

Written by JOHN CORYER, Staff Writer
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PLATTSBURGH — The Plattsburgh State men's baseball team hasn't played since last Wednesday. Maybe, that's a good thing. "I'm not concerned about the layoff because that's probably the best thing that could have happened for us," said Cardinals' head coach Kris Doorey. "Everybody was so tense. "We got back to work on Monday and have had a couple days of good practices. We're going to be a lot better mentally this weekend."

The Cardinals, who have struggled at the plate in their most recent games, return to State University of New York Athletic Conference play this weekend.

Plattsburgh State is at Fredonia today for two games and plays at Brockport on Sunday for two more. Both doubleheaders will begin at noon.

While every other SUNYAC team has played between six and 10 games in the conference, the Cardinals (16-7 overall, 2-2 SUNYAC) have played only four because of the lousy weather.

"Our conference games are our most important games and I know our players will be up for them," Doorey said. "If we're not up for them, we have an issue.

"At this point, we need wins. We've swept these teams in the past so we're capable of doing so. We need to take it day by day. Our conference is pretty tough and you have to do more than show up. If you don't come ready to play, you lose.

"But, I sense a little bit of excitement on the team. It's like we're starting over."

Junior first baseman Todd Hughes, who has been out with an injury, will play this weekend and hopefully help give the Cardinals an offensive boost.

"Todd needed some rest and he was able to get it," Doorey said.

Fredonia is 8-15 overall and 3-5 in the conference. The Blue Devils played last Saturday and split a twinbill with New Paltz — losing the first game (8-3) and winning the second (9-4).

The Blue Devils have beaten Oswego twice this season and lost twice to both Cortland and Brockport.

"We're going to see their No. 1 and 2 pitchers," Doorey said. "They have a couple of good hitters as well.

"We need to take advantage of their mistakes and get some timely hitting."

Scheduled to start the two games on the mound for the Cardinals against Fredonia are Kevin Gent and Matt Dahlin.

Gent is 2-1 overall, with a 3.71 ERA, while Dahlin 3-2, with a 2.54 ERA.

Brockport, meanwhile, is 16-9 overall and 6-4 in SUNYAC play.

It's been kind of a strange season for the Golden Eagles within the conference. Brockport swept conference power Cortland in a twinbill but lost twice to Oswego.

The Cardinals are looking to get as least three wins over the weekend.

"We just need to relax a little," Doorey said. "Hopefully, we'll play better in the better weather."

The Cardinals swept a non-conference doubleheader from Lyndon State (1-0, 6-4) last Wednesday at home.

Prior to that, Plattsburgh State had dropped five of six following a 13-2 start to the season.

The Cardinals, who will play 10 conference games in the next eight days, are currently tied for fourth in the conference standings with New Paltz and Oswego, who both have 4-4 records.

Cortland (6-2), Oneonta (4-2) and Brockport (6-4) hold down the top three spots.