

HIGH SCHOOLS

Strong goaltending makes Pilots a favorite

DLS was state quarterfinalist last season.

By Fred Costello
Special to The Macomb Daily

Losing 13 seniors off a highly ranked team would probably pose a big problem for most high school hockey programs. But not De La Salle.

The Pilots, who spent most of 2007-08 ranked second in Division 2, advanced all the way to a state quarterfinal before being ousted by perennial power and eventual state champion Trenton.

Coach Dan Barry isn't worried about having to replace so much talent. That's due in part to the fact that he has perhaps the best player in the Michigan Interscholastic Hockey League coming back in John Kleinhans. The senior goalie is the backbone of the team and has Tier 1 junior programs interested in him for

Catholic League Hockey

next season.

"He's just a good, solid goalie," Barry said. "He plays the angles well and is an all-around great athlete."

Up front, De La Salle will count on junior forward Billy Coole to provide a lot of offense along with senior co-captain Frank Sorise.

Former travel player Steve Vandenberghe will anchor the defense in this, his senior season.

Barry sees his team as one that will contend in the MIHL and in the state, despite the presence of only five seniors on the roster.

"We're looking for some of the new kids to make an impact," Barry said. "We're a little faster and a little more skilled and we're better than last year all-around. The kids know that John will win us some games,

but we've got to be disciplined."

Regina

The Regina girls hockey team begins its second season with a new coach, Katie Juliano. After coaching the school's junior varsity program a season ago, Juliano steps in to a varsity team that looks to be pretty solid defensively.

Seniors Gina Valgoi, Elizabeth Lariviere and Marisa Nelson will anchor the blue line, along with sophomore Rebecca Montgomery.

"The defense is going to be very good," Juliano said. "The six defenders are really strong and all three of those seniors have been with the team for a while and know how the program works."

Up front, the Saddlelites are paced by juniors Kristen Taylor

and Lisa Perzanowski. Also expected to make key contributions are senior captain Teresa Smith and fellow senior Morgan Hodges. Smith, in particular, has been an ambassador of sorts for the new coach.

"Teresa is a great leader," Juliano said. "She's stepped up and given me a few pointers about how to work with some of the girls, which has made things easier."

Sophomore Kelsey Erne will start in goal. She was the starter for the Saddlelites junior varsity team last year as a freshman.

Juliano believes the team will be extremely competitive, despite her unfamiliarity to the opposition.

"I know absolutely nothing about the teams we'll be playing against," Juliano said. "It's very hard to predict how we'll do, but each practice the team is getting better. Our biggest thing is working on the offense and having three strong lines instead of one or two. I think it will come."

Expect close race in balanced White

By Fred Costello
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Every year since its inception, the Macomb Area Conference White Division has had a different champion. Last year it was Warren-Sterling United that took home the title – though three other teams were within four points of the Thunder.

That parity will likely continue this season, as many of the White schools have added significant talent. Here's what we'll find in the division:

Eisenhower

The Eagles got beat up a bit in the Red last season, so a move to the White may serve them well. Coach Bob Hall has seen an inexperienced team learn from its losses and come back even stronger, especially on the back end.

"I think we've definitely improved from last year," Hall said. "We'll be a lot stronger depth-wise on offense and we're just a lot deeper defensively. The program has turned around completely."

The defense corps will be the team's strength, counting on seniors Jimmy Graves and Ryan Persha along with juniors James Czarnik, Adam Nimitz and Ryan Maloney.

Seniors Greg Robertson, Will Methven and Joe Warner will be productive offensively, as will junior Justin Whitson. Sophomore defenseman Jake VanSlem-brouck and junior forward Ryan Kalinowski also have showed signs of promise.

The goaltending situation still needs to shake out for the Eagles. A pair of seniors, John Onaga and Adam Rothstein – are battling up-and-coming sophomore Everett Bommarito for starts.

Only a couple seasons removed from being a state-ranked program, Eisenhower and coach Hall are seeking to make significant strides to pull the Eagles back to the top.

L'Anse Creuse

The Lancers and coach Bob Kotowski will be well equipped to improve on last season's fourth-place finish in the White

MAC White Division Hockey

Division. A senior-heavy roster has impressed the coach with its camaraderie.

"The team chemistry is our strength," Kotowski said. "They're all getting along and picking each other up. This is one of the best team-oriented groups that we've had and they've really bonded."

Senior Ben Pharis looks to be the starting goalie, though he's being challenged by freshman Brett Blum. Defensively, the Lancers are led by junior Danny Terenzi, senior Kevin Williams and sophomore Jake Phillips – a former travel player.

Up front, seniors Max Torres and Roo Wiggins are joined by juniors Sean Maxwell and Stephen Treppa. Sophomore Tyler Spezia will see his share of time as well.

Kotowski expects to contend in a parity-filled division.

"It's really tough to predict who will win because as high school hockey continues, the teams just keep getting better and better," he said.

L'Anse Creuse North

Last year's narrow runner-up finish in the division may be a precursor for even more success this season for the Crusaders. Coach Chris Rojem was enthused with the quality of the nearly 40 players that tried out for the varsity team. North was able to replace 12 outgoing seniors with another crop of 12.

Senior co-captains Nick West and Taylor Till will spearhead the offense, while Chris Davis and Matt Kennedy will anchor the defense. Rojem also pointed out former travel player Brenden Ludeman, a senior defenseman, and bruising senior forward Brad Glow as likely impact players.

In goal, sophomore Alex Sypniewski and freshmen Brian Ellis will see time between the pipes.

Rojem has his expectations set very high for the group and believes a division championship definitely is within reach. The team finished just two points behind Warren-Sterling for last year's title.

"We'd like to think we can take the MAC White and advance in states," Rojem said. "I think this team – with all of their hockey experience and their teamwork – should be able to do that."

Romeo

For the first time since coach Rich Boggio took over at Romeo, the Bulldogs will have no freshmen on the varsity team. A team that finished sixth in the division in 2007 returns a host of players who gained valuable experience a year ago.

"We have some kids that have been around," Boggio said. "All but one of them has played in a high school hockey game for Romeo, so there's not that adjustment period because the expectation is already there."

The Bulldogs goaltending situation is a competition that began in the summer and has yet to produce a clear-cut number one guy. Junior Zach Thom and sophomore Zach Comeau are both likely to see time in net.

On defense, Boggio will rely on seniors Paul Capizzo and Billy Turner, along with junior Scott Lanski. Seniors Sean Simpson and Vince Finazzo head up the forwards, as do juniors Johnny Tiseo, Brad Rice and Zack Souliere.

Boggio hopes his team has enough discipline to take the next step.

"We have to play defense first and let the offense take care of itself," he said. "If we think defense, then good things will happen."

Stevenson

After capturing the division title in 2006-07, the Titans managed a fifth-place finish last sea-

son. Coach Al Korolewicz is looking to right the ship in 2008.

"Our goal is to get back up to the top of the White like we were two years ago," Korolewicz said. "We feel like we have a significant chance to make a dent in the state tournament, as long as we've got the right attitude."

Stevenson should be dynamic up front, with senior forward Dan Dougherty being joined by Ryan Belfy, Drew Demarti and Justin Zyvon. Junior Will Shier and senior Brandon Branthoover will patrol the blue line.

Newcomer Rick Ice will start in goal. The junior has Korolewicz's full confidence, as do the group of forwards and a new-look defense.

"I think we'll have pretty solid offense this year, so goal scoring shouldn't be a problem," he said. "We need to get some guys up to speed defensively, but I think they'll surprise some people. I think they're vastly improved."

Warren-Sterling United

Last season's division champs will have their work cut out this season as the proverbial bull's-eye will be on them every time they play. Coach Andy Peraino believes he has plenty of returning personnel who can get the job done.

"I expect us to be right up there in the White," Peraino said. "Obviously we lost some talent with all the seniors graduating, but this team is a little more balanced. Our young goalies are going to be critical to our success."

Those netminders are a pair of sophomores in Jake Dewalt and Chris Schornack. Both employ their own style and they'll likely split duty until one of them emerges as the full time starter.

Junior forward Marty Case will provide a lot of offense up front. He's joined by junior standout Anthony DiMarco. Fellow juniors Dave Pomaville and Mike Merola are expected to contribute as well.

Seniors Ryan Komosinski and Anthony Cecil anchor the defense along with junior Kyle Kozey.

High School Football

STATE SEMIFINALS

Division 1

SF1: Rockford (11-1) vs. Livonia Stevenson (10-2) - S 10:30 AM at MSU
SF2: Lake Orion (11-1) vs. Dearborn Fordson (12-0) - S 7:00 PM at Troy Athens

Division 2

SF1: Davison (9-3) vs. Muskegon (12-0) - S 1:00 PM at MSU
SF2: De La Salle (12-0) vs. Southfield (11-1) - S 1:00 PM at Berkley
Division 3

SF1: East Grand Rapids (11-1) vs. Stevensville Lakeshore (11-1) - S 1:00 PM at Otsego
SF2: Inkster (11-1) vs. Lahser (11-1) 98.111 - S 1:00 PM at Birmingham Seaholm

Division 4

SF1: Grand Rapids Catholic Central (9-3) vs. Holland Christian (12-0) - S 1:00 PM at East Kentwood HS
SF2: Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day (10-2) vs. Crosswell-Lexington (9-3) - S 1:00 PM at Oxford

Division 5

SF1: Standish-Sterling (12-0) vs. Ovid-Elsie (11-1) - S 1:00 PM at Midland Community Stadium
SF2: Muskegon Oakridge (12-0) vs. Jackson Lumen Christi (10-2) - S 1:00 PM at Lansing Everett

Division 6

SF1: Montague (11-1) vs. Saginaw Nouvel (12-0) - S 1:00 PM at Alma College

SF2: Leslie (11-1) vs. Monroe St Mary Catholic Central (10-2) - S 1:00 PM at Withington Stadium, Jackson

Division 7

SF1: Traverse City St Francis (11-1) vs. Ravenna (10-2) - S 1:00 PM at Ferris State
SF2: Reading (12-0) vs. Ubly (12-0) - S 1:00 PM at Howell

Division 8

SF1: Crystal Falls Forest Park (12-0) vs. Frankfort (11-1) - S 1:00 PM at Superior Dome
SF2: Muskegon Catholic Central (12-0) vs. Beal City (11-1) - S 1:00 PM at Cedar Springs

Volleyball

STATE QUARTERFINALS (All Games today) Class A

(At East Kentwood) East Kentwood vs Jenison, 7 p.m.
(At Novi) Carleton Airport vs Livonia Chruhchill, 7 p.m.
(At Grosse Pointe North) Grosse Pointe North vs L'Anse Creuse, 7 p.m.
(At Holly) Marian vs Flushing, 7:30 p.m.

Class B

(At Allegan) Plainwell vs Holland Christian, 7:30 p.m.
(At Ladywood) Ida vs Notre Dame Prep, 7 p.m.
(At North Branch) Lake Odessa Lakewood vs North Branch, 7 p.m.
(At Big Rapids) Fruitport vs Petoskey, 7 p.m.

Class C

(At GR North Pointe Christian) Schoolcraft vs Morley-Stanwood, 6 p.m.
(At Burton-Bendle) Allen Park Cabrini vs Unionville-Sebewaing, 6 p.m.
(At Springport) Monroe St. Mary CC vs St. Louis, 7 pm.
(At Traverse City-St Francis)

Kingsley vs Calumet, 7 p.m.
Class D (At Haslett) Battle Creek St. Philip vs New Lethrop, 7 p.m.
(At Washtenaw Christian) Adrian Lenawee Christian vs Lutheran Westland, 7 p.m.
(At Clare) Bay City All Saints vs Traverse City Christian, 7 p.m.
(At Pellston) Pellston vs Crystal Falls Forest Park, 6:30 p.m.

Schedule

TUESDAY, NOV. 18
Boys Ice Hockey
Troy at Romeo (SIM)
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 19
Boys Ice Hockey
St. Clair Shores Unified at Chippewa Valley (GLSC)
FRIDAY, NOV. 21
Boys Ice Hockey
Fraser at Stevenson (GLSC)
Warren-Mott at Lamphere (VIA)
Dakota vs. TBD at Novi Tournament
SATURDAY, NOV. 22
Boys Ice Hockey
Fraser at L'Anse Creuse (GLSC)
Utica at Anchor Bay (GP)
Stevenson at Troy (TSC)
Troy Athens at Warren-Sterling Unified (VIA)
Marysville at Warren-Mott (VIA)
Plymouth at Romeo (SIM)
Ford at Eisenhower (SIM)
Dakota vs. TBD at Novi Tournament

VOLLEY: Lancers can't afford off day against GPN

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Pointe North its chances of advancing to a Class A state semifinal match Friday at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek are minimal.

"Not unless (GPN) has an off day, can we get away with another match like that," said Chase, whose squad is 33-17-1 overall. "They're very solid and don't make a ton of mistakes."

What hurt the Lancers against the Stallions, who finished in fourth place in the MAC Blue, was how poorly they were serving the ball.

"We hadn't served that poorly in weeks," Chase said. "Early in the season that was a problem for us, but the past month or so we've tuned it up."

They also had trouble adjusting to Sterling Heights' single-player blocking scheme at the net.

"Our middles are used to getting double and triple blocked," Chase said. "We knew it was coming, but the girls were trying to make too many changes on the spot instead of relying on their own skill."

Having the game played at Grosse Pointe North is another disadvantage the Lancers will have to overcome. The Norsemen beat LC in the regular-season finale for both teams.

"I don't know what it is, but we always seem to struggle up there," Chase said. "They play exceptionally well at home. But to be honest, we've played better when we are the underdogs and there are less expectations on us."

And according to Chase, that was the case when her squad faced Anchor Bay in a district

SIGNING: Alex Marcotullio signs with Northwestern

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guard Alex Marcotullio signed with Northwestern, L'Anse Creuse guard Willie Cruz signed with Eastern Kentucky and Conner Creek West forward John Hoskins Jr. signed with Detroit.

Balkema had decided on Eastern Michigan months ago, but he was happy to make his decision official.

"I made my decision a couple of months ago, and it felt great," he said. "I knew it was going to be Eastern for a while ... but it feels great. It's awesome."

Balkema averaged 15.0 points and 9.6 rebounds per game for Cousino as a junior last season, and he averaged 12 points and 10 rebounds playing AAU basketball for the Michigan Mustangs over the summer, his father Brad Balkema said.

Balkema joins a recruiting class at Eastern Michigan that includes 6-8 forward Jamell Harris of Euclid (Ohio).

"We are extremely excited

about signing both Matt and Jamell," EMU coach Charles E. Ramsey said in a press release. "We wanted to get bigger, stronger and more athletic on the front line, and I think we accomplished that with Matt and Jamell."

Balkema developed a good relationship with the coaching staff, particularly assistant coach Charles Thomas, and he believes he can have an immediate impact with the Eagles.

"Coach Thomas said that with his athleticism and knowledge of the game, he looks for him to contribute right away," said Brad Balkema.

Matt Balkema said he also liked Eastern's campus when he made an official visit there last month.

"We just fell in love with the place. It was awesome," Matt said. "I love the campus. It's not too far, but it's far enough because I can be on my own. I just can't wait to go there."

For now, though, Balkema can't wait for the high school



Macomb Daily photo by David S. Angeli

De La Salle Pilots player Alex Marcotullio will play at Northwestern next year.

basketball season to begin.

Though Cousino lost some top players to graduation in Ricky Powell and Bernard Edwards, Balkema has high expectations for the Patriots.

"We've got some big shoes to some fill," Balkema said. "(But) we have some juniors who are ready to step up. Look out for the Patriots this year. We're going to be all right."

Coaches please call in scores and updates to The Macomb Daily at (586) 469-4771 or fax to (586) 469-2892

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