

Lacrosse catching on at Catholic schools

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

Lacrosse fever appears to be catching on at three diocesan high schools. Cardinal Mooney will join Bishop Kearney and McQuaid on the varsity level this spring, as all three schools attempt to contend with the powerful lax programs in the Monroe County League.

Bishop Kearney appears to have the only realistic shot of gaining a sectional berth — 12 teams will make it to the post-season compared to eight in previous years — but the Kings will sorely miss the scoring of attackmen Rich Shoap (school record 52 goals) and Jeff Hall.

Fourth-year coach Jim Burns also lost key personnel at the midfield and defense positions with the graduation of Jim O'Leary and Brian Haur.

Burns is looking to senior midfielder Steve Smith and Jon Hand — a junior who started at attack as a sophomore — to lead the offense.

"Rich Shoap and Jeff Hall were two really good attackmen. They worked real well with Jon Hand," said Burns, whose team narrowly missed the sectionals last year with a 9-8 record. "I'm gonna miss those guys, but Beaver Smith and Jon Hand have a lot of ability."

Senior midfielders Jeff Failing, Mark Schickler and Carl Provenzano will need to assert themselves offensively, while senior Kevin Haur and junior Ryan Kennerson round out the attack. Kennerson

was the leading scorer on the JV last year.

Senior Mark Shaw and junior Jim Ingrid give Burns depth at attack.

Defensively, the Kings look strong with the return of seniors Craig Chodak, Bill Oberlies and Ben Klube. Goalie Mark Hall is also back for his senior year.

The way Burns figures it, his Kings fell one win short of gaining a sectional bid last year and also suffered from a weak schedule. That won't be the case this season, as the Kings have added traditionally strong Fairport to the schedule. Kearney will also do battle with the likes of Rush-Henrietta, Penfield (the new king of the Monroe County League?), Irondequoit, Webster and Pittsford.

"No more Bloomfields or Waterloos," Burns said. "This is by far the toughest schedule we've had."

Second-year McQuaid coach Mike Schepis knows all about tough schedules. His Knights labored through their first varsity season ever last spring, finishing 0-10.

Schepis lost 16 players to graduation from last year's team, including leading-scorer Dennis Hyatt (10 goals, seven assists) and midfielder Phil Pecora (team MVP).

Junior middies Mike Diehl and Scott Cottier are back for McQ. Diehl was among the team's top scorers as a sophomore.

Sophomore Steven Paul, who started as a freshman, is the only returning attacker.

Defensively, the Knights return fresh-

man Brandon Piccareto — who started as an eighth-grader — and junior John Holby. Junior goalie Paul Magerkurth, who shared the netminding duties with two other players, is also back.

Although Schepis is encouraged by the fact that 13 of his 16 returning players attended lacrosse camp at Hobart during the off season, his young Knights may still lack the physical strength to win consistently this year.

"We're a lot more talented than we were last year, but we're a lot younger," Schepis said. "The drawback this year is age."

McQuaid will be able to play nine home games this season as work on its athletic fields is completed.

Cardinal Mooney has a new coach to guide the Cards through their first varsity season ever. Tom Kraft, a former assistant coach at Rochester Institute of Technology and Herkimer Community College, will take over a team that finished 2-14 at the JV level last spring.

Leading-scorer Scott Bevilacqua is back for his senior season, as is senior attacker Craig Kenney. Senior midfielders Mike Reinschmidt and Keith Bell also return, while sophomore Brian Meyer steps in at the other midfield spot.

Defensively, the Cards return senior Chris Ranson and sophomore Jason Floreano. Sophomore goaltender Greg Phi-



File Photo

Kearney, which narrowly missed a trip to the sectionals last year, will miss Jeff Hall's quick stick work around opponents' goals.

lips should see plenty of action in his second year.

Kraft will see a steady diet of Finger Lakes area teams this year, in addition to games against Kearney, McQuaid, Rush-Henrietta and Williamsville.

"A lot of teams aren't going to know what to expect from us, so we might be able to surprise a few people if we can jump on them early," Kraft said. "Offensively we've got some good players, so we'll look to run as much as we can."

Baseball

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Gone from last year's 14-7 team, which fell in the first round of the sectionals to Edison, are center fielder Keith Boeck (.393), third baseman Steve Peacock (.344), shortstop Steve Schott (.344), outfielder/catcher Bob Wynne (.321, 12 RBIs, 7 extra-base hits) and first baseman Todd Tonucci (.286). The five former Knights had 44 RBIs between them.

The return of Dave Nientemp (.455, 10 RBIs), Kurt Schmidt (.328, 13 RBIs) and John Steinbrenner (.286, 14 RBIs) gives Jordan a solid core of hitters. Nientemp, who was the designated hitter last spring, had the team's best hitting percentage, and Steinbrenner led in runs batted in. Nientemp moves to third base this year, while Steinbrenner will start in left field.

The Knights should keep opponents in check with the arms of senior Byron Schneider (6-1, 2.51 ERA, team MVP as a junior), Tony LoVerdi (3.03 ERA) and junior left-hander Ed Horton (3-1 on the JV). Schmidt (1-0) will be used as a reliever once again this year. Junior reliever Andy Dvovich should also see some action in relief.

Seniors Dan Wilmot (first baseman, .324), Marc Curran (catcher, .313) and

Dave Smith (second baseman, .308) give Jordan stability in the infield.

Aquinas coach Rich Pilliter lost a ton of talent to graduation from last year's team, which finished 18-7 after losing to Spencerport in the first round of the sectionals.

Three All City-Catholic players, pitcher/outfielder Mark Chapman (.461), catcher Chris Culver (.340) and outfielder Brian Monteleone (.337), graduated, as did second baseman Fred Rogers (.300), third baseman Mike Germain, outfielder John Messura (.290) and No. 1 pitcher Eric Knapp (6-2, 2.97 ERA).

The only player returning in the infield for the 15th-year AQ coach is junior shortstop Alan Schlageter.

Senior Todd Moore (5-1) will be the ace of the staff this year, while senior Paul Kucewicz, a reliever last season, jumps into the No. 2 spot. Senior Jim Allocco will replace Culver behind the plate.

Left-hander Jim Schrader (2-0) provides more pitching depth for Pilliter, who will also use sophomore Rob Burke in the rotation.

Senior Jim Delly (.270) is the only other returning player from last year's team.

In contrast to Aquinas, DeSales returns just about everyone from last year's Class C champion. Ninth-year coach Frank Pane only lost Alex Onarato to graduation, making this year's Saints a strong contender for

the FLW title, along with Honeoye and Naples.

The Saints, 15-3 last year, are armed and dangerous with a trio of sophomore pitchers. Frank Pane Jr. (6-1), Joe Vedora (7-2) and Jim Vedora (2-0) comprise a super rotation, while another sophomore, Jim McDermott, anchors the catching position.

The Saints have a multitude of offensive power and experience back for another crack at a sectional title. Four seniors, third baseman Steve Vedora (.350), center fielder Matt Cannon (.385), second baseman Ron Cecere and left fielder Dean Askin should have stellar seasons. Cecere had the game-winning hit against Pavilion in the championship game, and Cannon is one of the best all-around players in the league, according to his coach.

Junior outfielder/first baseman Jeff Taney (.280) provides additional power for the Saints, who will drop down to Class D this season.

DeSales does not open its season until April 24, when the Saints play host to South Seneca.

Elmira Notre Dame (1-5) took its lumps during the Crusaders' annual trek to Myrtle Beach for the North-South Baseball Classic, but fourth-year coach John Cain

believes the team will benefit from the experience gained south of the border.

The Crusaders, who finished 10-11 last year after losing to Greene in the second round of the Section 4 Class C tournament, have some holes to fill this season. In addition to pitcher Joe Long, Cain lost several key players, including catcher Randy Harvey, pitcher/infielder/outfielder Mike Mesuch and first baseman Jim Ermold (.375) to graduation.

Two seniors, pitcher/center fielder Bob Grosvenor and left fielder Mike Bernatavitz, return for ND. Grosvenor was one of only two ND players to hit over .300 last year. Ermold was the other, and Bernatavitz hit .300 down south.

Mike Bennett, who was brought up from the JV at the halfway point of last season, will split his duties between pitcher and shortstop.

Sophomore catcher Brian Sheehan, junior third baseman Bryan Granger and freshman utility player Brion Woodworth — one of the top hitters on the JV — should make ND a competitive team in the Sullivan Trail Conference. Defending-champion Horseheads looks to be the early favorite for the league title, with ND and Elmira Free Academy close behind.

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We received 7 correct entries identifying the "Pittsburg Panthers" as the team that Ball State beat in the first round of this year's NCAA basketball tournament.

The winner was Tim Anderson of Fairport.

SPORTS TRIVIA

This week's question:
What does bowling's ABC stand for?

A: _____

Rules:
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