

Sports

Diocesan hoop teams have tough act to follow

By Richard A. Kiley

The 1986-87 basketball season will be tough to top for several diocesan boys' high school teams. McQuaid advanced to the state Class A playoffs last season, and Elmira Notre Dame did one better by earning a trip to the state Class C semifinal game before losing to Niagara Falls Trott Vocational.

In addition to those two schools, Aquinas and Geneva DeSales also came on strong in the second season before falling in the Section 5 Class AA quarterfinals and the Class C semifinals respectively.

New faces abound this December as high school basketball embarks on its first season ever with the three-point shot rule.

WITH THE SECTION 5 Class AAA trophy neatly tucked away from last March's madness, McQuaid is already eating up its opponents this season. Impressive wins over Gates-Chili and City-Catholic foe Franklin have second-year coach Joe Marchese and his Knights looking like the favorites to win it all again this time around.

Despite losing two key players from last year's championship team in Glenn Taggart (North Carolina A&T) and Michael Holton (Washington and Lee) — as well as scrappy off-the-bench players like Tom Veltz, Joe Williams and Ted Von Hoene — Marchese has a multitude of talent to defend the crown.

Returning starters from last year's 21-2 team, which fell to Buffalo Nichols in a state Class A playoff game, are Greg Woodard (18 points per game) and Scott Martzloff (11 p.p.g.). Woodard, who announced last month that he'll be playing for the Big East's Villanova Wildcats next year, is an All-American player if there ever was one. The 6-foot-6 senior forward combines more-than-adequate speed with a textbook jumpshot to frustrate Knight opponents, while the 6-foot-11 Martzloff (Holy Cross-bound next year) is the team's steady giant at center.

What makes McQuaid even more intimidating this year is Drew Henderson, a transfer from Harley Allendale Columbia. Henderson has already earned high marks from his new coach.

Seniors John Kelly and Jay Gangemi replace Holton and Taggart at the guard spots. Gangemi has already made his presence felt — and a name for himself — with a 24-point performance against Gates-Chili in the Knights' 63-51 season-opening win.

"He's a very capable player; most of the teams will probably be surprised by what he can do," said Marchese of Gangemi. "He's capable of scoring points and he gives us a balanced attack."

The Knight coach, who watched his team dispose of City-Catholic foe Franklin on Friday, Dec. 4, knows he'll need a complete team effort to repeat as champs.

"It makes it difficult because you have nothing to gain and everything to lose," Marchese said. "If we don't blow teams out, people say we really didn't win by enough. It's not easy... we're working on it."

EVEN THOUGH HE THINKS McQUAID is on a different planet as compared to the rest of the teams in Section 5, Cardinal Mooney coach Ed Nietopski has his team playing confidently and down to earth.

Although he endured some pretty hefty



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

Aquinas, which defeated Charlotte in its home-opener last weekend, didn't always find the Lakesiders polite guests.

losses to graduation, the 25th-year Mooney coach has the guns to make some noise in the City-Catholic as evidenced by a win over East.

Team captain Walt Cusick (10 p.p.g.) is gone as is center Brian Puffer (8 p.p.g.), Pete Leicht and a slew of others from last year's 11-8 team, but seniors Peter Mojsej (11 p.p.g.), Mike Leonardo (8 p.p.g.) and Keith Gaffney (10 p.p.g.) give Mooney experience in the sometimes chaotic play of the City-Catholic League.

Mojsej is a three-year starter and is adept at handling pressure at the point guard spot. The 6-foot-3 Leonardo combines decent size and shooting ability for the Cards, who will depend on 6-foot-5 Gafney to score as well.

Others on the Cardinal roster include 6-foot-9 junior center Mike McGwin (6 p.p.g.), 6-foot-2 senior forward Rob Hrankowski and senior guard Pat McCann. Players up from the JV include Tim Burgmaster, Sean Trapp, Eric Heinsler, Dan Wegman and Al Ford.

Nietopski believes his team's balanced scoring will make up for a lack of speed and height.

"We don't have any dominating scorer, but we're balanced. I think our inside and outside games compliment each other," said Nietopski, whose club fell to Webster in the quarterfinals of the Class AAA last winter.

Unlike most of its rivals in the City-Catholic League, Mooney will look to play more deliberately on offense. "We could be in some trouble if we don't play our tempo," Nietopski said.

SECOND-YEAR AQUINAS COACH Mike Dianetti graduated a lot of height from last year's 11-9 team, but still has some scoring punch returning.

Center Sean Schiano (14 p.p.g., 10 rebounds) will be sorely missed for his gutsy play inside, as will forward Jim Livecchi (9 p.p.g.), Paul Mayer and back-up center Brian Mackey. Dianetti will also be without the multi-talented Mark Chapman and Eric Knapp, two players from last year's Class AA quarterfinal loser to Rush-Henrietta Roth who have chosen to sit out the season.

A lot of the scoring burden rests on the shoulders of Mike Whitfield, a flashy senior who averaged 17 points per game for Aquinas last season.

Gary Moxley, who missed almost his entire junior season with a broken ankle, will also need to assert himself offensively if the Little Irish have any hopes of beating out Wilson and Jefferson for the title in City Catholic's Division II.

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DIOSCEAN LEAGUES

High School League

Northeast Division  
Holy Trinity 69, Pinnacle Lutheran 62  
Lewis Street, St. Ambrose (\*)  
Christ the King, St. Bridget (\*)  
St. Margaret Mary 81, Blessed Sacrament 72

Northwest Division  
Our Lady of Mercy, St. Lawrence (\*)  
Mother of Sorrow, St. John (Greece) (\*)  
Sacred Heart 72, Most Precious Blood 63  
St. Charles Borromeo, Holy Cross (\*)

Southeast Division  
JCC 64, St. John (Humboldt) 60  
St. Joseph (Pen.) 69, Faith Lutheran 53  
Assumption 82, St. Thomas More 73  
St. Louis 55, Resurrection 42  
St. John (Fpt.) 56, Good Shepherd 50

Southwest Division  
St. Pius Tenth, Holy Name (\*)  
Holy Family, St. Monica (\*)  
St. Joseph (Pen.), CYP (Mendon) (\*)  
St. Theodore, St. Annie (\*)

Junior High Boys' League

Northwest Division  
St. Lawrence 69, St. Rita 25  
St. John (Greece), Most Precious Blood (\*)  
Sacred Heart, St. Charles Borromeo (\*)  
St. John (Spem.) (W) 51, Mother of Sorrows 39  
St. Thomas Apostle 63, St. Anthony Padua 12

Southwest Division  
St. Pius Tenth 51, St. Helen 27  
Holy Ghost, St. Monica (\*)  
Good Counsel, St. Theodore (\*)  
Charles House 49, St. John (Spem.) (B) 22  
St. Anne/St. Boniface 77, Holy Rosary 23  
St. John (Humboldt) 64, Seton 55

Northeast Division  
Holy Trinity, Blessed Sacrament #2 (\*)  
Lewis Street, St. Cecilia (\*)  
Christ the King 54, St. Salome 21  
St. Ambrose, St. Margaret Mary (\*)

Southeast Division  
Blessed Sacrament #1 68, St. Louis 55  
Pinnacle Lutheran, Good Shepherd (\*)  
St. Joseph (Pen.), CYP (Mendon) (\*)  
St. John (Fpt.), Oatka (\*)

Junior High Girls' League

East Division  
Blessed Sacrament 46, St. Louis 39  
St. Joseph (Pen.), Good Counsel (\*)

West Division  
St. Rita, Lewis Street (\*)  
Seton 16, Christ the King 4

Mother of Sorrow 44, St. Theodore 4  
St. Charles 21, Sacred Heart/Nazareth Hall 4

West Division  
St. John (Spem.), St. Pius Tenth (\*)  
St. Ambrose, Holy Cross (\*)

5th and 6th Grade Boys' & Girls' League

North Division  
Holy Ghost, St. Thomas the Apostle (\*)  
St. Pius Tenth (B), St. Charles Borromeo (\*)  
St. Lawrence 18, St. Pius Tenth (A) 16  
Holy Cross 42, Mother of Sorrow 24  
St. Helen (W), St. Helen (B) (\*)  
St. Margaret Mary (B) 40, St. John (Spem.) 30

West Division  
Nativity, St. Anne (\*)  
Holy Rosary, St. Theodore (\*)  
Good Counsel, St. John (Greece) (\*)  
St. Margaret Mary (A) 49, Holy Family 40  
St. Anthony of Padua, Most Precious Blood (\*)

South Division  
Bethlehem Lutheran, CYP (\*)  
Good Shepherd 40, Pinnacle Lutheran 27  
St. John (Humboldt) (W), St. Louis (\*)

Central Division  
St. Salome, St. Joseph (\*)  
St. Andrew, St. John (Fpt.) (R) (\*)  
Holy Trinity 42, Lady of Lourdes 39  
Christ the King 39, St. John (Humboldt) (R) 6

(\*) No scores reported