

# Saints will try to 'three-peat' as champions

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

April showers may bring May flowers, but for diocesan high school baseball players and coaches, April rain — and snow for that matter — means they will have to wage battles against both their opponents and the elements.

This year has proved no exception, as teams have already had to cancel or postpone games.

Still, the boys of spring are ready to begin play, with DeSales seeking its third consecutive sectional title. Meanwhile, Aquinas, Bishop Kearney and McQuaid are seeking to improve upon their records of last season, and Elmira Notre Dame is looking to recover from a season marred by injuries.

DeSales (12-0, 15-0, Section 5 Class D champion last year) was hard hit by graduation, with its entire outfield and such .300 hitters as Steve Vedora, Ron Cecere, Matt Cannon and Dean Askin now gone. Only shortstop Paul Prieve returns from the ".300 brigade." He is coming off a .366 season.

Even though the Saints might be searching for hitters to lead them back to the sectionals, hitters on opposing teams will have a hard time just trying to connect against DeSales' pitchers.

Returning to the mound for DeSales are juniors Frank Pane Jr. (8-0, 1.20 ERA last year) and Jim Vedora (7-0, 2.50 ERA). Joining them in the rotation will be junior Joe Vedora, who didn't pitch last season because of an arm injury, and sophomore Bill Sweeney. The pitching staff gives the Saints an edge on Finger Lakes West opponents.

Other returners from last season are senior catcher Jim McDermott (.250) — who can also pitch — and outfielder Jeff Taney (.242).

Coach Frank Pane Sr. said he sees the potential for his team to develop into a good hitting squad, but acknowledged, "We've got to hope our pitching can keep us in (games early in the season)."

The Saints were notorious last season for come-from-behind wins in their final at-bat, and Pane noted that his team could easily have lost several games.

The Finger Lakes West League is once again tough this season, especially with Section 5 Class C champion Red Jacket returning most of its starting pitchers.

Lack of hitting could cost DeSales a few games along the way this year, but the pitching should give the Saints a shot at their



File photo  
Steve Vedora (center, arms raised) and a number of other key players from the Section 5 Class D championship baseball team that DeSales fielded last season have graduated, but with the entire pitching staff returning, the Saints appear to have a shot at their third consecutive sectional title.

third consecutive sectional title.

DeSales has already had two non-league games against Lyons cancelled due to the weather. The Saints were scheduled to begin league play April 9 at Bloomfield.

Aquinas compiled a 13-11 record last season before falling in the first round of the Section 5 Class AAA tournament at Brockport, 1-0.

Coach Rich Pillitter lost some key people from that squad, including pitchers Todd Moore and Jim Schrader, and catcher Jim Allocco. This will be a rebuilding year on the mound and behind the plate for AQ.

Junior Rob Burke (4-2) is the only returning pitcher who saw significant action as a varsity starter last year. Senior Heath Rist occupies the No. 2 spot in the rotation.

Several other players are contending for the third spot.

Senior Alan Schlageter, who hit .310 last year, has a lock on the shortstop position, and senior first baseman Brendan Pickett and third baseman Darren Diehl will start, but other positions are still up for grabs.

Pillitter said that despite the uncertainty about who will start at some key spots, defensively the team looks solid. "The big question would be if we can get enough hits until we develop a pitching staff," he said.

If Aquinas can get some run production, they could post another winning record. But if the Little Irish bats don't produce enough runs, it could be a long season for Aquinas fans.

The Little Irish compete in the City-Catholic League West Division along with Edison, Marshall and Wilson. Aquinas was scheduled to open its season with a visit to Batavia April 11.

Players from the 1989 Section 5 Class AA football champion at Bishop Kearney may prove the key to a successful 1990 baseball season at the Kings Highway high school.

"(The players) are working harder than any team I've had," said third-year coach Art Carlisi, who guided last year's squad to a 10-10 record before the Kings lost in the Class AA quarterfinals to Greece Arcadia, 2-1. "I think it helped that some of these kids were on the football team," he added. "They know how to win."

Three players on that grid team will play important roles for the baseball Kings. Pitcher Marty Alexander — who earned All City-Catholic League honors last year — returns to the mound. He was also one of the team's leading hitters last season.

Rene Ingoglia, who led Kearney with 24 steals last year, will hold down center field. And senior second baseman Dave Armanini will provide some stability to the infield.

Senior Steve Miner, a Cardinal Mooney transfer, has also pitched his way into the starting rotation, and juniors Jamie Twist and Mike Canali are likely to see time on the mound.

Pitching will be particularly important to Kearney this year, as hitting is likely to be a weak spot. Last year's team hit only .230, and its best hitter, Vince Falbo, has graduated along with his .331 average.

Carlisi is looking to Alexander, Armanini, Ingoglia and junior third baseman Tommy O'Brien to provide some offensive punch and manufacture some runs.

Thanks to the weather, Kearney has already had to reschedule its season-opener against league-rival McQuaid. This week, the Kings were scheduled to face three tough non-league foes in Fairport (April 10), Hilton (April 11), and Pittsford Mendon (April 12).

The Kings will play in the City-Catholic League East Division with McQuaid, East and Franklin.

This spring, McQuaid will be under the helm of a new coach, Gerry Jaromin, who takes over for Athletic Director Tim Jordan.

Jaromin frankly admits that this will be a rebuilding year for the Knights, who are coming off a 10-10 season and a 1-0 loss to Gates-Chili in the opening round of the Class AAA sectionals.

Gone through graduation are such players as pitcher Byron Schneider, catcher Marc Curran, first baseman Dan Wilmot, and second baseman Dave Smith. In addition, pitcher Ed Horton transferred to Penfield.

Senior Andy Dvovich, a relief pitcher last season, will be a key player for the Knights.

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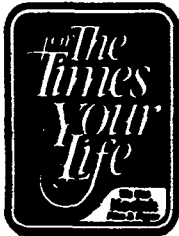
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