

Our View

After losing, victory always tastes sweeter

Losing makes winning taste that much sweeter.

Just ask members of the Shaler Area High School baseball team or the Seneca Valley High School softball team.

Shaler overcame an early-season slump — at one point it had lost three of five games within its section — to win the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletics League Class AAA baseball championship. The Titans won the title by beating Ringgold High School, 6-3, on Thursday.

The Seneca Valley softball team lost to Ambridge in a first round playoff game last year and came into this season feeling as though it had something to prove. That loss was avenged in this year's playoffs. The Raiders defeated Trinity, 4-1, Thursday to win the WPIAL Class AAA softball title.

Shaler, which has 20 wins and just four losses, has won four WPIAL baseball championships — no other high school has more. It was the second championship for Seneca Valley's softball team, 22-2 so far this year.

Shaler's season turned around after a short series of one-run losses. The team won five games in a row, including a victory over tough North Allegheny, to win a spot in the playoffs.

Junior shortstop Dan Schwartzbauer said the early losses had benefits. "It helped to have some kind of adversity to work against, a little bit of difficulty to give us a push."

At Seneca Valley, pitcher and team leader Julie Purvis said the team decided early they were going to put personal differences aside and focus on playing together. The result was a looser group that seemed to have as much fun in close games as they had in easy victories. The Raiders won three one-run games during the playoff run to win the title.

Both teams now advance to the state championship playoffs, but no matter when their seasons end, they've accomplished a lot already. Championship seasons create memories that last a lifetime.

And members of both teams have learned that winning teams can't be built without some experience at losing.