

# Soccer teams hoping for return to glory days

By Barbara Ann Homick  
Staff writer

After languishing through mediocre seasons last fall, diocesan high school boys' soccer teams will look to return to the days of post-season glory this season.

Here's a look at this year's teams.

## Ready to challenge

Last fall, Bishop Kearney was the only diocesan high school boys' soccer team to advance past the quarterfinal round of the Section 5 soccer tournament. The Kings eventually lost to Pittsford Mendon, 6-0, in the semifinals.

This season, Kearney appears ready to challenge rivals McQuaid and Aquinas for the City-Catholic League title. Since AQ captured the league title last year and McQuaid Jesuit won the crown the previous two years, the Kings believe that this is their year to take top honors.

Eighth-year coach Greg Schuber said that he will continue to emphasize the strategies that have worked in the past.

"We are building on things we've been doing for years," Schuber said.

Kearney's strength can be found in its goaltending with the return of seniors Kory Khuns and Marco DiMarzio. Schuber said he will alternate his two goalies to keep them both sharp throughout the season.

Experience should also help the Kings. According to Schuber, nine of his 11 returners are seniors. Returning starters include center midfielder Dan Finnegan, stopper Tony Camillo, and halfbacks Tom O'Brien and Jason Floreano. Mark Petzing, who will play on the front line, came back to BK after spending a year at Eastridge High School.

Schuber said that junior striker Scott Delgatti and Petzing are his most dangerous offensive players. He will also look to Derek Mercury and Marco Pace — both up from the JV ranks — to provide some scoring punch.

But Schuber, who along with assistant coach Paul Forte will guide this year's Kings, kept coming back to the defense he thinks could carry the Kings all the way to the league title.

"Our strong point as a team will be that we're a good defensive team. We plan to let up very few goals," Schuber said.

Kearney will start its season away from home against Greece Athena on Sept. 5. The Kings are also gearing up for the first-ever Bishop Kearney Tournament, which will be held under the lights at BK on Sept. 7-8. Besides the tourney's host, Irondequoit, Greece-Olympia and Eastridge high schools will compete.

## Looking for consistency

According to McQuaid Jesuit coach Dan Schied, last year's season felt like a roller coaster ride for him and his Knights. Except for the Lewiston-Porter Tournament and the regular-season finale against Penfield, Schied said his team didn't always play to its potential.

The fourth-year coach said he will look for more stability from his players this season. "We hope to turn things around this season so we can play more consistently," Schied said.

Schied said he wants to see his Knights gel as a team and not rely on individual players to succeed this fall.

"Our team this year is solid all the way around. I don't single anyone out because the team is where the strength is," Schied said.

Although the Knights will miss graduated players such as Matt Parker and Matt Lane, Schied said the Knights have enough balance to fill the void. He is also hoping his team can regain the scoring punch of past seasons.

Senior Chris Capella and junior Colin Lennon will split duties in goal — depending on the opponent. In addition, junior goalies Sean Norton and Ben Fox could see



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer  
Aquinas forward-striker John Aboumoussalem, right, collided with Churchville-Chili's goalie during an Aug. 30 scrimmage. The Little Irish won, 3-1.

some occasional playing time.

Returning seniors include Tim Cannon, Pat Ahern, Steve Weisensel, Rich DiPrimo, John Barney, Kevin Wilnot, Damien Shields, Matt Heath, Rob Armbruster, John Kendall, and Calin McCaulay. In all, 12 seniors return for Schied and assistant coach John Thomas.

After watching his team capture back-to-back league titles in 1987-88, Schied said his team's chances of winning another crown are as good as ever.

Non-league games may pose a problem for the Knights, however. The most difficult games of the season will include two contests against Pittsford Mendon, as

well as single games against Penfield, Honeoye Falls-Lima and Rush-Henrietta.

McQuaid will open the season against Pittsford Mendon at the Brockport Tournament on Sept. 7. The Knights will also defend their title at the Lewiston-Porter Tournament on Sept. 14 & 15.

## Wealth of experience

Aquinas started this year's varsity soccer season on a positive note after taking a scrimmage against Churchville on Aug. 30, 3-1. Tyler Gleason led the Little Irish with two goals, and Pat DiNicola notched one.

Aquinas will return 10 seniors from last year's team, giving the Little Irish a lot of experience.

"We have a great group of kids coming back. I'm going to base our team on that," LaPietra said.

Experienced senior starters include sweeper Jason Mucha, center-halfback Chris Valentino, stopper Lorenzo Dicesare, goalie Craig Stanton, forward-striker John Aboumoussalem and halfback Pat DiNicola. Other returning seniors are fullbacks A.J. Bianchi and Mike Deutsch, and forwards Tyler Gleason and Dave Perrotta.

AQ's season ended last year with a tough 1-0 loss to Bishop Kearney in the sectional quarterfinals. LaPietra, who is beginning his third year as varsity coach at Aquinas, said his players would like to see Kearney or McQuaid in the sectionals.

"We were upset about losing (last year), to Bishop Kearney of all teams," LaPietra said.

LaPietra is counting on Jason Mucha and Chris Valentino for their leadership. Mucha is one of the top players in the league because of his size and strength, according to the AQ coach. Valentino's strength comes from his ability to play almost any position on the field.

"He (Valentino) will run all over the place," LaPietra said.

The Little Irish coach said he will have to rebuild his defense this year after losing sweeper Joe Valentino, leading-scorer and center-halfback Jeff Page and halfback Peter Ruggiero.

Aquinas, which usually plays a strong defensive game, had a hard time scoring last year. LaPietra said he plans to mold a strong defense and then work on scoring

strategies.

The Little Irish have a number of tough non-league games on the schedule, including contests against Hilton, Greece-Athena and Brockport. LaPietra said he'll use such games to prepare his team for the sectionals this fall.

The Little Irish will open their season Sept. 7 at the Honeoye Falls-Lima Tournament. They will travel to Buffalo for the Clarence Tournament on Sept. 14-15.

Aquinas, the defending City-Catholic League champion, is already looking forward to a match against host Bishop Kearney under the lights on Sept. 29, at 8 p.m.

## Versatile and deep

Since most of his team has been playing together for the past three seasons, Notre Dame coach Henry Ferguson said his Crusaders are quite familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses.

After finishing last season 6-11 — an impressive 6-2 against Class C schools — the Crusaders are looking to improve their showing against larger schools in the Sullivan Trail Conference.

Ferguson returns five starting seniors: Mike Ramich, Eric Sira, Andy Latchford, Dave Brabham and Josh Elias. Ramich led the team in scoring last fall with 14 goals and six assists.

In addition, senior Rob Stiles — who has experience playing both football and soccer — may see action at a number of positions this season.

Senior Peter Deanheart and sophomore Jason Smith will both see playing time in goal. In addition, former JV players such as sophomores Bob Cavalier, Brian Milford, Andy Cummins and Ian Kavanaugh should also contribute.

Although he will especially count on Ramich and Sira to produce offensively, Ferguson said he has a fine supporting cast behind them. He added that this is the most versatile team he's had since he came to Notre Dame six years ago.

"Anyone can play almost any position," Ferguson said.

The Crusaders advanced to the sectional finals in 1985 and 1986, winning the title in 1986.

Two big challenges this season will come against Lansing, Sept. 5, and Athens, Sept. 8.



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