

Anticipation is growing for York Revolution vs. locals game

By COLUMN By LARRY A. HICKS *The York Dispatch*

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It's the day many of us have been looking forward to for years -- Saturday, April 18 -- when the York Revolution takes on a contingent of local amateur players selected from the Central and Susquehanna baseball leagues.

The game was announced two months ago, and according to Revolution officials, more than 2,000 tickets have already been sold for the game. Who knows how many more will be sold in the next three weeks as interest in the game builds?

As it stands today, the Revs have only signed 12 players for this year's roster. Six of them are pitchers. Six have played in the major leagues for a period of time. But six pitchers and six position players does not a team make, so the Revs will have to pick up the pace to have a full team on hand in time for its game with the locals.

One thing though -- most of the Revs players will be in shape and ready to go, having played winter ball somewhere in the offseason and some of them having gone through a major league spring training camp.

That's more than you can say for the local guys. They held their first practice session last weekend and will be practicing on weekends for the next two weeks. They will then have two practices on the Sovereign Bank Stadium field the week before the game, according to Curly Holtzapple, manager of the combined local team.

The first practice went well, Holtzapple said earlier this week. He was surprised at how well position players were hitting, fielding and throwing the ball in the one workout they've had.

"Obviously, some of them have been hitting off of a machine somewhere," he said. "Their timing was better than you'd expect their first time outside."

And, he added, the pitchers were throwing well, too.

"I had to keep telling them to ease up a little. I didn't want anyone throwing their arms out the first day of practice," Holtzapple said. "They were all excited to be a part of this game."

While the Revs team is only half settled at this point, Holtzapple's roster is completed. He knows exactly who he'll have to work with.

At first base, he'll have Glen Rock's Tim Hare and Windsor's Nate Neumann. At second, Mount Wolf's Dan Weigle and Jacobus' Anthony Ferrell will hold down the fort. The shortstops will be Eric Bonds, Mount Wolf; Tim Frisch, Glen Rock; and Jason Seitz, Hallam. Fritz Allison, Glen Rock; Dustin Kuhn, Dover; and Shaun Wilson, Windsor; will play third base.

The catchers will be Glen Rock's Dan Rhodes, Jacobus' Nate Kopp and Hallam's Justin Seitz.

There will be four outfielders from each league: Shawn McCleary, Hallam; Jimi Nomikos, Conrads; Mike Wokulich, York Township; Rick Thompson, Conrads; Kyle Wildasin, Stoverstown; Austin Rickrode, Dover; Chris Bubb, Dover; and Todd Meyer, Pleasureville.

Jason Kitner, Pleasureville; and Kirk Reichard, Red Lion; will be the designated hitters.

Add to that eight pitchers: Matt Gonzalez, Glen Rock; Chris Powl, Stoverstown; Brad McCullough, Glen Rock; Mark Phillips, Stoverstown; Shawn Hedrick, Red Lion; Jason Enoch, Red Lion; Drew Kelley, York Township; and Casey Markey, York Township.

Holtzapple will be ably assisted by coaches from both leagues: Clint Workerger, Red Lion; Kim McCullough, Glen Rock; Nate Neff, Windsor; Terry Golden, Jacobus; Dave Miller, Manchester; Rex Meyer, Pleasureville; and Bernie Wolfe, Stoverstown.

It may not be the best team the York County leagues could put on the field, thanks to the absence of college players who won't be eligible for two more months, but it's a darned good one.

York County baseball fans have been talking about this game for years, but always from a perspective of fantasy rather than reality. No one knew a game ever would be played, but now it's just three weeks away. The stands are already half filled.

People are curious, Holtzapple said.

"It's a great thrill to be a part of it," he said. "I don't know about the Revs, but we're looking forward to it. Win or lose, we'll have a great time."

There's probably no way the local guys should win this game. No one gives them much of a chance. But that's the great thing about baseball -- the game's played on the field, not on paper.

So you just never know.

Me? I'm rooting for the locals.

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