

By Scott Kindberg
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1996 FREWSBURG BASEBALL TEAM

CHAMPIONS AGAIN!

Repeat Puts Bears In Select Company

Since 1981, seven Section 6 baseball teams have captured New York State Public High School Athletic Association championships.

Sweet Home did it in 1983

Orchard Park and Dunkirk turned the trick in 1988, while Maple Grove was victorious in 1992.

But no team in Western New York can match the baseball success of the Frewsburg Bears. In fact, when Mike Sheesley no-hit Pawling in the June 8 Class D final, it marked the third state title in six years for the Bears, which also won it all in 1991 and 1995. The latest championship was unexpected because there were those who thought Frewsburg would not be able to recover from the graduation losses from 1995's title team.

But with Coach Bob Schmitt's careful, almost meticulous, use of his pitching staff, the Bears, which have traditionally had potent bats, always won the important games. In fact, the 20-5 record compares favorably to last year's 24-5 mark. "It was a heckuva lot more than luck." Schmitt said. "We got some breaks, but you make your own breaks, too. We never lost a game we had to win."

Led by Ken Powell's perfect 10-0 mark, and the rapid maturation of Sheesley, Frewsburg was able to win the Division 2, Section 6 and Far West Regional titles with only two pitchers. And what they lacked in pitching depth, they more than made up for in cohesiveness. This team really *cared* for one another.

"This year it's sweeter than last year," junior catcher Chris Gray said, "because everybody counted us out. Last year we had to (win it all) because we had all the talent. This year we gave 110 percent and that's what got us through. With (Sheesley) pitching (in the title game) and all the defense and everybody pulling together, I don't think anybody could have stopped it."

Next year, the Bears will play in Class C. "I would like to go through the challenge next year of being a C School and see how that goes," Schmitt said.

Frewsburg Bears

Adam Beckerink

Casey Brink

Mike Caruso

Chris Gray

Eric Haglund

David Heald

Seth Johnson

Mike Lampo

Matt Moore

Andy Piazza

Ken Powell

Billy Prince

Jeff Shannon

Mike Sheesley

Josh Smith

Bob Schmitt, head coach

Tim McMullen, assistant coach

Fabiano Buskei, student manager