

SPORTS
FEATURE

Snow slows beginning of 1994 baseball season

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Last week's weather was directly responsible for a string of no-hitters.

When you receive two big snowfalls, nobody hits. Or pitches or fields, for that matter.

Two season-opening baseball games for Aquinas Institute, and one by Bishop Kearney, were postponed due to the persistent cold and snowy weather.

However, as temperatures slowly warmed through last weekend, it appeared that Aquinas and Kearney — along with McQuaid Jesuit and Geneva DeSales — would manage to get their openers in sometime this week.

Elmira Notre Dame fared slightly better in the Southern Tier, squeezing in two of four scheduled games. ND played a pair of home contests, winning 13-5 over Thomas Edison on April 6 and losing 7-6 to Canton on April 9.

Here's a look at the key players on each of the five squads:

AQ relies on newcomers

Aquinas is hoping to maintain the momentum of last year's strong finish, when the Little Irish reached the Section 5 semifinal round before losing a classic 11-inning struggle to top-seeded Webster. AQ posted a final record of 19-8 and also gained the City-Catholic League co-championship with McQuaid.

Continued success will hinge upon the emergence of several new players, said Coach Richard Pillitter.

"I'm very concerned about our hitting because we lost six starters," Pillitter remarked. "For us to be successful, probably more than ever, everyone's going to have to contribute."

Two veteran pitchers will lead the Little Irish: senior Ken Keilman, who posted a 7-1 record last season; and junior Brian Natalie, who went 4-1. New to the pitching staff are four sophomores: Kyle McGee, Ken Farrell, Brian Campe and Todd Ciavardini.

Junior Jim Miner, who batted .343 last year, is the starting catcher. He's backed up by another junior, Jim Kelly.

At first base is junior James Stevens. Seniors Ken Bianchi and Matt Delly patrol second base and shortstop, respectively; and senior Mike Ciavarri is at third base. Junior Frank Grego serves as a backup infielder.

Senior David Khuns plays left field, with McGee, Natalie or Keilman in center when not pitching. Farrell and Campe share right-field duties.

Another crown for Kings?

If history can serve as an omen, then this might be a championship year for Bishop Kearney.

The last time Ed Nietopski coached a Section 5 championship baseball squad was in 1982 at the former Cardinal Mooney High School, and he also captured basketball sectionals that year. In 1994, he's already completed half of the same combination by recently winning the Section 5 Class B basketball crown.

"Well, who knows? In baseball, anything can happen. It's a game of inches," said Nietopski when asked about the possibilities of another BK title squad.

"I think this will be a pretty good year," commented Nietopski, whose Kings play an independent schedule and are coming off a 9-13 season. "It's kind of hard to tell how far we'll go, but I'm looking forward to a winning season."

Leading a deep pitching staff are seniors Colin Ribble, Jason Derleth and Dave Barry, along with junior C.J. Schrank. Other pitchers are juniors Greg Maier, Pete Kinsella and Jason Dale.

Starting catching duties will be split between seniors Chet Waver and Dave Fuehrer, with junior Dave O'Neil serving



File photo

It's a new year for baseball thrills and chills, such as this collision between Brockport's Barry Sullivan and McQuaid's Cy Glavin (12) in a game last year.

as backup.

Juniors Eric Mathis and Chris Stinson occupy first base, with junior Sean Nicholas and senior Bob Ng at second. Junior Ryan Van Allen is the starting shortstop, and senior Fred Tillinghast is at third base.

Sophomore Chris Pipa is slated for outfield duty, and Ribble and Derleth will also see considerable time as outfielders.

Ample arms at McQuaid

McQuaid Jesuit is armed and ready for the 1994 season, with nine of the 17 Knights projected as pitchers.

These hurlers include seniors Brian Kornfield, John Rizzo, Matt Podmenik, Matt Barbato and Pat Derleth; and juniors Dave Germano, Phil Nawrocki, Chris Pilato and Pat Snajder.

Catchers are Derleth, senior Rob Rice and junior Mike Gaudio. First base is covered by Barbato, with Pilato and juniors Brian Sprague, T.J. Cashette and Tim Lincoln slated for middle infield. Junior Andy Hammond and Kornfield are at third base.

Junior Jay Magee, sophomore Donny Cortina, Rizzo, Podmenik and Rice will all spend time in the outfield.

Coach Mike Fennell's club finished 16-7 a year ago.

Notre Dame optimistic

Elmira Notre Dame's first game produced some intriguing statistics: the Crusaders only managed three hits against Edison but took advantage of 16 walks to score 13 runs. ND then pounded out 13 hits against Canton but came up one run short.

Overall, Coach John Cain is optimistic about his club's chances for success as it prepares to do battle in the Sullivan Trail Conference.

"If our pitching comes through, we ought to do pretty well," said Cain, whose Crusaders ended up 10-9 last year. "Our defense hasn't been too bad. It's something we've worked a lot on."

The pitching staff is anchored by seniors Mike Eisenman and Tom McNamara, with senior Alex Jordan and sophomores Steve Janeski and Rob McNamara also slated for mound duty.

Senior Matt Fogarty is the starting catcher. Infield positions include McNamara, Eisenman and junior J.J. Brady at first base; junior Kevin Wilson at second base and his brother Dan, a senior, at shortstop; and freshman Tug Ollock at third base.

Starting outfielders are junior Joel Stephens in center, junior Mike Lynch in left and Janeski in right. Additional outfielders include Jordan and juniors Matt Cornacchio, Peter Duchy, Rob Fish-

er and Jim Whittaker.

Saints look to bounce back

Geneva DeSales' incredible string of

five consecutive Section 5 championships was snapped when the Saints were eliminated in the first round of last year's Class D playoffs. They finished with a 6-9 record.

But even though Coach Pete French doesn't rate his team a front-runner in the 1994 Finger Lakes West league, he's not ruling out the possibility of reclaiming the sectional title.

"When you stay in (sectional class) D, you always have a shot," French commented. "If we keep working hard, who knows by the end of the year. We could cause some trouble."

Junior Jayson Lamson leads a pitching corps which also includes seniors Dan Morgan and B.J. Carter. Sophomore Dave Morgan is the starting catcher, with junior Ben Kiley backing him up.

Junior Kyle Perillo handles first-base duties, with junior Mike Sweeney at second, senior Jeremiah McGrath at shortstop and senior Don Cass at third base.

In the outfield, seniors Robert Mungo and Eric Colton are on the left and right sides, respectively, while Carter plays in center when not on the mound. Rounding out the lineup is junior Steve Davoli, who serves as a utility outfielder and infielder.

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