

C-J Sports

Nazareth, Mooney on collision course for softball crown

By Richard A. Kiley

Joette Abbey's Lady Cardinals may once again have the horsepower to take the Private-Parochial League this season, but that doesn't mean they won't get a run for their money from Nazareth Academy.

Dave Pisano's club is off to a 6-2 start (1-1 in league play), and is gaining confidence each inning. Recent wins against Mercy, as well as Jefferson and Martin Luther King of New York City, have Pisano wondering what his club is capable of this spring.

"I thought we'd be O.K., but the league we play in is so strong," said Pisano, whose girls went 14-5 last year before succumbing to Rush-Henrietta in the quarterfinals of the sectionals.

Pisano has quietly done a masterful job of coaching at the all-girls school on Lake Avenue. The softball program has not had a losing season in six years, which is a testament to its coach, who doesn't exactly get a new crop of seasoned softball players each season.

"I have all city kids; some have never even picked up a glove before," Pisano said.

Opponents of Nazareth this spring are wishing they never had since. "We're playing almost error-free ball," said a beaming Pisano.

Against Mercy last Wednesday, April 29, Pisano's club played flawlessly on defense and nipped the Monarchs, 2-1.

Amy Budd, a three-year all-star for Nazareth, scored teammate Samantha Schramm from third base with an infield hit in the bottom of the seventh inning, giving Nazareth the one-run win at home over Mercy.

Budd was one of the main reasons the game was still tied at that point. In Mercy's half of the third inning, the Nazareth shortstop ended a Monarch rally by throwing out Jackie Bryan as she tried to score.

The game was played well defensively on



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

After forcing Mercy's Beth Hebert out at second base, Jackie Sojka completes the double play with her throw back to first.

both sides, considering the November-like weather conditions.

Nancy Bush went the distance for Pisano, and Mollie Board did the same for Mercy Coach Paul Walker. The only hit off Board was Budd's infield single in the seventh.

For the Monarchs, who are usually never short on runs, it was a case of not getting the key hit when it was needed.

"We hit the ball pretty well. Unfortunately, it was usually right at someone," said Walker, whose team is also 1-1 in the Private-Parochial League.

Pisano admitted freely that the gusting wind was an ally of Nazareth, which doesn't have the offensive power of a team like the Monarchs.

In other Private-Parochial League action, Mooney is undefeated in the league with two recent wins against Nazareth and Bishop Kearney.

The Lady Cardinals beat Nazareth 6-2, breaking open a 3-2 game in the top of the sixth inning with three runs. Abbey's girls drubbed Kearney, 20-4.

In other softball action from last weekend, Nazareth won the championship game of the Tenth Ward Tournament with a 6-5 victory

over Jefferson. Nazareth and Jefferson hosted the tournament for the fifth consecutive year.

Pisano's club beat Martin Luther of New York City, 12-6, to reach the tourney final.

Jefferson defeated Greece Athena, 6-2, in the other first-round game. Jackie Sojka scored what ended up to be the winning run in the top of the sixth inning, on a misplayed ball in the outfield.

Jefferson had led at one point in the game, 5-2, before Nazareth rallied for one run in the fourth inning and two more in the fifth.

According to Pisano, Jefferson had the bases loaded with no outs in the bottom of the seventh inning, but was unable to score.

Nazareth catcher Paula Short was named the tourney's MVP.

Sport Shorts

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Tim Jordan, head baseball coach and athletic director at McQuaid Jesuit High School, will conduct his baseball camp at McQuaid for boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 13.

The first session will run from July 13-17, followed by the second session from July 20-24. Hours will be 9 a.m. to noon.

The camp will offer the opportunity for boys and girls to improve their overall baseball skills, including instructional sessions on hitting, throwing, fielding, pitching and running. Intra-squad games will also be played.

The camp fee is \$55 per person for the

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The camp will emphasize individual development and fundamental skills. The cost of the two-week session is \$90, with group discounts available. Camp T-shirts, daily refreshments and an awards ceremony will be included.

Contact Brother Oxx at (716)342-4000 or Ruff at 442-8523 for a brochure or information.

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