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## Marshall to play at Epling Stadium on Wednesday

Three Thundering Herd players will be on West Virginia Miners' roster this summer

**By Gary Fauber**

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BECKLEY — Baseball fans will have a chance to see the present and future at the same time.

Marshall will host Coppin State in a doubleheader Wednesday at Linda K. Epling Stadium in Beckley. First pitch is set for 1 p.m. The second game will begin approximately 30 minutes after completion of the first.

Coach Jeff Waggoner was on hand for the announcement in December that the West Virginia Miners would begin their inaugural season at the stadium this summer. The Miners will compete in the Prospect League, a collegiate wooden bat league.

"I got to see the stadium after they got the turf down and they were starting to build all of the amenities," said Waggoner, a high school teammate of Miners pitching coach Jeff Wallace. "It looked absolutely beautiful. I am looking forward to playing there and I know the players want to play there."

Three of Waggoner's players will play for the Miners. They are third baseman Victor Ramos and pitchers Kyle Blank and Kevin Shackelford. Ramos is ineligible this spring but projects as a very promising player.

"The kids are excited to play there, especially the kids who will be there representing Marshall University on that field this summer," Waggoner said. "We really appreciate the Epling family giving us the opportunity to play on the field."

The Thundering Herd (15-20, 6-6 Conference USA) are in a three-way tie for fourth in the league standings. They defeated Southern Miss 6-3 Sunday to take two of three in the series.

Marshall had lost three straight before winning the final two games against the Golden Eagles, who played in the College World Series last June.

"We're playing really well right now," Marshall coach Jeff Waggoner said. "We struggled midweek because of our (lack of) depth. But the guys bounced back and had a really great weekend. They are playing with great confidence."

Waggoner thought pitching depth was going to be one of his team's strengths, but three hurlers have been lost for the season because of injuries. They are Joe Church, a PikeView graduate, Shane Farrell and left-hander Greg Williams. Farrell is the son of Boston Red Sox pitching coach John Farrell and Williams was drafted in 2008 by the Tampa Bay Rays out of prep baseball factory Cincinnati Moeller.

Despite those losses, Waggoner remains confident of his weekend rotation of right-hander Ian Kadish (1-3, 6.55 earned run average), southpaw Mike Mason (2-5, 8.85) and RHP Arik Sikula.

The Herd is led by junior catcher Victor Gomez, the team's leader in batting average (.347), home runs (10), runs batted in (44), doubles (12) and slugging percentage (.639). Outfielder Kurt Lipton is hitting .341 with eight homers and 27 RBIs.

Closer Austin Coan picked up his sixth save in Sunday's win over Southern Miss.

Coppin State, a member of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, has turned around its program this season. The Eagles are still under .500 at 11-20 under second-year coach Mike Scolinos, but their 10-3 win over Virginia State on March 9 snapped a 45-game losing streak. They were 0-29 last season.

Admission for Wednesday's doubleheader is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. Gates open at noon.

The first 36 fans will receive a baseball autographed by Gomez.

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