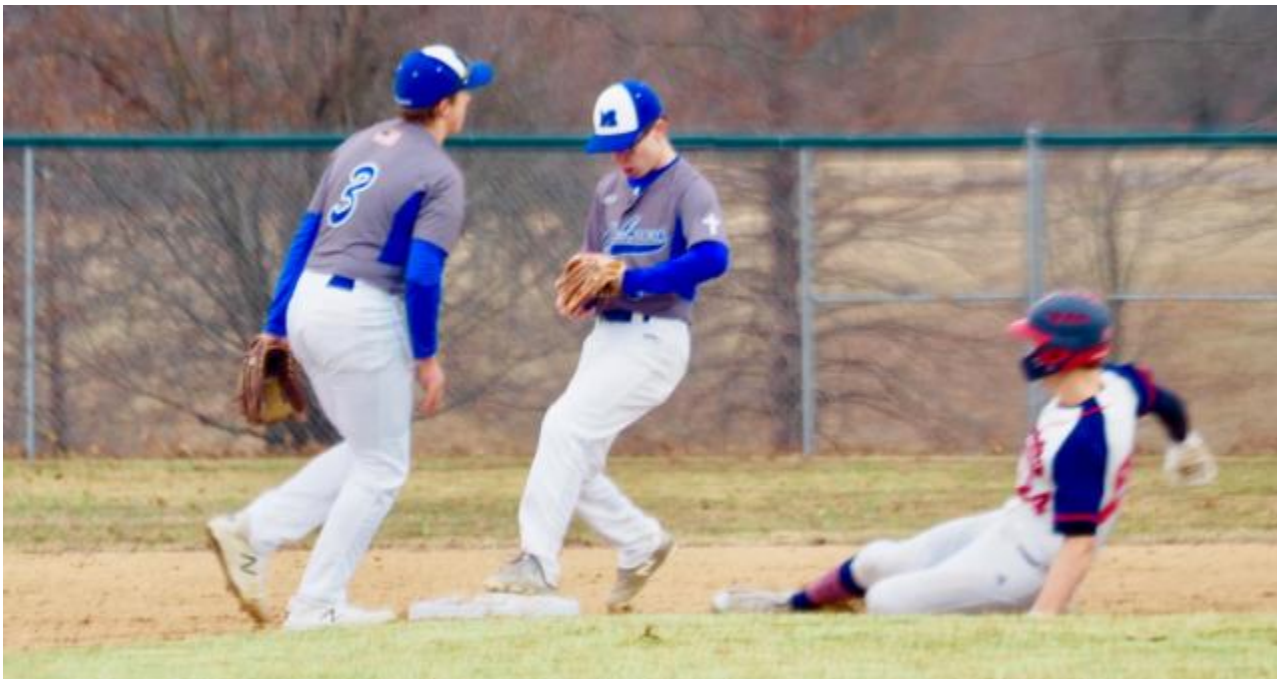




Solid pitching with patient hitting power Marquette to opening day victory

March 13 2019 2:00 AM







ALTON - The Marquette Catholic Explorers started the 2019 baseball season on the right foot with a 12-0 shutout victory over the St. Louis Patriots at Gordon Moore Park on Tuesday afternoon.

“This was our first time hitting on the infield, so I was really happy,” Explorers head coach Tim Fahnestock said. “The guys hit the ball well, put it in play, and made them handle it. The pitching was good. I’m happy so far.”

Senior Jack Warren tossed three scoreless innings while striking out four batters, walking none, and allowing one hit. He is expected to be the ace of the Explorers staff.

The Patriots, a Christian homeschool team, based in St. Charles, MO, move to 1-1.

“He’s probably going to be our No. 1,” Fahnestock said of Warren. “We’re very young on the mound. We got some good senior leadership on the field, but pitching is going to be what we need to develop. got the most varsity experience from last year. Jack’s going to have to step up. We wanted to get him a little work tonight to see where he’s at, and he kept it under his pitch limit.”

The new faces in the pitching staff will have an experienced catcher to work within Ethan Kopsie. The senior had nothing but positivity to say about Warren’s first outing of the season.

“Jack was throwing wonderful as usual,” Senior catcher, Ethan Kopsie said. “Everything seemed to be working well. He was hitting his spots. Jack’s a wonderful pitcher who’s going to be leading our squad this year.”

Kopsie, who batted .321 last season was promoted this year to third in the lineup, and he didn't disappoint with his first on the job. He reached base all four times going 2-for-2 with a double and an RBI single.

"I was seeing the ball well," Kopsie said. "I've been working on my hitting a bit while getting ready for college. I've been working on my visuals and getting my stance ready. Batting third's a new experience for me, but I'm going to do whatever I have to in order to step up and produce for us. It felt good today."

Additionally, the cleanup hitter, Carter Hendricks was 1-for-2 with two RBI and reached base three times with two hit-by-pitches. Sam Cogan was 2-for-3 with two RBI doubles. Although they scored 11 runs, as a team Marquette collected seven hits, but earned eight walks and got 22 men on base.

"That's the key. Good at-bats especially early in the year," Fahnestock said. "I thought we looked pretty good for being this early. I was concerned we would be taking a lot of pitches, and we didn't. We had good eyes today and took walks when we needed to, and put the ball in play when we could."

The Explorers picked up two runs each in the first two innings.

In the first, they brought eight men to the plate with Sam Kogan hitting an RBI double and Reily Seiner drawing a bases-loaded walk. In the next inning, Kopsie drove in Braden Coles on a single, and Garrett Weiner scored on a sacrifice fly from Hendricks.

After an inning of no runs, the Explorers burst things open in the bottom of the fourth.

RBI doubles from Hendricks and Cogan were followed by two errors that produced four runs, including a wild throw that led to three, which put Marquette in front 11-0 giving them the required amount to end the game early.

The Explorers were unsure of how things would dictate for themselves fielding-wise as this was the first time since they began practicing they were able to field groundballs on their own field. That's because it was always wet by rain or snow. Marquette had one error, but they'll be okay with that now.

"It's a new experience, but what Marquette's always done is a grind in the offseason, and we do whatever we got to," Kopsie said.

Marquette travels east to O’Fallon and will take on the Panthers at Blazier Field today at 4:30 p.m. On Thursday the Explorers stay on the road to play Granite City at 4:30 p.m. and come back home to face Triad on Saturday at 11:00 a.m. to round out their first week.





