

# Nazareth has slight edge in league-title fight

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

The 1990 girls' softball season is underway, with the four Rochester diocesan teams in the Private-Parochial League threatening the most open title fight in years.

In addition, three teams boast new coaches, DeSales is seeking a return to the Class D title game, and Elmira Notre Dame is looking to contend for the Sullivan Trail Conference crown.

The closing of Cardinal Mooney — which won last year's Private-Parochial League title — guarantees that a new champion will emerge this season. The consensus among the league's coaches is that the title battle will be tight, but that Nazareth has a slight edge over its three competitors.

**COACH DAVE PISANO'S** Nazareth squad (2-1) returns five key players from last year's team that went 14-9 before being upset by Geneva, 4-3, in the first round of the Section 5, Class A tournament.

Back are senior catcher Missy Creamer (.265 batting average); senior pitcher and infielder Amy Attridge (.498, 28 RBIs); senior center fielder Renee Gambitta (.340, 19 RBIs); senior right fielder Julie Soyka (.288, 15 RBIs) and junior shortstop Jenny Olley (.436, 24 RBIs and a two-year all-star). If they play as they did last season, Nazareth will not lack for offense.

Thus far this season, indications are that they may indeed pick up where they left off last year. On April 9, for example, Nazareth pounded visiting Wilson, 27-10. Sojka hit three doubles and recorded seven RBIs. Olley and Gambitta both went four-for-six.

But the team has lost pitchers Nicole Olley and Michelle Morgan to graduation. Pisano admits that pitching is the big question mark for the team this season.

Joining Attridge in the rotation will be sophomore Lenore Suraci, who is overpowering when she is in control. In the game against Wilson, Suraci registered nine strikeouts and allowed just five hits.

Suraci also can lose her control, however. On April 7, against host Martin Luther High School in New York City, Suraci struck out seven in four innings, then gave up 10 runs in the fifth, as Nazareth fell 12-6. Amy Attridge pitched the second game of the doubleheader against the New York team, earning a 6-0 win.

If Suraci can maintain control and the Nazareth bats don't cool off, the team may wrap up the league title — and be a sectional contender.

Nazareth was scheduled to play a couple of games during the Easter break, traveling to Marshall on April 17, and Harley-Allendale Columbia on April 19.



In what promises to be one of the tightest softball title battles in recent Private-Parochial League history, Nazareth will be relying on catcher Missy Creamer (left), and Mercy will be turning to shortstop Kim Caccamise (right) to provide leadership.

**AQUINAS (6-14)** is another team with pitching questions this year, since the team lost its main pitcher, Sheri Arnell, to graduation. Arnell took with her a .387 batting average.

Second-year coach Carol Jones will turn to two pitchers who didn't see a lot of pitching time last season: senior Lee Donovan, who also plays second, and junior Lyn Wesley. Two transfers from Cardinal Mooney — Clare Stortini and Patty Heydens — may also see some time on the mound.

But the Little Irish also have seven players back from last year's squad, which lost 9-8 to Livonia in the first round of the Class AA sectionals.

In addition to Wesley and Donovan, the team returns infielder Kathy Thies (.390 batting average); sophomore shortstop Amy Reynders; senior right fielder Debbie Hofford; senior third baseman Eileen Montes; and senior catcher Sheila Hayes.

So far, the Irish have been victimized by the weather, and haven't played a game. "It's hard to tell right now (how good the team will be) without having a game in," Jones acknowledged.

The Irish were scheduled to test their performance April 18 against visiting Penn Yan.

**BISHOP KEARNEY (1-0)** has its pitching mainstay — senior Anne Stockslader

— back from a 7-11 team that lost 14-3 to Pittsford Sutherland in the first round of the Class A sectionals last year.

Also back are senior shortstop Sandy Supple, senior third baseman Debbie Missel, junior outfielder Beth Maring, and senior catcher/outfielder Tammy Hess.

But the team also includes a number of new players who saw limited varsity action, or who have just come up from jayvee.

Furthermore, the Kings' players must also adjust to a new coach, Paul Forte, who guided Cardinal Mooney's team to a 23-2 record last year.

Forte said the team has speed on the base paths, and good pitching with Stockslader and junior Michelle Pinkney (up from jayvee) on the mound.

But the team lacks power hitting, Forte observed, and will have to manufacture its runs. In the team's lone game of the young season, for example, the Kings used a combination of walks, steals, passed balls and just three singles to rally for 10 runs in the bottom of the fifth and claim a 20-18 win over visiting Greece Athena on April 9.

Kearney had 14 hits for the game — none of them for extra bases.

Leading the attack were two Mooney transfers, junior catcher Teri Waterhouse, who went three-for-four and drove in four

runs, and senior outfielder Kim Andolina, who rapped out three hits in five at bats and drove in three runs.

Kearney was scheduled to take the Easter break off, then return to action April 23 against visiting Wilson.

**AFTER GOING 5-14** last year, Mercy appears certain to improve on its record this year. Second-year coach Mike Baxter only lost two key players from last year's squad — catcher Lisa Pellegrino (.389 batting average, 21 RBIs) and first baseman Erin Baumer (.294, 13 RBIs).

Returning are senior shortstop Kim Caccamise (.471, 29 RBIs); pitcher, now first baseman, Mary Beth Cleary (.383); senior left fielder Elizabeth Kowal (.304); and senior right fielder Kristin White (.309).

The Monarchs, who relied almost exclusively on Cleary's arm last season, this year will feature a two-woman rotation — both sophomores. Cardinal Mooney transfer Ellen Lennox and Victor transfer Tesa Warmack will take the mound for Mercy. Another transfer, sophomore Gina Faggiano who came to Mercy from Rush Henrietta, will be behind the plate.

Baxter predicted his team's pitching will be stronger this season, and that greater bench strength will give him more options.

Mercy started out on the right foot this season with a 20-8 win over visiting Edison on April 9. Faggiano went three-for-six and rapped in four runs, and Caccamise banged out three hits — including two doubles — and brought home three runs.

Mercy's next scheduled game is April 23 at home against Marshall.

**DESALES (10-4, 15-5)** will be in the midst of a tight title battle as well. The Saints are in the competitive Finger Lakes West League, and are one of four teams with a shot at the crown.

Guiding DeSales into the season is a new coach, Charmaine DeVaney, who is replacing Pat Luzzi.

DeVaney has a number of key players returning from a squad that went to the Class D finals before losing to Bradford, 18-13.

One of those returning is junior pitcher Danielle Boncaro, who went 13-3 as a sophomore and was on the league's all-star team second team. Boncaro also batted .358.

Also back are junior first baseman Heather Lush (.333 batting average); junior catcher Megan Jenkins (second team on the all-star squad); sophomore left fielder Sarah Peters; and sophomore third baseman Karen Campbell.

In addition, the team welcomes back shortstop Jeaneane Donahue, who was forced to miss last season because of a knee injury. She is the lone senior on a team that includes three juniors, three sophomores

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