

# Mooney blanks Aquinas to capture Private-Parochial crown

By Richard A. Kiley

The fact that the Lady Cardinals won their sixth consecutive Private-Parochial soccer championship last Thursday afternoon may not be terribly surprising.

The way they won the crown was.

Three unanswered tallies in the second half propelled Scott Morrison's squad past a beleaguered Aquinas team, which endured a bitter ending to an otherwise brilliant season under head coach Mary Beth Moore.

The 3-0 win by Mooney avenged a 2-0 double-overtime loss to the Little Irish earlier in the season. Aquinas, which had been unbeaten up until the final two weeks of the regular season, finished with a 13-3-1 record overall, 6-2 league.

The Lady Cardinals finished 12-3-2 overall, 7-1 league.

According to Morrison, who is in his fifth year with the varsity girls after coaching the boys on the junior varsity level for 10 years, his squad had been looking forward to the game against the Little Irish since early September.

"I knew that our kids really wanted it this time," said Morrison, who teaches both physical education and business at the Greece high school. "They (his players) have been looking forward to this game since we lost to them (Aquinas) the first week of September. That put a lot of pressure on them because they knew they would have to win every league game for this game to be important."

Mooney did win all its league games in the weeks between the two Aquinas contests, a not-too-small task considering the Private-Parochial League really asserted itself this fall season as being a force to be reckoned with among Rochester-area schools. The league players and coaches were rewarded for their efforts last Saturday, when area coaches met to decide on sectional seedings. All five squads in the all Catholic league made the sectionals for the first time since the league's inception.

The Mooney-Aquinas contest last week was much like the first game between the two squads, with the Lady Cardinals controlling the play through much of the game. Not even the heroics of Little Irish netminder Donna Enright could deny Mooney the championship.

"We had just as many shots in the first game (against Aquinas), said Morrison, after his team peppered Enright with 28 shots. The

Lady Cardinals have averaged 25 shots per game this season. "But they (the shots) just didn't go in during the first game. We couldn't buy a goal. I figured if we just kept to our game (plan), the shots would go in."

The coach's thinking proved to be good philosophy.

After a scoreless first half in which the ball stayed in the Aquinas end most of the time, Mooney staged a soccer clinic in the second 40 minutes.

Just 1:52 into the second half, senior midfielder Teri Lamphron gave her team the only goal it would need, lofting the ball over Enright's head into the goal.

Four minutes later, Mooney upped the lead to 2-0 when Kim Probst combined with Marybeth Progno on a pretty pass play. Probst had two assists for the afternoon. The game marked the first time in weeks that Progno had seen extensive play. Progno, who catches for Joette Abbey's girls' varsity softball team in the spring, has been troubled with a bad knee, and Morrison was ecstatic that she played a major role in Mooney's clinching the title.

"I had tears in my eyes after she scored; it was like a fairy tale," Morrison said. "This was her first game back where she played for a long period of time. She (Progno) is very important to us."

Chris Monfalcon closed out the scoring with 22:04 left in the game. The junior's goal was set up by a textbook corner kick by Sandy Vollo. Enright did her best to punch the senior midfielder's kick away from the goal, but Monfalcon was one of numerous Mooney players awaiting the rebound.

Morrison was delighted his squad came out on top of the five-team league, which saw the most competitive play to date.

"This was a very rewarding season for me. This team has not played a bad game all season," said Morrison, citing tough losses to Mendon, Rush-Henrietta and Aquinas. "We've steadily improved all season. We may have not won every game, but we never slipped back."

Reflecting on the play of his Lady Cardinals in the second half of the victory over Aquinas, Morrison said "they're right where I want them to be."

The coach attributed this year's accomplishments to the unselfish attitude of not only his players, but the Mooney soccer program on the whole.

"I'm always going over coaching strategies with Paul (Forte) to see if this works or that works," said Morrison of his coaching relationship with the boys' varsity soccer coach. "I don't know if you'll find something like that anywhere else in Section 5. We play off each other; it's a nice situation. We try to instill that it's the soccer program here, not the girls' or the guys' program."

As the dawn of the second season approaches, Morrison cited Gates-Chili, Hilton, Brockport, and Greece-Athena as the teams to watch, but added "the Triple A bracket has so many good teams and so many equal teams"

And he feels good about his team's chances in this year's tourney, with 17 of his 25 players returning from last year's squad which reached the tourney semifinals. "The good thing about our team this year is that I can use 20 players a game and I don't weaken myself."

That trend should continue next year, when Morrison inherits Lori Jaros' junior varsity players.



Theresa Nietopaki of Mooney battles Aquinas' Christine O'Querry for possession

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Marybeth Progno is all smiles as she and her teammates celebrate her second-half goal.

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