

# 2004 PROVIDENCE COLLEGE MEN'S LACROSSE

## SEASON PREVIEW

The Friar men's lacrosse team has enjoyed great success under the guidance of Head Coach Chris Burdick during his five-years on the sidelines. Last season, PC finished the season with a 7-9 overall record and an impressive 7-1 mark in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC). The team's 7-1 conference finish helped the program claim its first-ever team title as 2003 Co-MAAC Regular-Season Champions. Defenseman Brian O'Rorke was honored as the league's Defensive Player of the Year and a First-Team selection for the second-straight season, while three other Friars also stepped up to receive post-season MAAC honors. Skip Dunphy joined O'Rorke on the First Team, while Andrew McMinn and Frank Bosco gathered Second-Team honors. Providence also made its third-consecutive trip to the MAAC Championship Tournament.

The Friars have clearly defined themselves as a team to contend within the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, and they look forward to setting the bar even higher in 2004. The team's sights are set on capturing the MAAC Tournament Championship for the first time in program history, which would ultimately propell the team into the NCAA Tournament for the first time as well.

The 2004 Friars may have the ingredients they need to get the job done. The squad has 23 letterwinners returning from last season, including O'Rorke who returns to the Friars' defensive unit as the reigning MAAC Defensive Player of the Year. He is the most decorated player in Providence men's lacrosse history, and is expected to, once again, have a strong campaign during his final season with the Friars. Junior John Hollister (Longmeadow, Mass.) led the Providence offense in 2003 with 27 points on 13 goals and 14 assists and returns in 2004, along with All-MAAC Second-Team performers Bosco and McMinn. The Friars also are excited about the return of junior Mark Rotella (Smithtown, N.Y.), who has been the team's primary face-off man the past two seasons. Last year, Rotella put up impressive numbers at the "X" with a .503 face-off percentage (94 face-offs won in 187 opportunities). O'Rorke, Hollister, Bosco, McMinn and Rotella are just a few of the many returners who will be expected to contribute to the program in 2004. The Friars also add 15 new faces to the roster, all of whom should compliment the existing nucleus of players, and several of the newcomers will contribute immediately to an already potent line-up.

### ATTACK

The primary attack unit will be comprised of Hollister, senior Kevin Kornobis (Merrick, N.Y.), junior Sean Kirwan (Drexel Hill, Pa.) and sophomore Michael Farley (Westfield, N.J.). Hollister, who led the Friars in scoring in his first season (27 points), will be looked upon to use his athletic ability and speed to penetrate and open up scoring opportunities for himself and his teammates. With one year of experience under his belt, Burdick is confident that Hollister will play at an even higher level in 2004. Kornobis, an intellectual player and great finisher, scored 15 points on eight goals and seven assists last year. Kirwan developed athletically during the off-season and is the most skilled attackman on the field for the Friars. He scored one point on one goal last season and will make the transition from special teams to a "regular" on the offensive unit. Farley missed most of last season rehabing an injury. He played nine games and scored three points on two goals and one assist. Farley has great speed and vision on the field and will contribute more minutes in his second year with the team. Freshman Ross Nochumowitz (Baltimore, Md.) has a great understanding of the game and is a good finisher at the net. He is working hard to develop athletically to fit in the mix of things. Look for Nochumowitz to play special teams as well.

### MIDFIELD

Bosco is heading up the midfield unit and will be joined by junior Dan Giuntini (Floral Park, N.Y.), sophomore Tom Kelly (Henniker, N.H.), sophomore Mark Seyer (Chesterfield, Mo.) and senior Chris Wray (Mahopac, N.Y.). Bosco is a great dodger and shoots well on the run. He's looking to rebound from an injury plagued campaign in 2003, in which he still earned All-MAAC Second-Team recognition. Giuntini played four games for the Friars in 2003 and scored nine points on five goals and four assists. As a freshman in 2002, Giuntini earned All-MAAC First-Team honors after finishing second on the team in scoring with 42 points on 30 goals and 12 assists. Giuntini is the complete package for the Friars. He has size, speed, shoots well on the run, is skillful with both hands and is a solid defender. Kelly will provide another solid dodging presence in the midfield. Last year, he led his freshmen teammates in scoring with eight points on seven goals and one assist. Seyer has been the biggest "surprise" during the preseason, among all returning players. Over the offseason, he progressed from where he was last year and continues to improve what is already one of the best shots on the team. Seyer played 16 games last season and scored four points on three goals and one assist. Wray is the hardest shooter on the team. He played three games in his first season with the Friars in 2003, and will see time on the special teams unit. Wray also may see some time at midfield and attack.

Adding depth to the midfield unit will be freshmen Mark Bundra (Winnetka, Ill.), Brendan Ryan (Chatham, N.J.) and Carlo Sunseri (Pittsburgh, Pa.). Each of these three players will see time in the Friars' first two midfield groups. Bundra, a high-school All-American, has speed and skill and is a tremendous all-around athlete. Ryan has great field vision and also may see time on the extra-man unit. Sunseri is a "hard charger", has a good shot on the run and uses both hands well. Sunseri was an attackman in high school.

Freshmen Peter Crommett (Cumberland, Maine), Jason Trout (Lutherville, Md.), Mark Dillon (Gaithersburg, Md.) and Sean Nixon (Wyckoff, N.J.) all have the ability to step-up and see time in the midfield as well.

Rotella returns as the Friars' primary face-off man in 2004. Last year, he won 50.3-percent of his face-off opportunities (94 face-offs won in 187 opportunities) and finished third on the team with 36 groundballs. Toward the end of the 2003 season, Rotella proved he was capable of being one of the more dominant face-off men in the MAAC. Sophomore Tom Ingle (Charlton, Mass.) and freshman Thomas Wenskus (East Islip, N.Y.) will add depth to the face-off position. Ingle played nine games as a freshman and won 50-percent of his face-off attempts (19-38) and picked up 10 groundballs.

Senior Roland Ostapoff (West Hartford, Conn.) also will play a big role on face-offs at the wing as a long-stick midday. In 2003, he played 15 games, tallied one assist and registered 33 groundballs. Joining Ostapoff at long-stick will be freshmen Chris Chalke (Auburn, Maine) and Pat James (Lansdale, Pa.). Chalke brings tremendous size and range to the field, and Coach Burdick expects him to develop into one of the top players in the MAAC. James adds great speed to the line-up. Sophomore Steve Gerry (Groton, Conn.) and freshman Liam Smith (Islip, N.Y.) also will be vying for time at the long-stick midfield position.

In the short-stick defensive unit, Providence returns junior Richard Knightly (Windsor, Mass.) and senior Troy Moore (Manlius, N.Y.). Knightly is a very intelligent player. He appeared in 16 games in 2003, scored two goals and recorded 16 groundballs. Moore played 14 games a year ago and collected five groundballs. He is a very athletic, one-on-one defender. Knightly and Moore will be pushed by sophomore Ryan Martin (Arlington, Mass.) and sophomore Ronan Buick (Cohasset, Mass.). Martin played four games for PC a year ago and recorded four groundballs. Buick recorded two groundballs in three games. A combination of Hollister and Bundra also could be used in the short-stick defensive unit.

## **DEFENSE**

The Friar defense will be led by senior Ben Brown (Ranch Santa Fe, Calif.), who is the most physical defenseman ever to play under Coach Burdick. A second-year captain, Brown is the "heart-and-soul" of the defensive unit. Brown will likely match-up against the opposing No. 1 attackman in each of the Friars' games this season, allowing O'Rorke, the 2002 and 2003 MAAC Defensive Player of the Year, to gain favorable match-up advantages in an effort to create more turnovers. Brown finished second on the team with 44 groundballs in 2003. O'Rorke played 13 games last season and recorded 35 groundballs.

Freshman James Courter (Lincoln Park, N.J.) will make an immediate impact in the defensive unit this season. Courter stands at 6-foot, 5-inches tall and is one of the hardest workers Coach Burdick has seen since he began coaching. Courter's basketball background has helped him to develop a good understanding of the game, and allows him to make intelligent decisions on team slides.

Also playing large roles in the Friar defense will be junior John Pynchon (Ipswich, Mass.) and junior Patrick Hoey (Garden City, N.Y.). Pynchon played 12 games in 2003 and collected six groundballs, while Hoey saw time in 12 games and picked up seven groundballs.

Freshman Curtis Chandler (Vineyard Haven, Mass.) and Wenskus will push for time in the defensive unit.

## **GOALKEEPING**

McMinn leads the way for the Friars in the net after a fantastic sophomore campaign in 2003. He continues to improve, and also developed his "clearing game" in the off-season. Burdick believes that McMinn is the best returning goaltender in the MAAC. On a national level, McMinn finished the 2003 season fourth, among all NCAA Division I goaltenders, in goals-against average (6.91) and 12th in save percentage (.605).

Sophomore Ron Westgate (Lutherville, Md.) and freshman Peter Littell (Upper Montclair, N.J.) are both very capable back-ups. Westgate appeared in two games as a freshman and played 54 minutes, posting a .533 save percentage. He is a great communicator on the field and has tremendous athletic ability. Westgate has worked hard in the off-season to develop his technical skills, and Coach Burdick believes he can lead the team defense. Littell is working on making the transition to the Division I game. He brings great size and range at the position, and as a freshman, he has proven himself to be one of the better communicators on the team. Littell will definitely push McMinn and Westgate for playing time.