

C-J Sports

McQuaid's season ends; Elmira ND advances to Glens Falls

By Richard A. Kiley

Optimism was running high just :44 into the first quarter of the state Class A playoff game between McQuaid and Buffalo Nichols last Saturday night, March 14.

Nichols' standout guard Rick Torgalski, who averaged 20 points per game for the Vikings during the regular season, had just picked up his second foul less than a minute into the contest, prompting one McQuaid fan to lean to another and say, "Hey, isn't he one of their big scorers? Maybe he'll foul out before he does any damage."

No such luck.

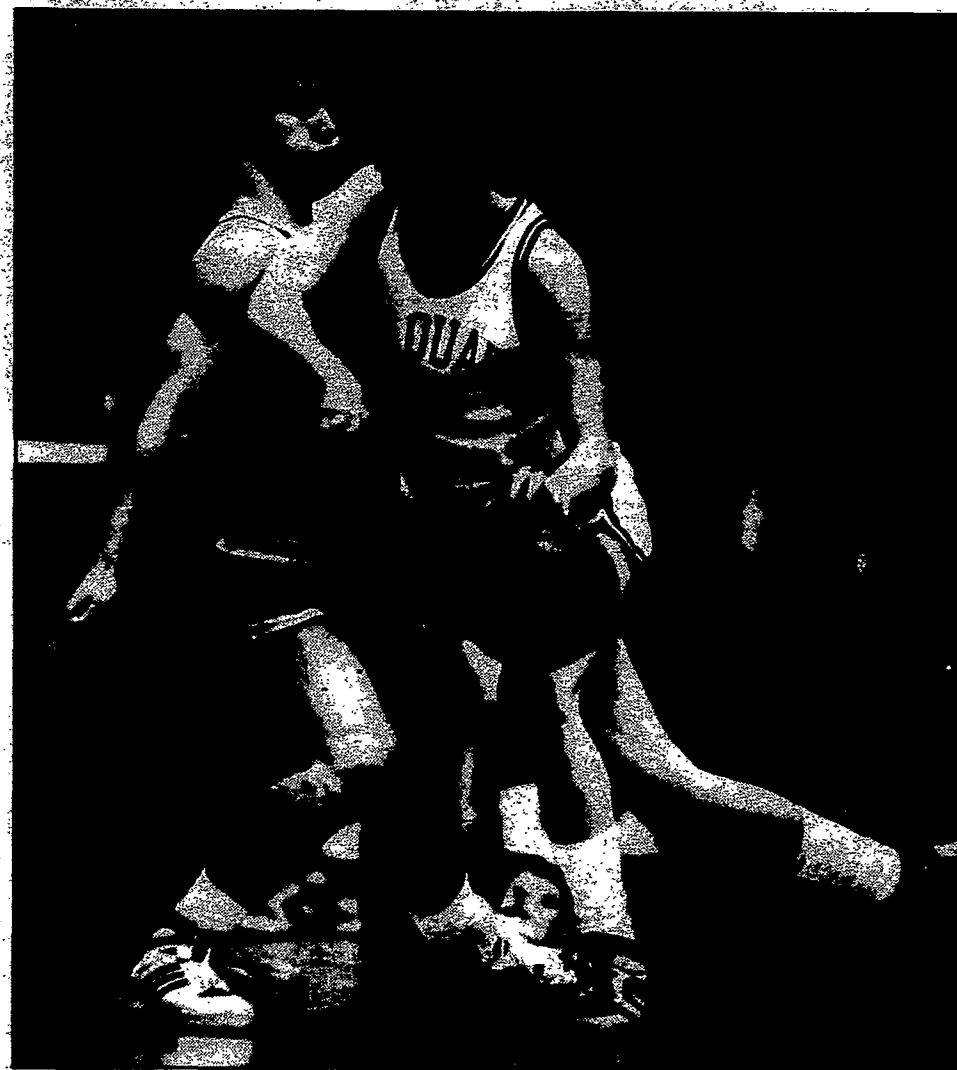
Torgalski eventually did foul out of the game, but not before scoring 38 points and dishing out 12 assists to lead his teammates to a 76-63 win over the Knights in the game played at SUNY College at Geneseo.

With the win, the Class A champs from Buffalo advance to Glens Falls this weekend for the semifinals of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association tournament.

Torgalski was simply phenomenal for Coach Jim Kramer's Vikings, outdoing an impressive 24-point night by McQuaid's Greg Woodard. McQuaid, which ended its season at 21-2, also received a gutsy performance by senior guard Glenn Taggart, who scored 18 points. Twelve of Taggart's points came in the fourth quarter.

Nichols roared out to a 20-9 first-quarter advantage, and upped its lead to 37-21 at intermission. Torgalski scored 10 points in the third quarter as Nichols upped the margin to 19 after three quarters, 56-37.

The Elmira Notre Dame boys' basketball team has earned a trip to Glens Falls this weekend, with wins the team scored over



McQuaid's Michael Holton looks to drive past Rick Torgalski of Nichols during first quarter action.

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Norwood-Norfolk from Section 10 (Potsdam area) and General Brown from Section 3 (Syracuse area) last weekend.

Notre Dame will play Trott Vocational of Section 6 (Buffalo area) this Friday night at 5 p.m. at Glens Falls.

The Crusaders — who, in Coach Mike Johnston's words, have been "enjoying the 'I Love New York' tour," with all the traveling necessary at state tournament time — simply overpowered Norwood-Norfolk in the state playoff game played at Potsdam State last Saturday, March 14. Johnston's squad used relentless pressure to jump out to a 20-2 first-quarter lead, and cruised to a 62-30 win over the Section 10 Class C champs.

Senior Dave Ferris led the Crusaders with 19 points, and Pat Lynch contributed 18.

In the game against General Brown last Friday night, March 13, things were not as easy. Notre Dame rallied from a 38-34 halftime deficit to win, 75-65, in the game played at SUNY College at Oswego.

This one was nip and tuck all the way, until Ferris and Christian Falkenberg asserted themselves defensively in the last four minutes of the game. Both blocked several key shots in the waning moments of the fourth quarter, to secure the win for the Crusaders.

Ferris scored 16 of his game-high 23 points in the first quarter, as Notre Dame jumped out to a 23-17 lead. But a change in defense in the second quarter held Ferris in check, allowing the Syracuse Class C champ to take a 38-34 halftime advantage.

The Crusaders took advantage of several missed scoring opportunities by General Brown in the third quarter, to regain the lead 55-51 heading into the final eight minutes.

Frustrating night for Muzzi, DeSales as Greenwood takes Class D title

By Richard A. Kiley

Up until last week's sectional final against Greenwood, just about everything had gone right for Steve Muzzi and his No. 1-seeded Lady Saints of DeSales in this year's basketball campaign.

After a 17-1 regular season, with the only loss against a strong Naples team in the season finale, there were no indications that Muzzi and his girls would be anxiety-ridden throughout the Class D final as they were against the Eagles last Tuesday night, March 10.

It just goes to show you: no team is immune to a poor shooting night, not even a team that, throughout the season, had most of its games won before halftime.

Greenwood used relentless pressure against Muzzi's most potent offensive weapons, Krissy Guinan and Babette DeVaney, and raced to a 55-39 win over the defending Class D champions in front of 700 fans at Prattsburg High School.

For No. 2-seeded Greenwood (22-0), the win avenged a 54-47 loss at the hands of DeSales (20-2) in last year's sectional final.

The Lady Eagles remembered that loss well — especially Sondra and Katrina Tracy. This year, the two cousins combined for 34 points, and after the game, Sondra Tracy was named the tourney's Most Valuable Player.

Guinan and Sondra Tracy had met for the first time at this year's banquet for the Second Annual Ronald McDonald House Exceptional Seniors All-Star Basketball Game, the day before the Class D final. "She was really psyched for us," said Guinan, who scored 14 points in the last game of her career at the Geneva high school, after averaging 24 points in her previous three sectional contests. "They've been coming to our games all year."

But Greenwood never saw the Lady Saints shoot the way they did in the tourney final.

"We shot 15-for-64, and they out-rebounded us 40-20," said a disappointed Muzzi after the game. "It was frustrating. We'd come down and put it up, and it would spin in and out, and they'd come right down and score."

"We were taking the same shots we got all year," Muzzi continued. "But we didn't score off our press, and we didn't score inside as much ... But give Greenwood credit. They played tough defense and made a lot of their shots."

It became evident that it just wasn't DeSales' night in the second quarter, after Greenwood led by just 14-10 after the first eight minutes.

The Lady Saints were able to muster a lone field goal in the second quarter, and found themselves in the unfamiliar position of trailing at halftime, 25-14. The first half ended on a fitting note for DeSales, with three good chances underneath the basket failing to materialize into points.

"Our shooting was off. A lot of us were rushing our shots," said DeVaney, who led her teammates with 16 points and was named to the tournaments all-star team. "We weren't concentrating when we would shoot, and we weren't rebounding at all."

The third quarter was much like the first two, as the Lady Eagles upped their lead to 30-16 with 5:41 left. After Muzzi called a timeout to regroup his beleaguered squad, however, DeSales went on an 8-0 run to cut the margin to 30-24.

His girls trailed just 33-26 going into the final quarter, but it was Sondra Tracy who would not allow them to get any closer than seven points the rest of the way. The senior point-guard iced eight of 11 free throws in the final quarter to secure the win.

It was a disappointing ending to an otherwise brilliant season for DeSales, a season in which many thought the Lady Saints would do no better than third in the



Katrina Tracy of Greenwood finds herself surrounded by DeSales' Michelle Hughes (left), Stacy Marsteiner (center) and Babette DeVaney (right), as Tracy attempts to shoot.

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

rugged Finger Lakes West Division, let alone make it to the Class D final game.

From last year's 17-2 team, which lost in the Class C playoff to Honeoye, Muzzi lost Stephanie DeVaney to graduation, and standout guard Alisha Priebe transferred to a prep school in New Hampshire. But Guinan and DeVaney's younger sister, Babette, assumed the leading roles right away.

"Everyone was asking me at the beginning of the year, 'How are you gonna do this year?'" said Guinan, who was named to the all-tourney team with DeVaney. Guinan was the one most responsible for getting her teammates to attend hoop camp in the Poconos last summer. "I wasn't really sure how we were going to do after we lost Stephanie and Alisha Priebe. But we wanted to show everyone."

And that they did. DeSales romped to wins

over Geneva and Midlakes in the Horizon Bank Tournament back in early January, and had an unblemished record until the loss to Naples.

Does Guinan, who is being actively recruited by St. John Fisher, Nazareth and Keuka Colleges, have any advice for her ex-teammates?

"I'd tell them you have to have confidence in yourselves, and you have to work hard," Guinan said. "We have good coaches here, so if they want to win, they can."

DeVaney echoed her ex-teammate's sentiments. "Next year, everyone is going to be saying, '(DeSales) won't do much, because they lost their two high scorers.' They'll have to play every game like it was their last."

That's good advice from two tough competitors who may have played their last game at DeSales, but whose impressions will last for seasons to come.

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