

Race for Private-Parochial may go to the wire

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Our Lady of Mercy has the hitters.

Aquinas Institute features strong pitching and defense.

Bishop Kearney's coach says his team "has more pitching depth than we've ever had."

And Nazareth Academy, despite a 2-5 start, showed flashes of potential with a win last week over Kearney.

To put it more concisely, there are no shoo-ins for this year's Private-Parochial League softball title.

The five-team league — which also includes Harley Allendale-Columbia — could produce a carbon copy of last year's finish, when Mercy captured the crown with a 6-2 league record while AQ and BK tied for second place at 5-3.

Our Lady of Mercy has begun the 1995 season with three consecutive wins, including a 2-0 mark in Private-Parochial play. The Monarchs flexed their muscles in a big way with a 31-17 win over Churchville-Chili last Saturday, April 29, at McAvoy Park in Irondequoit.

"I can't remember ever scoring 31 runs in a game — and they were all hits. We weren't scoring runs because of (Churchville's) mistakes," Coach Mike Baxter noted.

Monarch pitchers include senior Sharon Gelia and junior Karrie Butera. The No. 1 catcher is freshman Ashleigh Cirilla, who paced Mercy's 27-hit attack against Churchville with two home runs including a grand slam. Also catching is sophomore Stephanie Mikulsky.

First-base duties are shared by junior Leah Oliveiri and sophomore Christine Murray. Sophomore Julie Antignano starts at second base with junior Casey Steve as backup, and juniors Katie Fitzgerald and Meredith Cirilla occupy shortstop and third base, respectively.

An all-junior outfield features Katie Kurycki in left, Joanne Hanna in center, Kathleen Purcell in right. Mary Ellen Dzakowic is a backup.

Aquinas Institute has started out 2-0 in league play and 5-1 overall. The Little Irish ended last week on a successful note by edging Penfield, 8-7, April 28 at home.

AQ is buoyed by strong pitching from senior Amy Bierley and Michelle DeMunck and junior Dee Anzalone. Senior Yvonne LaForce completes the rotation, with senior Jenny Werner handling catching duties. Sophomores Julie Khuns and Sally Natalie are backup catchers.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Nazareth Academy's Larissa Huge receives the throw too late as Katie Sadler of Aquinas Institute slides safely into second base. The Little Irish defeated the Lasers 11-2 during a Private-Parochial League game played April 25 at LaGrange Field.

Infielders include senior Liz Johnston at first base, sophomore T.J. Totedo at second with junior Christy Chase as backup, senior Katie Sadler at short, and junior Alicia Brognia at third.

Outfielders are junior Michelle Guyette in center and senior Janine Bianchi in left. Bierley, Anzalone and LaForce also see time in the outfield.

Coach Dave Herbst said that his team prides itself on its excellent defensive ability.

"If they can't score on us, they can't win. That's our theory," Herbst remarked.

Bishop Kearney is off to a 1-1 start in league play and 4-2 overall. The Kings ended last week by winning 20-4 over Nazareth (in six innings) in the Kearney-Nazareth Invitational's consolation game April 29 at McAvoy Park. Five days earlier, BK had been defeated 16-11 by host Nazareth.

The Kings' pitching ensemble should be strengthened once junior Crystal Bishop returns from academic ineligibility, possibly within the week. Junior Laurie Schuler and sophomore Autumn Mills lend further pitching strength, and sophomore Ryan Barry serves as backstop. Mills threw a no-hitter in her six-inning outing against Nazareth April 29.

Infielders are senior Courtney Shores

at first base, senior Jen Nicolay at second, freshman Katie McIntyre at shortstop, and junior Melissa Valbergs at third. Top outfielders are seniors Erin Pinkney and Liz DeMatteis, along with Schuler and Mills.

Completing the roster are sophomore infielder Nicole Lajuett, sophomore outfielder Nora Haldeman, and junior outfielder Amy Feldbauer.

"Once we get our act together, I think we can compete with anybody," said Coach Paul Forte.

Nazareth Academy's all-junior pitching staff is led by Jenny Massare, with Lisa Johnson and Deidre Britton also seeing considerable action. Sophomore Robin DeMark is the catcher.

Infielders include senior Michele Yax at first, senior Larissa Huge at second, senior Traci Sergeant at short, and junior Betsy Rivera at third. Outfielders are senior Tenley Ostrowski in left, junior Jessica Benthin in center, and junior Melissa Heisley in right. Junior infielder/outfielder Michelle Marzano rounds out the roster.

Nazareth has begun its year at 1-2 in Private-Parochial action and 2-5 overall. In addition to their April 24 win over Kearney, the Lasers rallied from an 8-1 deficit to defeat Wilson Magnet, 22-8,

April 26.

First-year Coach Tom Davies said his club was "doing fine, as far as I'm concerned" before suffering losses to Waterloo and BK in the Kearney Tournament.

"I think we have potential," Davies said.

In the Finger Lakes West, Geneva DeSales has high hopes for success when the Section 5 Class D tournament begins next month.

"I'd be very disappointed if we don't reach the finals," said Coach Vic Harris. "Offensively, we're doing very well. We're extremely fast."

The Saints have compiled a 5-2 record, including 3-2 in Finger Lakes West play. They were averaging more than 14 runs per game through last week.

Sophomore Melanie Chelenza and junior Melissa Liberatore are the key pitchers, with junior Emily Krakowiak at catcher. A young infield features senior Rosemary Guerri and sophomore Nicole Palmer at first, sophomore Theresa Patrick at second, sophomore Allison Hilberer at short, and sophomore Kim Hagadorn at third.

Top outfielders are junior Bridget Buckley in left, Liberatore in center, and sophomore Heather Pike and senior Carlene Cosentino in right. Completing the roster are junior designated hitter Becky Balsley, junior pinch-hitter Lara Carpenter, and three utility players: senior Kerry Van Sickle, sophomore Charina Carissimi, and freshman Michelle Riviello.

At Elmira Notre Dame, the Crusaders have started 0-3 in the tough Sullivan Trail Conference and 2-5 overall. However, Coach Dan Delaney believes his team can still be a force in the Section 4 playoffs.

"When we get into (Class) D play at sectionals, we'll do all right. I've got some girls who can flat-out play ball," Delaney commented.

Senior Christie Garwood is the top pitcher, and sophomore Tania Meck serves as backup pitcher as well as the starting catcher. Infielders are junior Carrie West at first base, sophomore Kerri Delaney at second, junior Emily Violette at short, and junior Michelle May at third.

Outfielders are senior Jenny Hill in left, sophomore Monica Bennett in center, and senior Beth Mingus in right. Junior Jenny Spaziani is the designated hitter. Four juniors — outfielders Valerie Burt and Theresa Hayner, and infielders Katie Audinwood and Katie Lilly — complete the roster.

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