

Schoolcraft will receive boost from newcomers

BY C.J. RUSAK
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If a coach brings back six players from his previous soccer season — and that team was 10-4 — it would seem there would be good reason for optimism.

But if those six guys are all on one team, scrimmaging a team of all newcomers, and the veterans are losing 1-0 at halftime, the optimism would diminish substantially. Right?

Of course — unless you're Schoolcraft College men's coach Van Dimitriou.

SOCCER

That's because it isn't a matter of the veterans slipping. It's that the recruits are darn good.

The Ocelots coming back from last season's squad, which lost in the NJCAA Inter-Regional Tournament, are not guaranteed anything. "Not one of them has a starting position made," said Dimitriou.

Returning for SC are keeper Eric Anderson (Brighton), midfielders Dave Lotarski (Dearborn) and Naum Popovskii (Livonia Stevenson), stoppers Mike Black (Livonia Churchill) and Joel Wizinaky (Dearborn Heights Crestwood), and utility player Matt Shaw.

All, according to Dimitriou, are capable of helping guide the Ocelots back to the NJCAA Tournament, which they qualified for in 1997. SC has recorded back-to-back 18-win seasons.

Making a run at a national title will require something more, however, and Dimitriou believes he might have the proper mix — if he can sort through the 20-plus players trying out.

Starting in the back, Anderson is being challenged by Plymouth Canton graduate Doug Koozts.

Ben Davis, who started in goal at Canton the season before Koozts came in, may also be part of the equation.

On defense, Dimitriou likes Paul Ansara (Novi) and Aaron MacDonald (Plymouth Salem) at marking back, with Sergio Mainella (Stevenson) or Tom Stark at sweeper. Mainella could also play at midfield or forward.

At outside midfield, there's Johnny Demergis (Canton) and Dan Wielechowski (Salem); Nick Skotanis (Northville) is a possible attacking midfielder, with Casey Bantle (Ann Arbor Pioneer) at defensive midfield.

Gary Bell (Derry, Ireland), Tony Maldonado (Stevenson) and Joey Brincat are strong possibilities at any of the midfield spots. Forward Mike Jones scored 24 goals as a senior at Fenton. Andrew Moyers was a versatile player at Dearborn.

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score (76) at the regional, and Josh Davis.

Joining Currie, Luna and Yost as returning starters are juniors Matt Davey and Zach Davis. Hayes thinks Yost, Davey and Davis are comparable in talent and capable of grabbing the No. 3 slot in the lineup.

Davey ranks second among the CC junior class in grade point average and is such a team player he gave up his spot in the lineup to Samuelson at the regional "because he said 'Adam's a senior, I have two years left,'" Hayes recalled.

Hayes thinks there will be times when five Shamrocks can break 40 and he's hoping their sixth player comes in at the low to mid-40s. Vying for the sixth spot are juniors Brett John, Brian Peczynski, Tony Eberhart and Adam Malmin.

CC opens the season on Monday at Forest Akers Golf Club in East Lansing, the site of the East Lansing Invitational where some of the state's top teams congregate. The first week also includes a stop at Friday's Pinckney Invitational followed by the Brighton Tournament next Monday.

"Monday (in East Lansing) is going to be a good sign," Hayes said. "This is a great bunch of guys who work hard and I expect that to continue in the meets. This is their second year of going through tryouts and they're at least getting accustomed to what I'm all about and what I expect."

WEEK AHEAD

PREP FOOTBALL
Friday, Aug. 27
East Catholic at Borgess, 4 p.m.
Charter at Redford Union, 7 p.m.
Lincoln Park at Franklin, 7 p.m.
Coolidge at Westland Green, 7 p.m.
Wayne at Romulus, 7 p.m.
Crestwood at Garden City, 7 p.m.
Therion at Willow Run, 7 p.m.
Dearborn at Stevenson, 7:30 p.m.
Canton at Ypsilanti, 7:30 p.m.
P.H. Northern at Salem, 7:30 p.m.
Novi at Farmington, 7:30 p.m.
Roseville at H. Farmington, 7:30 p.m.
Oxford at Harrison, 7:30 p.m.
Wayne Woods at Clearcreek, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 28
Mt. Carmel at Port Sanilac, 1 p.m.
St. Agatha vs. Port Sanilac at R.U. Kraft Field, 1 p.m.
Redford CC vs. A.A. Pioneer at Pontiac Silverdome, 1 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Wednesday, Aug. 25
St. Alphonsus at Clearcreek, 6 p.m.

BOYS SOCCER
Friday, Aug. 27
Therion vs. John Glenn at Ball Creek Park, 4 p.m.
Novi at Churchill, 7 p.m.
Country Day vs. Edsel Ford, 10 a.m.
Farmington vs. Groves, noon.
Searight vs. Franklin, 2 p.m.
Northville vs. Mt. Clemens, 4 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 28
Stevenson at Troy, 11 a.m.
H. Farmington at Midland, 12:30 p.m.
W. Bloomfield at Harrison, 12:30 p.m.
Redford CC at Riv. Richard, 1 p.m.
(Belmont Tournament at 1:30 p.m.)
Portage Central vs. Canton, 10 a.m.
Troy Athens vs. Salem, 10 a.m.
Coronet game, 1 p.m.
Championville final, 2:30 p.m.
(Country Day Invitational)
Lancers bracket, 9 & 10:30 a.m.
Winners bracket, noon & 1:30 p.m.
7th & 8th place, 3 & 4:30 p.m.
Consolation final, 6 p.m.
Championville final, 7:30 p.m.

MEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER
Saturday, Aug. 28
Schoolcraft vs. Duquesne (H) at Valparaiso (Ind.), 11 a.m.
Sunday, Aug. 29
Schoolcraft at Valparaiso (Ind.), 10 a.m.
WOMEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER
Saturday, Aug. 28
Schoolcraft at Alma College, 2 p.m.
WOMEN'S COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL
Friday-Saturday, Aug. 27-28
Schoolcraft at Kalamazoo, 10 a.m.

Gonzales sparks St. Mary's offense

BY BILL PARKER
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Here's a tip for Orchard Lake St. Mary's football fans: keep an eye on the scoreboard. It's likely to be changing often.

The Eagles enter the 1999 prep football campaign with a potent offensive attack led by three-year starting quarterback Jermaine Gonzales. The 6-foot-3, 200-pound senior passed for 14 touchdowns and over 1,300 yards last fall and racked up nine TDs and 400 yards on the ground.

Jermaine is very versatile. He can pass and he can run. He's played in a lot of big games and has a lot of experience," said St. Mary's coach George Porritt. "Having him in there is a big plus for us."

Gonzales will be joined in the

backfield by junior Quenell Williams, a 6-0, 212-pound power fullback and speedy junior tailbacks Keyvon Barbee (5-10, 185) and Anthony Sherrell (5-10, 180). Both possess break-away speed, going 4.65 and 4.55, respectively, in the 40.

When Gonzales goes to the air he'll have plenty of capable receivers. Returners Grant Mason, a 5-11, 180-pound junior, and David McDermott, a 6-2, 180-pound senior, anchor the receiving corps. Mason led the team with 27 receptions and five TD's last year. Junior newcomer Charles Davis, a rugged 6-5, 250-pound tight end, gives Gonzales another dangerous target.

Gonzales & Company should receive good protection from a beefy offensive line. Returning

starters Jon Marcial (6-1, 245), a senior center, and John Scaglia (6-1, 245), a senior guard, along with newcomer Tom MacInnes (6-8, 280), a senior tackle, anchor the front.

The big question as the Eagles prepare for their season opener, 1 p.m. Saturday at the Pontiac Silverdome against North Branch, is if they'll be able to stop the opposition. Only two starters return from last year's stingy defensive unit, which gave up an average of less than 12 points per game.

Mason, who doubles as a cornerback and had 48 tackles and three interceptions, returns on defense as does Gonzales, a safety who led the team with five interceptions. Barbee, a hard-hitting linebacker, Scaglia, a defensive tackle, and junior Maurice Searight (6-3, 185), a

speedy free safety saw plenty of action last year and bring some experience to the defense.

"Our defense has to come on as fast as it can," Porritt said. "They're young, with only two returning starters, but in the past (our defense) has given up fast. A lot will depend on how fast they come together as a unit."

The Eagles will be tested early. Week No. 2 has them traveling to Detroit Country Day and hosting Detroit Detroit in Week No. 3.

"We always believe we will be one of the top contenders in the league. We have a challenging schedule but we can't go around complaining about that because everyone in the Catholic League has a tough schedule. We just have to be ready to play each game."

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your first game that's tough. He lost a little confidence after that game, but he got better.

"He's older and we've been working with him," Francassa said. "He's a decent passer if he has the proper protection. He'll do a good job for us if our receivers can run good patterns and get open."

If Baker's Warriors are to succeed this year, he'll need plenty of help from senior captain Mark Goebel (6-foot, 2-inch, 205 pounds), Garrett Weston (6-0, 210), Brendon

Hart (6-3, 220) and Adam Karl (6-0, 180).

Goebel, Rice's most valuable player last season, is a power running back who's already made a verbal commitment to Michigan State University. Mark Rowley (6-2, 220) will anchor the offensive line, and honor students Weston (linebacker) and Karl (secondary) are valuable defensive assets.

Not only is Brother Rice generally inexperienced and on the small side, it's facing a killer

schedule. The Warriors open with perennial state power Sterling Heights Stevenson at the Silverdome, travel to Chicago for a game against perennial nemesis Brother Rice over the Labor Day weekend, then return to renew acquaintances against Catholic Central to begin their Catholic League season in the third game.

"We don't have an easy schedule," said Francassa. "In fact, this is probably the toughest schedule we've ever had."

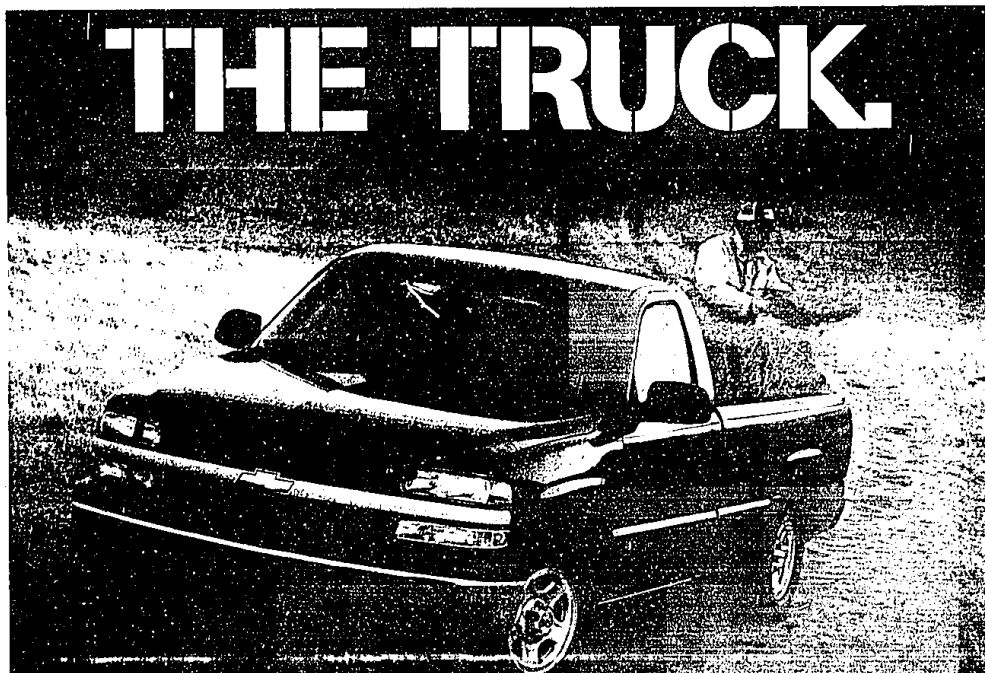
So Baker faces a monumental

challenge this season in his attempt to lead Brother Rice to another winning season en route to another playoff berth.

"I remember a long time ago we had a quarterback named Brian Brennan who got hurt and his back-up was a fellow by the name of Dave Yarama," Francassa said. "Yarama went on to set all kinds of records at Michigan State University."

"We need Matt, and we expect him to do a good job," he said.

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