

Cranes prepare for 26th campaign

Cranbrook Nine face rebuilding; six vets return

This will be a classic rebuilding year for Cranbrook School's varsity baseball program.

Not a single player returns with as much as two years of varsity experience—two years in which the Cranes put together an impressive 30-14 record. They were ranked fifth among the Class B high schools in Michigan last spring.

Only six players return from the 1976 squad to form a base for the rebuilding. Coach Dominic Marinelli will doubtless have to start with the pitching, where only John Hatcher is back.

The senior lefthander was 3-0 last spring, but pitched just 10 innings. He was, however, a workhorse of the summer staff.

from senior Scott Whiston, who was at first base last spring but posted a 4-1 pitching record in summer ball. His .631 batting average, which led a pair of home runs, was also tops for the summer team.

But it will be difficult to replace the graduated Jay Purcell, who notched a sparkling 0.34 earned run average in 91 innings of pitching last spring. His 11-3 record made him the winningest pitcher ever for Cranbrook.

Some experience on the left side of the infield is present in senior Arthur Purrell and two juniors, Jeff Faver and Jim McVey.

The steady McVey, who saw all of his more limited action at shortstop in 1974, will be a key figure in rebuilding the middle of the infield.

place Bill Conn, a .907 fielder at shortstop, who hit .314, and second baseman Don Smith, who included a barrage of extra-base hitting in his team-leading .460 average.

Senior Tom Harbeck, who came along rapidly last year, is the sole returning player from the 1974 outfield, which was stripped almost clean by graduation.

For the 26th straight year, Cranbrook will start its extensive baseball schedule with a two-week spring vacation trip to the South.

After 10 days of practice in Atlanta and in Winter Park, Fla., the Cranes will head north for a five-game trip schedule in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area.

ACTION WILL include a pair of doubleheaders sandwiched around a single game, all in a 48-hour period. The opener will be a twin bill with Lockland High School on March 27.

After a single game with Harrison High School on March 28, the Cranes will conclude with their traditional Saturday morning doubleheader with Reading High School's defending state champions on March 29.

In the regular season, Cranbrook will have its hands full—with three Saturday doubleheaders and simultaneous competition in two leagues.

This will be the Cranes' final year in the travel-loaded Inter-State Prep

School League, which they first joined in 1959. And it will be their first season in the Detroit-area Metro Confer-

ence. Taken together, they will have

21 games with teams from one league or the other.

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(Table assumes taxpayer is in a 25% tax bracket and all figures are based on a 5% investment return.)



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