

Community mourns Smith

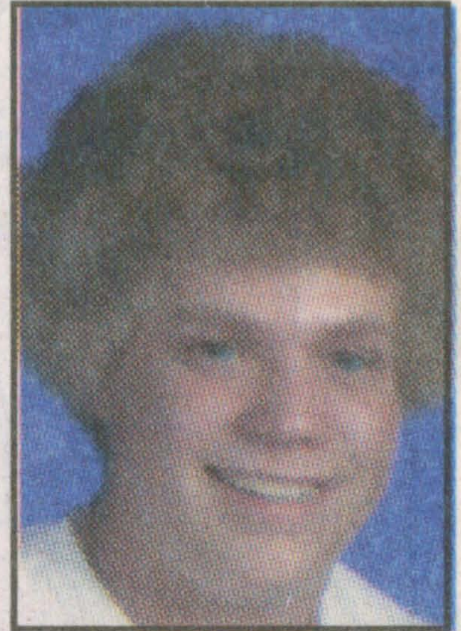
Staff report

The staff, faculty and students at Western Brown High School are mourning the loss of a high school sophomore this week. Chance Robert Smith, 16, of Hamersville, died on Tuesday, Feb. 7, in Hamersville.

Smith was heavily involved in baseball, and played both on the Western Brown High School baseball team and on the Flash Baseball team each year. According to Mike Daly, owner and operator of Flash Baseball, Smith had been on a Flash team since the facility opened in 2002. Smith was six when he joined.

Smith is the second Western Brown student lost in the past year. According to Western Brown superintendent Christopher Burrows, the Western Brown School District were informed about Smith's death on Tuesday morning. Burrows said the district took steps to provide counseling and rooms for students to mourn.

"This started on Tuesday when the word first hit the high school," Burrows said. "We spent 20 minutes looking at our crisis plan. This was the first time we've had this happen where we didn't have a chance to talk to the



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SMITH**

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teachers before we talked to the students.”

“Within those 20 minutes we had 10 counselors from other districts and the school psychologist arrive, and we went into non-academic mode,” Burrows said. “We have rooms the students can go and grieve and work through those issues.”

On Thursday, Burrows said the school was starting to get back to normal, though rooms are still available for students and faculty. Losing Smith has been difficult for the district, and Burrows said Smith was well known in Mt. Orab and in Hamersville, where he had attended elementary school.

“It’s very hard for parents and teachers, but it’s

even harder for students since they could have a class that he was in,” Burrows said. “Today (Thursday) we were moving toward as normal of a day as we could, but we’ll still have those rooms available for students.”

“He was a very respected kid in the community,” Burrows said. “He came up through Hamersville Elementary, and he was well known there as well. It was just a very sad day. Western Brown is grieving, and we’re working with the parents to get through this as well.”

Visitation and services were planned for Friday, Feb. 10, at the Flash complex in Hamersville. Daly said the location seemed fitting, as Smith was a superb baseball player who

could often be found on the Flash Baseball grounds.

“He’s been with us since he was six,” Daly said. “He was a super player, he played 60 games a year with us since he started. He was probably on the facility 100 days a year, every year.”

“He was one of three of the original team players from when we started in 2002,” Daly said.

Daly said Smith had absolutely loved playing baseball, and had shown a lot of talent in the program over the past 10 years.

“He was a gifted hitter, and a great center fielder,” Daly said. “He had a radar, he always knew where the ball was. I always told him he was born to play baseball. He absolutely loved it. His eyes would get huge

every time the ball came his way.”

Daly said the rest of the 160 Flash Baseball players are planning on honoring Smith through the next season by wearing his number, seven, through each game this year.

“We’re having the service in the indoor facility we opened this year,” Daly said. “We have 160 kids playing for us out here this year, and they’re all going to wear a number seven on their hats and helmets this year.”

Daly also expressed his sympathies to Smith’s family.

“He was one of the most compassionate kids I’ve ever met,” Daly said. “Everyone here loved him, and he had one of the finest families you’ve ever met.”