

25 TO WATCH IN '05

12) Famous alumni

In college basketball, it's Jay Wright's turn on the hot seat. Some believe that if Villanova doesn't make a run at an NCAA tournament bid, the Council Rock grad could be in trouble. Meanwhile, Lower Bucks County Hockey League alumni Tony Voss (Archbishop Ryan) is among the leading scorers for the Phantoms of the AHL.

SPRING/SUMMER ON THE FIELD

13) Rocky II

On the heels of Smarty Jones' run in the Triple Crown last year, John Servis appears ready to come back with a vengeance with Rockport Harbor, a similar horse that will make the trip through Arkansas probably to Kentucky. It could make for another fun spring at Philadelphia Park, which draws closer to slot machines.

14) Neshaminy baseball

Last season, the Redskins got on a roll late in the season and found their way into the PIAA Championships. This year, with a lot of players returning, it wouldn't be shocking if Neshaminy ended up making another deep run in the tournament.

15) The softball rivalry between Pennsbury and Neshaminy

Last year, the Falcons had the bet-

ter of it thanks to the pitching of Lauren Cognigni. She is gone but Pennsbury has another solid pitcher in Rachel Crossin. The Falcons still

are one of the best in District One.

Neshaminy, meanwhile, should bounce back to make a run deep in districts.

16) Keeping track

Last year, Bensalem had one of the better boys teams in the state in the relays. This year, most of those runners are back and ready to make another move. There are also several girls teams that figure to fit into the district playoff race.

17) Growth spurt

The one sport that continues to grow in the area more than any other is lacrosse. It will be interesting

to see if it continues and how much the level of play in the area improves.

18) Encore presentation

Council Rock-South's girls soccer team won the school's first PIAA Championship last June. A lot of players are back from the group, so a repeat would hardly be a shock. The team that may challenge them the most will be Council Rock-North.

19) Changing of the guard?

Last year, Falls upset Yardley Western to win the Lower Bucks County American Legion League championship. Could this be a sign of the end of Yardley's long dominance in the area — or just a blip on the radar screen.

20) Donofrio repeat?

One of the legitimate surprises of 2004 was the fact that a team filled with Bucks County all-stars found its way to the semifinals of the highly-acclaimed Albert C. Donofrio basketball tournament in an extremely

tough bracket with some of the city powers. Once is a fluke, but two would be a trend....

FALL ON THE FIELD

21) Another run for the Redskins?

One of the things that made the Neshaminy football teams run so remarkable in 2004 was the fact that they arrived a full year ahead of everybody's schedule. This year, they will not be able to sneak up on anybody and surprise. Neshaminy and North Penn — who played in this year's District One Class AAAA final — will be expected to go back to the district final and be the favorite for a trip to Hershey.

22) Viking ship sailing

It's tough to know exactly how the PCL will look by next football season, so projecting a potential championship for Wood is being a little ambitious. Still, if the current format comes back with Red and Blue, there is no doubt that having Chris Lorditch back will help the cause for the Vikings.

23) VJM repeat?

One of the main questions coming into 2004 was how the Jems would respond to a new coach after the departure of John McOwen. But Rich Finneyfrock's crew steamrolled to another state title and has a lot of performers coming back from last year. It all sets up for another fun time in Holland.

24) Expect Marvel-esque things.

Council Rock-North's Bethany Marvel has participated in a lot of national hockey tryouts and figures to be among the top recruits in the tri-state area next season in field hockey.

25) The unexpected

If there's one thing that sports has taught us all these years, it's trying to project into the future is a risky thing. Something will come out of the woodwork in one of these seasons and surprise us all.

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