

Sports

Little Irish draw third seed; Crusaders rip Whitney Point

By Richard A. Kiley

It was a short-and-not-so-sweet post season for diocesan baseball teams last spring. Not one Catholic school advanced past the opening round of the sectionals, and two others — DeSales and Notre Dame — failed to qualify for the second season.

First-round games in the Section 5 tournament were played on Tuesday, May 31. Aquinas Institute, which overcame some mid-season injuries and a brilliant start by Cardinal Mooney to win the City-Catholic League title this year, opened up at home against No. 14 Spencerport. After a disappointing season last spring, Rich Pillitter's Little Irish have the pitching and the hitting to do something big this time around. Irondequoit eliminated AQ last spring.

In other first-round games, fourth-seeded McQuaid battled divisional rival and 13th-seeded Edison at home on Tuesday. Like Aquinas, Tim Jordan's Knights came on strong late this season and have a line-up capable of posting some impressive numbers. McQuaid's team batting average has been hovering around the .300 mark all season.

In the other Class AAA game involving a diocesan school on Tuesday, May 31, No. 6 Cardinal Mooney hosted No. 11 Canandaigua. Ed Nietopski's Cards prevailed over the Braves earlier this season. In an interesting side note to this first-round game, the Braves eliminated the Cards in the semifinals of the Section 5 basketball tournament last winter. Nietopski coaches the basketball Cards as well.

Gates-Chili is seeded No. 1 among Class AAA teams, but No. 2 Fairport and No. 5 Hilton loom as possible dark horses in the tourney.

In the AA classification, third-seeded Bishop Kearney hosted 14th-seeded Victor on Tuesday. The Kings, who were upset in the first round of the tourney by Hornell last year, should benefit from playing mostly AAA teams during the regular season. Waterloo, which beat Cardinal Mooney two weeks ago, is the top-seeded team in Class

AA. No. 2 Geneva (18-4), No. 4 Palmyra-Macedon (19-1) and No. 5 Penn Yan (13-5) are all capable of making a run for the title.

Over in Class C, fourth-seeded DeSales hosted 13th-seeded Hammondspport at Geneva's McDonough Park on Tuesday, May 31. The surprising Saints, who defeated Honeoye and Red Jacket last week, finished tied for first place with Naples in the Finger Lakes West division. DeSales coach Frank Payne believes his team is in a good bracket.

"We drew in right where we wanted to go, away from (league rivals) Romulus and Honeoye," Payne said Monday evening, May 30. "We're in (the same bracket) with the number one seed but we avoided Lyndonville."

Fillmore (11-2) is the top seed in Class C, but Payne views second-seeded Lyndonville (16-4) as the team to beat in this year's tourney.

Third-seeded Avoca (11-2) and fifth-seeded Canisteo (12-4) also look to be teams peaking at the right time.

Over in Section 4 Class C, Elmira Notre Dame closed out its regular season with a big 10-9 win over Horseheads in a game that was suspended due to bad weather last week. The win propelled John Cain's Crusaders (9-10) into the sectionals — the only team with a losing record to get there — where they are seeded eighth.

ND opened up with a 7-1 win over ninth-seeded Whitney Point in a first-round game. After yielding a leadoff home run, Bob Grosvenor settled down and got the win for Notre Dame.

Jim Ermold, who scored the winning run against Horseheads, came through with three RBIs against Whitney Point. Mike Mesuch had two RBIs for the Crusaders, who faced No. 1 Greene (15-3) on Wednesday, June 1.

After struggling through much of the early part of the schedule, ND, which finished tied for third in the STC with Elmira Free Academy, has won six of its last seven games.



Bonnie Traflet/Courier-Journal

Conditions at the sectionals were much better than they were at qualifiers a week earlier.

Sumner shines at AA championships; Sectional track record eludes Knights

McQuaid junior Brad Sumner raced to wins in the 400 and 800 meters to help propel the Knights to the boys' team title in the Section 5 track and field championships at Rochester Institute of Technology on Saturday, May 28.

Bob Bradley's Knights held off Fairport by a margin of 92-68. Cardinal Mooney could muster just two points for the afternoon.

Sumner ran the 400 meters in :49.0 and finished the 800 in 1:56.6 to pace the Knights. He edged out teammates Scott Romanowski, who finished the 400 meter distance in :49.6, and Chris Cusack (1:57.8) in the 800.

Cusack covered the 1,600 meters in 4:22.1 to lead the Knights in that race.

McQuaid's Justin Berko-Boateng had a stellar day on Friday, May 27. The McQuaid senior finished first in the triple jump (44-8 1/2) and was leading the long jump most of the way until late in the competition. He finished second to Brockport's Jessie Long with a jump of 21 feet 8 inches.

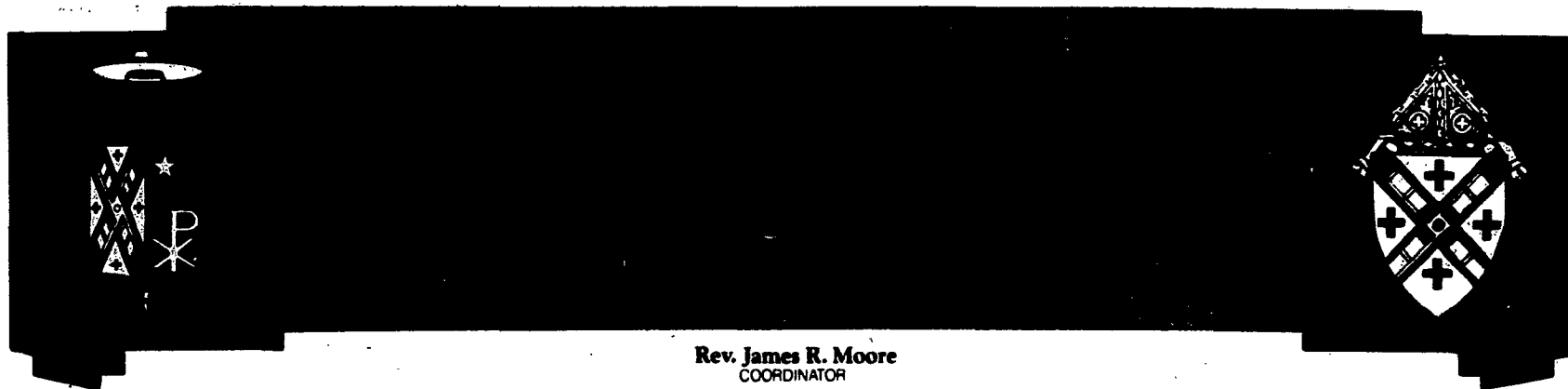
McQuaid's 400-relay team of Steve Branca, Romanowski, Sean O'Neill and Berko-Boateng took that race before the mile-relay team of Sumner, Cusack, Chris Adin and Mike Hanna finished in first place with a time of 3:25.8.

McQuaid narrowly missed setting a Section 5 record when the Knights finished in fifth place in the 1,600 meter relay at the Eastern States Championships on Randalls Island near New York City on Monday, May 30.

Romanowski, Cusack, Adin and Sumner came within a second of the record, finishing in a time of 3:21.5. The time matched the school record, but fell short of the record time of 3:20.6 set by Monroe and Rush-Henrietta.

McQuaid also lowered its 3,200 relay time to 7:51.2 by finishing in second in that race. The Knights will attempt to break the record once again at the state qualifier at Geneseo State this Saturday, June 4.

— Richard A. Kiley



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