

# Bianchi is too much for Little Irish as Titans advance to state tourney

By Richard A. Kiley

The game plan was simple, its execution nearly impossible.

Aquinas boys' varsity soccer coach Emilio Monti knew that if his defense could stop Arcadia's Mike Bianchi — an All-American athlete if there ever was one — the Little Irish had a chance of upsetting the Titans in last Wednesday night's Class B playoff game.

The third-year coach even went as far as putting an extra midfielder on the scoring machine to blanket Bianchi wherever he went.

Nice try, Coach.

Bianchi single-handedly eliminated the Little Irish (13-8-1) from advancing to the state Class B soccer tournament by scoring the hat trick in Arcadia's 3-0 shutout at Spencerport.

"The whole game I told them, 'If you stop Mike Bianchi, you stop the team,'" Monti said. "If we keep him from scoring, we could pull out the game. But Mike Bianchi is really an excellent player, and that's tough to do."

The Little Irish did keep Bianchi from scoring for the first 26 minutes, but then watched helplessly as he struck twice in less than four minutes.

Bianchi's first score came with 13:54 left, when the Aquinas defense was unable to clear the ball out of its own end. The junior forward was one of three Arcadia players swarming around the Aquinas goal, when he converted a rebound shot over Little Irish goalie Mike Compisi.

Just 3:38 later, Bianchi scored again, thanks to a perfect feed from sweeper Don Lovell.

Compisi came out to punch Lovell's long shot away from danger, but was victimized by the swirling wind, which appeared to knock the ball down somewhat, enabling Bianchi to head the ball high over Compisi and into the goal.

"Mike showed a little experience on that play," Monti said after the game. "He's only a sophomore, and he's bound to make mistakes. The more experience he gets, he'll be able to minimize those mistakes."

Bianchi notched his hat trick just 5:01 into the second half, when he once again pounced on a loose ball in front of the Aquinas cage and beat Compisi to the upper-left-hand side.

Monti attributed the third Arcadia tally to the lack of Aquinas bodies in front of Compisi. The AQ coach gambled to get back in the game when he put in an extra forward.

"Down 2-0, I tried to open up (the offense) a little bit more," Monti said. "If I can get a goal back in the first 10 or 15 minutes. If I can get a goal back, we would have been back in the game, but it (the gamble) went against us."

Monti downplayed the revenge factor having any role in the game's outcome — Aquinas beat Arcadia 1-0 earlier in the year, despite being outshot 24-1 — and said the Titans were just opportunistic in capitalizing on Aquinas defensive lapses.

"We made three mistakes, and they (Arcadia) capitalized on all of them," Monti said. The first 20 minutes I thought we were playing pretty well, but the kids got pretty down after the second goal."

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Susan Kost

An unidentified Aquinas player shadows Arcadia's Mike Bianchi during action in the first half. Despite their efforts, the Little Irish were unable from keeping the junior from scoring three times.

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