

## Girls open first softball season here

By: Willie Hlatt

No one can say that the first RCHS girls' softball team has failed to generate interest.

About 70 players, practically enough for a whole league, showed up for the team's first organizational meeting. But that number was soon trimmed to a more manageable 28 when they learned that Coach Debbie Cash requires wind conditioning and calisthenics.

"When they found out they had to do a lot of running and conditioning," said Cash, a teacher at RCHS, "that cut a lot right there."

With the help of grade problems and more dropouts, Cash has since cut the roster to 18. Problem is, the team has had only four days of practice and has already missed its first two games because of the weather.

The team still has 16 games, including double headers, remaining on the schedule.

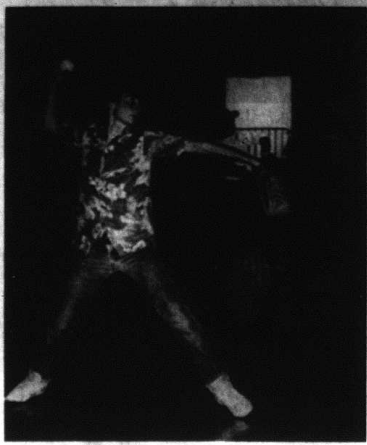
Some schools have had girls softball for two or three years, Cash said. "Some schools this is their first year. I expect a pretty good season. I've got about eight who seem to be pretty good players."

Cash plans to start freshman Gina Martin at first base, senior Cindy Fain at second, senior Celena Lear at shortstop, junior Lor Mink at third and freshman Stephanie Northern at catcher.

The outfield includes sophomore Sara Anderlin in right field, junior Regina Benge in right center, junior Rhonda Cobb in left center, and junior Shandra Gentry in left.

A lot of them have never really pitched before, said Cash, who plans to start senior Tammy Reeves in their opening game.

"We're having a problem finding someone who can pitch it over the plate."



Both the girls and boys teams have been confined to practicing in the gym as a late because of the bad weather. Above Chris Frith limbers up his throwing arm after school.

## Boys lose season-opener 5-3 at Monticello Tuesday

By: Willie Hlatt

After scratching the first four games on the schedule because of snow and related bad weather, the RCHS baseball team finally took the field Tuesday afternoon at Monticello.

The Rockets, who have had only a handful of practices this spring, left the bases loaded in the top of the seventh inning in dropping their season opener, 5-3.

(Monticello had had a little bit more practice than we had," said RCHS coach David Perkins. "For the first game and it being cool, we played a pretty good ball game."

The Rockets led Monticello 2-1 before surrendering four runs in the fifth and sixth innings. They

scored one run in the seventh before stranding three.

Junior Tim Hodges, who went the distance for the Rockets, took the loss. He pitched a pretty good ball game until he got a little tired, Perkins said.

The Rockets' game at Whitley County scheduled for Wednesday afternoon was canceled because of wet field conditions. The team missed only three games in the entire 1986 season.

Although Perkins is still tinkering with the lineup, Tuesday's starters included senior Mike Hamilton at first base, senior David Dees at second, senior Kevin Bassell at shortstop, senior Brian McGuire at third and sophomore Chad Hodges behind the plate.

Sophomore Greg Abney got the starting nod in left field, junior Chris Larkes in center and senior Shannon Burton in right. Burton hit a third inning home run in the Monticello game.

Except for an infield gutted by graduation, the Rockets return a large part of last season's 13-7 team, which lost to Middleboro in the 13th Region Tournament. Gone are second baseman Troy Taylor, who led the team with 444 average, shortstop Benny Blanton, outfielder Tony Harrison and Kenning Graves.

The pitching rotation the team's biggest question mark will include Hodges, Burton, Bassell, McGuire, Hamilton and Chris Frith, most of whom also play other positions.

"If we get any pitching, we'll be a pretty fair team," Perkins said. "The players we have back are pretty good hitters."

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