



# **Father McGivney Catholic Heads Into 2019-20 School Year as One of Area's Up-And-Coming Athletic Programs**

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**GLEN CARBON** – The 2018-19 school year at Father McGivney Catholic was its most successful on the athletic fields, courts, and tracks, as various Griffin teams enjoyed their best seasons ever in the brief history of the school, and in the cases of both cross-country and track and field, qualified athletes for the IHSA State meets.

As the new school year is about to begin – in the case of McGivney, classes begin on Thursday, Aug. 15 – the Griffins’ athletic program is being considered by many as one of the St. Louis area’s most up-and-coming programs.

“We’ve taken lots of steps forward each year,” said athletic director and girls basketball coach Jeff Oller, “and we’re excited about this coming school year.”

The girls' volleyball team last year finished 23-13 last season and made it to the IHSA Class 1A Okawville super-sectional match, losing to Grayville 25-19, 25-16. The boys' soccer team finished 16-8-0 in 2018, losing the sectional final to Belleville Althoff Catholic 2-1, and the cross-country team had a runner finish 12th in the state meet in Class 1A to cap off a very successful fall season for Griffin teams.

In addition, the girls' basketball team went 21-11, while a very young boys team finished 6-26, but progressed well and became more competitive as the season went on. Baseball made its varsity debut in the spring, and finished 4-15, gaining its first win on Mar. 16, a 9-4 decision over Dupon. And in boys track, the Griffins qualified its 4x800-meter relay team to state, as well as qualifying both Tyler Guthrie in the 1,600-meter run and Brandon Ahring in the 3,200-meter run.

For the 2019-20 season, many of the Griffins' coaches return – Tim Vance in boys soccer, Jim Helton in both boys' and girls' cross-country and track and field, Rich Beyers in boys basketball, Oller in girls basketball, Dale Renken in boys golf and Kenny Hyten in girls golf – and introduce Paul Vieth in both boys and girls volleyball and Chris Erwin in baseball. A new girls soccer coach is yet to be announced.

Oller feels that both Vieth and Erwin will be good additions to the coaching staff, and thinks that the school's athletic program fits in well with the overall philosophy and mission of the school itself.

“One of the things we try to do is build our students' mind, body, and spirit,” Oller said, “and the athletic program contributes to all three, we think.”

And a successful athletic program is one of the key attractions to the school, as more and more of the McGivney students become involved in the sporting programs. It also helps attract students who might be interested in enrolling at the school.

“I think it's a big thing,” Oller said. “We've become more competitive, but we've also grown in the number of students participating, and the level we can provide in any sport.”

McGivney will continue to offer its current lineup of interscholastic sports for the upcoming school year, but discussions are always ongoing about sports to add to the program.

“We plan to keep offering the same sports for this year,” Oller said, “but we always discuss adding more sports, with our growing student interest and enrollment.”

At this time, girls softball is the sport most likely to be added to the program, but other sports like football and wrestling are, as Oller put it, “a little ways down the road. It depends on what the kids are interested in.”

But the future of the Griffins’ teams looks very bright, and the athletic program at McGivney is moving forward at a very positive pace.

“We see ourselves moving in the right direction,” Oller said. “We’ve got great coaches on our staff, great support from our faculty and administration, the support of our families, and dedicated student-athletes. We’re just really excited about this year.”