

# Football teams gear for challenging seasons

By Barbara Ann Homick  
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The high school football season kicked off last weekend with Elmira Notre Dame's 47-6 win against Watkins Glen. Diocesan high school football coaches are gearing for another tough season.

And although each of the five Catholic school football teams has different challenges to overcome, every coach and player has one goal in mind: to win.

Here is how this fall's diocesan teams stack up:

## Greener than grass

For a team that is greener than grass as far as experience goes, Notre Dame did some serious damage at home on Friday, Sept. 7, as Mike D'Aloisio's Crusaders crushed Watkins Glen, 47-6.

D'Aloisio, who is marking his 10th year as head coach at ND, commended the job of his offensive line for controlling the line of scrimmage against the Senecas. ND's young line created gaping holes all night for its running backs to get through.

Halfback Mike Bennett had two touchdowns on nine carries for 147 yards. Another one of ND's talented halfbacks, Geoff Woodworth, also scored twice after carrying the ball 11 times for 124 yards. Quarterback Bryan Woodworth, running back Pat Palmer, backup quarterback/defensive back Aaron Mekos and running back Chris O'Herron each added touchdowns for the Crusaders.

The win over Watkins Glen — ND's fourth consecutive season-opening victory against the Senecas — was a huge contrast to the last game ND played. Last fall, Notre Dame earned a Section 4 bowl bid by winning the Division IV title only to lose to Chenango Valley in its post-season clash.

D'Aloisio felt a loss of another kind when most of his offensive line graduated, including Lee Heyward and Anthony Wisniewski. Other standouts who graduated last June were Travis Apgar, Andy Minch, Andy Pedalty, Pat Farnan, Bryan Granger, Blake Pierce and Jeff Williams.

Even though his Crusaders are a relatively young team, the ND coach said his team is capable of winning all its games this season. One of the cheers he uses to psyche his players up at practice is "little potatoes can be hard to peel," meaning sometimes a team small in numbers and size can be just as deadly as any other.

Besides the players who scored in the win over Watkins Glen, other Crusaders to keep an eye out for are flanker Brian Sheehan, defensive tackles Damian Saks and John Maio, and tight end Rich O'Kane.

D'Aloisio said that he and his players are wary of upcoming games against teams with lots of returning players. Future opponents include Newark Valley and Dryden, among others. ND will also get another crack at Chenango Valley.

"We came out of the Watkins Glen game healthy," D'Aloisio said. "We're ready for our next game against Southside."

Notre Dame will host the Green Hornets this Friday, Sept. 14, at 7:30 p.m.

In Section 5, the battle for the title in the City-Catholic League will be interesting as always. McQuaid Jesuit, Aquinas Institute and Bishop Kearney each have a shot at capturing the crown. McQuaid is the defending league champion.

## Defending the title

McQuaid Jesuit earned the No. 1 seed for the 1989 Class AAA sectional playoffs, but the Knights were abruptly beaten by Fairport in the semifinals. Although ninth-year coach Tom Sprague lost most of his backfield and offensive line to graduation, he retained many of his key people on defense.

The Knights have some holes to fill from



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer  
Players gather around Notre Dame coach Mike D'Aloisio for a post-practice prayer on the eve of the Crusaders' 47-6 win over Watkins Glen.

last year's team, which won the C-CL title after going 6-0 in league play and 7-2 overall. But even with the loss of players such as fullback Bernie Lippa, linebacker Sam Owens, center Mark Danchak, tailback Jamal Dunbar, flanker Keith Gibbs, linebacker Todd Dorschel, tight end Scott Cottier, defensive end Jason Henderson and kicker Jim Flanagan, Sprague is counting on an even better campaign this season.

To achieve more success, the Knights' coach is counting on some powerful returning starters, including right guard/tackle Jim DeBloom (6-3, 235 pounds), defensive tackle Paul Scanlon (6-4, 225), defensive end Chris Miller (6-0, 210) and free safety/QB Greg Paro (6-1, 185) and tight end Alton Turner (6-1, 235).

Barring injuries, Sprague said his starters will see lots of playing time both offensively and defensively. Juniors such as linebacker Dwight Walker, tailback Kullen Dickinsen and flanker Rich Rund will see a lot of action at their respective positions. In addition, senior and two-way starter Phil Motsay is back at McQuaid after spending his junior year at Rush-Henrietta.

Christian Klein and Paro are both competing for the starting QB spot. Paro will also be a force to be reckoned on defense at free safety.

Although he's got good size on his team, Sprague noted, one major weakness this season will be the lack of depth in the line. The Knights will also be without an experi-

enced kicker for the first time in many seasons.

One of the key games for the Knights this season is against one of the state's top ranked teams, Canandaigua, at McQuaid on Oct. 6. McQ, however, must first take care of business in the league with games against visiting Franklin on Sept. 15 and Marshall on Sept. 22. The Quakers have given McQuaid trouble in recent years. The Knights barely eked out a 3-0 victory last season.

## Looking to pay back

During his first year as head coach at Aquinas last season, Bob D'Ettore endured several crushing defeats against some accomplished teams. Although his team finished a respectable 3-2-1 in the C-CL and 3-4-1 overall, he still remembers the 28-0 thrashing the Little Irish received during a season-opening loss to Mike Foster's Canandaigua Braves.

"It was a culture shock, being a new coach opening against a team that has been at the top of their class for tons of years," D'Ettore said.

D'Ettore said his players got off to a slow start last season, finding it hard to adjust to a new system with the departure of former AQ coach Chris Battaglia in 1989. After losing to Canandaigua, the Little Irish tied East and suffered through a 40-8 loss to St. Joe's of Buffalo.

But things began to improve as the Little Irish defeated Franklin, Wilson and Mar-

shall. In fact, AQ missed a sectional bid by a mere field goal after losing to McQuaid, 16-13, in a key league game.

This season, Aquinas will miss star offensive/defensive tackle Alcindor Coleman. Also gone are linebackers Don Schwab and Alva Royston.

D'Ettore will have several returning seniors, including nose guard/tackle Jim Julian, offensive/defensive tackle Gary Johnson, running back/safety Kareem Patterson, QB Joe Bianchi and running back/linebacker Adrian Seay.

D'Ettore said the kicking ability of junior Mike Sloan will add a new dimension to AQ's game plan this season. The AQ coach said Sloan, a Division I prospect, is one of the best field goal kickers in the Rochester-area.

The Little Irish begin their grid season at home against a much-talented East on Sept. 14. Down the road the Little Irish will face Clyde-Savannah — one of the best teams in the state — which has former AQ assistant coach John Pezzulo training its linemen this season.

Aquinas will run up against another of its former coaches, Nick Teta, when the Little Irish battle Bishop Kearney on Sept. 29.

## High spirits at BK

The numbers are down but spirits are up at Bishop Kearney. Although coach Teta lost many star players to graduation, he and his Kings appear pumped for a winning season.

The greatest void to fill for the 1989 Section 5 Class A champions will be at running back. Academic problems have forced Lamin Massaquoi to transfer to Webster High School, Teta said. Massaquoi, a constant scoring threat, became a BK legend for the rushing yardage he accrued on the gridiron.

In fact, many fine players left the Kearney ranks, including Burt Richardson, Craig Mikel, Dwayne Yansen, David Bell and Dave Arminini. But any coach with a player as talented as running back/linebacker Rene Ingolia isn't too bad off. A Division I prospect, Ingolia will be the key weapon for Teta.

Other returning starters include tight end Jamie Twist, linebacker Greg Phillips and junior Demond Mack, who will play both safety and quarterback.

With a roster of just 23 players — and nobody up from the JV ranks — Teta has one of the smallest teams in the C-CL. His greatest fear this season is injuries, which can pose serious problems for a team with limited resources.

After playing as an independent team last fall, the Kings are back in the league but will only play the C-CL's smaller teams. Games on the schedule include strong programs such as Aquinas, McQuaid and Greece Olympia.

## Keeping the status quo

Even though this is Mark McCheyne's first year as head football coach at Geneva DeSales — which competes in the Finger Lakes West — he's no newcomer to the program. McCheyne played middle linebacker and center for DeSales in 1969 and 1970, and was a member of the first football champion at the Geneva high school in 1970.

Not much has changed, he said.

"We are basically using the same playbook as we did in 1969," McCheyne said. "We still stress simple blocking and tackling."

McCheyne was an assistant under legendary DeSales coach Harry Furman from 1980-85, and Bob Taney in 1988-89.

Now this is McCheyne's chance to take over the reins at DeSales, and he will continue to rely on the fundamentals. The new DeSales coach will not be able to count on all-league running back Chris Iké, who has

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