

Sports

Hoop teams

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Mike Compisi (11 p.p.g.) who saw ample playing time as a sophomore last year, will be catapulted into a starting role this season, as will junior Paul Kucewicz. Kucewicz, a 6-foot-2 forward, averaged 12 points per game for the junior varsity last year.

Mike Tuttle, a 6-foot-4 junior forward, and Dwayne Postell, 6-foot-4 junior forward-center, provide Dianetti with additional offensive weapons. Sophomore Matt Hill, juniors Todd Reynders, Stan Nelson, Don Dellavella, Mark Spencer and freshman Aaron Boucher round out the Little Irish squad.

Despite a lack of size and speed as compared to that of some Division 2 opponents, Dianetti will stick to the up-tempo style of play his team used last season.

"We still want to run it up court, trying to get other teams to make mistakes," said Dianetti whose team beat Charlotte, 65-48, December 5. "We're going to come at people for 32 minutes; my philosophy still remains the same."

Dianetti, whose team will be playing its first full season on a new gym floor after almost an entire season of away games last year, has also scheduled two games against powerful Bishop Ludden of Syracuse.

PLAYERS LOST TO GRADUATION and academic problems have Mike Ruff and his Bishop Kearney team in disarray. That's not to say the Kings, who were 8-12 last year and fell in the Class AA tourney to Waterloo, are throwing in the towel.

As if losing forwards Eric Jones and Mark Young wasn't enough, Kearney lost Max Curenton to Franklin and Darryl Harris to Monroe after the two players experienced academic problems. On top of that, Sean Salamida has left the Kings Highway high school for Wayne Central after finding his commute too lengthy. Effron Gause has also left Kearney for East High School.

To make matters worse, Irondequoit transfer Marcel Vernon, the talented forward around whom Ruff hoped to build the Kings, is physically ineligible to play at present because of a nagging knee and ankle injury. Ruff is unsure if Vernon will play at all this season.

"It's an unsettling situation for the kids with everyone expecting the team to run around Marcel," Ruff said. "We've just been decimated by transfers already."

Junior point guard R.D. Long and 6-foot-one junior forward Wendell Spiva — just off an impressive season for Kearney Football — are back, as is Bob Nicolay. The 5-foot-7 guard has been Kearney's top three-point shooter, icing eight for the season already. Pete Wolak a 6-foot-one swing man, has also returned for his senior season.

Ruff will depend heavily upon juniors Steve "Beaver" Smith, Rich Davison and Bernie Quinn after the purge of lost players.

"We're trying to regroup. We can get back on track," Ruff said. "We have got some kids that can really shoot (the three-pointer), so we hope we can upset a few teams along the way."

OPTIMISM IS RUNNING HIGH at Elmira Notre Dame even though Mike Johnston's Crusaders were hit hard by graduation.

Johnston begins his 13th year trying to regain the momentum that carried his Crusaders into the New York State Public High Schools Athletic Association semifinal game against eventual Class C state champ Niagara Falls Trott vocational last year. ND feel to the Engineers, 66-51.

This season, the Crusaders are off to a 4-1 start despite losing four of five starters to graduation. Dave Ferris (18 p.p.g.) has since gone onto Hamilton College.

Also gone are forward Sean Vecellio (10 p.p.g.), point guard J.P. Bernatavitz (6 p.p.g.), and guard Pat Lynch (6 p.p.g.).

But the return of senior Christian Falkenberg (10 p.p.g.), senior guard Scott Long (6 p.p.g.), and senior John Philipps (6 p.p.g.) give

Johnston a good nucleus with which to work. Senior Mark Philipps has also returned after leaving ND for Elmira Free Academy for a year, and senior Sean Murray will take over at the point guard spot.

Already this season, Johnston is seeing more balance from his team offensively. "We tried to do a lot of things around Dave (Ferris)," Johnston said.

Falkenberg, Long, Mark Philipps and John Philipps all reached double figures as ND took the Edison Tip-Off Tournament with wins over Corning East in the opener and Seton Catholic of Binghamton in the championship game.

And in the Windsor Tip-Off Tournament last weekend, seven of Johnston's players reached double figures in two games. Three players — Long, Falkenberg and John Philipps — were named to the All-Tournament team.

Mike Agan, Geoff Woodworth, Mike Bernatavitz, Bill Updyke and Rowan Neal give Johnston the depth he'll need to compete against the tough Sullivan Trail Conference competition.

"The league is going to be ridiculously tough this year," said Johnston, whose club finished runner-up among teams such as EFA, Southside, Horseheads and Hornell as well as Corning East and West last season. "They seem to know they've got to increase the intensity."

Once again this season, the Crusaders will throw multiple defenses at their opponents, hoping to create mistakes. Pressure defense has

always been one of the fortes of Johnston's teams.

"That's a credit to the program and the people understanding their roles," Johnston said.

DeSALES IS OFF AND RUNNING with wins over Penn Yan and Romulus. Even though Tony Alvaro lost roving guard Sam DeMetro (21 p.p.g.) as well as point guard Brent Holdridge, guard Kevin Powers, center-forward Phil Sindoni, Steve Vattar and Mark Polcinetti to graduation, the fourth-year coach is optimistic that his returning players can pick up the slack.

The only returning starter for DeSales, which fell in the Class C semis to Batavia Notre Dame last March, is junior Peter Parshall. Parshall will be used as a swing man in the Saints' offense and will most likely draw tough defensive assignments, according to Alvaro.

Junior Pedro Rojas, a domineering force inside, is also back this year after missing most of his sophomore year with a back injury. The Saints will depend heavily on Rojas, who has been DeSales' leading scorer thus far, for his rebounding prowess as well.

Six-foot-4 freshman Rob McFadden, who came up through the CYO system in Geneva — more specifically St. Francis/St. Stephen — gives the Saints even more size. McFadden has been an imposing presence on the floor already with several blocked shots.

Chris Ike, a transfer player from Waterloo

and a standout on the football Saints this fall, provides Alvaro with good outside shooting potential. Sophomore Jeff Tancy has stepped into the guard spot after junior Aaron Mantegna sustained an injury in pre-season.

Senior forward Sean Sturgeon, junior guard Ron Cecere and Dean Askin provide Alvaro with the depth necessary for the Saints to run and gun as have DeSales' teams of the past.

"We're a running team, but we're very young. I think we're blossoming into a very decent club," said Alvaro, who coached at Romulus for 27 years before coming to DeSales. "We'll make mistakes because we're young."

The graduation of DeMetro, who is now on the freshman team at Nazareth College, means the Saints will have to balance their scoring.

"We're a much more balanced team. I don't know who they would key on all the time," Alvaro said. "I don't like to depend on one scorer anyway . . . the good teams are always more well-rounded. We have that this year."

DeSales will need a complete team effort to try and compete for the Finger Lakes West crown with teams like Naples, South Seneca and Bloomfield among others.

Alvaro believes this year's team may even be better than the one that fell a point short to H-A-C in 1986.

"Potentially this can be a better team than two years ago," he said. "I'm looking for this team to solidify together."

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