

CARRYING A HEAVY LOAD

Brock Alexander a versatile player for Cherryville's Ironmen

By MIKE POWELL
Correspondent

Brock Alexander carries a heavy load going into his senior season with the Cherryville High School baseball team.

Not only will Alexander be counted upon to hit for an average, deliver the long ball, drive in runs and field his position, the three-sport athlete may be asked to help out on the mound.

And just for good measure, coach Henry Jones will expect Alexander to provide some senior leadership for an inexperienced team.

Does all that responsibility weigh heavily on Alexander heading into the 2005 season?

Not at all.

"I am not the only senior leader, but I will do whatever is necessary for the team," Alexander said during a recent workout at Buck Fraley Field.

"Hopefully, I won't have to pitch, but I can get on the mound if I need to."

It is that kind of blue-collar, good work ethic attitude that has characterized Alexander's athletic career at Cherryville.

For example, it would have been easy for Alexander to take the winter off after the grind of an 11-game football season that saw him start both ways (tight end and defensive line).

Instead, he joined the boys basketball team as a first-year varsity player. As a backup power forward and center, Alexander has made a significant contribution to the Ironmen's runner-up finish in the Southern Foothills 1A Conference and berth in the playoffs.

He has averaged about six points per game and has scored in double figures on a couple of occasions.

In baseball, Alexander will move from



Brock Alexander will be one of the leading hitters and will play several different positions for the Ironmen

a supporting role to a prime time player. As a junior, the 6-foot-3 Alexander led the Ironmen in home runs (five) and RBI (27) and compiled the second-

highest batting average (.327).

He is entrenched as a starter at third base and may see some spot duty on the mound, even though he has never

pitched at the varsity level.

As for individual goals, Alexander wants to hit over .300 and field his position well.

And he wants to do a better job of hitting off-speed pitches. Known around the league as a power hitter who feasted on fast balls earlier in his career, Alexander now sees mostly breaking balls and pitches away from his power zone.

By his own admission, Alexander has struggled to make the adjustment.

"I am not getting the fast balls I was when I was younger. This season I want to use the middle more and not try to pull everything. I have to adjust to seeing more breaking stuff," the right-handed slugger said.

As for team goals, Alexander said the primary objective is the same as always at Cherryville—win the conference championship.

"Coach Jones always tells us to have one goal at a time. We are going to focus on the conference first. We are rebuilding from last year and we lost some key players. But we still have some people who will come up big. We just have to come out hitting strong and work on our defense," Alexander said.

What will a banner senior season mean for Alexander's future? There could be some baseball scholarship offers ahead if he performs well.

"My goal is to go to school and get an education. I want to play some sports, football and maybe baseball as a walk-on," said Alexander.

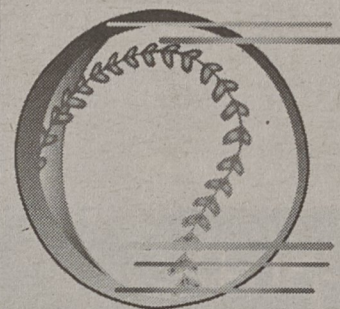
The senior is undecided on a college, but he is interested in Methodist University in Fayetteville, N.C. Other schools could come into the picture in the spring.

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