

New Ottoville Coach has Plenty of Experience Back

Tony Castronova's First Baseball Season at Ottoville

Putnam County Sentinel – March 26, 1997

New Ottoville baseball coach Anthony Castronova is walking into a good situation this season.

As baseball practice opened for the 1997 season Castronova welcomed back 11 lettermen to the program making his task a little easier.

Castronova takes over at Ottoville after having been the head coach at Lordstown High in Warren for three years. Lordstown was the runner-up in the TIC in 1995 and won the league championship in 1996 giving the school their first league championship in 20 years.

Although Castronova has 11 lettermen back this season he will have some work to do as the Big Green finished the 1996 season with a 4-18 overall record and were 1-6 in the Putnam County League.

Leading the list of returning players for the Big Green are senior two year letter men Aaron Burgei (1B-P), Kevin Klima (CF) and Jeremy Koester (2B-P). Juniors Scott Horstman (SS) and Cory Miller (C) also return to the lineup with two varsity letters.

Returning to the Ottoville lineup with one varsity letter are juniors Brian Beining (OF) and Scott Deitering (DH-1B) along with sophomore letter winners Chris Horstman (OF-P), Chad Knippen (1B-P), Adam Koester (INF) and Mitch Koester (INF).

Castronova feels the 11 starters back will be a strength this season, plus with just three seniors on the team they will have eight players that are gaining additional experience for the 1998 season. He is hoping this experience will pay off in league play.

Coach Castronova has two concerns entering the season and they are defense and hitting. He says the team has to work on being fundamentally sound on defense and they have to keep working on their hitting.

The first year coach feels this should be an exciting and fun year. The players seem to be excited about the season and it should be a challenge for them. "My players are making a commitment to hard work and discipline. We'll see what happens," Castronova says.

Entering the PCL for the first time should be exciting for the new coach as he feels this is one of the most competitive leagues in the state as it has some outstanding coaches and players. As for the league this season, he feels Miller City, Leipsic and Kalida could be the favorites, but with the league being so tough anyone can beat anyone on a given day.

Ottoville will open the baseball season Tuesday when they meet Ottawa-Glandorf.