

## Iowa preps don't need spring baseball

Written by Jim Ecker

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It's a good thing high school baseball is a summer sport in Iowa.

Can you imagine playing high school ball in the spring? Especially this spring?

Don't be fooled by Thursday's sunny skies and 50-degree temperatures. Starting Saturday, it's headed back into the 30s with precipitation on the way early next week.

Aside from the chilly conditions, the baseball fields are not ready for the season. There's too much frost in the ground, for one thing, and the grass is still dormant.

Coe College was supposed to host Simpson in Iowa Conference doubleheaders Friday and Saturday at Daniels Park in Cedar Rapids, but that's not going to happen. They might play one of those twinbills at Simpson, but not here.

Cedar Rapids Jefferson High School was supposed to host a girls track meet Saturday, but that's fallen by the wayside as well.

Pity our neighbors who will try to play high school baseball this spring. Illinois was supposed to begin its season March 17, and maybe they did in some of the southern parts of the state. Nebraska was scheduled to start today, Minnesota begins March 27 and Wisconsin starts April 1.

Good luck with all that. And remember to wear your parkas and boots.

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Iowa is the only state in the country that plays high school baseball in the summertime, and thank goodness for that. Practice begins May 5, and the first games are scheduled for May 26, which makes perfect sense.

Three cheers to the Iowa High School Athletic Association for consistently resisting calls by some people to switch to spring ball. They could certainly start the games May 1, but there's no reason to begin playing April 1.

Some people think high school baseball players in Iowa face a disadvantage by playing summer baseball, in terms of college scholarships and the pro draft. Maybe a few do. But the vast percentage of high school players are never going to play in college, let alone get drafted.

There are plenty of preseason "spring" leagues in Iowa for anyone who wants to get an early start, and Perfect Game USA — located right here in Cedar Rapids — provides an excellent opportunity for top players to get the exposure they need for college and pro scouts.

Baseball is meant to be played in warm weather, not the 30s and 40s that put a stress on young arms and bodies. It's also meant to be watched in warm weather, not bundled up in blankets and sleeping bags.

Coe, Kirkwood, Mount Mercy and Cornell will begin their spring campaigns around here soon enough, but chances are the weather will be miserable for much of the season. The Kernels are scheduled to open the season in two weeks on April 3 at Veterans Memorial Stadium, and chances are it might be a little chilly for that as well.

Let's leave the Iowa high school baseball season right where it belongs. We'll see you in May when it's time to play ball.