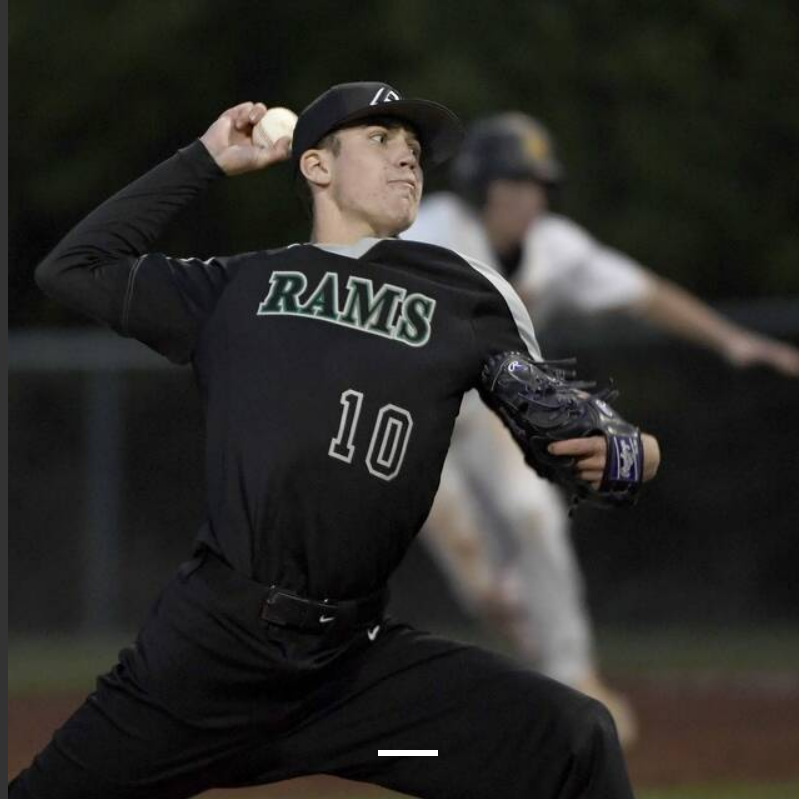


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Pine-Richland pitcher Tristan Farrar delivers against North Allegheny last season.

## After 'magical year,' Pine-Richland baseball embraces ramped-up expectations

By Jerin Steele March 25, 2023



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When [Pine-Richland](#) baseball coach Kurt Wolfe reminisced about the 2022 season and earning a share of the Section 1-6A title, what stood out to him most was how the team did it.

It was a young roster coming together, believing in one another, that surprised many across the WPIAL by scratching out tight victories on its way to splitting the title with [North Allegheny](#).

There's 16 players back from last year's team, but they are still young and will need to develop similar traits to try to make another run at a section championship.



The Rams are a group with varsity experience, but some players are stepping into new roles.

One constant for the team the last few years has been pitcher/outfielder Jacob McGuire.

McGuire, a senior, has been one of the top two pitchers for the Rams since he was a sophomore.

Sam Grana is the only other senior pitcher. Nathan Kush and Tommy Zimmerman are juniors on the pitching staff, along with a whole host of sophomores: Keegan Diehl, Tristan Farrar, Braden Buhl, Sam Heckert, Noah Mackie, Jake Waddell, Sam Heckert and Anthony Mengine.

Of the sophomores, Diehl, Farrar and Buhl have the most varsity pitching experience.

With a new section format featuring three-game series for Class 6A, deep pitching staffs will be necessary. The Rams are in Section 1 with [North Allegheny](#), [Butler](#), [Alderdice](#) and [Seneca Valley](#).

The Rams have a future NCAA division I catcher in senior Joey Perry.

Perry, a Seton Hall commit, will be responsible for working with the young pitchers.

“We’ve challenged not only to be a leader on the field but off it as well and he’s responded well,” Wolfe said. “He had an amazing football season and career. He came to one of our fall workouts during one of his off days (from football) and introduced himself to all the freshmen and sophomores. That’s the type of kid he is.”

[Pine-Richland](#)'s outfield is intact from last year. Mengine will be in left, McGuire in center and Payton Ford in right. Andrew Lamendola will play in center when McGuire pitches.

The infield is a bit different following some graduations. Owen Henne returns at shortstop, but his double play partner from last year, Cole Nelson, is injured to start the year.

Wolfe is hopeful Nelson can start swinging a bat in a couple of weeks. Tanner Cunningham will slot into second base. Grana is at third base and Avery Brown and Waddell are battling for the first base job. Zimmerman will be the primary designated hitter.



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The Rams won their first three games in nonsection play, beating [Norwin](#), [Hempfield](#) and [Plum](#). They've outscored those opponents 22-3.

"What I'm really excited about is our approaches to our at-bats and the way we've completed at the plate," Wolfe said. "We've done a fantastic job with all of that early in the season. If we continue to grow with our approaches, we're going to see a lot of success throughout the season."

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