

New programs dot diocesan lacrosse scene

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

If you took a poll to determine the favorite sport at Catholic schools in the diocese, you'd get a fairly mixed response.

There's little room for argument, however, about the most quickly rising sport.

Within the past decade, varsity lacrosse programs have increased from one (Bishop Kearney) to four (BK, McQuaid Jesuit, Aquinas Institute and Elmira Notre Dame) at the five diocesan high schools offering boys' athletics.

Two of these programs have surfaced extremely recently: Notre Dame is putting its inaugural varsity unit on the field this year, while Aquinas is entering just its second season.

As the 1994 campaign gets underway, here's a look at the lacrosse programs at each school:

Knights riding high

McQuaid is coming off its best finish ever, posting a final record of 10-8 last year and reaching the Section 5 Class A tournament semifinals.

Coach Tony Levin believes that, despite a brutal 1994 schedule, the seventh-year McQuaid program is capable of achieving another winning season.

"I'm really looking forward to it. We're real green in some areas, but we could be good if the young kids come around," said Levin, whose Knights open their season on Tuesday, April 12, at home against Kearney (4 p.m. start).

Leading attackmen for the Knights are junior Mike Kehoe and senior Jeff Shepard. Top midfielders are seniors Steve Dianetti and Brian Felber, along with juniors Chris Schiller and Pat Holden.

Defense is what Levin rates as "in my eyes, the strength of the team. We have so many players." Leading defensive performers are seniors Pat McAvoy, Dave DiMitro and Jamie Fishgold; and sophomore Pete Milliman. In goal is another sophomore, Michael Hayes.

McQuaid plays an independent schedule but will face tough Monroe County League programs such as Fairport, Rush-Henrietta and Penfield this season.

"There's nobody that can say if we make sectionals, we backed into it," Levin commented.

Kearney relies on "D"

With a large influx of young offensive players, Bishop Kearney Coach John Kleehammer is turning to his defense for leadership in 1994.

"The defense is going to be OK, and will have to carry us until our offense jells. We're going to have to win low-scoring games in order to qualify for sec-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Aquinas Institute's varsity lacrosse team worked on skills in a March 31 scrimmage against Fairport at Minerva Deland School.

tionals," observed Kleehammer, whose Kings were scheduled to open their season on April 7 at home against Geneva (11 a.m. start). BK finished with a 5-11 record in 1993.

Defensive standouts are seniors Matt Xaisanasy, Chris Muscato and Sean Hudson; and juniors Jeff Smith, Chris O'Connell and Joe Wesley. They'll protect sophomore goalie Sean McNamara.

Top attackmen are senior Todd Delehanty and sophomores Tom Staub and Terry Schmitz. Leading midfielders are seniors Colin Davis and Mike Gorski, ju-

niors Aaron Delehanty and Dan Shot, and sophomores Jay Mersdorf, Chad Mayer, Bill Gruhn, Joel Zaleski and Brad Vorndran.

Numbers up at AQ

Buoyed by the addition of several athletes who have excelled in other sports, Aquinas' varsity roster has more than doubled — from 17 last season to 37 in 1994.

"We have the depth that we didn't have last year, and we basically have everybody back. I'm very, very optimistic," remarked Coach Dave Stein.

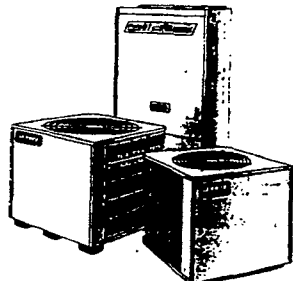
Aquinas already has two games under its belt. The Little Irish competed in a tournament at St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia, Pa., losing 11-5 to Radnor High School on March 26 and 7-6 to Conwell-Egan High School on March 27. AQ was scheduled to open locally against Webster on April 5, and its home opener is set for April 12 against Waterloo (4:15 p.m. start).

Top AQ attackmen are sophomore Kevin Callahan, who scored four goals at the Philadelphia tournament; senior Joe

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