

Saints (17-0) march to yet another title

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

June 9 dawned with the threat of rain. Throughout the morning, clouds rolled over Silver Stadium on Norton Street in Rochester.

Around noon, however, the sun broke through in time to shine down on the DeSales Saints as they celebrated their 5-3 win over sixth-seeded Canaseraga in the championship game of the Section 5, Class D tournament.

The victory earned the top-seeded Saints (17-0) their third consecutive sectional crown and extended their winning streak to 40 games. DeSales has not lost a varsity baseball game since 1988.

This year's Class D championship game — like the weather — began ominously for DeSales.

Pitcher Jim Vedora (9-0) struggled against the Indians (12-5) from the outset. He walked the first batter, who then stole second, reached third on a sacrifice, and scored on a wild pitch.

With two outs, Vedora then gave up three consecutive singles, but a Canaseraga runner trying to score from second base on the third hit was tagged out at the plate on a throw by left fielder Jeff Taney to catcher Jim McDermott.

McDermott led off the bottom of the first inning with a single, then he displayed some of the base-running ability he's used to irritate opponents all season. McDermott quickly stole second and third before scoring on a wild pitch to tie the game, 1-1.

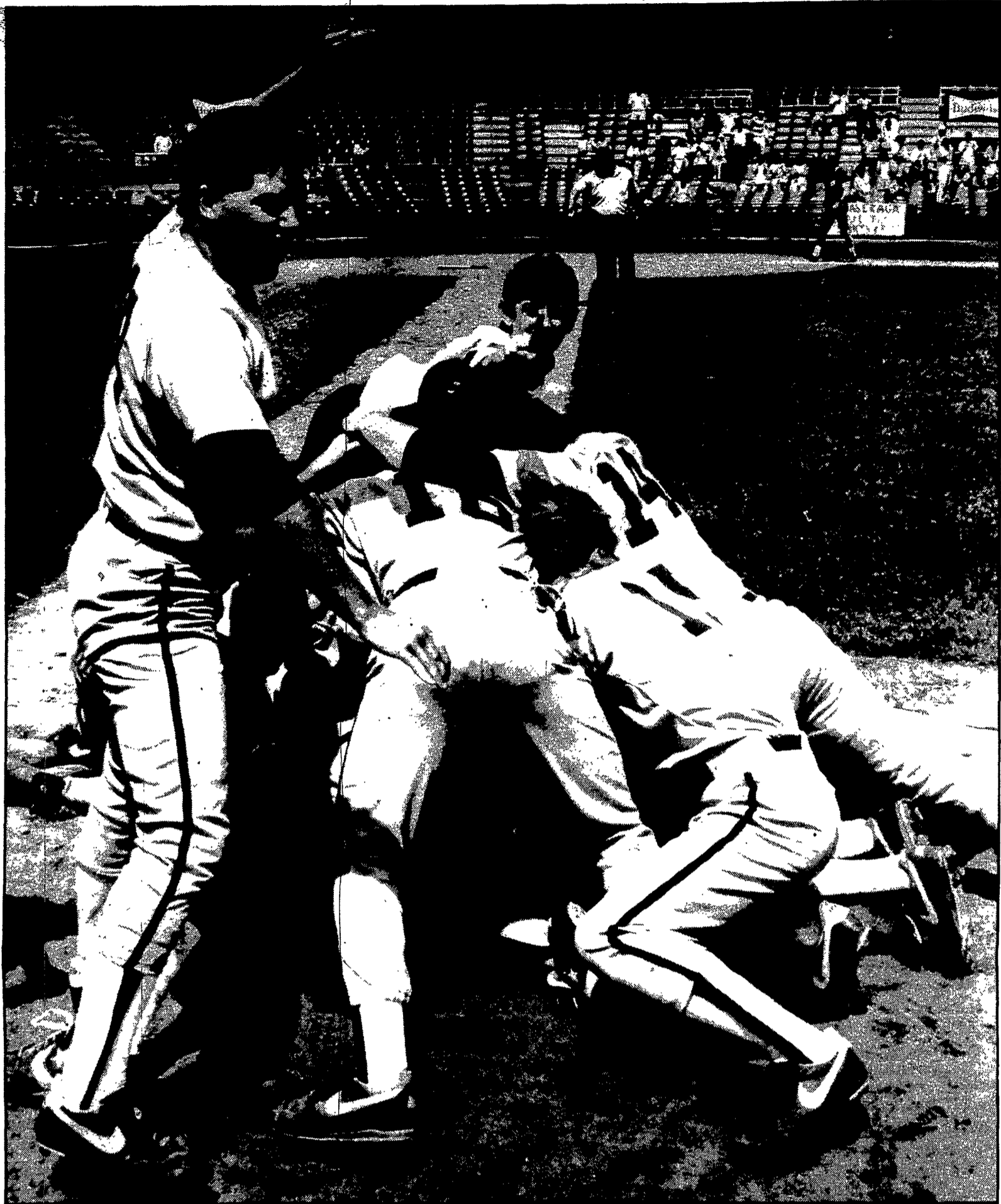
In the second inning, Vedora seemed to find his control, striking out two and holding Canaseraga scoreless.

During the Saints' half of the inning, Todd Hardy borrowed a page from McDermott's book on base running. Hardy reached first on an error, and then stole second and third on consecutive pitches. He came home on Dave Barnard's single to give DeSales a 2-1 lead.

The Saints added two more runs in the third inning to make the score 4-1. McDermott led off with a triple before scoring on a sacrifice fly to left by Joe Vedora. Taney then walked, stole second and later scored on two consecutive wild pitches.

At this point, DeSales coach Frank Pane Sr. thought his team had the game in hand. "I thought we put them away," he acknowledged later.

In the top of the fourth, however, the clouds overhead darkened as Jim Vedora



Christopher Millette
The DeSales Saints pile onto first base as they celebrate their 5-3 win over Canaseraga in the Section 5, Class C, title game June 9 at Rochester's Silver Stadium. The sectional title was the Saints' third in a row, and the win both capped a 17-0 season and extended DeSales' winning streak to 40 consecutive games since 1988.

once again began to struggle on the mound.

The first Canaseraga batter bunted his way onto first. Vedora struck out the next hitter, but then walked the next two to load the bases. The walks were followed by a double that brought home two runs, but a base running blunder left two men at third, and the Saints tagged one of them for the second out. The inning ended when a Canaseraga player grounded out.

"That was the key (play), that double with the bases loaded and they lost the runner," Pane said. But with the score 4-3,

and with Canaseraga staying close, the DeSales coach said that from the fourth inning on, "I never really felt that secure."

The Saints' defense came up with another fine play in the fifth inning, when a Canaseraga runner was picked off first to end the Indians' half of the inning.

In the bottom of the fifth, Joe Vedora doubled, advanced to third on a sacrifice, and scored on Taney's single to up the score to 5-3.

The Indians threatened once again in the top of the sixth, putting men at first and

second with a single and a walk, but McDermott caught a pop foul behind the plate for the third out.

DeSales went quietly in the bottom of the sixth. The game ended with two long flies to the outfield and a slow grounder to Frank Pane Jr. at first — where he was soon buried beneath a pile of celebrating Saints.

"(Canaseraga) is a lot like we were two years ago," coach Pane observed. "They're young. They came in here with nothing to lose."

The coach noted that he'd expected a tough game because of Canaseraga's pitcher, Joe Dunning. The Indians' pitcher allowed only three earned runs while striking out seven against DeSales. "I didn't think they would hit the ball and play in the field as well as they did," Pane acknowledged.

Steals — especially in the early innings — were the key to the game, coach Pane said. "We knew we could run on them," he remarked. The Saints stole nine bases, paced by McDermott with three and Hardy with two.

McDermott also had a hot bat as he collected two of the Saints' nine hits and scored twice.

Despite his problems on the mound, Jim Vedora scattered nine hits and struck out five. He improved his record to 16-0 over

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