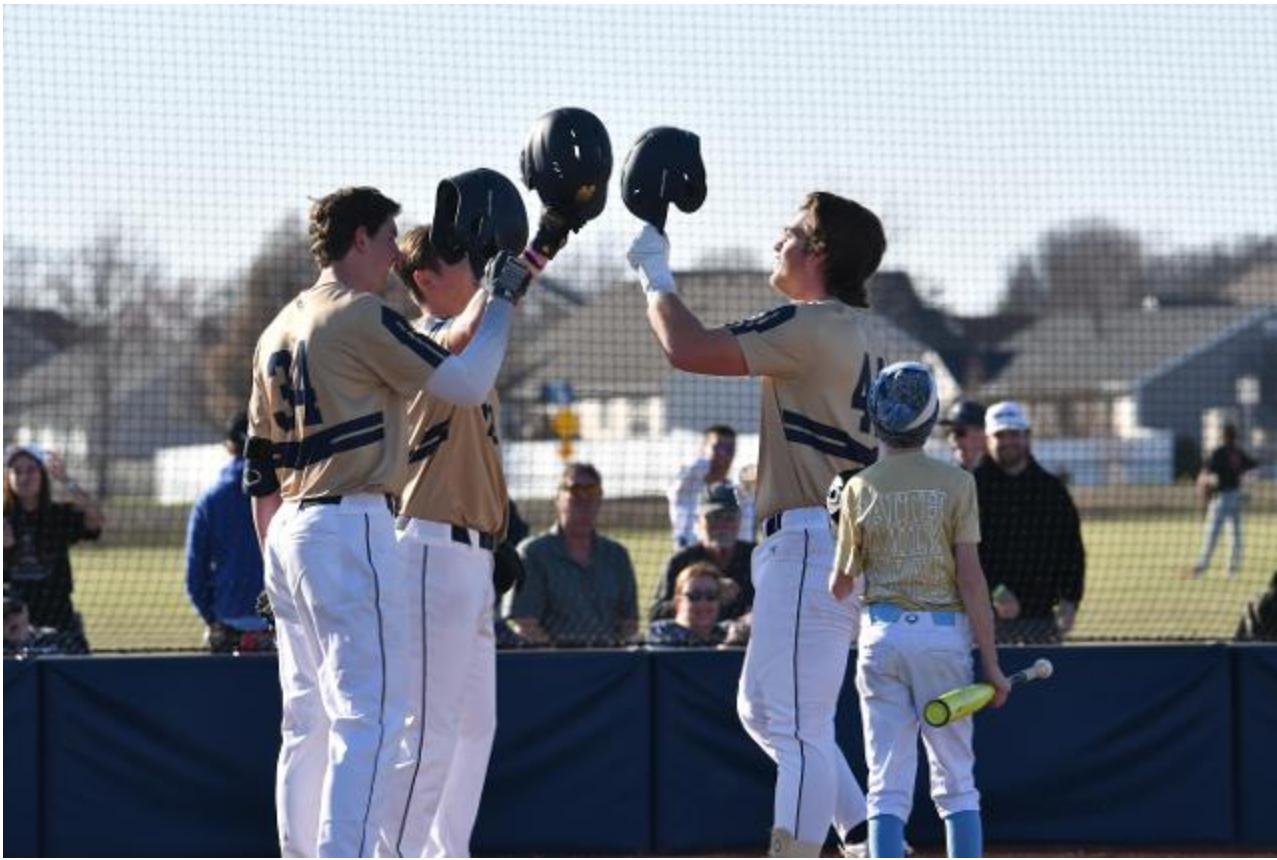




Kamp Has Three Hits, Two-Run Homer, Five RBIs; Holmes Fans Eight - McGivney Wins Season Baseball Opener

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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GLEN CARBON - Kannon Kamp hit a first-inning two-run homer, en route to a three-hit, five-RBI day at the plate, Mason Holmes threw three solid innings, striking out eight, and Father McGivney's baseball team scored nine times in the second inning on its way to a 16-0, four inning win over Vandalla in the season opener for both teams Monday afternoon at Griffins Field.

It was a great start for the Griffins, who made the Class 2A Sweet Sixteen last season and won its first 29 games in compiling a 37-2 record, losing to eventual Class 2A runners-up Columbia in the sectional final at Breese Central.

In the 2024 season opener, McGivney was firing on all cylinders as they began their season.

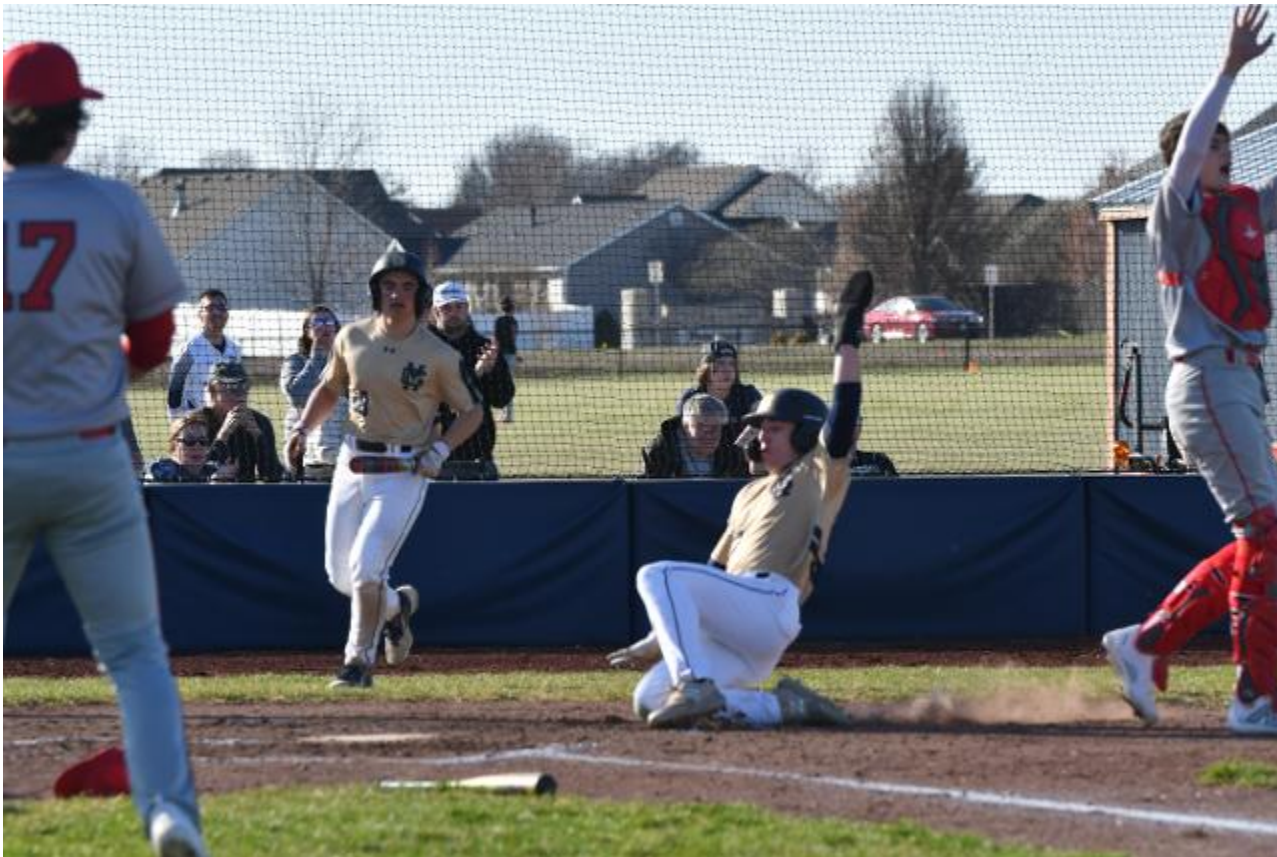
"I was really impressed with the way Mason controlled the game on the mound," Griffins coach Chris Ewin said. "That was really important to come out and throw the ball well, and Mason got us started very early, threw strikes, and struck out a lot of guys. So that was a big key start for us."

The Griffins also found success at the plate, as the Griffins pounded out 11 hits and took advantage of all of their scoring opportunities, pushing across nine runs in the second to

all but put things away. Nick Franklin also hit a home run for McGivney during the game.

"For us, we wanted to make sure we saw deep, as far as saw the pitch deep," Erwin said, "we got our pitch, didn't get too aggressive, and make sure we're hitting our pitch and hitting it to all parts of the park, which was really good for us today. We had a lot of guys who hit the ball well and with power."

It was the season opener for an ambitious Griffins team, who have dreams of bringing back a long-awaited state championship to the school, which would be McGivney's first-ever IHSA title in any team sport.





"Well, every year for us, I think, we want to make sure we can get as far as we can," Erwin said, "and I'd be lying if I said the goal wasn't to try to get back to the state tournament. We've got a really good group of guys, it's a long season, and we've got to make sure we play tomorrow, and play the week after, make sure we're looking at it each game at a time. But we've got a lot of talent on this team, and the guys work really hard."

The Griffins are, indeed, a very hard-working and personable team that has high ambitions.

"It very much is," Erwin said. "It's the work ethic that impresses you the most. When you see them out here in practice, putting the work in, and wanting to take one more swing, one more ground ball, working on the mound, and working in the bullpen, these guys really put a lot of work in, they love the game, and they love playing with each other."

The Griffins have adopted the one-game-at-a-time mantra, and look ahead to what's next on the slate.

"We've got the Metro-East Kickoff Classic this weekend," Erwin said. "We've got a really tough slate. We'll play a conference opponent on Thursday (Metro-East Lutheran

from the Gateway Metro Conference), which is a conference game, second game of the season, which is a little odd. And we'll play (Louisville) North Clay on Friday, and then (Lisle) Benet Academy, out of Chicago, on Saturday. Those guys are tough opponents, so it'll be a good challenge for us."

Of course, Erwin is looking ahead to the whole season, especially with one factor.

"I'm really looking forward to the whole season," Erwin said. "Especially the weather. If the weather's like this all season, it'll be great," he said with a laugh and smile.

The Griffins got on the board in the opening inning, when lead-off batter Omar Avalos drew a walk, followed by Kamp's two-run shot over the right field fence to give McGivney a quick 2-0 lead. The Griffins loaded the bases with two outs and threatened to add more, but a liner back to the box ended the inning.

McGivney then hit for its nine-run second inning, starting with a Ben Sink lead-off single, followed by a walk to Avalos, with Kamp driving in Sink with a single to right, making it 3-0.

Drew Kleinheider then doubled home two more runs, Issac Wendler singled home another run, and Franklin hit a two-run shot over the left-field fence to make the score 8-0.

Justin and Nathan Terhaar then drew back-to-back walks, with Justin Terhaar stealing second, going to third on a wild pitch during Nathan Terhaar's at-bat, and Justin Terhaar scoring on an error by the second baseman.

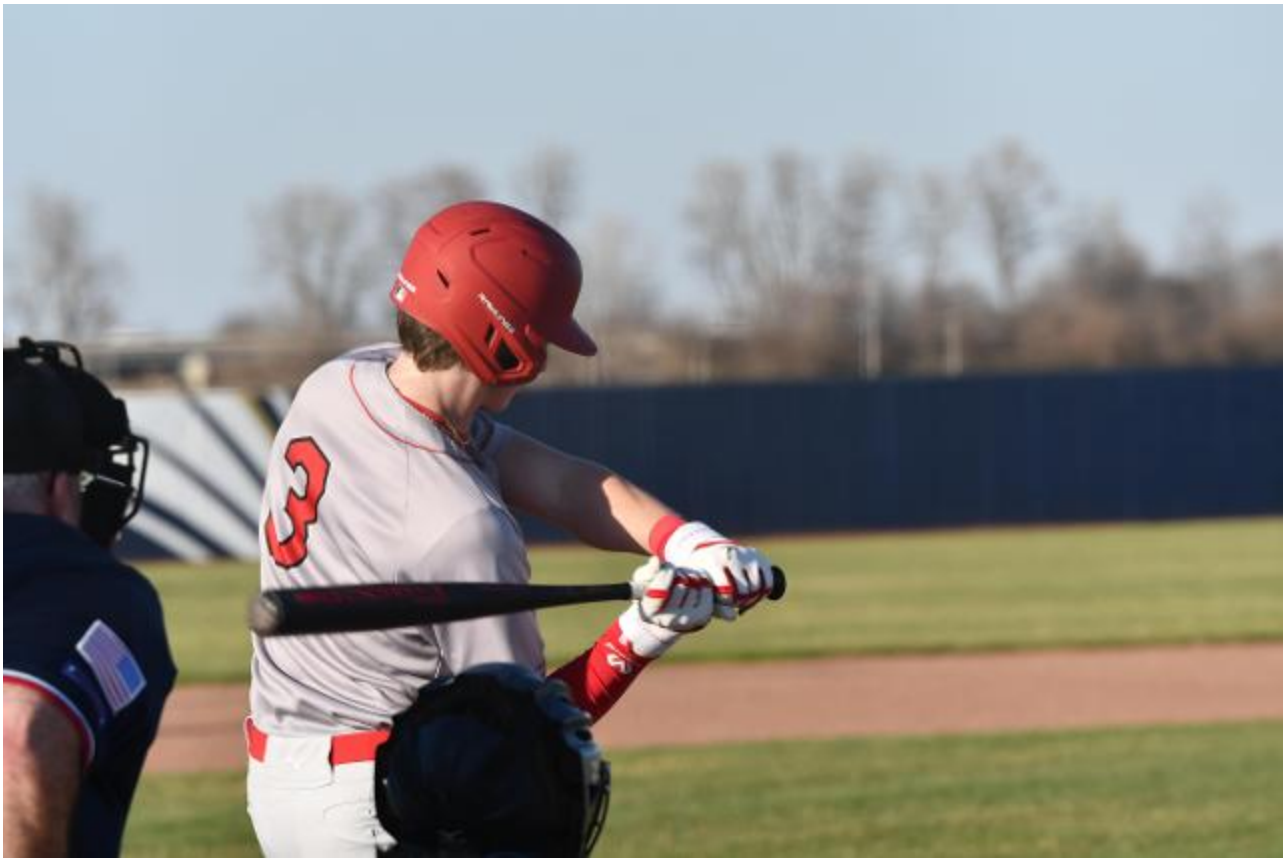
Scott Phelps grounded back to the pitcher to advance Justin Terhaar to third, and a Sink grounder to second scored Nathan Terhaar to make the score 10-0. Avalos then drew another walk, stole second and third, and scored on Kamp's single to right to make the score 11-0.

Meanwhile, Holmes hummed right along on the mound, striking out eight in three innings, allowing only a third-inning scratch single by Jack Lewis, with three of the strikeouts looking. Dane Keeven came in to pitch in the fourth, and gave up a walk to Carson Lotz, striking out two and putting the Vandals down in his one inning.

Meanwhile, in the bottom of the inning, Kamp drew a bases-loaded walk to force in the 12th run, Kleinheider reached on an error by the shortstop, bringing in Sink to make it 13-0, Gerold Myatt's base hit to right scored A.J. Sutberry, and a Franklin single to right scored Kleinheider and Kamp to end the game on the 15-run rule to give the Griffins their first win of the new season.

McGivney starts off the season 1-0, while Vandalia begins 0-1. The Griffins meet the Metro-East Lutheran Knights Thursday at Martin Luther Field Thursday at 4:30 p.m., then meet North Clay Friday in a 4 p.m. start, then take on Lisle Benet Academy Saturday at 10 a.m.





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)