

See the story and picture at the top of the page about the Apopka Blue Darter Volleyball team's 3-1 win over the Bishop Moore

Hornets in the Regional Quarterfinal of the 2024 FHSAA Boys Volleyball State Championship Tournament



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Volleyball will face No. 4 or No. 10 ranked team with a win over Winter Park

By Marshall Tempest
Apopka Chief Staff

The Apopka Volleyball team is our last hope in the playoffs right now. Saying that, by the time you're reading this, that could have changed as the team faced the number two program in the state, Winter Park, on Friday after press time.

I had high hopes for the baseball team in the district championship to get us a guaranteed spot in the playoffs, but falling to Lake Brantley really ruined



TEMPEST'S TIMEOUT

Marshall Tempest

that. Apopka did not make the cut for the playoffs after losing 7-4.

So, if you're still looking for an Apopka team to get behind and support, don't worry because our volleyball team is still in the hunt. As of Wednesday, May 3, Apopka is ranked 18th in the state with a 22-4 record according to FHSAA. Winter Park is ranked second in the state and has a perfect 24-0 record. Apopka and Winter Park played earlier in the season where the Darters lost 3-0, so Apopka is coming for their revenge and to prove they are better than the number two team in Florida.

But before heading to

Winter Park, Apopka hosted Bishop Moore at home this Tuesday. The game started a little slow for the Darters as they were noticeably not playing at their usual level. The boys came out flat in the first set and weren't ready to play at the sound of the first whistle – but Bishop Moore was.

"I'm a different kind of person because I'm always thinking about tomorrow. It was a good game, yes. There were times though that I knew that they had so much more in them, and that just makes me think about Winter Park... At the beginning, the little jitters they had I was like, 'What's going on with you guys? You don't play like this.' So we need to learn how to start the game at the same level that we finish it at. If we start by warming up little by little as the game goes on, then it's going to be a problem," said Apopka's head coach, Ramon Reyes, after the Bishop Moore game.

The Hornets took the lead quickly capitalizing on Apopka's lack of intensity. Apopka was trailing 6-1 and was looking still a little too calm for a playoff elimination game. Apopka's errors at the net kept digging the whole they were in



On Tuesday, May 7, the Blue Darters pose after beating Bishop Moore 3-1 in the Regional Quarterfinal of the 2024 FHSAA Boys Volleyball State Championship Tournament.

deeper and deeper. Before they knew it Apopka was behind 13-3.

Apopka's offense slowly started to gain traction but was facing a ten-point deficit. Aidan Lowry was fueling Apopka's offense grabbing kill after kill and applying massive pressure to Bishop Moore's libero and blockers.

Apopka continued to gain momentum and was looking more locked in now, but still trailing 17-9. Shortly after giving the Hornets a few free points from hits outside the lines, Apopka went on a glori-



Apopka's Aidan Lowry goes for a kill in the first set of their matchup against Bishop Moore.

See TTO Page 3B

AHS spring playoffs update

By Marshall Tempest
Apopka Chief Staff

It's been a tough ride for Apopka athletics this spring with just the flag football team and the boys' volleyball team making it past the district tournament this year and earning a spot in the FHSAA State Championship Tournament. The volleyball team is the only

one left in the hunt and is coming off a first-round 3-1 victory over the Bishop Moore Hornets.

Apopka athletics are known for their prolonged and consistent greatness, but even the best need a season off. The Apopka baseball team, softball team, girls' and boys' lacrosse, and the beach volleyball team all did not

make it past their respective district tournaments.

Apopka baseball had a good season finishing 15-12, but that last loss always hurts. Apopka dominated in the first round of the district tournament, defeating Evans 16-0, and then completed their season sweep of West Orange in the sec-

See PLAYOFFS Page 2B

APK Baseball season ends after loss in District Championship

Alejandro Posluszny focuses on the strikezone in the first inning of the District Championship game against the Lake Brantley Patriots on Thursday, May 2.



By Marshall Tempest
Apopka Chief Staff

The 2024 Apopka Baseball season has come to an end, much before most of us had hoped. Finishing with a 15-12 record was not what the team had envisioned for the year, but there was a lot of good that happened this season and we got to see a lot of underclassmen rise to the occasion which means a good future for this program.

The season ended on

a tough loss to longtime rival Lake Brantley 7-4 in the District Championship game. A game if Apopka had won that would cement their seat in the playoffs. This loss to Lake Brantley makes the seventh in a row for Apopka when facing the Patriots.

To be honest with you it was just one of those games where Apopka was playing defense from the Patriots' first at-bat. The game started with a good couple of at-bats except for

Jackson Adams who started with a strikeout. Cody McKinley grabbed a double, and then Braylon Reynante drove in McKinley with a hit. Brady Roberts was up to the plate and just got a piece of the ball which set Lake Brantley up for a double play which they were awarded even though it was a very close call on Roberts at first.

Apopka's time at the plate ended earlier than

See BASEBALL Page 3B

WHS spring football game will be against Hornets

By Neal Fisher
Apopka Chief

The 2024 Spring Practice game also marks the debut of Doug Gabriel as the Wekiva Mustangs head coach. The Bishop Moore Hornets will provide the opposition and host on Thursday, May 16.

Gabriel's philosophy as a coach falls under running multiple sets formation on offense and the even front with movement on defense. The use of four down linemen is the basis of the

even front. Cover three is also common for the how the secondary covers the passing game.

When last season ended freshman Onrique Henry was the heir apparent to the starting quarterback position. Henry started two contests last season and played in five. However, Jackson Keillor has since transferred from Ocoee. Snaps under center are expected to be shared



A Wekiva reciever has open field in front of him during a play at spring practice.

See WHS Page 5B

WHS baseball finishes second consecutive season above 0.500

By Neal Fisher
Apopka Chief

The Wekiva Mustangs began the 2024 season by committing a multitude of errors and mistakes. The Wekiva Mustangs ended the 2024 season by committing a multitude of errors and mistakes.

At 14-12, the final record was the second consecutive above .500. Back to back records over .500 is also the second time in Wekiva history.

However, "potential wasn't realized," Mustangs coach Brian Tatai said. "Nor were the expectations met."

Wekiva was unable to take the next step beyond a 19-7 record in 2023.

"Errors and mistakes were talked about over and over throughout the season," Tatai said. "Talent isn't why we lost the 12 contests and didn't take the next step. Umatilla won its district (3A-9) championship tournament. We beat Umatilla though. No errors and only a couple of mistakes were committed during the victory. No team wins when committing errors and mistakes are constant, regardless of the talent.

Seven of the victories were against opponents with .500 or better records.

"There is a lot to learn from this season, including me as the coach" Tatai said. "The pressure of playing with the potential

See MUSTANGS Page 5B

By Roger Williams
Guest Editorial

Roger Williams brief Blue Darter Baseball background:

two-time All-Orange Belt Conference 1B; Regular Season Batting Champion 1975 Elite 8 team; three-year starter; hit over .300 junior and senior seasons; product of the inaugural Apopka Little League season 1968

1975 Elite 8 Team Was Truly Historic
As Apopka High School Baseball enters another post-season, opening with two sublime

victories, the occasion evokes memories of great Apopka teams from the prodigious history of Blue Darter Baseball.

In the warm haze of reflection, one team stands out as truly historic—the 1975 Elite 8 and District Champion team coached by Florida Sports Hall of Fame member, Coach Pete Dunn. In retrospect, the 1975 team's credentials for historic esteem are numerous, but four factors, exclusive to that team, stand out that make them truly unique in the annals of Blue Darter Baseball History.

First is the fact that they were the first team since 1949 to return to the State Quarterfinals, a drought that spanned parts of four decades! In addition, the '75 group stopped the hemorrhaging of 4 consecutive non-winning seasons, including the stench of a 5-15 season the previous year. The 1975 Blue Darters also helped to launch the career of their 24-year-old rookie Head Coach, Pete Dunn.

Finally, and most importantly, Coach Pete Dunn and his 1975 Blue

See ELITE 8 Page 2B

Police Beat

If a law enforcement agency charges you with a crime and this paper reports that information, please notify us within 90 days if the charge is dropped, or if you are found not guilty by the court. After verifying the information, we will be happy to publish it. Please send notification to The Apopka Chief, P.O. Box 880, Apopka, 32704-0880.

In the period from April 28-May 4, the Apopka Police Department received 1,739 calls for service, responded to 36 crashes, issued 111 citations, and made 13 arrests. No juveniles were charged. The following adults were arrested and charged: Samantha Dru Cancel, 36, 1529 Sunset View Cir., Apopka, larceny-grand theft \$750 less than \$5,000. Alex Cardona Santiago, 49, 1767 Deanna Dr., Apopka, drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (cocaine); drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (metham-

phetamine); drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (fentanyl); drug equipment-possession and/or use; drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (buprenorphine); drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription(ecstasy). Santiago Cordero Retana, 35, 531 E. Cleveland St., Apopka, other agency warrant. Gary Anthony Gambacorto, 60, 1460 Marden Rdg. Lp #108, Apopka, aggravated assault-with deadly weapon without intent to kill. Reginald Edwards Jenkins, 28, confidential, Apopka, battery-touch or strike. Cody James Kimbel, 32, 1529 Sunset View Cir., Apopka, larceny-grand theft \$750 less than \$5,000; moving traffic violation-driving while license suspended, revocation equivalent status. Anthony James Love, 41, general delivery, Apopka, trespassing-failure to leave property on order of owner. Ocasio Andretti Lyons,

45, confidential, Apopka, battery-touch or strike. Glenn W. Osteen, 42, 31 W. Tahoe St., Apopka, larceny-grand theft \$750 less than \$5,000. Dorian James Tinsley-Gary, 23, confidential, Mount Dora, battery-commit domestic battery by strangulation; intimidation written/electronic threat to kill, bodily harm another; aggravated stalking-follow, harass, cyberstalk cred threat to person; aggravated assault-with deadly weapon without intent to kill. Isaias Ezequiel Uz Macario, 33, 1736 Jolly Ave., Apopka, DUI-unlawful blood alcohol, DUI-influence of alcohol or drugs. Jalyn Washington, 27, 1650 S. Central Ave., Apopka, larceny-other theft; resist officer-obstruct without violence. Jazmine Mariah Precious Williams, 18, 5485 Timberleaf Blvd. 1302, Orlando, drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription; resist officer-obstruct without violence; battery-touch or strike.

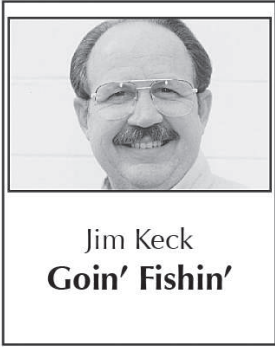
30 to 40 bass caught on West Lake

Hello Folks,

I hope everyone got a chance to do some fishin' over the weekend.

The fishin' has really been good and should continue over this comin' weekend. Kyle at Bitter's Bait & Tackle reports that lots of bluegills are bein' caught in West Lake, East Lake, and Lake Kissimmee. Lake Kissimmee has been producin' some really nice stringers. You can catch'em on crickets, grass-shrimp, but most folks are doin' best with red worms. Kyle also reports that the bluegills are still bitin' pretty good on East Lake, too. Most folks are usin' red worms to catch'em.

My buddy Rich Niles fished his club bass tournament over the weekend on West Lake and he reports that him and his co-angler caught 30 to 40 bass on Sunday. Rich also reports that they saw over 50 bluegill beds throughout the lake. So, it seems like, to me, if you want to catch bluegills or bass, now would be a good time to go



Jim Keck
Goin' Fishin'

fishin'.

Also, as a note of interest, the grass is very thick on West Lake so you need to make sure you watch your water pressure as you run through that thick grass. The last thing you want to do is over-heat your motor and get stuck on the lake with no motor.

I read this week that the bass fishin on Lake Yale was really good over the weekend. It took over 26 pounds for 5 bass to win a club tournament. The bass fishin' on the Harris Chain has slowed down a little, but if you want to put in the time, I'm sure you can catch a few bass. It's been kinda' hot, so get on the water early or go late in the day as the sun is goin' down.

I almost forgot to tell you my buddy Rich Niles caught his personal best bass yesterday. He is on vacation this week and he decided to fish a local private lake and he caught a 9.88 pound bigmouth. Rich said she was post spawn or she would have weighed over 10 pounds. He caught her on a chatter-bait. Later in the day, he had one on that would have been bigger, but she came up and spit out the hook.

The bass fishin' on the Butler Chain is about the same as last week. Folks are catchin' plenty of keeper-size bass, but not too many big'uns. Most of the bass are bein' caught on chatter-baits, plastic worms, Senko-type baits, and swim-jigs.

Well folks, that's it for this week. I hope you get a chance to do some fishin' real soon. So, with all the bluegills on the beds, get the family together and have a blast catchin' em.

See ya next week.
Tip of the week: Bluegills on the beds.
Save a few and good luck!

Playoffs: Volleyball team is APK's last team in playoffs

Continued from page 1B

ond winning 5-3. It was the Lake Brantley Patriots that ended the run for the Darters though. A 7-4 loss ended the 2024 campaign, a loss to Lake Brantley that marks the seventh in a row for the Darters in this matchup. Apopka softball had a really tough start to the season but made a great effort on the ladder half of their schedule to grab some wins. The Darters finished the season 9-16 but fell in the first round of the district tournament. Apopka faced

off against Ocoee, an opponent they were 3-0 against so far on the season and lost 8-6. Apopka was ahead for most of the game, but Ocoee had a six-run inning in the fifth that brought Apopka's season to an end. The girl's lacrosse team had a fantastic season that was cut short in the first round of the district tournament. The Darters finished the season 11-6 and were playing amazing all season with most of their losses being within one or two points. But Winter Springs ended the Darters' playoff hopes earlier

than they could have imagined in the first round of the district tournament defeating the Darters 8-7. The boys' lacrosse team had the toughest time of all of Apopka athletics finishing the season 2-15. The Darters lost nine of their last ten games. The team faced Lake Minneola in the first round of the district tournament and lost 16-2. The beach Volleyball team is still in its infancy stages just in its third year of existence at Apopka but finished with a 3-9 record on the season. They were defeated by Lake Highland Prep in the first round of the district tournament 3-0.

Elite 8: The key was Leesberg

Continued from page 1B

Darters not only ended the culture of losing, they set the foundation and the standard for over 30 consecutive seasons of winning teams at Apopka. Once Dunn took over at Apopka, the Blue Darters didn't have another losing season in baseball for over 30-plus years (until the David Lee-era, circa 2010). The Elite 8 1975 Blue Darters set the standard for over 30-plus years of baseball excellence.

Today Dunn is well known and highly respected as one of the all-time greatest coaches in College Baseball history for his extraordinary success at Stetson University; he ranks 20th all-time in career Division I wins and is a member of the American Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame and Florida Sports Hall of Fame. In 1975 he was a young, first year Head Coach taking over a losing program that was in severe disarray.

The Keys to Winning the District Championship

The major event in the long post-season run for the '75 team was a gut-wrenching 1-0 victory over powerhouse Leesburg in the District Championship Game, played at Leesburg's home field, historic Pat Thomas Stadium.

The Yellow Jackets were a perennial top-10 program, had played in the 1974 State Championship Game, and were fully expected to return.

According to Senior first baseman Roger Williams, several players were key to the team's post-season success; RHP Jimmy Ferrier, 3B/RHP Kevin Halker, 2B Donnie Kirkland and Catcher Carlos Avila.

According to Williams, "The 1-0 win over Leesburg was one of the finest pitched games I have ever witnessed. Ferrier was magnificent. He was our number one pitcher all season and if he

wasn't on the mound that Friday night, there is no District Championship and no Elite 8. Ferrier was our indispensable man. Kevin Halker, also, was a huge key in post-season. Halker came out of nowhere to be that reliable number two starter that is so crucial to post-season. Halker pitched a wonderful game in the district semifinal against Titusville Astronaut that got us to the Championship Game, he hit over .300 in the playoffs and he scored the winning run in the Championship Game. Donnie Kirkland was on fire as our leadoff hitter; he hit over .400 in post-season and started a rally in the first inning of almost every playoff game, which got us started with good leads. And, of course, Carlos Avila delivered the game winning hit in the 1-0 victory for the Championship", said Williams.

"One of the Finest In-fields in Apopka Baseball History"



A photo of the 1975 Apopka High School Baseball team that went to the Elite 8 with Coach Pete Dunn in his first year as head coach of the team.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

3			8			1		
	7	9			2			6
	8			5			2	
2					4	5		
	9		5					3
		8		6			1	7
	6			4	1			2
		4	6			7		
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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SUDOKU ANSWERS: PAGE 1C

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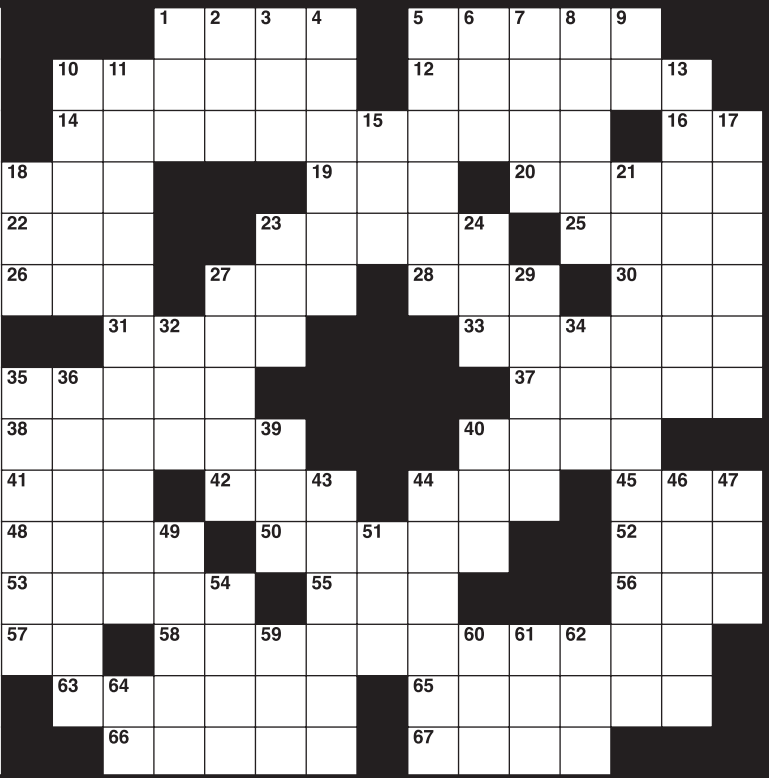
CLUES ACROSS

- Gene type
- Persian male given name
- Type of protection
- Cloud
- One who returns to life
- Gym class
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Baby's dining accessory
- Enchantress
- Prefix denoting "in a"
- Spiritual leader
- Cavities
- Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- Foot (Latin)
- Sweet potato
- Pharaoh of Lower Egypt
- Land
- More inquisitive
- Dog breed: ___ Apso
- Stood up
- Direct and uninhibited
- Authorless
- Blocking type of drug (abbr.)
- Retrospective analysis (abbr.)
- Root mean square (abbr.)
- Macaws
- Actress Remini
- Polynesian wrapped skirt
- City of Angels hoops team (abbr.)
- Fitzgerald and Baker are two
- Bowling alley must-have
- A way to cool down
- Ethnic group in Asia
- A way to alter
- Set of five
- Removes from the record
- Dummies
- Set period in office

CLUES DOWN

- DC Comics superhero
- Brew
- Play
- Single-celled animals
- Rough to the touch
- Small island (British)
- Often noted alongside cons
- Preparation of rootstock
- Atomic #44
- Egyptian unit of capacity
- About secretary
- Particular groups
- Poke fun at
- Make certain that something occurs
- Financial term
- Justify
- Arbiter
- 007's creato
- Czech name for Prague
- Groans
- American time
- No seats available
- ___ Stahl, journalist
- Cleft lip
- Talk incessantly
- Expresses atomic and molecular weights (abbr.)
- A part of a river where the current is very fast
- Curdled milk
- Running competitions
- A team's best pitcher
- Carthaginian explorer
- World-renowned city
- Most common Japanese surname
- The bill in a restaurant
- They ___
- City of Angels football team (abbr.)
- Distinctive practice
- One quintillion bytes

Solutions can be found on page 1C of this newspaper.



TTO: Apopka moves on to No. 2 program in the state, Winter Park

Continued from page 1B

ous run.

Apopka was down 21-11 and was seemingly out of the contest for set one. But all it takes is for one team to think it's over, and for one to think it's not. Bishop Moore, for good reason, thought the set was over, but you never turn your back on your opponent. Apopka went on an 8-4 run to bring the game to 25-19, and while they lost set one, Apopka was now fully engaged and ready to win the next three.

Apopka, from the whistle, absolutely dominated in set two. They got out in front early and never let up leading 7-4, 14-9, then taking set two 25-9 going on an 11-0 run to finish the set. Set two Apopka and set three Apopka was two totally different beasts.

Now after feeling more comfortable after

such a win, Apopka relaxed their play a little, having a bit more fun, but still focused on winning. Set three was a lot closer than set two as Bishop Moore wouldn't go home easy.

The Darters and the Hornets traded points for most of the first half of the set until Apopka began to separate. Apopka led 8-6, then 10-9, and started to separate at 15-13. Apopka then went on a 5-2 run to cement the lead (20-15) and position themselves for the second win of the match. Apopka took set three 25-18 and did well to close out the game quickly near the end.

Set four was all over the place. The start was like set three with Apopka and Bishop Moore trading points every possession. It wasn't until later on in the set that Bishop Moore's will to win would

be on display for the entire Apopka gym to watch.

They were tied 4-4 at the start of the fourth set with both teams starting to show slight fatigue. Apopka began to separate and took the lead 6-5, but Bishop Moore came back and tied it up 7-7. Then again, Apopka took a good step to separate from the Hornets leading 14-11, but Bishop Moore came crawling back trailing 16-14.

Apopka kept that lead for much of the later part of the game and even looked like they were about to lock away the game early when leading 24-19. But the Hornets wouldn't go down without a fight.

Apopka was already dreaming of the next round and beating Winter Park, and they were a bit lackadaisical with ending the game. This gave Bishop Moore their window. The

Hornets take a point, another, then another, and all of a sudden, Apopka is leading just 24-22. What was just a guaranteed win might have an extra set involved if Apopka didn't seal up the win.

Luckily, Apopka turned their game right back on and finished the game ending set four 25-23. It was a great team performance all around, but Apopka's Lowry, Devon Bolling, Logan Rogers, Julian Gonzalez, and Morgan Edwards led the team to victory.

Lowry is still one of the best players in the nation, ranked fifth in hitting percentage and 12th in serving aces. Lowry's hitting percentage is 0.512, which means more than half of the time he hits the ball it results in a point. In the game, Lowry had 18 kills in four sets with just five attacking errors and

had one block.

Bolling had a great game as well and is ranked 13th in the state in hitting percentage (0.474). Bolling had 10 kills in four sets and just two attacking errors, he had one ace and three serving errors, one solo block, three digs, and received 12 serves with just two errors.

Rogers, the team's playmaker, had a great game at the net with seven kills and just one attacking error. He collected two aces and four serving errors, three solo blocks, and 36 of the team's 37 assists with just two ball-handling errors on 73 attempts.

Gonzalez is the team's libero or "defensive specialist" and did his job keeping Apopka in the game. Gonzalez had one ace and no serving errors on 18 serves, 20 of the teams 27 digs with no errors, one assist, and re-

ceived 24 serves with just one reception error.

Edwards has had a great season so far and has been doing his job to collect points and blocks when he can to keep opponents on their heels. In the game, Edwards had six kills and no errors on 12 attacking attempts as well as four solo blocks.

Apopka faced off against Winter Park on Friday after press time, and if they won will be moving on to the FHSAA Regional Final against the winner of the Timber Creek High School and Freedom High School matchup. Timber Creek is as of Wednesday, May 8, 23-5 on the season and ranked fourth in Florida according to FHSAA and Freedom is 23-5 as well and ranked 10th in Florida.



On top Apopka's Morgan Edwards blocks an attack from a Bishop Moore player. On bottom, Apopka's



On top, Apopka's Aidan Lowry angels a kill perfectly between to blockers on Tuesday, May 7. On bottom Apopka's head coach Ramon Reyes talks with his team in a timeout against Bishop Moore. On the left Apopka's Logan Rogers goes up for a serve in the fourth set against the Hornets.



Baseball: Reynante lights a fire in the fifth inning that Patriots put out

Continued from page 1B

they had hoped but still grabbed a run in the first inning. After Apopka's time at the plate was cut short, the Patriots did well to make good use of their time with the bats. Alejandro Posluszny started on the mound for Apopka and had a less-than-fantastic start to the game. After Lake Brantley loaded the bases their first run came from their batter drawing a walk to force a run home. But it was Apopka's fielding that led to the rest of the runs in the first.

Apopka was able to stop the bleeding quickly allowing four runs in the fourth trailing 4-1 going to the plate in the second.

Apopka just wasn't getting their luck anywhere. Not at the plate, not at the bases, and definitely not with the blue shirts. The Apopka side of the stands was getting very audible early on about their disagreements with the umpires' calls.

Apopka went scoreless in the second and then pulled Posluszny off the mound 2/3 of the way through the inning. He was replaced by Tyler Spaid who did great to end the inning quickly and keep Lake Brantley scoreless in the second.

The game went quiet for a few innings except for the Patriots scoring a run in the third, but in the fifth Apopka was able to bring the game back within reach. With two on base, Braylon Reynante had taken the plate. With a huge clutch hit Reynante sent a ball that just kept going past the left-field wall. The three-run homer sent the stands into a frenzy as well as the dugout as the Darters engulfed Reynante in a dogpile of cheers and half-empty water bottles.

Now trailing just 5-4 Apopka was ready to make a comeback. Unfortunately, Lake Brantley didn't let up and answered Apopka's three runs with two of their own to give them some insurance. At the bottom of the fifth Apopka was now trailing 7-4.

The game was never over, and Apopka never gave up, but it did seem Apopka was in one of those situations where they would have to win by five to win by one. What I mean is that the universe did not want Apopka to win. Now you can blame the universe, luck, bad calls, or whatever you want but sometimes, in some games, the dice just aren't rolling the way you want them to. In those games, you gotta win by an overwhelming amount just to scrape by.

Apopka and Lake Brantley went scoreless the rest of

the game, but Apopka came very close to scoring another run a few times. The Darters ended the game with a team batting average of 0.286 and a team on-base percentage of 0.333. The Patriots ended the game with a team batting average of 0.333 and a team on-base percentage of 0.394.

Apopka collected one double (McKinley), one home-run (Reynante), and four RBIs (Reynante). Lake Brantley collected two doubles and five RBIs. Apopka drew two walks to Lake Brantley's four and had six batters strike out compared to Lake Brantley's seven. Apopka's fielders recorded just one error for a 0.947 fielding percentage compared to Lake Brantley's 1.000.

Apopka had three pitchers go in Posluszny, Spaid, and Reynante. Posluszny threw for 1 and 1/3 innings and allowed three hits, four runs (two earned), walked three batters, and struck out two batters collecting an 8.4 ERA. Spaid threw for one inning and allowed zero hits, zero runs, and walked zero batters while striking out two batters collecting a 0 ERA. Reynante ended the game for Apopka and threw for 3 and 1/3 innings allowing six hits, three runs (three earned), walked one batter, and struck out two collecting an ERA of 6.3.



Apopka's Bryson Nichols collects a clutch at bat for Apopka in the seventh inning resulting in a base hit.



On Thursday, May 2, Apopka's Braylon Reynante forces the Patriots to earn hits at the plate.



On the top, Apopka's Alejandro Posluszny winds up for a pitch in the first inning. On bottom, Braylon Reynante looks for a strikeout in the sixth inning.

Blue Darters spring football practice starting to heat up



Apoeka's Tyson Davison warms up at a spring football practice in full pads on Monday, May 6.



A few Apoeka players put everything they have into moving the sled on a hot day right before being let go to a water break.



Apoeka's coach Jett Davison and a few team captains led the Blue Darters in stretches so as to prevent injury because the Darters trouble with injuries last year.

Apoeka baseball falls to Lake Brantley in District Championship



On the left, Zachery Barrieau draws a walk in the later innings on Thursday, May 2. To the right is a picture of Cody McKinley securing an out above a picture taken a moment later as he throws the ball to third base looking for the double play.

Apoeka's Braylon Reynante crosses home plate and is met by the entire Apoeka dugout after a three-run homer in the fifth inning of the District Championship.

Wekiva spring football practice is in full effect

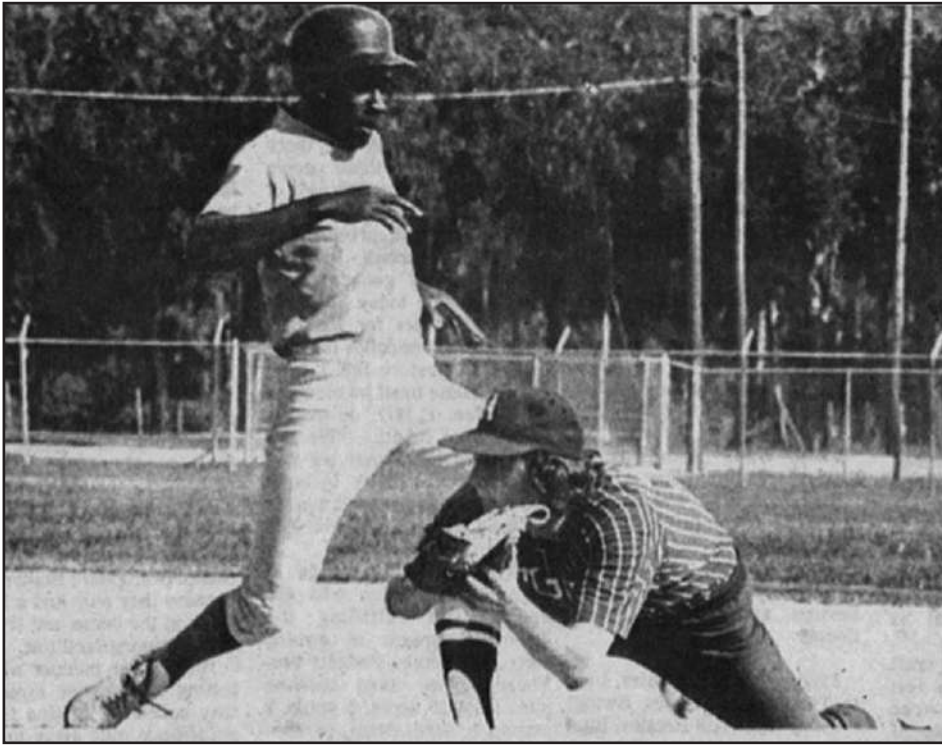


A Wekiva quarterback hands off the ball to a back as he looks for a way out of the pocket with an opposing defender right in front of him.



A Wekiva quarterback scrambles out of the pocket as it collapses.

Elite 8: Dunn was integral to the culture for Apopka



Roger Williams gets Crystal River's Warren Brooks out in 1975. (photo courtesy of the Leesberg Commercial Daily Newspaper)

Continued from page 2B

One of the strengths of the team was the starting infield of 1B Roger Williams, 2B Donnie Kirkland, SS Scott Pitman, and 3B Kevin Halker. According to lifelong Blue Darter Baseball observer (and former AMHS athlete) Tommy Merson, "Williams, Kirkland, Pitman and Halker; one of the finest infields in Apopka Baseball History."

Williams, Kirkland and Halker were all three-year Senior starters, starting together as sophomores. The backstory of the 1975 team goes back years to the founding of the Apopka Little League in 1968. Many of Apopka's community leaders in those years were instrumental in founding Apopka Little League, for the purpose of developing a top-notch high school program.

The 1975 team had

a large core group of players who started playing baseball in those early years of Apopka Little League. The infield of Williams, Kirkland, Pitman and Halker; both starting pitchers, Jimmy Ferrier and Halker; and numerous starters and reserve players were all products of the early years of Apopka Little League.

Principal Roger A. Williams specifically hired Coach Pete Dunn to rebuild Apopka Baseball and return Blue Darter Baseball to excellence, and so this crop of early Little Leaguers could fulfill their potential as a team.

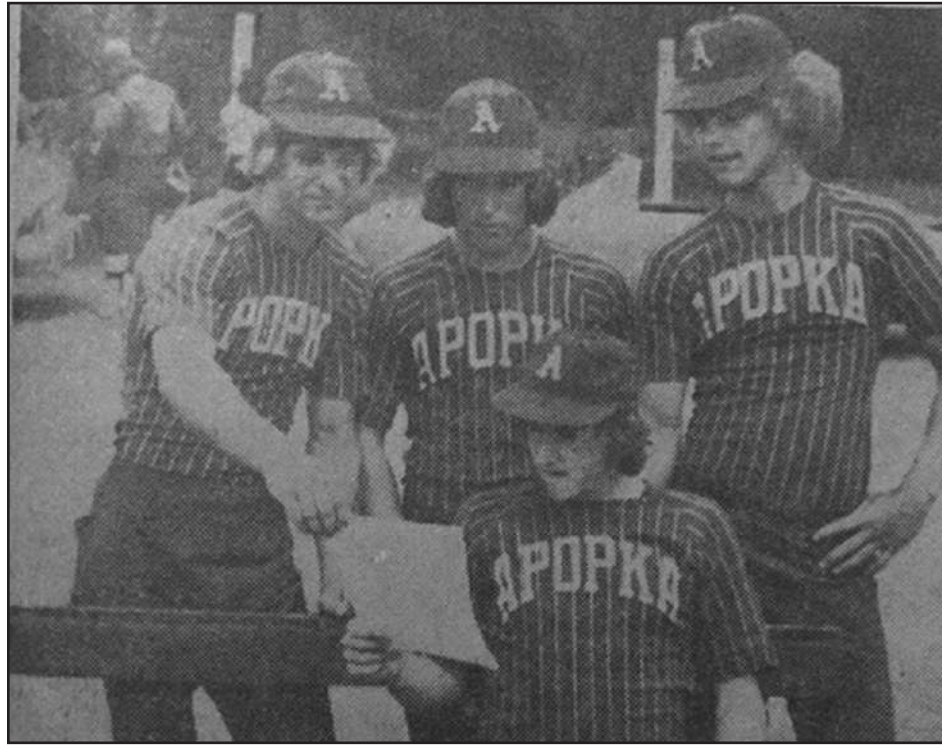
Note: Donny Kirkland is the Father of Derek Kirkland, current Apopka assistant coach and patriarch of the 3-generation Kirkland Baseball Family. Scott Pitman's grandfather is Bob "Pit" Pitman, former Head Baseball Coach at the University of Florida

and member of the Florida Sports Hall of Fame. Roger Williams is the son of Roger A. Williams, longtime Apopka High Principal and inaugural member of the FHSAA Hall of Fame.

Dunn Establishes a Standard of Excellence AND Builds J Barnes Field

The role of Pete Dunn in the history of Apopka Blue Darter Baseball is impossible to overestimate. The catalyst that actually led to the hiring of Pete Dunn as Apopka Baseball Coach was the 5-15 season of 1974, which was totally unacceptable to Principal Roger A. Williams.

Principal Williams embarked upon a mission to find a coach who would return Blue Darter Baseball to the excellence of the past. Even though Dunn was young, he had already established an outstanding resume in baseball—outstanding



Apopka's Roger Williams (front), (ltr) Scott Pittman, Donny Kirkland, and Kevin Halker stand together before a game. (photo provided by Roger Williams)

hard-hitting Catcher at Stetson (Dunn's teammate and roommate at Stetson was Larry Jones, father of MLB Hall of Famer Chipper Jones, and Dunn is Chipper Jones' Godfather), drafted by the KC Royals and played in their minor league system and most recently Grad Assistant at Georgia Southern who had just played in the College World Series.

According to Senior All-Conference First Baseman, Roger F. Williams, Dunn's impact was dramatic and immediate, "Coach Dunn immediately brought much needed structure, discipline, and professionalism to our team. He taught us to play fundamentally sound baseball and he demanded that we set high on-the-field goals and standards of behavior, on and off the field; and especially that we represent Apopka Blue Darter Baseball with

dignity and class at all times. That included on-the-field appearance and demeanor. His knowledge of the game seemed to be limitless. Coach Dunn had that rare ability to demand discipline, accountability, and high standards, but at the same time keep the game fun."

Dunn's 3 seasons at Apopka were impactful in many ways: the 1975 team ended the losing culture and brought home a District Championship and trip the Elite 8; 1976 team also posted a winning record and in 1977, Dunn and his 1977 team literally built Apopka's brand new baseball field, J. Barnes Field.

Dunn raised the money to buy the sod and other materials for the new baseball field. When the funding and materials were acquired, Dunn and his 1977 players, with the creative support

of Principal Roger A. Williams, literally laid the sod and built the backstop for Blue Darter Baseball's brand new baseball field, J. Barnes Field. *

Current Head Coach Bobby Brewer was a member of that 1977 team. And as previously mentioned, Apopka Baseball went from 4 consecutive non-winning seasons, including a 5-15 team immediately before Dunn's arrival to 30-plus years of consecutive winning seasons that began with the arrival of Coach Pete Dunn.

*The information about the building of J. Barnes Field was taken from a March 22, 2019 story by John Peery in the Apopka Chief. Some of the quotes of RFW about Dunn are taken from the same article

WHS: Football has a 13-18 record in past three seasons

Continued from page 1B

equally and continuing from spring practice.

Wekiva also needs to find a permanent starting running back. Both running backs who took the majority of rushes last season are graduating this month. However, with a per carry average of less than three yards, Wekiva rushed only on about 30 percent of the plays.

Furthermore, only two starters and one lineman return on both sides of the ball.

An average of 28.3 points were scored per contest while giving up 25.4. However, 107 of the 283 points or 38 percent were scored during two contests. Wekiva held opponents to less than 13 points during four contests. During four other contests though, at least 30 points were given up by Wekiva.

Between 2014 and 2020, Wekiva compiled a 57-23 record and earned six berths into the FHSAA state playoffs. The record has slumped to 13-18 with only one berth into the FHSAA postseason tournament over the last three seasons. During the previous three seasons, Wekiva entered the finale against Apopka with a 4-5 record and facing the win or go home scenario. A victory was needed to earn a berth into the state playoffs. Wekiva

won only the middle contest though.

A schedule among the 15 most difficult in Class 6A and 50 all classifications over the last three seasons has also been faced by the Mustangs. Gabriel begins his tenure at Wekiva with a high school championship pedigree. The Sunshine State Athletic state championship was claimed by the Master's Academy Eagles last season with Gabriel serving as the assistant head coach and defensive coordinator. En route to the state championship, the Eagles won 10 of 12 contests.

Gabriel lined up in multiple skilled offensive positions over the course of his playing career for Dr. Phillips, UCF and then in the NFL (Oakland, New England).

Only a handful of athletic personal can make the claim of high school state champion and fashioned a solid career in one of the mainstream professional sports leagues as well.

Bishop Moore has not only been successful at the highest level in sports, but as steady as possible over the last two decades. The high point was 2014 and claiming the state championship. However, Bishop Moore has not suffered a losing record over the last 20 seasons. Since 2003, a 178-55 record or an average of 9-3 per season has been posted by Bishop Moore. Nineteen playoff berths

have been earned during the 20 seasons (except in 2007).

Last season ended in the regional semifinal round with a 9-4 record. An average of 35 points were scored per contests against 17.6 given up. However, 98 of the 455 total points or 22 percent were given up during the four losses.

Junior Bjorn Jurgensen was as efficient a quarterback as possible, completing 186 passes out of 277 attempts for a percentage of 67 and 2,466 yards. Perhaps even more impressive and the first requirement of efficiency was 29 touchdowns were thrown against only eight (almost one during every two contests) interceptions. Quarterback rating was 118.

Rushing was deep with equal efficiency as six players carried the ball at least 26 times and gained no worse than an average of 5.1 yards. A total of 2,347 rushing yards were gained between the six players. None of the six players gained more than 632 yards, but at least 250.

Receiving corps was also deep with efficiency as five players gained at least 244 yards but no more than 691. A total of 2,237 receiving yards were gained by the five players.

Mustangs: Only committed seven errors in last seven games

Continued from page 1B

and expectations wasn't handled well by the players, a big reason for committing errors and mistakes.

"The goal was to at least match the 19 wins in 2023," Tatai said. "Setting a tangible goal and in comparison to the last team was a mistake. If the lesson is learned though, we are in a position to play as well as during 2023 with the personal returning. Then a strong freshman class is expected to join the program.

Miguel Acosta, Ivan Tolentino, Luis Perez, Brad Reinert, Zach Reinert, Jake Meyers and Onrique Archie are expected to return for Wekiva.

"This was a season of two halves," Tatai said. "Then the grand finale was just when the past appeared to be behind us."

In fact, Wekiva

averaged 3.6 errors through the first 11 contests and a 3-8 record. Mistakes are not recorded as a statistic. However, Tatai repeatedly listed multiple mistakes after each contest.

Between the start of the 17th and end of the 24th contests chronologically, the Mustangs committed a total of only seven errors or .875 per contest.

Despite committing five errors, the regular season ended with a victory over the Davenport Broncos by a score of 6-3.

"Errors are a statistic and recorded in the scorebook," Tatai reiterated. "Mistakes don't get scored but are just as costly. I know errors and mistakes were talked about all season. However, constantly committing errors and mistakes is the story of the 2024 season. The season can't be talked about without

the impact of committing errors and mistakes first. We put together that run during April and felt better about the season. We gave ourselves an opportunity to move in the right direction during the postseason. Then just as quickly, we inexplicably committed multiple errors and mistakes again when even the slightest usually ends the season.

Another three errors were committed while facing the South Lake Eagles during the first round of the District 6A-7 championship tournament. South Lake dispatched Wekiva by means of scoring one, three, three, two and one run during each inning, respectively.

"At the least from our perspective, the score of the contest during the first round should have been close and competitive," Tatai said. "South Lake's

record was 12-13, two games under ours. The teams were evenly matched according to the records.

"We swung at a couple of pitches outside the strike zone and went one, two, three during the first inning. Then a couple of soft liners landing just outside the reach of the middle infielders were bobbled. Solid pitching turned into multiple extra bases and a deficit right away. Our one lead-off hitter reaching base, then looked away from the pitcher and was picked-off. Several fly balls went over the outfielders because the first step taken was forward instead of backwards. The handful of batters who reached base didn't advance because of the failure to lay a bunt down. All are basic components of the game and worked on during every practice by every team. If unable to execute

the basic components first, the talent is moot."

Victories were earned over the Lake Mary Prep Griffins, Evans Trojans, Tohopekaliga Tigers, Four Corners Coyotes, Lake Mary Prep Griffins, Dr. Phillips Panthers, Oak Ridge Pioneers, Edgewater Eagles, Colonial Grenadiers, Evans Trojans, Freedom Patriots, Umatilla Bulldogs, Ocoee Knights and Davenport Broncos.

A record of 5-1 was posted during the Metro Conference Championship Tournament. Victories during the tournament were earned over Dr. Phillips, Oak Ridge, Edgewater, Colonial, Evans and Freedom.

Wekiva batted a better than average .288 as a team. Leading the team with a .443 batting average was Damir Simon. The next highest batting averages were .381 by Jonathon Mills

and .380 by Miguel Acosta. With 23, RBI leader was Marcus Campbell. Simon also knocked in 19 runs to place second on the team. Acosta's four home runs led the team and 37 stolen bases set the school record for a single season.

Ace of the pitching staff was also lived up to by Acosta with an ERA of 2.33 and 60-35 strikeout to walk ratio. Onrique Archie led the staff with a 1.88 ERA and 4-2 record. En route to a 4-2 record as well, Jake Meyers gave up one hit during back-to-back starts. At 3.78, the team's ERA was far from spectacular but good enough to consistently provide the opportunity to win.

We learned the rules for tennis and...

...practiced every day so we could play.

Kids: color stuff in!

www.readingclubfun.com

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Newspaper Fun!

I love the season of spring with its warmer temperatures, flowers and green, green grass. People go...

...outside and work in their yards, hike in the parks, walk pets, and bicycle and run on the roads and trails again.

Which spring sports and activities do you like to do? You can join a team to play baseball or softball. Fishing, skateboarding and kite flying are all fun to do with family or friends.

There's something for everyone – so spring up and get going!

Spring Up and Out!

Spring Sports & Activities

Read the clues to fill in the crossword puzzle.

This sport is played with (or done using):

1. nets on the end of long sticks, special face masks and a ball
2. ropes and harnesses to keep you from falling
3. bats, leather gloves and balls on a diamond
4. a large pool of water with a ball and 2 goals
5. long clubs, balls, large grass area that has sand and water traps
6. a ball that the player can only touch with his or her feet and kicks into a large netted goal
7. megaphone, pom-poms; this sport really gets the crowd going
8. fast inline skating, people like to do jumps and tricks
9. balls (larger than baseballs), bats and leather gloves on a diamond
10. a good pair of running shoes, hurdles, whistles
11. a large net and a racquet; the ball bounces very easily
12. rods and lures; relaxing sport; some people do it in winter on lake ice

Chatter and I are trying sports that we haven't played before. She found 8 that she likes playing disc golf in the park. I love the fast pace of ultimate frisbee!

Check your local parks and recreation department to see what is offered for outdoor fun!

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You may remember seeing me on the street with my sign. Ever wonder what I was about? "When Jesus is your Savior, I will see you in Heaven." I leave you with these words: "Be encouraged." 1 Thesalonians 5:11

E 0419-0510 DAV 01

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E 0419-0510 RUB 10

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0503-0524 OFC 20

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JT 0503-0524 TFN COM 21

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CC 0419-0510 TAY 32

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CC 0319-0510 APO 32

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CC 00419-0510 CHI 32

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CC 0510-0531 EDW 32

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0503-0524 OFC 53

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PRIDE MOBILITY GO chair. Electric wheelchair with charger and under seat storage. Great condition. \$500 OBO. 352-253-0220.
JT 0405-0503 PEN 70

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4 BURNER 36" Blackstone flat top propane grill \$100 No calls after 5 p.m. 407-668-4157.
CC 0510 PRE 70

81. AUTOS FOR SALE

USED CARS. New cars. Low upfront pricing. No dealer fees. 407-972-1678. Mullinaxfordrll.com
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82. BOAT FOR SALE

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131. VACANT LAND

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PLAN NOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE of the tax cuts planned for school supplies. July 29—August 11, families can save on pens, pencils, computers, clothing, and other school supplies. Clean out the closets now and make room for more. .
CC 0503 OFF 66



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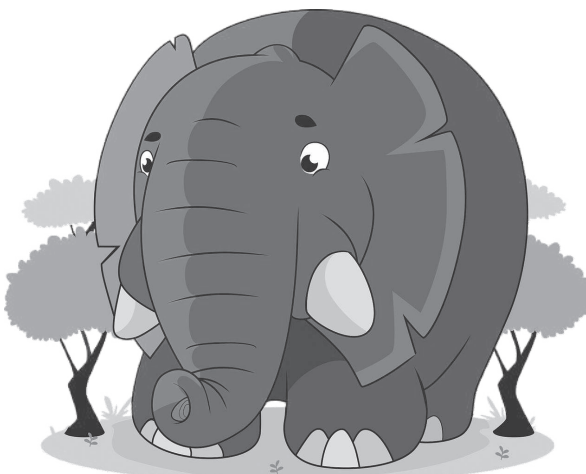
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