

Shamrocks have many first-time state champs on team

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Redford Catholic Central won three state championships in the last school year, but it was the first for many of the seniors on the baseball team.

They experienced the thrill Saturday with a 6-5 win over Troy in the Division I state final in Battle Creek.

First-time state champions included Mario D'Horin, Mark Cole, Bob Malek, Dan Duffey, Matt Niemiec, Brent Zak, Anthony Tomez and Chris Woodruff.

CC seniors Casey Rogowski, Dave Lusky and Nick DiBella and junior Matt Lortan had already won state titles in other sports. Rogowski, DiBella and Lusky were on back-to-back football state champions in Division I and Rogowski was a two-time state champion in wrestling.

Lortan played on last fall's state football champion.

Rogowski embarks on his professional career with the Chicago White Sox, who selected him in

BASEBALL

the 13th round of the Major League draft, looking for rings for his other hand.

"CC is the first-ever school in the state to win state championships in the same season in football, hockey and baseball. The Shamrocks are usually ranked among the top 10 in each sport and this year incredibly senior leadership in all sports really showed."

"D'Horin, who started the Shamrocks' winning rally in the seventh with a single to right field, is one of their unsung heroes, according to Rogowski."

D'Horin, who will join Cole and Woodruff as Madonna baseball recruits, played a steady second base and batted ninth.

"Lusky's two-run homer in the third that tied the score 5-5 traveled way over the fence, but not too far that someone couldn't retrieve it for his parents."

"The Shamrocks paid special tribute to one of their biggest fans, Sam Borri, a CC graduate from the 1950s. CC assistant coach Al Moran waved Borri over from the stands after the win over Troy and gave him the trophy to hold. One of the team photos included Borri surrounded by players and coaches."

"If anyone doesn't know, this is Sam Borri, our super fan," Moran said.

"Rogowski doesn't need a teammate to play catch with on off days. He just throws to his girlfriend, Brighton High all-state softball player Libby Voshell."

Voshell was asked who has the stronger arm and she smiled, deferring to Rogowski's father, Dennis.

"She does, by far," he said, at least giving the politically correct answer if he's stretching the truth.

So now we know why she plays shortstop and he plays first base. Voshell's team was knocked out of the tournament the same day Rogowski hit a grand slam in CC's 10-2 win over Brighton in a quarterfinal. Voshell couldn't hide her allegiance to her boyfriend. The win meant Rogowski could delay signing with the White Sox.

"I'm glad CC won because Casey got to stay longer," said Voshell, headed to Bowling Green for softball.

Rogowski signed a pro contract after playing in the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association All-Star Game Tuesday at Tiger Stadium.

He received a \$35,000 signing bonus and will get his college education paid for whenever he decides to start.

"Tomez was selected in the 23rd round of the draft by the Cleveland Indians. Already signed with Eastern Michigan University for baseball, Tomez said he would decide on his future after meeting with Cleveland officials this week."

Lusky, an EMU football recruit who is supposed to be Tomez's roommate, has been letting people know how he feels.

"He keeps telling people I'm going to Eastern," Tomez said.

Tomez didn't pitch in Friday's 12-1 semifinal win over Portage, hoping another day's rest would allow him to be ready for the championship game.

Tomez set Troy down in order in the first before the Colts erupted for five runs on six hits and a walk in the second.

Salter had the feeling Tomez wasn't his usual self.

"Troy's a good team and we were worried about Tomez coming in," Salter said. "Usually we ask him after three days rest how he's feeling and he says 'Give me the ball.' Today he said, 'Yeah, I'll give it my best.'"

Tomez remained in the game as a left fielder and finished 1-for-3 with a run scored and an RBI.

"I didn't have it and tried to get it out," Tomez said. "Charlie stepped up. I thank God coach let me stay in the game."

"The win over Troy gave CC coach John Salter his 470th career win against 168 losses in 19 seasons."

The Shamrocks won one previous state championship under Salter, in 1987. The 1997 team, which finished 18-14, is the only one in Salter's tenure that failed to win at least 20 games.

The Shamrocks have won four Catholic League championships, 10 districts and five regionals. They have reached the Final Four three of the last five years.

Moran has been one of CC's assistant coaches since the early 1980s. Ed Hamacher joined the staff in the early 90s and Kevin Walters came aboard a few years ago.

College coaches and profes-

sional scouts are nearly as impressed by the size of CC's players as they are with their talent. Rogowski, Dave Lusky, Anthony Tomez, Matt Lortan and Chris Woodruff tip the scales at more than 200 pounds.

Woodruff lost 30 pounds in a rigorous off-season program and still carries 225 pounds on his 6-foot-1 frame, but it's a lean-looking 225.

"I just did some lifting and running and ate healthy," Woodruff said.

Cole, one of the smaller Shamrocks, had an embarrassing moment in the semifinal against Portage Central when he headed for first base, thinking a fourth-inning pitch he received was the fourth ball for a walk.

The umpire reminded him it was only ball three. The next pitch was ruled a strike, and Cole popped out on the following pitch.

Hey Mark, remember, the 3-ball, 2-strike rule is used only in Catholic League play.

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The Shamrocks, whose first celebration was interrupted by the news that Malek's hit was a ground-ruled double, celebrated for good this time.

The state championship was the third for CC this year, joining the football and hockey teams as No. 1.

"It's great," Malek said. "We

worked so hard and now we've got the triple crown for the school. It was a total team effort."

The Shamrocks (38-1) scored three first-inning runs, a walk and three hits, including RBI singles by Dave/Lusky and Chris Woodruff. The Colts gave Leston a 5-3 lead after chasing Tomez with five runs in the second, but Lusky's mammoth, two-run homer with Rogowski aboard tied the score in the third.

"The one really big mistake was made when I threw that beach ball up there, and that kid just hit it to South America," Leston said. "That was the only thing I was really upset about."

The Colts collected six hits off Tomez in the second, with four of the five runs coming after two were out.

Todd Reibling and John Mulka had RBI singles; Leston delivered a two-run single, and Jim Goldhof drove in one run with a double.

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The Board of Education reserves the right to accept any item in the bid; to accept or reject any or all bids; to waive any informalities therein; or for reasons of establishing uniformity, to award the contract to other than the low bidder.
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LINDA K. ENBERG, Secretary
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