

# Saints march on despite injuries to lacrosse team

Plagued by injuries, the St. Mary's High School, Annapolis, girls' lacrosse program has suffered setbacks, but not enough to fold a longstanding, dynamic program.

Led by Head Coach Sue Chittim, who is in her sixth season and carries a career record of 83-36, the team isn't crying over the woes of injury. Instead, Chittim's players are fighting harder to stay in the hunt for the IAAM A Conference championships, which begin in early May with a May 10 championship showdown at St. Paul's School for Girls.

The Saints are 6-5, 11-7 as of April 27, and inconsistency has plagued the team that has been called a dynasty.

"We have played well at times and not so well at other times," said Chittim. "The injuries have been a big factor."

A severe thigh muscle tear occurred during the McDonogh game for senior Danielle Estill, the team's key defenseman. A meniscus tear keeps senior goalie Mary Jordon out of the mix and forces senior goalie Natalie Wills to take on the roll of full-time goalkeeper while Jordon's knee heals.

The way Chittim had it, Wills and Jordan split time in the goal 50-50. They were that similar in numbers and talent, and they came to rely on each other. Jordon, headed to the University of Maryland, and Wills, headed to Vanderbilt University, are crucial to the program's success.

Junior midfielder Joanna Dalton is down with a pulled thigh muscle. Chittim and the Saints can count on at least four goals from Dalton each game, and when they do, the Saints often come away victorious.

Senior Caroline Cochrane, another middie, has an Achilles tendonitis injury. The injury list goes on and on for the Saints this year, but do not count the school out. They do not intend to fold or to look ahead to next season. That is not who the Saints

are, past or present. They are a dynasty – they show up game in and game out and give it their all.

Chittim has her players compete against the best schools so that on any given day, they can seal a win in the most dangerous and talented lacrosse conference in the region.

A key game for St. Mary's comes on April 28 against archrival Severn School, a neighborhood clash that will have a strong effect on the tournament bracket.

On the upside, St. Mary's is about the future. Coach Chittim is in the game to frame a secure college experience for her players. It's a self-imposed pressure, and all 11 seniors on the team this year will be attending Division I colleges and playing lacrosse.

Seniors Jen Fox and Megan Schrum are heading to The Johns Hopkins University. Fox, a midfielder, is a game-turner for the Saints and is wicked fast up the middle. Schrum is a quiet go-getter. She is all over the place, snaring ground balls and forcing turnovers.

The Saints find themselves in the middle of the standings, but Chittim reminds her team, "never play less than you can. Never ever walk off of the field knowing you have not given 100 percent of your best effort."