

Seniors lead way as DeSales wins fourth title

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — They endured many tough games, suffered through several key injuries and had to share the Finger Lakes West title with Red Jacket.

But players on the Geneva DeSales baseball team said they never doubted winning a Section 5 title for the fourth year in a row.

The Saints won their second Class C title in four years (1988, '91) with the win. DeSales had also won consecutive championships in Class D (1989, '90).

The top-seeded Saints (17-2) kept their sectional streak alive by thwarting No. 3 Campbell, 3-1, at Silver Stadium on June 8.

With the win over a stubborn Campbell team, DeSales becomes the first Section 5 baseball team ever to win four consecutive sectional titles.

According to DeSales Coach Frank Pane, four players — Jim McDermott, Frank Pane Jr., and Jim and Joe Vedora — were an important part of the four championship seasons. DeSales compiled an amazing 62-5 record over the past four seasons.

McDermott said he was confident that his team would clinch the title again this year. "We've had a winning tradition here, for four years now. I knew all along," he said.

Despite suffering two leg injuries, one sustained during the football season and the other early in the spring, McDermott returned to the squad just in time for sectionals. Although he wasn't supposed to play in the Saints' first-round game, the catcher said his doctor finally agreed to let him return.

Joe Vedora pitched the first three innings, giving up two hits and striking out one. Brother Jim Vedora relieved him for the last four innings, allowing just three hits while striking out three and walking one.

The game was scoreless until the Saints batted in the top of the fifth inning. Jim Vedora reached on a single and stole second on an error. McDermott followed with a single to bring Vedora home.

The Saints added to their lead with two more runs in the top of the seventh. First-year varsity baseball player Brian Askin put down a bunt and ended up on third base after the ball was thrown into right field.

Todd Hardy, who did not start the game because of an arm injury, entered the game to pinch-run for Askin. John Conner followed with a single to score Hardy for what turned out to be the game-winning run.

Conner kept the rally going by stealing second on a third-strike pitch to Chris Lamson. Jim Vedora then launched a single down the left-field line to score Conner, whose slide narrowly beat the throw to home plate.

Campbell's only run came in the bottom of the seventh inning with two outs. Mike Hargrave, who reached on a single, scored all the way from first base when Askin dropped a fly ball in right field. The Red Jackets couldn't muster any more offense, however, as the following batter grounded out.

McDermott called the win "beautiful," adding, "We don't have all that much talent, but we play with heart and desire and that's what gets us there."

Conner said he had a good feeling about the game when he arrived at Silver Stadium on Saturday.

"This is like our second home to us. We've been here three times before," noted the center fielder from Geneva.

The Saints advanced to the final game by clipping No. 4 Avoca, 4-1, at Cohocton on June 4.

Joe Vedora allowed one run, struck out two and walked one over four innings. Jim Vedora pitched a no-hitter over the final three innings, striking out five.



DeSales' John Conner dives back to first base as Campbell's Greg Mackey awaits the pick-off attempt during the Section 5, Class C championship game at Silver Stadium June 8. The Saints defeated the Red Jackets 3-1, earning DeSales its fourth consecutive sectional title.

Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

Once again DeSales' bats didn't warm up until late in the game as the Saints scored all four of their runs in the seventh inning.

Pane singled and pinch-runner Hardy took first base. Hardy then stole second and took third on a fielder's choice. Askin followed with a single. Broomfield then took first base for Askin, stole second and came home on a single by Conner. McDermott and Joe Vedora then cracked back-to-back doubles to finish the scoring.

But it was the moment after winning their fourth sectional title that counted to this year's team. As Joe Vedora said, "We knew we would get this far. We have great coaches, great players and we never give up."

In other baseball action from the sectional tournament, top-seeded Bishop Kearney was eliminated by No. 3 Hornell (19-5), 8-0, in the Section 5 Class AA semifinals at Wayland on June 4.

According to Coach Ed Nietopski, Hornell's two ace pitchers — Mike Parker and Dave Shepard — made all the difference.

The two Red Raider hurlers gave up only two hits, a single by Brian Gefell in the third inning and a single by Bob McGrail in the fifth.

A home run by Shepard in the fourth inning gave Hornell a 2-0 lead. The Red Raiders then rallied for five runs in the sixth inning.

Mark Andolino pitched six innings for the Kings, giving up eight hits and striking out four. Jamie Twist allowed a single run in one-inning of relief.

The Kings' coach said he will be losing top hitters Mark Keenan and Gefell, third baseman Tom Kennedy, catcher McGrail, outfielder Kory Kuhns and pitcher Twist to graduation.

Bishop Kearney finished its season at 20-5.

In sectional softball action, Geneva De-

Sales and Elmira Notre Dame were each eliminated in the finals. Bishop Kearney never made it past the semis.

In Section 5 Class D, No. 5 DeSales (9-9) was shut out by No. 2 Whitesville (18-3), 8-0, in the championship game at Hornell on June 7.

Danielle Boncaro went the distance, giving up nine hits, striking out three and walking two.

The game was scoreless until the fourth inning when the Blue Jays scored twice. After notching another score in the fifth inning, Whitesville blew the game open in the bottom of the sixth with five more runs.

In the Class D semifinal game on June 4, DeSales trounced No. 8 Bradford, 7-3, at Hornell.

Boncaro went the distance once again, allowing 10 hits and striking out one.

The Saints scored the winning run in the bottom of the sixth inning with two outs. Emily Parshall singled and then stole second and third. Liberatore singled and stole second, before Cecilia McCann doubled to drive home Parshall. Boncaro singled to bring in Liberatore, and a single by Megan Jenkins plated a run from McCann.

Liberatore finished with a first-inning double and two singles; Boncaro tripled in the third and added two singles; Jenkins and Parshall each collected two singles.

In Section 4, second-seeded Notre Dame

— the only other diocesan softball team to reach the finals — lost in the Class C final to Sidney (23-0), 4-0, at Cattleville Park on June 3.

Sidney sophomore Liz Wagner tossed her fourth no-hitter of the season in shutting out the Crusaders.

Bobbie Jo McMail pitched a three-hitter, striking out eight and walking one.

Notre Dame wrapped up the season 13-8.

Fourth-seeded Bishop Kearney (18-8) couldn't get past the semifinal round of the Section 5 Class BB tourney, losing to No. 9 Hornell, 4-1, at McAvoy Park on June 4.

Cathy Molinari went the distance for the Kings, giving up seven hits and walking four.

Offensively, the Kings didn't get a hit until the sixth inning when Kim Dieter singled. Kearney's only run came in the seventh when Beth Maring tripled, Nicole Geier walked and Holy Bhamme sacrificed to score Maring.

Although BK started hitting late in the game, Forte said it wasn't enough.

"We got the bat on the ball for the most part, but we couldn't do much with it," explained Forte.

The Kings are losing three starters to graduation — Kristin Greblewski, Michele Pinckney and Maring — as well as seniors Alissa Gunerra, Bhamme and Dieter.

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