

Sports

Cards yet to taste defeat; Saints take opener, 4-0

By Richard A. Kiley

Maybe some of the hapless Baltimore Orioles should find time in their schedules to take in a couple of Cardinal Mooney baseball games this spring.

For the second consecutive year, Ed Nietopski's Cards (6-0 overall, 2-0 league) have put together an impressive winning streak to open up the season. Last spring, the Cards reeled off 10 consecutive wins before tasting their first defeat.

The last two Aprils have been very good to Nietopski, who is in his 25th year of coaching at the Greece Catholic high school.

"A lot of different guys are helping us win right now," said Nietopski, whose team batting average is more than .300 thus far this season. "It's nice when one guy doesn't have to carry the load for the whole team."

The Cardinals' most recent wins against City-Catholic opponents McQuaid and East followed far different scripts. Against Tim Jordan's Knights (3-1 overall, 1-1 league) on Thursday, April 21, host Mooney came back from a 7-4 deficit late in the game to win 8-7.

Mooney pitcher Dave Zastrow helped his own cause in the bottom of the seventh inning, when his single to right field scored Scott Hyland and Scott Quinlan.

Although the game against McQuaid was not one of his better performances, Zastrow improved his record to a perfect 3-0 with the victory. Dave Brescia, who Nietopski said is leading the team with a .475 batting average thus far, was 2-for-4 with two RBIs in the Cards' win over the Knights.

Brescia has two home runs, one triple, two doubles and seven runs RBI for Mooney this season. He has also scored nine times.

Against league opponent East on Tuesday, April 19, the Cardinals didn't need any late-game heroics as they pounded the host Orientals, 13-0. Sophomore Steve Miner, who Nietopski believes may be one of the best pitchers in the Rochester-area in a year or two, pitched the shutout, improving to 2-0 for the season. Miner's other win came against Marshall, 8-1, back on Wednesday, April 13.

The unbeaten Cards will be severely tested this week with games against Hilton and Aquinas. Mooney will also face the likes of Greece

Arcadia, Greece Olympia and Rush-Henrietta. In McQuaid's other game last week, the Knights' Curt Schmitt went a perfect 3-for-3 with three RBIs to lead his teammates to a 6-1 league win over host Edison Tech.

Rich Pilliter's Aquinas team (8-2 overall, 1-0 league) has continued its impressive start. With the exception of losses to Pittsford-Mendon and Fairport, the Little Irish have been winning big.

One of AQ's most exciting games thus far came against host Edison on Thursday, April 21, when Pilliter's club staged a come-from-behind, 6-5 win over Dick O'Toole's Engineers.

After falling behind 5-3, the Little Irish won the game in the top of the sixth inning — thanks to some help from the Edison defense. Mike Germain scored the winning run on an error.

Todd Moore (2-0) came in to relieve starter Eric Knapp and held Edison hitless over the final two innings. Knapp had pitched well earlier this season, closing out wins against Gates Chili and Spencerport.

The game against Edison was something of a microcosm of AQ's campaign thus far, as steady defense, timely hitting and strong relief pitching all came together in the win.

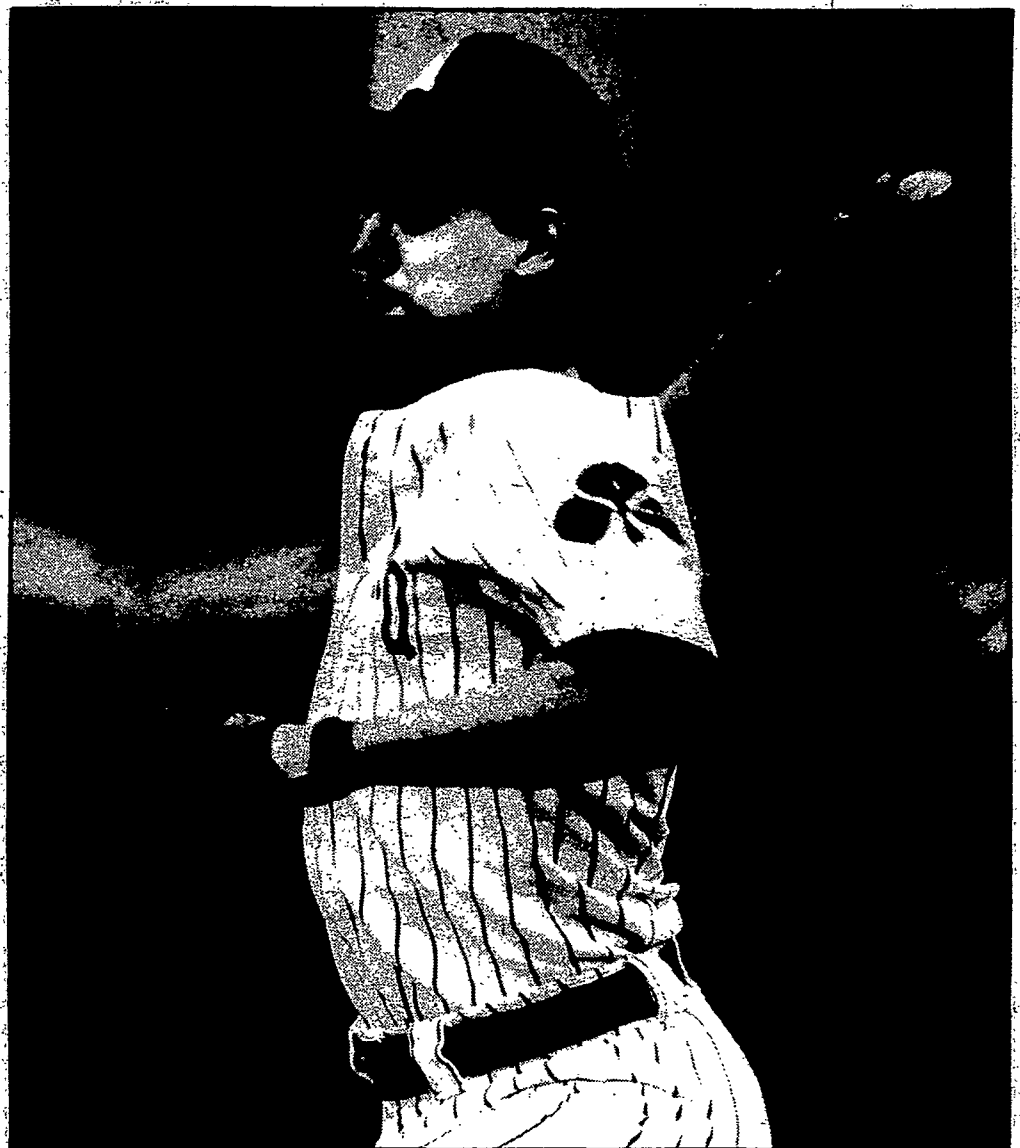
"I'm very pleased so far; I'm getting better balance than I thought I had before the season began," Pilliter said. "Defensively, we really made some big plays."

Catcher Chris Culver, who has vastly improved his game behind the plate, is not doing too badly at the plate either. His eight RBIs lead the team. Brian Monteleone, who has won two out of three decisions on the mound so far, has seven RBIs.

Senior Mark Chapman is batting .471 for the season thus far. He has also yet to lose a pitching decision.

Bishop Kearney is off to a 4-2 mark with its most recent wins coming against Marshall and Franklin. The defending City-Catholic League champions scored six runs in the top of the fourth inning on six consecutive hits, to drub host Marshall, 9-0 on Thursday, April 21.

Art Carlisi, who took over this season for longtime Kearney coach Carm Urzetta, received a strong outing from junior Rich Davison. The Kearney ace allowed just two hits



Aquinas' Mark Chapman, shown here pitching against Gates-Chili earlier in the season, has helped the Little Irish get off to an 8-2 start.

Bonnie Traflet/Courier-Journal

and three runners to reach base during the win. Offensively, Kearney was led by Paul Viola, who was 3-for-3 with three RBIs.

Against host Franklin on Tuesday, April 19, Viola was a perfect 2-for-2 with four RBIs to help his teammates to a 12-1 rout of Franklin. Viola is 8-for-8 in his last eight official at bats and is hitting .750 for the season. He also has eight RBIs in Kearney's four wins.

Another offensive weapon for Kearney has come in the form of Marty Alexander, who started the season with 13 hits in his first 15 trips to the plate.

Defensively, the Kings appear to have recovered from some early-season jitters. In their first three games — two of which were losses to Geneva and Fairport — the Fighting Kings were not fielding balls cleanly. During its modest three-game winning streak, however, Kearney is playing errorless baseball.

Carlisi is also receiving some great pitching performances. In addition to Davison, sopho-

more Bill Tehan (1-1) has been a key stopper for the Kings.

"I think we started slowly because of over-aggressiveness and because we had an 11-day break after our Florida trip," Carlisi said. "Now it's been a different kid doing the job every day."

Frank Payne's young DeSales team opened the season with a 4-0 win over South Seneca on Thursday, April 21. Payne's son, Frank Jr., pitched a gem for the Saints, going five innings before Joe Vedora came on in relief. Payne yielded just one hit and a walk against a good-hitting South Seneca team.

DeSales got all the runs it needed in the bottom of the third inning when four Saints crossed the plate. The key hits in the inning came on RBI singles from Jeff Taney and Matt Cannon.

This week will tell a lot for the Saints, who battle Finger Lakes West opponents Romulus, Dundee and Naples in their next three games.

'Fab Four' score a triple at relays

The Fabulous Foursome did it again. Chris Adin, Chris Cusack, Scott Romanowski and Brad Sumner — McQuaid Jesuit's top-four distance runners — took three times at the 11th-annual Big E Relay Carnival track meet in Kenmore last Saturday, April 23, to spur Bob Bradley's Knights to the large-school team championship.

Adin, Cusack, Romanowski and Sumner won the distance medley in 10:49.4, the 3,200-meter relay in 8:10.6 and the 1,600-relay in 3:27.8 to carry the Knights in the meet, which was plagued by damp and cold weather.

Adin started the amazing day for McQuaid by covering 800 meters in 2:05.6 before Cusack ran 1,600 meters in 4:37.7 to nip St. Francis of

Athol Springs by :09.8.

In the 3,200-meter race, the Knights battled traditionally strong Clarence Central of Section 6 (Buffalo area). Cusack's time of 2:01.6, combined with Sumner's 1:57 was good enough to hold off Clarence, which finished with a time of 8:11.0.

Romanowski began the 1,600 with a :52.5 leg before Cusack finished impressively to give McQuaid another win. The Knights' time of 3:37.8 nipped Lockport (Section 6), which finished in 3:31.3.

McQuaid will be competing in the 1,600 and 3,200-relays this week at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia, hoping to also gain a spot in the distance relay.

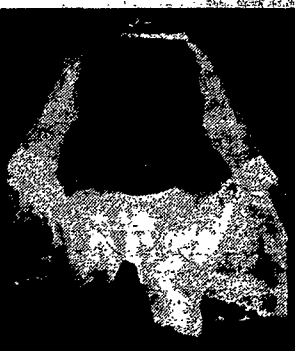
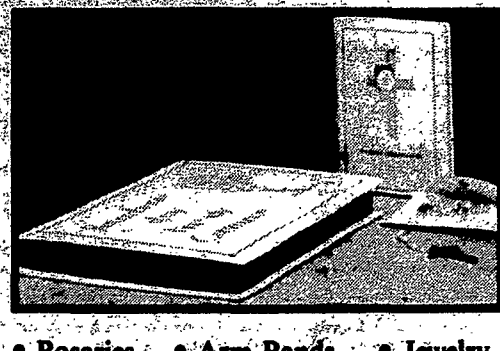
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