



THE CIRCLE Men

“It's just not the way you want to end your season.”

— Dave Magarity
Marist Head Coach

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2003

maristcircle.com

PAGE B2

Season brings new attitude, players for Foxes

By ANTHONY OLIVIERI
Staff Writer

When Siena's Prosper Karangwa's running one-hander fell through the net with four tenths of a second left in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) quarterfinals, it sealed one of the most-crushing defeats in Marist basketball history and sent the Red Foxes back to the drawing board for the 2003-2004 season.

Head coach Dave Magarity, in his eighteenth season, cannot help but wonder what could have been for last year's team.

"The way the season ended, I can't ever remember in my career a game ending like that," he said. "The circumstances in which it ended, it was disappointing."

The referees generously let Siena inbound from half court after a timeout, resulting in the game winning shot.

After losing to Siena in the quarterfinals for the second straight season, Marist lost its two leading scorers to graduation.

David Bennett and Nick Eppehimer were leading a Red Fox team that was finally coming together at the right time.

"Everything I hoped for was coming to fruition," Magarity said. "We had only one tough loss at Manhattan; we ran into a buzz saw down there. Other than that we played some great basketball down the stretch."

The Red Foxes now have to make last season a learning experience, using their loss as motivation for future success in the postseason.

"We have to put it behind us, and we did, but it was a tough pill to swallow," Magarity said. "It was probably the toughest locker room I've ever had to face after a game. It's just not the way you want to end your season."

This season the Red Foxes have a drastically different roster, welcoming five freshmen and two transfer students. The freshmen — Kerry Parks, Ryan Stilphen, Miles Orman, Jared Jordan, and Will Whittington could play a significant role on this year's squad.

"This is a different year, a different team, and a whole new



CARLISLE STOCKTON/Used with permission
Dennis Young

cast of characters," Magarity said. "I think all our new guys have a chance to step in and contribute."

Magarity likened the situation that this year's freshman class faces to the early years of former Marist standouts Sean Kennedy and Rick Smith.

This year's class has talented players ahead of them in the rotation, and competition for minutes with the team's veterans will only improve a young player's game.

The Red Foxes return backcourt leader Brandon Ellerbee, who averaged 10.6 points per game, to go along with 3.1 assists. Ellerbee was forced into playing out of position last season, playing the majority of his minutes at point guard.

Magarity said Ellerbee is the consummate combination guard, with the ability to score and find open teammates. With Pierre Monagan, the much-hyped junior college transfer at the point, Ellerbee will be able to slide over to shooting guard.

"(Ellerbee) is an exceptional perimeter guy," Magarity said. "He can play the point and two guard, really has an understanding of the game, and nobody can stop him but himself."

High expectations accompanied Monagan to Poughkeepsie. With such talent handling the ball, he was deemed the heir to Sean Kennedy's point guard throne. Monagan sat out last season as a medical red shirt.

The Red Foxes did not bring in a freshman point guard last season feeling Monagan's collegiate experience would ease the transition to the post-Kennedy era.

Magarity acknowledged Monagan's ability to make everyone better around him with the ball in his hands, but warned after a season off, it will take time.

"He hasn't played in such a long time," Magarity said. "The last time he played competitive basketball was a year and half ago."

Magarity said Monagan and Ellerbee would not play every minute at point guard. MAAC tournament star Carl Hood, senior Eric Siegrist, and the frosh Jared Jordan will all see some time.

Magarity also suggested that Monagan could see some time at shooting guard when the pure point guard Jordan is on the floor.

The numerous possibilities in the backcourt give the Red Foxes some well-needed depth, and the ability to create favorable matchups based on their opponent.

The Red Foxes return a pair of 6-8 big men this season, as Dennis Young and Chris Handy are back for their senior seasons.

Young averaged 10.0 points per game to go along with 6.0 rebounds in his junior season, and Handy had 8.6 points per game and 6.3 rebounds.

Junior transfer Will McClurkin, who sat out last season after transferring from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, will provide much needed help in the post.

McClurkin said his game is



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Brandon Ellerbee focused on the ability to score on the inside, and be a major presence in the paint.

"I have a couple of pet moves down low, and play pretty much in the post," he said. "I can step out and hit the jumper from about 15 feet. I'm not too much of a shot-blocker; I'm more of a transition defensive player."

Marist looks to show off its new weapons in the first game of the season on Tuesday, Nov. 18 at the McCann Center.

The Red Foxes host the Hofstra Pride in the opening round of the preseason NIT. It is the program's first appearance in the prestigious early season tournament. The Red Foxes appeared in the post season version of the

NIT in 1996.

Marist's tough initial game will be a sign of the future as they face three 2003 NCAA tournament participants, Holy Cross, Vermont, and Central Michigan in three early non-conference games.

Marist will also make a trip to Atlanta to face Georgia Tech for the second year in a row. The Red Foxes lost last year's game 67-53 at Madison Square Garden.

Along with a tough non-conference schedule, the Red Foxes have to compete in a tough MAAC conference, the league having its most talent in years.

"This year the conference is very good, and I don't even think it is close since we've been in the league," Magarity said. "Manhattan is very good, but honestly my pick to win the league is Niagara."

Marist was picked to finish sixth in the conference by the MAAC coaches in a recent poll. The Red Foxes are considered by many as a dark horse team because no one knows how their seven newcomers will perform.

The Red Foxes don't know how the young freshmen and the two junior college transfers will play, but the team is deeper, bigger and more athletic.

Frosh Miles Orman knows all about big and athletic. His teammates call him "Baby Vince", as in Vince Carter.

Gary Trent was the "Shaq of the MAC" — Miles Orman could be the "Vince of the MAAC" — and if he is, the Red Foxes hope he can help them soar to new heights.

The Circle predicts a 2003-2004 Gaelic Championship

By TRAVIS TELLITOCCHI
Staff Writer

#1 Iona (16-11): The road to a MAAC championship may run through New Rochelle this season. You know the MAAC is expecting big things from the Gaels since they named DeShaun Williams, a senior transfer from Syracuse, to the third team preseason squad and he hasn't even laced up his sneakers for a regular season game. When the dust clears from another wild season in the MAAC, Iona emerges as the number one seed in the tourney.

#2 Manhattan (23-7): Can you blame head coach Bobby Gonzalez for coming back to Manhattan with the most talented guard in the MAAC by his side, Luis Flores? Flores will be joined by the sophomore sensation Mike Konovelchick whose name is just as hard to pronounce, as he is to guard behind the 3-point arc. Their schedule will be highlighted by a trip north to face the defending national champion Syracuse Orangemen in a rematch of the NCAA East regional on Dec. 17th and a return to national

television on ESPN2 against Marist on February 28th in Riverdale. The Jaspers will once again be the team that everyone is gunning for in the MAAC.

#3 Siena (21-11): Last season the saints marched into Trenton for the MAAC tourney and managed to break a few hearts along the way, beating Marist in a controversial buzzer beater in standard Siena style. The question is will they be able to Prosper this season without Karangwa? With players like Austin Andrews, Jamal Jackson and Justin Miller returning it should be no problem. There will be even more incentive for the Saints since the MAAC tourney returns to the capital region this season.

#4 Niagara (17-12): You won't find anyone on the purple eagle's roster testing the falls this season. Niagara returns all five starters including first team all MAAC selection Juan Mendez and second team honoree Tremmell Darden. Don't think that the eagles have overlooked the fact that the first round of the NCAA tourney is in their hometown this year. While Buffalo is not the most desirable destination in the

country, every team would love to be there come March.

#5 Marist (13-16): Six of the Red Fox players don't even know who "Shooter" is. So what makes anyone think that they have any type of chance this season with such a young squad? Coach Dave Magarity does. Yes, half the team isn't even legal to drink, but that doesn't mean they aren't talented. Marist will look to saddle up with its four Texans and hit the trail to Albany where justice will be served.

#6 Fairfield (19-12): It's been a long off-season for head coach Tim O'Toole and the Fairfield stags. With allegations surrounding the program of recruitment violations, the coaches and players will be happy to get out of the headlines and onto the court. The stags welcome back three starters from a year ago; Deng Gai, Kudjo Sogadzi, and Terrance Todd, but lost three key role players to graduation. Playing teams like Duke, Michigan and St. John's is never easy, but will speak volumes for the conference if the result is favorable.

#7 St. Peter's (10-19): People in Jersey City will come to grow and love the nickname "KeeKee". One player has never had an

impact on the athletic program at St. Peter's like Keydren Clark did last season.

Clark had the highest scoring average in the MAAC and was sixth in the nation at 24.9 points per game. He set a school record last year with 722 points and a national Division I record for 3-point field goals by a freshman, connecting on 109 treys. With a good support staff, St. Peter's can make waves in the MAAC this year and creep up on a lot of teams.

#8 Rider (12-16): Following a disappointing showing in the MAAC tournament in front of their home fans, Rider will look to speed up the rebuilding process this season. With four starters returning and MAAC player of the year finalist, Jerry Johnson on the floor, head coach Don Harnum knows his team will be much better than last season. The only problem for the Broncs is the six or seven teams in the MAAC are also going to be much better.

#9 Canisius (11-17): Canisius will be celebrating 100 years of basketball this season. If you ask head coach Mike MacDonald, he will tell you it felt like they went

through 99 of them last year. Luck was not on the side of the Golden

Griffins last season after losing half their roster to injuries. Toby Foster is a name that will be bounced around upstate N.Y. when he returns to the lineup after missing virtually the entire season last year. With five players returning who occupied starting roles, Canisius will have experience, but not as much talent as they could have had a year ago.

#10 Loyola (4-24): Things possibly can't get any worse in Baltimore this season, can they? Head coach Scott Hicks doesn't think so.

Hicks will bring back three of his top five scorers and welcome a strong recruiting class to the mix. With eight players returning to the lineup from a year ago, the glass is looking half full for the greyhounds. Loyola will be looking forward to the tip-off of the season more than any other team. Look for them to be fired up after getting challenges from the intramural squads on campus. Although I'm afraid to put them above anyone else in the MAAC, there is more to this team than meets the eye.

2003-2004 Preseason Coaches Poll

1. Manhattan
2. Niagara
3. Iona
4. Siena
5. Fairfield
6. Marist
7. Saint Peter's
8. Rider
9. Canisius
10. Loyola

Circle Predictions

1. Iona
2. Manhattan
3. Siena
4. Niagara
5. Marist
6. Fairfield
7. Saint Peter's
8. Rider
9. Canisius
10. Loyola

If you cannot make it to the McCann Center to see the historic NIT game, Watch it LIVE on MCTV channel 29.

6 p.m. — Pre game show

7:30 p.m. — Hofstra at Marist

Watch MCTV on Nov. 18