

Hoopla

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the composure to pull a few more games out this season.

"Last year was just a case of lack of experience. We made mistakes that inexperienced teams normally make," Nietopski said. "We'll play more aggressively this year."

The Cardinal coach is realistic about his team's chances this year.

"We want to be a little more competitive than last year," said Nietopski, who, like most City-Catholic coaches, said the Orientals of East have the potential to be the best in the state. "I much prefer getting them (his players) as much into the game plan as possible. They're a fun group to work with. One of our goals is to be the hardest-working team in Section 5."

Prediction: The Cardinals will live and die with their guards this season. Cusick, Mojsej and Khuns have to establish themselves as leaders early in the season. Mooney also need big games from its juniors.

NEW COACH MIKE DIANETTI should have no problems dealing with getting this year's Aquinas players to accept him because they, like the coach, are almost all new themselves.

"I kind of enjoy it. It's a new set of kids, who really haven't been given the chance," said Dianetti, who is about to embark on his first season ever as head coach of a varsity team anywhere. "And that's understandable because last year's team was so experienced. This year has been a case where everything is open; last year is history. I've got a new group of kids, and hopefully we'll be able to attain the suc-

cess we had last year."

Although Dianetti lacks experience this year, one thing his Little Irish aren't short on is size. At 6'9" and 220 pounds, Sean Schiano will be Dianetti's big man in the middle, with Mike Whitfield and Jim Li Vecchi needing good years at guard and forward, respectively. Whitfield is a 6'11", 180-lb. junior, while Schiano and Li Vecchi are both seniors, Brian Mackey, a 6'5", 210-lb. center, also provides bulk for the Little Irish.

Senior guard Jon Luconte, who averaged 12 points per game on the JV, as well as Jermaine McGowan, Mike Compisi and Paul Mayer, will also need to make their presence felt.

Dianetti said the main difference between his coaching philosophy and that of Ruff will be on defense.

"Mike played with a more zone-oriented defense; we'll be more man-to-man," Dianetti said. "There is always the possibility that we'll play zone or play a little more conservatively against some teams."

He may have to because Aquinas just doesn't have the talent it has had in years past, and Dianetti knows it.

"We don't have the athletes we had last year, but we're going to play our style regardless. We'll be an upbeat team; we'll push the ball up the floor. You won't see us come out and try to take the air out of the ball!"

Prediction: It may take awhile for Dianetti's coaching philosophies to catch on. The new coach has size in his favor, but that may be academic when his team goes up against a run-and-gun offense like many of the city teams employ. It will be a rebuilding year for Little Irish basketball.

OVER IN CLASS C, a number of the "cardiac kids" from last year's DeSales team

return for Coach Tony Alvaro this season. Alvaro lost a lot in the graduation of Mike Donahue, Mike Bucklan and Joe Giorgianni from last year's team, which was the Class C runner-up to Harley-Allendale Columbia. Those losses notwithstanding, he still has a contender.

Last year's leading scorer, Sam DeMetro (21 ppg) is back as a roving guard for the Saints, as is point guard Brent Holdridge. Holdridge is a more-than-capable ball handler who always seems to play over his head in the big games.

Alvaro will also look to Kevin Powers, Pedro Rojas, Phil Sindoni, Peter Parshall, Steve Vatter and Mark Polzinetti to pick up the slack for the loss of Donahue and the rest.

Sophomore Ron Cecere and junior Sean Sturgeon should also contribute for Alvaro, who is beginning his third year at the school in Geneva, after 27 years at Romulus High School.

"We're going to be a pressing team and fast break when we can," said Alvaro, who added that his team is the epitome of a regional high school with three players from Geneva, two from Newark, two from Waterloo, two from Seneca Falls and one from Phelps. "If we can't get the fast break, we'll set up inside."

Alvaro said his shooting is better than that of last year's team, which defeated Scio, Fillmore and Arkport by a total of nine points to reach the final against the Braves.

DeSales has a tough road in the Finger Lakes

West Division, with games against such traditionally strong hoop programs as South Seneca, Honeoye, Dundee, Naples and Red Jacket.

"We don't have the size or experience of playing together because they (his players) have come from so many different areas. Some (players) I didn't even know until they showed up in school.

"We're going to show a lot of different types of man-to-man defenses," Alvaro said, "We just hope we can make them (opposing teams) make a lot of mistakes.

"We'll be an opportunistic team; that's what I'm looking for."

Prediction: Like Bishop Kearney's situation, DeSales' season rests on how quickly it can mold as one unit. Somehow the Saints always play over their heads when it counts. If Alvaro can keep the team together early, look for DeSales to wreak havoc on the opposition in the sectionals.

IN SECTION 4 Class C, Notre Dame will be looking to pick up from last year's heartbreaking loss to Odessa-Montour.

Coach Mike Johnston begins his 12th year as head coach of the Crusaders, who, like DeSales, frustrate their bigger opponents with opportunistic and scrappy play.

Johnston lost Tom Gough, Kevin Vecellio, Dan Gizzi, and his son Mike to graduation, but he's got more than enough to do some damage this year.

Senior Dave Ferris and Sean Vecellio should

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Courier-Crossword

Our monthly crossword puzzle! Give it a try and see how well you do. Answers will be printed in our next issue. Good Luck!

CHRISTMAS

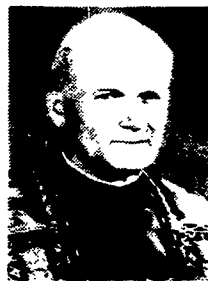
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ACROSS

- Mr. Eliot
- Primary letters.
- Kind of focal or plane
- Expression of relief.
- "Adeste Fideles" and others.
- Town of David.
- What a 3 3/4 is
- And so forth
- You and me.
- Common exclamations.
- VP from Minn.
- Direction of Binghamton from here.
- Irishmen.
- Tease.
- Mother's Doctor.
- Noisy interruptions on TV.
- Ecstasy's companion.
- Caring's companion.

DOWN

- What Jesus turned over in the Temple.
- Nativity visitors.
- Follows tooth or back.
- One of the Magi.
- Where Christ was born.
- Cordon
- Creeeds.
- Exclamation of surprise.
- Mr. Mencken.
- Russian General who defeated Nazis (initials).
- "The First Noel" is one.
- A kind of Wednesday.
- "Above the deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go
- Dogface of WWII.
- "Peace _____ earth".



CHRISTMAS YOU'RE IN BETHLEHEM

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE EASTERN CHURCHES

OUR GIFT TO YOU This Christmas you'll be remembered in the Midnight Mass in Bethlehem. The celebrant, Archbishop James J. Beltritti, will offer the Mass for the members and benefactors of this association. How better can we say thank you?

In 18 mission countries (where Catholics, though few, are mostly of the Eastern Rites) the Holy Father helps millions because you read this column and respond with love. Blind boys in the Gaza Strip (not one of them Christian) are learning life-giving skills at the Pontifical Mission Center for the Blind. Victims of leprosy are cared for by native priests and sisters in India. The poor are fed, in body and soul, in Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Ethiopia. The Good News of the Gospel is shared, thanks to you. This season especially, won't you remember the missions in your prayers? Our priests and sisters depend on you. They ask the Christ Child to bless you always.

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36 RJ

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