



Todd Hardy of DeSales attempts to pick-off Prattsburg's Nate Loesch during the Section 5 Class D final at Silver Stadium June 13.

Aris Economopoulos/Photo intern

## DeSales runs its sectional streak to five

### Saints overcome Prattsburg; earn Class D championship

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Other than the fact that they walked away with yet another sectional trophy, you won't see much similarity between this and past DeSales High School baseball teams.

And that suits the 1992 Saints just fine.

"Not many people believed in us, except ourselves," remarked pitcher Bill Sweeney.

"This is the best, by far. We weren't expected to do this," added shortstop Todd Hardy.

Sweeney and Hardy, both third-year seniors, were guiding forces down the stretch as DeSales captured its fifth consecutive Section 5 championship. The Saints outlasted Prattsburg, 10-7, in the Class D finals this past Saturday, June 13, at Silver Stadium.

The Geneva-based school, seeded No. 1 in Class D, won its last 13 games of the season to finish with a 16-2 record. DeSales had advanced to the sectional finals by defeating 16th-seeded Mount Morris and No. 8 Whitesville before scoring a 3-1 semifinal win over No. 13 Gananda on June 9 at Newark's



Right fielder Mark Higgins makes a late-game catch for the Saints in the win over No. 3 Prattsburg.

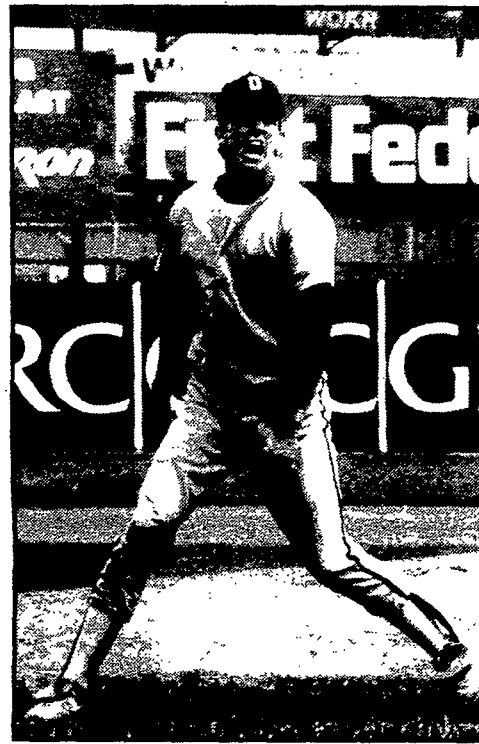
Colburn Park.

Although the Saints have now lengthened their amazing string of sectional crowns, back in April there was no guarantee of a successful season after DeSales had graduated many key players from last year's champion.

"The last two years we were so talented from one through nine. This year we didn't know what to expect," Sweeney admitted.

Yet Coach Pete French said, "When you're given no chance, it helps."

DeSales quickly found that it was in



Pitcher Bill Sweeney celebrates DeSales' fifth consecutive Section 5 championship after the Saints defeated Prattsburg, 10-7. The top-seed in Class D, DeSales won its last 13 games of the season to finish with a record of 16-2.

for a battle in the win over No. 3 Prattsburg. Sweeney, who had allowed a total of three runs in the three previous sectional wins — including a no-hit shutout against Whitesville and a three-hitter against Gananda — surrendered two runs to Prattsburg in both the first and third innings.

But DeSales, batting first, matched that run production and never fell behind. The Saints took advantage of three Viking errors to push across a pair of first-inning runs and scored two more in the third when — after a walk to left fielder Ron Lawson — Sweeney unloaded a home run over the right field fence's 380-foot mark.

Home-run ball also favored DeSales in the fourth inning as the Saints took the lead for good. After center fielder Mike Broomfield walked and right fielder Mark Higgins reached on an error, Hardy blasted a drive to the center field wall and galloped around the bases for a three-run, inside-the-park homer to make the score 7-4.

Both of DeSales' home runs came with two outs.

Prattsburg got one run in the bottom of the fourth to make it 7-5 before DeSales scored twice in the fifth on yet another two-out hit — a two-run single by Higgins.

Prattsburg added a run in the fifth for a 9-6 score. The Saints' final run came in the seventh on an RBI single by second baseman Jeremiah McGrath with — once again — two outs.

Although the Vikings' Brian Putnam and Chris Robbins led off Prattsburg's half of the seventh with singles, Sweeney held Prattsburg to just one more run.

"The heat got to me early (temperatures climbed into the mid-80s), and Prattsburg hits and runs well," admitted Sweeney, who allowed 10 hits.

DeSales finished with eight hits off the Vikings' Putnam.

The win marked a successful return to the Class D playoffs for DeSales, which competed in Class C in 1991. The Saints also won sectional crowns in Class D in 1989 and 1990, as well as Class C in 1988.

Interestingly, the June 13 finals matched two defending sectional champions: Prattsburg was the reigning Class D title holder.

However, DeSales almost never made it that far because of a strong effort from upset-minded Gananda.

The Saints were blanked for five innings by the Blue Panthers' Ryan Aller (who finished with 13 strikeouts in 6 1/3 innings), and Gananda broke a 0-0 tie when it scored its only run in the bottom of the fifth.

DeSales answered right back in the sixth when Sweeney hit a run-scoring triple to deep center field and came home after a throwing error on the play.

First baseman Chris Lamson picked up an insurance run in the seventh when he singled and came all the way around to score after Gananda committed two more throwing errors resulting from Lamson's attempted steal of second base.

### Charities Classic set for Ontario June 24

CANANDAIGUA — The third annual Ontario County Charities Classic golf tournament will take place Wednesday, June 24, at Centerpointe Country Club, 1940 Brickyard Road.

This year's tournament beneficiaries are Ontario County Association for Retarded Citizens as well as the Clifton Springs, Geneva and Greater Canandaigua YMCAs.

For registration information, call Jim Buchanan at 716/924-5346.

### Notre Dame doubles team falls in state tournament competition

WHITE PLAINS — It took a big first-round upset to get to the state tennis tournament, and Elmira Notre Dame's Peter Finnerty and Sunil Abraham made a strong attempt at performing the same kind of magic once they arrived there.

Finnerty, a senior, and Abraham, a junior, put up a strong battle against the state tourney's third-seeded doubles team before getting eliminated. The states were held June 12-13.

Finnerty and Abraham, representing Section 4, drew No. 3 seeds James Oliveres and Chris Bullaro from Syosset High School (Section 8, Nassau County, L.I.) in the opening round. They led 3-2 in the first set, but lost that set by a 6-4 score and dropped the second set, 6-2.

Dropping into the loser's bracket, Finnerty and Abraham were dealt another quick defeat when they lost 6-2,

6-2 to James Thaser and Nick Park from York of Section 5.

"It was kind of an awakening, playing at this level," remarked Dave Bernatavitz, ND's head coach.

Finnerty and Abraham had become eligible for state play by reaching the finals of the Section 4 state qualifier held June 5 in Binghamton. The Crusader pair knocked off the No. 1 seeds, Andy and Ed Pan of Binghamton, in the opening round of that event.

This year marked the first time since 1981 that Notre Dame had sent anyone to state competition.

The Crusaders also excelled as a team in 1992, going 13-2 in dual matches and finishing second in the Sullivan Trail Conference before capturing their first Section 4 Class C championship in eight years.

— Mike Latona