

# Nazareth edges Mercy in key league battle

By Richard A. Kiley

The Nazareth Academy varsity girls softball team has a message for all Private-Parochial opponents this year: don't count them out of this year's quest for the Private-Parochial title.

The host Lady Monarchs of Mercy heard the message loud and clear last Friday in a 19-16 loss to coach Dave Pisano's squad.

Nazareth pitcher Marisa Deliberto was phenomenal both on the mound and at the plate. The Nazareth senior drove in seven runs and recorded several key strikeouts against a team that had defeated Bishop Kearney by a 4-2 score earlier in the week.

The Nazareth victory over Paul Walker's squad leaves the league wide open for the taking.

Nazareth scored three runs in the first inning and two in the second before five Mercy runs in the bottom of the second evened the contest at 5-5.

In the top of the fourth, however, Mercy pitcher Mollie Board (who replaced an ineffective Jenny Baxter in the second) was rocked for eight Nazareth runs.

The bases were loaded with Nazareth runners when a Board pitch bounced off the front of the plate and rolled to the backstop, enabling Amy Budd to score from third.

Samantha Schramm's single two batters later plated both Diliberto and Paula Short to give Nazareth a three-run cushion, 8-5.

The onslaught continued when Nazareth loaded the bases for Sharon Semper, who doubled in both Jill Cosgrove and Scramm to up the lead to 10-5.

A series of wild pitches and an error by freshman Tami LaMora allowed Nazareth to up the margin to eight, 13-5.

The barrage ended when junior Beth Wambach doubled up Diliberto at first and sophomore Amy Budd at home.

Mercy tightened the contest in their half of the fourth when Wambach, who blasted two home runs for the day, tripled both her sister Laura and teammate Rita LaForce home.

Coleen Gartland pulled Mercy to within five when she singled Wambach home.

In the top half of the fifth inning, Nazareth's Kasey Compisi walked with bases loaded to up the lead to 14-8.

Mercy coach Baxter then re-entered Baxter into the game to replace a battered Board on the mound. The only further damage occurred when Schramm scored on a fielder's choice, giving Nazareth a 15-8 lead.

The Monarchs wouldn't quit, however, and pulled to within four at 15-11 in the bottom of the fifth. A walk and a throwing error put runners at first and second before Laura Wambach tripled home two runs and scored on the play when Nazareth threw the ball away.

Two batters later, Beth Wambach doubled Donna Grady home from second base to narrow the lead to three, 15-12.

Nazareth staged a two-out rally in the top of the sixth inning and scored three times.

Jill Cosgrove reached safely on an error and stole second. Sampler scored the senior third baseman, thanks to numerous throwing errors, and gave Nazareth a 17-12 lead.

A ground ball which took a bad hop over LaForce's head at third base scored a run and upped the margin to six, 18-12. On the ensuing play, LaForce's throwing error allowed freshman Gina DeMaura to score.

The three-run sixth, which at the time appeared to ice the victory for Nazareth, proved most important when a Mercy rally in the bottom of the seventh fell just short.

Laura Wambach began the inning with a home run (actually scored a triple and a throwing error) which made the score 19-13.

LaForce, Beth Wambach and Gartland all reached base with only one out and Grady at the plate. Grady's grand-slam home run up left-center field appeared to pull the Monarchs to within two runs. Grady was called out by the home-plate umpire, however, when she failed to touch home plate. It was the senior's second blunder on the base paths, so instead of trailing by two runs with only one out, Mercy now trailed by three runs with two out.

The game ended with a harmless foul pop behind home plate.



A determined Marisa Deliberto delivers a pitch in Nazareth's 19-16 win over Mercy last Friday.

# Arriola whiffs 16 batters as Kearney keeps Knights in check

By Richard A. Kiley

What a difference a day makes.

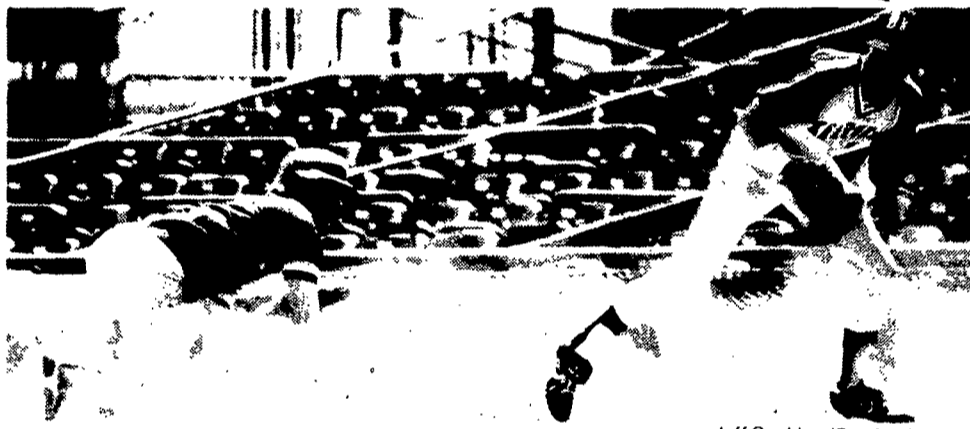
After losing to a mediocre Eastring team on Saturday by a score of 16-6, the Bishop Kearney varsity baseball squad came back with a nearly flawless 5-1 victory over the Knights of McQuaid at Silver Stadium on Sunday.

Saturday's dismal 10-run defeat (a game that saw Coach Carm Urzetta's squad commit 14 errors) happened to be played the day after the junior prom at Kearney. The numbers for the game showed it.

The numbers were stacked in Kearney's favor on Sunday, however, and were impressive ones at that. Junior left-hander Steve Arriola had 16 "sweet" strikeouts against the Knights. The transfer pitcher from Penfield kept Coach Tim Jordan's squad guessing wrong all afternoon with a mixture of fastballs and curveballs.

McQuaid pitcher Jon Knight was victimized by his team's dormant offense, which like many area moms, seemed to take the day off.

After Fred Blightman grounded out to start the fourth inning, Tom McKay walked and stole second. Brian Keenan moved McKay to third when he stroked a three-and-two fastball to left. Fighting King first baseman Joe Falbo scored McKay with an opposite-field single past a diving Peter Kowal at shortstop.



McQuaid's Mike Fina dives back to first base to beat the tag.

Don Weigand staked Kearney to a 2-0 lead when he followed Falbo with a towering fly to center, scoring Keenan from third for what proved to be the winning run.

The Fighting Kings added to their lead one inning later. Eric Jones' infield single combined with John Burke's walk gave Kearney runners at first and second with no one out. Jones took third on a wild pitch and eventually scored on Robert Long's single. While Burke was moving to third on the play, Long was thrown out trying to stretch the hit into a double.

With the score 3-0 and Arriola showing no signs of tiring, Jordan removed Knight from the game and replaced him with Chip Golembeski.

Blightman greeted Golembeski with a hard smash to centerfield, but was robbed of an extra-base hit when centerfielder Dan Peacock made a shoestring catch. The fly was far enough to score Burke from third, however, giving Kearney a 4-0 lead.

The Fighting Kings added an insurance run in the sixth inning, thanks to some shabby defensive play by McQuaid.

Keenan led the inning with his second single for the day, and eventually stole second base. Weigand followed two batters later with a single, giving Urzetta runners on the corners with one out.

Golembeski then attempted to pick off pinch runner Tony Kappuro at first, a play

that backfired when the throw got away from first baseman Steve Hettrich. The muffed attempt enabled Keenan to walk home from third and gave Kearney a comfortable 5-0 margin.

Arriola's shutout bid was lost in McQuaid's final at-bat in the seventh.

The left-hander struck out McQuaid catcher Scott Hebert to start the inning, but walked Dan O'Mara. After whiffing pinch-hitter Angelo Ponticello, Arriola was victimized by a fielding error by Blightman, which gave the Knights runners at first and third with two outs.

Designated hitter Dave Schroeder's long single to left scored O'Mara from third to break the shutout. Arriola averted any further damage when he struck out Hettrich on three pitches.

The win upped Kearney's record to 11-5 overall and 6-1 in the City-Catholic League for the season. McQuaid's record dropped to 5-9 and 5-4 in City-Catholic.

The game was Kearney's second victory over a Catholic rival at Silver. Two weeks earlier, Kearney defeated Cardinal Mooney, 8-7.

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