



# **Father McGivney To Meet Newark In Class 1A Semifinals Thursday Morning, Is Very Excited For Opportunity For First-Ever State Championship**

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**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL** - The Father McGivney Catholic baseball team has enjoyed a very successful season, and has advanced to the school's first-ever state finals in any sport. The Griffins will play Newark in the first semifinal of the IHSA Class 1A state tournament Thursday morning at 10 a.m. at Duffy Bass Field on the campus of Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.

The Griffins go into the last four at 30-6 and are guaranteed of bringing home a trophy on Thursday, the second in school history, having won the bass fishing championship in 2015. With a win, McGivney will play the winner of the second semifinal between Mt. Pulaski and Farina South Central, starting at 7 p.m. The losers will play in the third and fourth place playoff game at 4 p.m.

"It sounds silly, but it's the biggest day in McGivney baseball history," said Griffins head coach Chris Erwin, "just from the standpoint of we're such a new program. Everyone's excited, and we stopped at the field when we got into town."

It's definitely a big moment as McGivney get set to take on the Norsemen in the semifinal, and the team is doing everything to take in this special moment, not just for the program, but for the entire school.

"This is such a special moment for the program and our kids to get here," Erwin said. "Making it to state championship weekend is something special, and it doesn't happen as often as you would like."

The Griffins' players and coaches toured Duffy Bass Field, named for one of the most successful baseball coaches in collegiate history, to take pictures for posterity and to get to know the ballpark and get used to the atmosphere before tomorrow's game. And the Griffins will be ready to go for the big day.

"I love my team, I trust my guys." Erwin said, "and I would expect nothing less than their best effort. If we play our game, we're going to be tough to beat."

Among the Griffins' leading hitters are both Matthew and Daniel Gierer, Austin Callovini, Jacob McKee, Luke Deakos and Gabe Smith. Daniel Gierer leads the team with four home runs, while Smith had a team-leading 50 RBIs, while Drew Sowerwine had driven home 36 runs and Jackson Rodgers has brought in 34 runs.

Rodgers will get the start on the mound in the semifinal, and has a 0.39 ERA with 28 strikeouts this season. And the Griffins have high-quality starting pitching that has served the team very well this season, with Sowerwine having a 1.86 ERA and Christian Logue having a 2.00 ERA.

Erwin is very confident in his team's chances, and is very grateful for the Griffins' opportunity.

"It's awesome," Erwin said. "Words can't express how wonderful this experience has been."