

# Curley win puts new spin on ice hockey season

Currently posting a record of 4-2-1, the Archbishop Curley, Baltimore, Friars are turning their ice hockey program around. With only two wins on the books in 2005, the team is beginning to believe in themselves. This recent team confidence played out in a preseason tournament title win in Frederick, Maryland.

"I thought they won the Stanley Cup when they won the Frederick High School Preseason Tournament," said head coach Steve Wirth.

Wirth is in his first year as head coach with the Friars but has been around the ice a long time. "The team wasn't producing in the past but this tournament win opened their eyes."

The Friars are led by junior center, Ian Schultz, one of the team's offensive threats with three goals and five assists. "Ian is a heady player. He's good with the puck and when he gets it, he usually makes a good play," said Wirth.

Three other juniors, winger Zach Plankett (four goals, four assists), winger Nick Bender (two goals, three assists) and defenseman Cooper White (two goals, two assists) are pacing the team offensively. During the Frederick tourney, Plankett received the Most Valuable Player award.

The Friars' second line is comprised of two heady freshmen, Mike Druso and Corey Degier and sophomore Ryan March. All three players have scored thus far and show great promise for the future.

But defense is everything and the Friars are anchored by four steady players, sophomore Fig Kovacs, junior Justin "Critter" Wirth, senior captain Brent Oppenhauser and Cooper White. Coach Wirth will often use Kovacs on the power-play as Kovacs is one of the team's best one-on-one players, bringing excellent puck control to the mix.

Behind the defense is junior goalie, Ryan Henken. Henken was a forward for the team but last spring, during an off-season clinic, the Friars were in need of a goalie

and Henken stepped forward. Henken's spirits are high as he continues to learn the ropes at the net.

The Friars league opener in the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association B Conference got underway Dec. 8 at Patterson Park where the Friars came up short against St. Paul, Brooklandville, by a score of 5-3. The Friars face Gilman, Baltimore, Dec. 15 at Ice World in Abingdon.