

Sports

Girls' hoops

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AFTER BEGINNING THE SEASON with a two-point loss to Penfield and a 60-38 drubbing at the hands of Gates-Chili in the Brighton Tournament November 27-28, new Bishop Kearney coach Donna Sortino appeared to turn her team in the right direction, nipping Dunkirk last weekend, 48-43.

Sortino and assistant coach Chris Graziano, who took over the reins from former coach Joe Kenney, have been stressing the basics early in the season.

Senior point-guard Kelli Curcio and juniors Sally Gillispie, Pam Buddenbeck and Johanna Carlo give Sortino a solid core of players to build around. Curcio and Gillispie combined for 32 points in the Lady Kings' win over Dunkirk.

Monique Mate provides her new coach with some experience off the bench.

Sortino, a former East Rochester and St. Fisher standout, believes her team's swarming defense and improving offense could give Private-Parochial League opponents some problems. Upcoming tournaments in Webster and Livonia will enable the Lady Kings to acquire some sectional-type experience.

ALTHOUGH HE REFERS to this season as a rebuilding one, new Aquinas coach Dan Bates said his Little Irish are looking to win now.

That may be tough to do after losing a gutsy player in Donna Enright and another offensive threat in Tracey Lioi. Bates does have some experienced players returning in Terry Seiler, Kacey Compisi and Marita Vierra. Seiler is Bates' tallest player at 5-foot-9.

The new coach, who also serves as assistant to football coach Chris Battaglia this fall, has used some of his experience on the gridiron to speed up the development of this year's girls' hoop team at AQ.

"We've got to play great defense to win, just like in football, defense (in basketball) develops quicker than offense," Bates said.

A lack of team speed will also force the Little Irish to slow down the tempo of its games — especially against league foes such as Mercy and Cardinal Mooney.

Bates, whose squad is 0-2, opened the season with a dismal showing against Edison before losing to Wilson in double overtime last weekend. He hopes to see his squad gradually improve over the course of the season.

"We're trying to rebuild, but we want to win now," Bates said. "Now" begins December 17 for the Little Irish as they play host to Mooney.

A LEAGUE DARKHORSE MAY be developing at Nazareth Academy, where Walt Gordinier lost very little from a 4-14 team a year ago.

Nazareth is all sophomores and seniors, with co-captains Amy Budd and Lesley Salladin leading the way. The 5-foot-6 Budd is a four-year starter for Gordinier, and Salladin — presently sidelined after undergoing an emergency appendectomy — is back at the point-guard spot.

Five-foot-11 senior Samantha Schramm has been asserting herself inside for Nazareth and should receive ample rebounding help from Eileen Hart. Jeanine Sentnar, a senior transfer, has been averaging 11 points and 10 rebounds a game thus far, providing Gordinier with yet another offensive weapon.

Sophomores Kathy Doran, Missy Creamer and Lorra Salamone have also been playing well early this season. Doran nailed six consecutive foul shots during a 36-32 win over Wilson in which she scored 14 points and pulled down 11 rebounds.

Nazareth, a loser to Canandaigua in its season opener, is 1-2 after falling to Franklin, 34-32, Saturday, Dec. 12. Gordinier took some consolation in the fact that three starters missed the game for various reasons.

If Nazareth is to make any noise in the Private-Parochial League, it, like Aquinas, will need to play a deliberate game on offense.

"We'll try and slow it down with our size," Gordinier said. "We're really counting on the experience of our four seniors."

DESPITE LOSING A LOT of offense on graduation day last June, DeSales' Steve Muzzi should once again have one of the top teams in Class D this year.

The Lady Saints' coach will miss Kris Guinan (Nazareth College) and Babette DeVaney (Ithaca), but has several players returning from last year's 20-2 team.

Stacy Marsteiner, a 5-foot-11 senior center, is back, as is sophomore point guard

Jeneane Donahue. Marsteiner has been coming on offensively, according to Muzzi. Last season, she also averaged about 8 rebounds per game. Donahue saw a lot of playing time as a freshman on last year's squad, which finished sectional runner-up to Greenwood.

Michelle Hughes, a 5-foot-3 senior guard, provides Muzzi with adequate outside shooting, as does Becky Broomfield. The 5-foot-8 junior forward scored seven points and gathered in seven rebounds during DeSales' 41-19 season-opener against Harley Allendale Columbia December 9.

Danielle Boncaro, Amy McGuigan, Tina Barcomb, Mico Conolly, Mary Kelly Sullivan and Debbie Combs give DeSales the depth to make another run at the Finger Lakes West title. Muzzi's Saints have won the crown three years in a row, and finished second in two previous consecutive seasons. This year's team will have to fend off tough teams like Naples and Red Jacket to earn another title.

"The strength of this year's team is our defense. We lost a lot of points (to graduation), but if we can play better defensively we won't miss them as much," Muzzi said.

"We're proud of what's been accomplished in the past," Muzzi added. "We just like to carry on the (winning) tradition."

LOSING KEY OFFENSIVE and defensive weapons doesn't seem to unduly worry

Elmira Notre Dame coach Pat Quinn. Her club is off to a 3-1 start, and is looking to improve on last year's third-place finish in the Sullivan Trail Conference.

Gone from last season's 17-7 team, which lost in the Section 4 Class C final, are defensive specialist Lisa Johnston (Alfred State) and point guard Kris Vetukevic (10 ppg). Theresa Sweeney, who beat Elmira Free Academy in the waning seconds of a league battle last year, and Liz Kennedy (7 ppg) are also history.

But Quinn is not losing much sleep because her leading scorer, senior Natalie Kozlowski, is back. The Lady Crusader co-captain will likely benefit from playing on the Central Region's Empire State team this summer.

Senior Colleen Hoobler, the other team captain, will take Johnston's place at the off guard position.

Senior point guard Lisa Boulas and Tina Maloney give Quinn returning experience, and Melissa Jaskolka — a junior up from the JV — has the height at center for ND to score inside.

Senior Lisa Crisco, juniors Maureen Jaskolka, Leah Gruczkowski and Shelly Crisco, as well as sophomores Julie Cox, Cara Cleveland and Kathy Lynch, provide Quinn with depth to compete against rugged league foes such as EFA, Southside and Horseheads.

With Vetukevic gone, Quinn is seeing

more balanced scoring thus far. Kozlowski is the team's leading scorer, but several teammates have picked up the offensive slack during Notre Dame's first four games.

In ND's most recent win against Tioga Center last Friday, Dec. 11, Hoobler scored 10 points, Kozlowski scored eight and the remainder of the scoring was spread equally among several other Lady Crusaders. Notre Dame was able to rebound from a 24-21 halftime deficit to beat Tioga Center.

"We're lacking height but we should make up for that with our starting guards," Quinn said.

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