

BK, McQ lacrosse teams shooting to improve

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — After experiencing mediocre seasons last year, the lacrosse teams at Bishop Kearney and McQuaid Jesuit high schools are hoping to improve their records in 1991.

Bishop Kearney's Kings advanced to the Section 5 Class B sectionals before falling to Newark, 12-10, last May. Kearney finished the season 10-9 under the direction of Tom Coons.

A job transfer, however, forced Coons to resign at the end of the season. This year, John Kleehammer will take over Kearney's lax program.

A former midfielder at Irondequoit High School and Bethany College, W. Va., Kleehammer coached the junior varsity lacrosse team at Irondequoit for the past three years.



Junior Mike McDonald, the starting goalie for Kearney this year, checks for the ball after making a nice save.

Since Kleehammer is brand new to the Kearney program and his team has only been practicing for three weeks, the coach admitted that he didn't know what to expect from this year's Kings.

Although BK lost offensive standout Jon Hand to graduation, senior attackman Greg Phillips will return to give Kleehammer some offensive punch. The new coach is also looking to senior midfielder/attackman John Brunner Jr., attackman Mike Messner and midfielder Matt Cox to make up for the loss of Hand.

The Kings will miss the leadership and scoring of senior midfielder Jim Miller — who recently suffered a hip injury — but junior Derek Mercury looks ready for extensive playing time in Miller's absence.

Junior Mike McDonald will defend the goal for BK.

With only five seniors on the roster, Kleehammer said he is working with a very young team.

"We have to work on passing and catching the ball and picking it up off the ground — the fundamentals," noted the first-year varsity coach.

He added that his team's strength is in its defense, which will be a key factor as the Kings wait for the offense to get in gear.

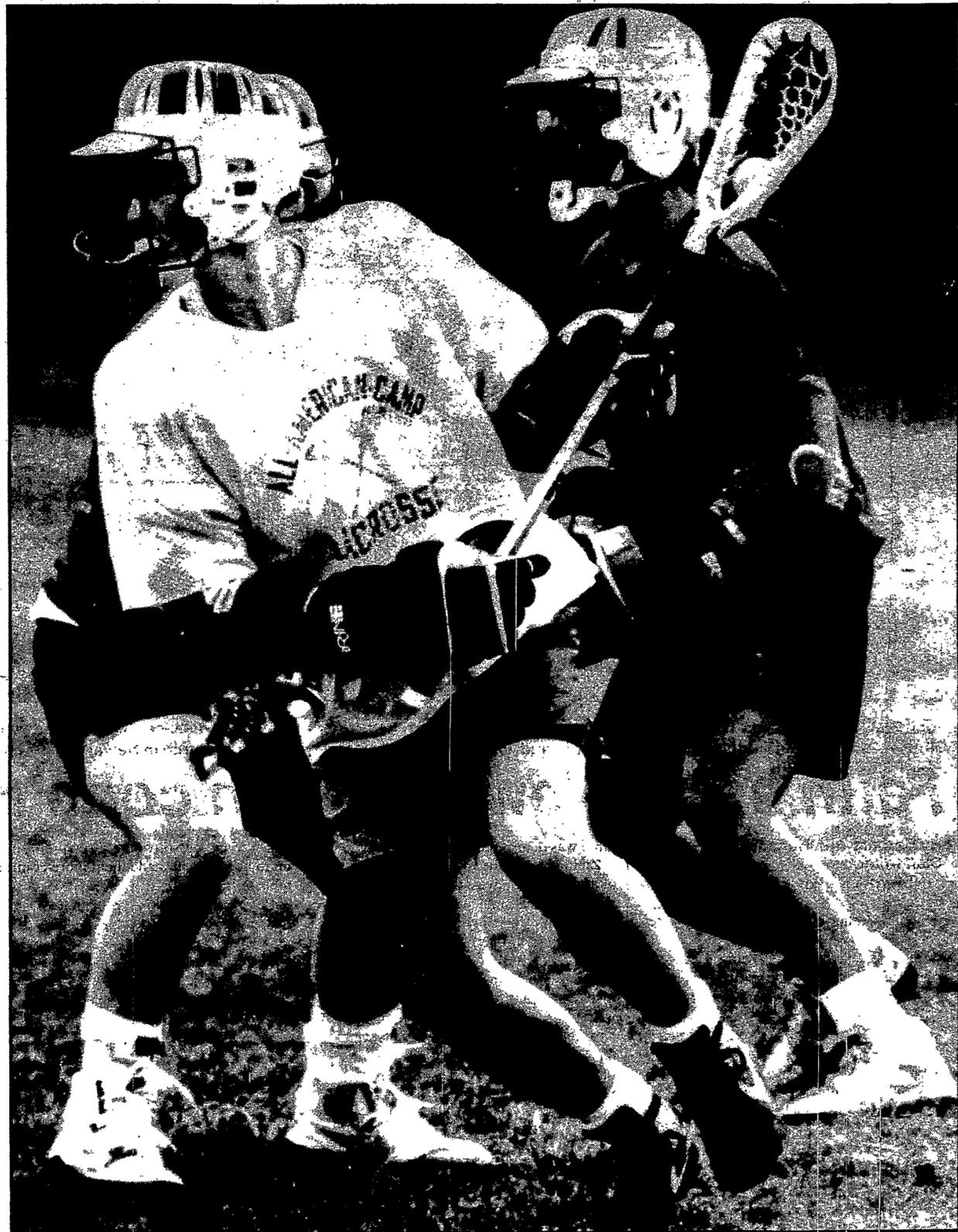
"I hope offensively we'll come around as the season goes on and as they learn the concepts of the game," the BK coach said.

Kleehammer is welcoming the coaching assistance of his younger brother, Jeff, since the Kings face a tall order this spring. Scheduled games include such traditionally strong Monroe County League powerhouses as Irondequoit, Penfield and Rush-Henrietta.

"We play them all, we play just about everyone," the coach said about Kearney's rugged schedule.

Kleehammer said that making sectionals will be one of the main goals in his inaugural season.

"The greatest challenge is getting to be competitive," the coach remarked. "I



Bishop Kearney midfielder Matt Cox cradles the ball after snaring a pass during a March 26 practice.



John Kleehammer, the new coach of Kearney's varsity lacrosse team, fixes the stick of backup goalie Erik Winarski. The Kings are scheduled to open their season at Penn Yan on April 6.

think we'll improve as the year goes on."

The Kings are scheduled to open the season at Penn Yan on April 6. The game is slated to begin at 11 a.m.

Although this spring marks the beginning of only the fourth season of lacrosse at McQuaid Jesuit High School, second-year Coach Tony Levin said he is expecting great things from his team this year.

"We have a lot of talent this year, and we just need to learn to grow together and we should do well," noted Levin, who coached lacrosse at the former Cardinal Mooney High School before coming to McQuaid last year.

After molding talent out of mostly underclassmen last spring, Levin said he will have a junior-dominated team this time around.

"You have to remember we are a very young team and we need to acquire the basic skills that enable us to succeed," explained Levin, a former defenseman at Rush-Henrietta High School and the State University College at Cortland.

The McQ coach said he will miss mid-

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