race with the usual powers Ohio Dominican, Mt. Vernon Nazarene, Malone, and Rio Grande leading the way.

Cincinnati will bring a ball club to Cedarville that was 26-28 last year with a record of 9-9 in the Metro Conference. The Bearcats are now coached by first-year man Jim Schmitz. He spent the last three years at Wilmington College and led the Quakers to their first district tournament appearance ever last season.