

C-J Sports

Upcoming games: Boys' basketball

Honeoye at DeSales, 6:30 p.m., 1/23
 Jefferson at McQuaid, 8 p.m., 1/23
 East at Aquinas, 8 p.m., 1/23
 Charlotte at Mooney, 6:30 p.m., 1/23
 Wilson at Bishop Kearney, 8 p.m., 1/23
 Corning East at Notre Dame, 8 p.m., 1/23
 Elkland at Notre Dame, 8 p.m., 1/24
 Aquinas at Franklin, 3:30 p.m., 1/27
 Mooney at Monroe, 3:30 p.m., 1/27
 McQuaid at Marshall, 3:30 p.m., 1/27
 Bishop Kearney at Jefferson, 3:30 p.m., 1/27

Upcoming games: Girls' basketball

Red Jacket at DeSales, 6:30 p.m., 1/22
 Spencerport at Mooney, 6:30 p.m., 1/22
 Nazareth at Bishop Kearney, 8 p.m., 1/22
 Notre Dame at Corning East, 8 p.m., 1/23
 Nazareth at Franklin, 1 p.m., 1/24
 DeSales at Bloomfield, 1 p.m., 1/24
 Athena at Mooney, 1 p.m., 1/24
 Monroe at Aquinas, 3:30 p.m., 1/27
 Mercy at Fairport, 8 p.m., 1/27
 Romulus at DeSales, 6:30 p.m., 1/27
 Nazareth at Wilson, 7:30 p.m., 1/27
 Mercy at Nazareth, 5:30 p.m., 1/29
 Mooney at Aquinas, 4 p.m., 1/29

Little Irish roll to win over Fighting Kings, former coach

Ruff's squad plagued by inexperience, miscues

By Richard A. Kiley

Things haven't exactly gone Mike Ruff's way in his inaugural season coaching the boys' varsity basketball program at Bishop Kearney.

Take, for example, last Tuesday night, January 13, when Ruff's Fighting Kings went up against Aquinas. The game marked the first time Ruff has squared off against his former club, which he guided to its first Section 5 Class AAA final last season.

The game against Aquinas proved to be a microcosm of what Ruff has been going through since he took over the Kearney program, which had gone 7-32 in its two previous campaigns. The first-year coach once again witnessed numerous turnovers in key situations. In addition, one of his premier players missed an easy breakaway dunk and another picked up a technical foul for wearing jewelry during play.

Those mishaps, among others, played a part in the Little Irish's 59-47 win over Kearney — which took place on Kearney's turf, after continuing renovations on the gym floor at Aquinas caused an unanticipated change in venue.

The Kearney turnovers could be attributed to inexperience at the guard position. Ruff, who has been trying to nurture his two sophomore guards along, has undoubtedly been helped by his four seasons as the No. 1 man at AQ.

"The situation I'm in now is very parallel to what I had over there," said Ruff, whose Little Irish teams languished in mediocrity before last season. "We never really got our offensive flow going against Aquinas. Our inexperience at the guard position has hurt us."

The Fighting Kings were within striking distance of Mike Dianetti's club most of the night, but were not able to capitalize on its opportunities when the game was on the line. At one point early in the fourth quarter, Kearney tied Aquinas, 45-45, but was able to muster just one basket the rest of the way.

With the exception of his team's inexperience at key positions, Ruff had a tough time putting his finger on what has been going wrong thus far.

"I'm discouraged with the way we're playing, but I'm still optimistic," Ruff said. "Right now, it's the intangibles. It's hard to create good chemistry on a team which hasn't really played together as a unit before. It's going to take time for them to get to know personalities."

Ruff observed that he has also tried to get to know his players as they've become familiar with each other. Through such



Aquinas' Mike Whitfield weaves a pass through the arms of Kearney's R.D. Long. Whitfield also did well shooting the ball as he poured in 22 points for the night.

activities as team lunches, the new Kearney mentor hopes to acquire the winning chemistry and atmosphere he had at Aquinas.

He called coaching against his former players "unusual," and said he was happy for the team and its new head coach.

"I was very impressed with the way they played. All those juniors, like (Mike) Whitfield and (Jim) Livecchi didn't play that much last year but they were a part of what we accomplished," Ruff said.

And a follower of Aquinas basketball in its years under Ruff can see that he left his mark on the program. With the exception of Whitfield's 22 points, Aquinas deployed a balanced attack to defeat Kearney. Senior Paul Mayer added 10 points for the Little Irish, while Sean Schiano and Jon Luconte contributed eight each.

Marcel Vernon led Kearney with 15 points, while R.D. Long added 10.

AQ led 32-28 at the half, and 45-43 after the third quarter, before the Kings pulled even in the first half-minute of the final stanza. That was as close as they would get, however, as the Little Irish went on a 6-0 scoring spurt. Trailing by six midway through the fourth quarter, the Kings were forced to foul. The strategy didn't change things, however, as Aquinas scored its last eight points from the free-throw line. Mayer was hot from the stripe, hitting on five of seven free throws to secure the win.

After four losses in its first five starts, Dianetti has taken Aquinas (3-3, 4-4) to .500.

The new AQ coach downplayed the extra incentive that going up against Ruff provided, but said his players seemed more up than usual before the game.

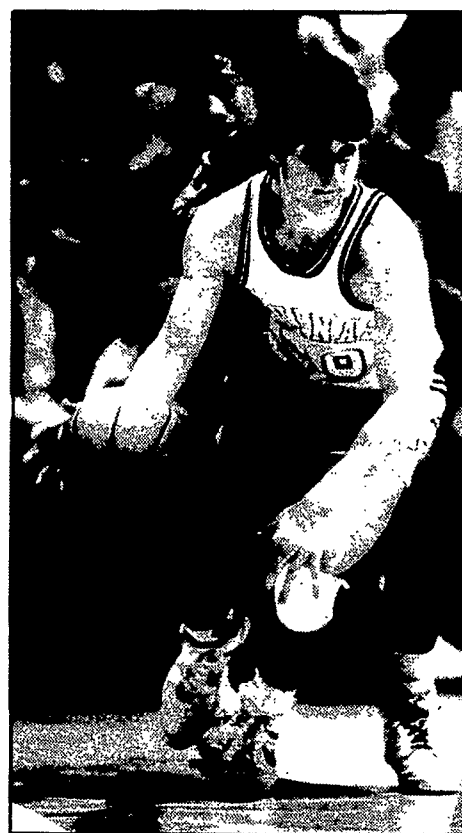
"The kids may have had extra incentive but I didn't. This game was important because it pulled us to .500," Dianetti said. The former graduate assistant coach at Nazareth College said his team was slowed by a long layoff at Christmas — nine days — but now seems to be gelling at the midway point of the season.

"We were very rusty after the layoff; we don't have the talent to sit out for awhile," Dianetti said. "But after two good days of practice, we got back on track. We've had three nice wins (in a row) against some nice teams. It's a credit to my kids and their work ethic. My guards are slow, but they really play their hearts out."

So while Dianetti seems to have things turned around, Ruff still waits. Knowing that these things take time, he is confident of his team's future.

"I'm discouraged, but I'm still optimistic. We're going to play better. I think if we worry more about our game instead of the other team's, we'll be all right," said Ruff, whose squad romped to a win over Charlotte just three nights after the loss to AQ.

"We need to start igniting our offense to get easy baskets and we have to start taking the charge," Ruff concluded. "We need to concentrate on our game."



Jon Luconte of Aquinas pushes the ball up the floor during his team's win over Kearney.

High School Boys			
SOUTHEAST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Assumption	2	2	(6)
CYA	1	5	(9)
Good Shepherd	1	4	(8)
J.C.C.	1	3	(7)
St. Joseph	2	1	(4)
St. Louis	1	3	(6)
St. John, City	4	1	(3)
St. John, Fairport	5	0	(1)
St. Thomas More	5	1	(2)
Oatka Secure	1	5	(9)
Faith Lutheran	3	3	(5)
NORTHEAST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Holy Trinity	3	3	(4)
St. Ambrose	5	0	(1)
Pinnacle Lutheran	1	5	(6)
St. Mary's	1	4	(5)
St. Bridget	4	1	(2)
St. Boniface	4	2	(3)
St. Stanislaus	4	1	(2)
SOUTHWEST DIV.	W	L	(S)
HF-HA	6	0	(1)
St. Pius X	2	2	(5)
St. Helen	2	2	(5)
St. Theodore	3	2	(3)
Holy Ghost	3	3	(4)
St. Rita	1	4	(7)
St. Anne's	1	3	(6)
St. John's (Spencerport)	4	2	(2)
Good Counsel	4	2	(2)
Holy Name	0	4	(7)
NORTHWEST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Holy Cross	6	0	(1)
St. Lawrence	4	2	(3)
St. John, Greece	2	3	(5)
St. Charles	3	1	(2)
Sacred Heart	2	2	(4)
Lady of Mercy	1	4	(6)
Mother of Sorrow	1	4	(6)
Precious Blood	1	4	(6)
Jr. High Girls	W	L	(S)
EAST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Seion Hall	0	4	(10)
Blessed Sacrament	2	1	(4)
St. Louis	6	0	(1)
Lady of Good Counsel	0	3	(9)
East Rochester (CYA)	3	2	(5)
St. Joseph	1	2	(8)
St. Michaels	0	3	(9)
St. Mary's (C)	4	1	(3)
St. Patrick	0	2	(8)
St. Mary's (W)	5	0	(2)
St. Francis/St. Stephens	2	4	(7)
St. Rita	2	3	(6)
WEST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Mother of Sorrows	5	0	(1)
St. Charles	4	2	(3)
St. Theodore	1	3	(7)
Holy Cross	2	2	(5)
St. John, Spencerport	4	1	(2)
St. Stanislaus	3	2	(4)
St. Salome	3	2	(4)
St. Pius X	3	2	(4)
Sacred Heart	1	2	(6)
Lewis Street	0	2	(8)
St. Ambrose	1	3	(7)
Christ the King	0	4	(9)
Jr. High Boys	W	L	(S)
SOUTHEAST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Blessed Sacrament	0	6	(6)
Good Shepherd	3	1	(2)
CYA	3	2	(3)
St. John, Fairport	5	0	(1)
St. Joseph	1	2	(5)
St. Louis	3	2	(3)
Pinnacle Lutheran	2	4	(4)
CYP	3	2	(3)
NORTHEAST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Christ the King	3	3	(3)
Holy Trinity	0	4	(7)
Lewis St.	2	2	(4)
St. Salome	2	3	(5)
St. Stanislaus	2	3	(5)
St. Margaret Mary	5	0	(1)
St. John's (City)	6	0	(1)
St. Ambrose	5	1	(2)
Blessed Sacrament	1	5	(6)
St. Andrew	0	5	(8)
SOUTHWEST DIV.	W	L	(S)
Charles House	3	3	(4)
HF/HA	3	3	(4)
Holy Ghost	5	1	(2)
Good Counsel	3	3	(4)
Holy Rosary	5	1	(2)
St. Boniface	5	1	(2)
St. Helen	2	4	(5)
St. Anne's	6	0	(1)
St. Pius X	1	5	(6)
St. Theodore	0	6	(7)
Nativity	4	2	(3)
St. Monica's	4	2	(3)
St. John's (Spencerport)	2	4	(5)
SOUTHWEST DIV.	W	L	(S)
St. Francis	2	1	(2)
St. Michael	2	0	(1)
St. Patrick	2	3	(4)
St. Mary's (C)	1	3	(5)
St. Mary's (W)	2	3	(3)

Sport Shorts

Rochester-area sports fans will once again have the chance to see renowned figures from the sports world at the annual Aquinas Sports Celebrity Dinner, which is scheduled for February 8, at the Diplomat Party House in Rochester.

Jerry Flynn will serve as master of ceremonies this year. The evening will feature such notable figures as Villanova head basketball coach Rollie Massimino; Pete Carlesimo, director of the National Basketball Invitational; Joe Altobelli, former Rochester Red Wing and Baltimore Oriole manager; Jo Jo White, former Boston Celtic great; Dick Buerkle, an Aquinas graduate and former world mile record holder; and Robb Riddick, running back for the Buffalo Bills, among others.

Tickets are \$30 per person. Tables of 10 may be reserved. Call (716)647-2990 for information.

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