

# Newspaper Articles on the Twelve State Tournament Teams

Putnam County has sent 12 baseball teams to the state tournament beginning with Kalida in 1940 and Vaughnsville in 1942. Advancement to the State Tournament was different for these two teams than it is today. The PCL Champion was placed in a 12-16 team District Tournament in which it took 3-4 wins to advance to the State Tournament. Since there was no Regional Tournament, 16 teams advanced to the State Tournament.

In 1940, Kalida lost its first game to Colerain 4-2. The Wildcats were coached by James Ferguson and led by pitcher William (Wid) Stechschulte.

In 1942, Vaughnsville lost its second game to Cincinnati Reading 10-0. The Vikings were coached by Don Ahern and led by the legendary pitcher Sylvester (Stretch) Goedde.

In 1976 and 1977, Putnam County won back to back State Championships with Leipsic in 1976 and Miller City in 1977. A unique feature to these two teams was that Leipsic lost only to Miller City in 1976 and Miller City was undefeated in 1977. Thus, Putnam County's State Championship baseball teams never lost to a non-county team for 2 years. A side note to this feat occurred at a recognition party of Coach Miller of Leipsic in 2006. Duane Tooman, a member of the team, was congratulating Miller City for winning the state tournament following Leipsic's championship season. He commented that even though Miller City was only 8 miles from Leipsic, the Wildcats didn't know how to get to Columbus until Leipsic led the way. To that fact, the fans of Miller City say, "THANK YOU LEIPSIC'!

In 1979, the Ottawa-Glandorf Titans made the trip to Columbus. The Titans, coached by Dale Bruskotter, lost to Trenton in the State Semi-Finals 7-1.

The Miller City Wildcats were next in line again. The Wildcats were State Runner-Up in 1983, State Champions in 1984 and a State Semi-Finalist in 1985. There were unusual events each year. In 1983, Miller City scored 4 runs in the bottom of the seventh to win the Semi-Final game 10-9. In 1984, Jeff Hermiller fell down rounding third base and crawled to the plate in the bottom of the eighth to

score the winning run. In 1985, the Wildcats led 5-0 in the third inning, but lost in the Semi-Finals to Skyvue 9-8.

The Fort Jennings Musketeers advanced to the State Tournament in 1994, losing to Steubenville 4-2 in the State Semi-Finals. The Musketeers were led by Coach Dan VonSossan and his son Ryan. Fort Jennings also had an unusual event occur at the Regional Final game. Coach VonSossan was pitching batting practice before the game and was hit in the head by a batted ball. He was taken to the hospital and missed most of the game.

The Kalida Wildcats followed Fort Jennings to State in 1995, but were eliminated by South Central 5-2 in the State Semi-Finals. The Wildcats were led by Coach Jim McBride and Chad Ehrnsberger.

Kalida made it to Columbus for the third time in 2006. However, they were defeated by Newark Catholic 4-2 in the State Semi-Finals. The Wildcats were again led by Coach Jim McBride and Ross Guisinger, the PCL Player of the Year in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Leipsic made it to State for the second time in 2026. The Vikings defeated South Webster 11-10 in the State Semi-Finals, but lost to Delphos St. Johns in the State Finals, 10-0. Leipsic's coach was Darren Henry. Leading All-PCL players were John Dewar, Colin Niese and Aaron Hazelton.

Enjoy the trip down memory lane with the State Baseball teams of Putnam County!