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Pine Richland's Cooper Zancosky gets around Penn-Trafford's Jonny DeMarchis during first-round WPIAL Class 3A lacrosse playoff action last season.

Lessons learned last season have Pine-Richland boys lacrosse poised for success

By Jerin Steele April 2, 2023



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It took a bit for the [Pine-Richland](#) boys lacrosse team to achieve results last year, but once the Rams got going, they went on a heater before ultimately falling in the first round of the playoffs to [Penn-Trafford](#).

Second-year coach Dave Offner believes the Rams can take another step forward and build off the momentum of their late-season run.

The Rams were 1-7 last year before rattling off six wins in their last eight to climb into third place in the Section 2-3A standings.

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The most experienced part, as far as starters go, is in the midfield.

Seniors Owen Luellen and Andrew Mellis and junior Cooper Zancosky are all returning starters. Sam Rippole also saw time in the midfield a season ago.

Luellen and Zancosky were named captains along with senior attackman Will Albrecht.

Ben Lyons is a returning starter on defense. Junior Brett Saulnier and sophomore Zachary White have helped bolster the defense early on while the team deals with a few injuries.

The defense has also been helped by the presence of Carter Ravotti.

Ravotti, a senior, switched positions from offensive midfielder to close defense in the offseason.

“He met and talked with me in the offseason and said he saw a hole on the defensive side he wanted to fill,” Offner said. “He wanted to get some speed and athleticism on the defense, and it’s worked out very well for him and the team. It was a brave and selfless decision to change sides of the ball.”

Brady Mullay also changed positions from midfielder to long stick midfielder. Evan Johnson is another LSM who Offner is expecting to be a major contributor.

Albrecht, Garrett Barth, Nate Vrabel and Clayton Speakman front the attack. Barth is a senior, Vrabel is a junior and Speakman is a sophomore.

Justin White, a junior, has been the starting goalkeeper.

[Pine-Richland](#) started with some difficult opponents. They dropped games to defending Class 2A state champ [Mars](#) and [Mt. Lebanon](#) but did get a little revenge for last season’s postseason exit with a 18-12 win over [Penn-Trafford](#). Freshman Callan DeGrands shined in the win, recording a hat trick and two assists.

“We went into that game with a little bit of a chip on our shoulder,” Offner said. “I respect Penn-Trafford. They’re a really talented team, and their coach does a great job. I know they graduated a lot of talent, but they returned some top guys and were able to backfill some of those gaps. They’re a solid team, and it was an awesome win for us.”

The nonsection schedule for Pine-Richland includes a trip out to Eastern Pennsylvania for games with Kennett and Upper Dublin. The Rams are in Section 2-3A again with [Allerdice](#), [Butler](#), [Fox Chapel](#), [North](#)

Open [eny](#), [North Hills](#), [Seneca Valley](#) and [Shady Side Academy](#).



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“They know not to get too discouraged if we don’t have the best record early in the season because our strength of schedule is front loaded,” Offner said. “That’s what we spend our season preparing for is making sure we’re peaking at the right time. We have our schedule broken up enough that some of our section games are at the end of the year. We certainly want to be in the mix for a section title and then making a deep run in WPIALs.”

Jerin Steele is a freelance writer

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