

Sports

Sports
Shorts

Sensational seniors

Fans of high school baseball in the Rochester area will have a chance to see some of the area's best players for the last time at Silver Stadium in Rochester where six high school games will highlight Youth Baseball Week in June. For the third consecutive year, Castle Hi-Tech Chemicals will sponsor the games.

The Rush-Henrietta Invitational will kick off the exciting week of baseball, when the host Royal Comets will compete for the title with the likes of Hilton, East Rochester and Pittsford Mendon.

Exceptional seniors from the City-Catholic League and the Monroe County League will play a doubleheader on June 16. City-Catholic League all stars will play at 5 p.m., followed by the game between Monroe County League standouts at 7:30 p.m.

Exceptional seniors will be honored in a ceremony before the Red Wings play Denver on Sunday, June 16 — Father's Day. Free tickets to the game can be obtained through Castle as well as from Rochester-area merchants and high school athletic offices.

Call (716)454-4760 for information.

Beneficial biking

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation will be holding its Sixth Annual Bike-a-thon on Saturday, June 11. This year's event will for the first time include a 25-mile course on the Lake Ontario State Parkway in addition to shorter courses in Greece, Henrietta and Penfield.

The bike-a-thon is open to anyone 19 or older who enjoys biking long distances and — most importantly — would like to help conquer cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease which affects the lungs and digestive systems of its victims, and is the number one genetic killer of young people.

The long-distance route begins at the Long Pond exit of the parkway and extends to the Westphal Drive intersection, where there will be a lap check and water station. Registration will begin at 10 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. All bike-a-thon participants will be eligible for a trip for two to San Francisco. Other prizes include exercise equipment, a shopping spree, camera, escape weekends and more.

The long-distance route is dedicated to the memory of Nadine Johnston, who succumbed to CF in April.

Call (716)546-5890 for information.

Mooney has tough road to repeat

By Richard A. Kiley

When defending Section 5 Class AA champion Cardinal Mooney took the field against Gates-Chili in the first round of the sectional softball tournament on Tuesday, May 31, the Cardinals were looking to settle an old score.

The Spartans (7-13) caught Paul Forte's Cards (18-4) a little flat on May 9, when they upset Mooney in a non-league contest, 9-8. Just two nights earlier, Mooney had fallen to Hilton 4-0 at McAvoy Park — marking the Cards first loss of the season after 12 consecutive wins — in a rematch of the 1987 championship game.

The game between third-seeded Mooney and 14th-seeded Gates-Chili was one of 20 games played in the five classifications on Tuesday. Tournament seedings were announced over the weekend. The top-seeded teams in each class were: Hilton (19-0) in Class AA; Penn Yan (15-4) in Class A; Holley (12-1) in Class B; Keshequa (13-1) in Class C; and Avoca (13-1) in Class D.

Championship games are scheduled for June 10 at McAvoy Park for Classes AA, A, B and C teams. Class D semifinals and finals will take place at Cohocton. For the first time ever this year, all AA games will be at McAvoy Park.

Although his team is 6-4 over its last 10 games after beginning the season with 12 consecutive wins, Forte is confident his Cards have put their late-season slump behind them. Mooney closed out its regular season on Friday, May 27, in much the same way it began in early April, when the Cards drubbed Rush Henrietta, 24-8.

Although the season was atypical in some respects, it very much fit the norm in other ways. Mooney went 11-1 against Private-Parochial League competition this spring en route to winning its fourth consecutive league title. Senior pitcher Noelle Feeney, who has struggled with her control at times, was also voted the league's most valuable player.

Forte doesn't believe his players have been feeling additional pressure from being the tourney's defending champions, because most of his girls were on the JV last year.

"I don't think it bothers them; 11 out of 16 were not on the team last year, so I don't see it," Forte said. "I still have some veterans like Chery (Lennox) and Noelle. Noelle might be feeling a little more pressure because she feels she has to carry the load."

Feeney did just that last May and June, carrying her teammates to hard-fought wins over Fairport, Irondequoit and top-seeded Hilton to win it all for Mooney. Repeating as champs will be difficult for Mooney. Although top-seeded Hilton (19-0) is not as strong as last year's team, more clubs seem to have a viable chance to take the crown this



Jenny Baxter is one reason why Mercy earned the tournament's sixth seed. Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

time around. In addition to Hilton, second-seeded Webster (18-1) and fourth-seeded Brockport (16-6) loom as possible championship teams. Even eighth-seeded Pittsford Mendon (12-8), which beat Mooney two weeks ago, has to be considered a possible dark horse.

Other first-round games involving diocesan teams in the AA classification on Tuesday were No. 11 Penfield (10-10) vs. No. 6 Mercy (8-4 league, 12-5 overall) and 15th-seeded Nazareth (8-11) vs. No. 2 Webster. Although Paul Walker's Monarchs have been playing well of late, Penfield did beat Mercy earlier this spring. If Mercy were to beat Penfield, its second-round opponent would be Cardinal Mooney on Friday, June 3.

A quick second season was likely for Dave Pisano's Nazareth team, which had to face star pitcher Liz Helbig of the Warriors on Tuesday. Webster would be a likely third-round opponent for Mooney or Mercy.

Over in Class D, Pat Luzzi's third-seeded DeSales Saints took on a familiar foe in Finger Lakes West rival Romulus on Tuesday, May 31. Romulus (2-12), which the Saints disposed of twice during the regular season by seven runs each time, came into the tourney seeded No. 14.

The Saints are coming off their best season ever, according to Luzzi. They were narrowly nudged out of the league's second spot by Honeoye (10-4) in the final week of the season, before closing out the regular season with a resounding win over Bloomfield.

"As far as I'm concerned, we're all 0-0 as of now. It's sudden death now, we'll treat everybody equally," said Luzzi, whose team lost to Honeoye 17-16 in a thriller last week.

The second-year coach of the Saints also believes his team was placed in the easier bracket. DeSales would avoid having to play top-seeded Avoca until the championship game — if it got that far.

Much like the regular season, Luzzi will depend heavily on Danielle Boncaro for both her pitching and hitting. The freshman pitcher, who was named to the first Finger Lakes West all star team last week, was on the mound for nearly all of the season. She also finished the regular season hitting nearly .500. Stacey Marsteiner (5-for-6, two triples in a 29-12 win over Bloomfield last week) as well as Carin Caraveta and Jeneane Donahue will also need to produce if the Saints are to have a chance of winning a title. Caraveta and Donahue were both named to the second all league team last week.

OVER IN SECTION 4, Elmira Notre Dame (9-6) was seeded No. 2, facing Newark Valley (13-5) on Tuesday, May 31. Wayne Coburn's Crusaders were riding high after beating Southside 1-0 to close out the regular season. Southside was ranked among the top softball teams in the latest large-school poll. ND, which is ranked fifth in the latest poll of small schools, used an RBI double by Leah Gruzckowski to nip Southside and finish third in the Sullivan Trail Conference.

If Notre Dame were to beat Newark Valley, it would face the winner of Odessa Montour and Greene on Thursday, June 2. All games in Class C will be played at Elmira's Eldridge Stadium.

Deposit (18-3) is the top seed in the tourney, although all of its wins came against Class C and D schools, while ND was battling it out with A and B schools.

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