

LMC baseball eyes regional berth

By **BEN SANDERS**
HP Sports Writer

The Lake Michigan College baseball team had a challenging start to its season, but the Red Hawks are hopeful it will pay off with a postseason berth.

"I really feel we're going to make regionals and we're going to make a strong run at regionals," LMC coach Scott Ponegalek said.

LMC started its season with 10 games against tough competition in Georgia. Though they lost all 10, Ponegalek was happy with the team's progress.

"I would say its one of the top three times going south, even though we didn't win," Ponegalek said. "We improved the most, played the best, got the most out of the trip I would say. Especially since I have a lot of freshmen."

The Red Hawks got their first win Friday, beating Vincennes 12-10.

Travis Keys, a left-handed freshman pitcher from Canada, will lead a young pitching staff.

"Six of our nine pitchers are freshmen," Ponegalek said. "That's going to be a big key, how our freshmen develop."

Sophomore Derek Gribler, a Lawrence graduate, will play third base and also serve as the team's closer.

Other key position players include sophomore first baseman and cleanup hitter Chad Paddock, freshman shortstop Damion Pompey, and freshman center fielder and leadoff hitter Noah Snyder.

Splitting catching duties will be sophomores Charles Frodl and Troy Lofgren.

"We have two really, really good catchers," Ponegalek said.

The Michigan Community College Athletic Association has split into two divisions this year. Seven teams will compete in the West Division, including LMC, while eight are in the East. Six MCAA teams will still qualify for regionals, but this year they will be the top three in each division.

Ponegalek expects Grand Rapids and Kellogg to be the top teams in the West.

"I think the West is a very challenging side compared to the East," he said.

Contact: bsanders@TheHP.com, 932-0366, @HPBenSanders