

Key injuries taking toll in early play

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

The girls' softball season began last week for diocesan high school teams, but the season-opening games did not offer a clear indication of what to expect this year.

Although some teams will rely on experienced players — especially pitchers — to help achieve winning seasons, others are plagued with injuries to several key players.

INSTANT REPLAY



Elmira Notre Dame has been able to stay relatively healthy this spring. And even though shortstop Kathy Lynch and catcher Kelly Fitzgerald graduated from last year's Section 4 Class C championship squad — which finished 15-10 — this year's Crusaders are ripe with experience.

Returning starters include junior Bobbie Jo McMail (pitcher), senior Melanie Crisp (first base), junior Heather Hanrahan (second base), senior Erin Kernan (third base), junior Becky Sherman (left field), senior Mary Valeant (center field) and sophomore Lisa Punzo (right field.)

Eighth-year Coach Dave Potter said he also brought up Heidi Hodder, last year's designated hitter on the junior varsity.

The infield is still somewhat unsettled. Senior Kim Szczepkowitz and freshman Kristen Kohan will split duties at shortstop, and Potter is also working with freshman Colleen Agan (first base) and junior Tracy Szczepkowitz (catcher).

The Crusader coach will look for McMail to keep opposing bats quiet this spring. He is also hoping for improved hitting and fielding from his teams.

After getting rained out in their season-opening game against visiting Odessa-Montour on April 8, the Crusaders (2-1) began the campaign on a sour note with a 16-4 loss to Southside in Sullivan Trail Conference action.

Potter said his team mirrored the sloppy weather that day by committing 11 errors in the game.

The Crusaders recorded their first win of the season on April 12 by drubbing host Canton, Pa., 11-4. McMail struck out 12 batters while walking just four.

On April 13, Notre Dame defeated



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

While attempting to slide into third base, Mercy's Sue Schaeffer is tagged out by Marshall's Marcia Braun during the Monarchs' 13-1 non-league win over Marshall April 9.

visiting Vestal, 3-1, behind McMail's one-hit pitching and two-run homer.

Potter said the STC will be tough again this year with the likes of Elmira Free Academy, Corning West and Corning East contending for the title along with ND.

In Section 5, Nazareth Academy (1-1) has been able to keep away from injuries but the Lasers are reeling from the loss of six players from last year's veteran-laden squad.

Gone from last year are Amy Attridge (second base), Renee Gamba (center field), Julie Sojka (outfield), Melissa Creamer (catcher), Margaret DiMaria (outfield) and Jennifer Woodrich (first base).

Despite a 6-5 loss to Midlakes in the first round of the sectionals, the Lasers finished with an impressive 15-4 mark last year. Tenth-year coach Dave Pisano will depend heavily on the four returning seniors.

Returning this spring are seniors Jennifer Olley (shortstop), Bernadette Fetzner (center field), Becky Bachmann (catcher/third base) and Christine Marchese (right field). Also back are juniors Jennifer Zumath (first base), Stacey Doran (outfield/pitcher), Sarah Grabowski (outfield) and exchange student Yvonne Gogell (designated hitter).

Sophomores Donna Sergeant (catcher/third base), Joanne Sojka (second base) and Linda Iekel (left field/pitcher) round out the squad.

Because this is one of his youngest teams ever, Pisano said he is counting on the pitching of Iekel and Doran to carry Nazareth

early in the season.

The Lasers opened their season with a setback against visiting Wilson, 14-11, on April 8. The Wildcats were helped by 14 walks.

Nazareth then traveled to Martin Luther High School in Queens, where the Lasers split a doubleheader — they lost 10-9 and won 5-1 — on April 13.

After finishing at 10-10 last season, which concluded with a first-round sectional loss to Batavia, Bishop Kearney appears to have the strong defense and hitting necessary for a successful season.

Second-year Coach Paul Forte said that even though he lost Sandy Supple (shortstop), Kate Dillon (center fielder), Wendy Issacs (first baseman) and Debbie Missle (third baseman) to graduation, he has several strong returning players.

Among those returning are Michele Pinckney (pitcher/third base), Beth Maring (second base), Kristen Greblewski (outfield), Kim Dieter (outfield), Alissa Gunerra (infield) and Holly Bhamme (infield). Forte added that he will also need

contributions from his nine underclassmen.

Injuries will keep two players off the field early this season. Bhamme recently had an appendectomy and infielder Janet D'Agostino has a torn calf muscle.

The Kings (4-1) lost their first game of the season to Rush-Henrietta, 17-6, on April 6; defeated Wilson, 25-5, on April 8; clobbered Mercy, 19-1, on April 10; crushed Marshall, 21-3, on April 12; and nipped Greece-Athena, 16-12, on April 13.

First-year Aquinas Coach Dave Herbst has inherited a relatively young team with several injuries this year. Herbst replaces Carol Jones, whose Little Irish team finished 7-11 last season after losing in the first round of the sectionals to Wilson.

Herbst said the loss of infielder Amy Reynders, who will miss this year because of a shoulder injury, will hurt AQ.

"The loss of Amy will really affect the team," said Herbst.

In addition, catcher Wendy Boprey, pitcher Lynn Wesley and outfielder Karen Berger will miss the early part of the

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KEEPING PACE WITH ...

Varsity Lacrosse

Bishop Kearney (0-0, 0-4)	April 6	PENNYVAN 12, Bishop Kearney 2
	April 9	Webster 5, BISHOP KEARNEY 3
	April 11	IRONDEQUOIT 18, Bishop Kearney 3
	April 13	GENEVA 11, Bishop Kearney 2

Varsity Baseball

Albion (0-0, 0-0)	April 10	EMPRESS 10, Albion 0
	April 12	ROCHESTER 5, Albion 0
	April 13	Albion 0, ALBION 5
	April 14	Albion 0, ALBION 11
Bishop Kearney (0-0, 1-1)	April 11	ROCHESTER 20, Bishop Kearney 1
	April 15	BISHOP KEARNEY 6, ALBION 3
Geneva (0-0, 0-1)	April 6	ROCHESTER 2, Geneva 1
	April 12	GENEVA 4, ALBION 1
	April 13	Albion 11, GENEVA 0
Madison (0-0, 0-0)	April 11	IRONDEQUOIT 8, Madison 0
	April 14	Madison 0, ALBION 0
Plattsburgh (0-0, 0-0)	April 11	ROCHESTER 10, Plattsburgh 0
	April 13	ALBION 10, Plattsburgh 0
	April 14	Plattsburgh 0, ALBION 0

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