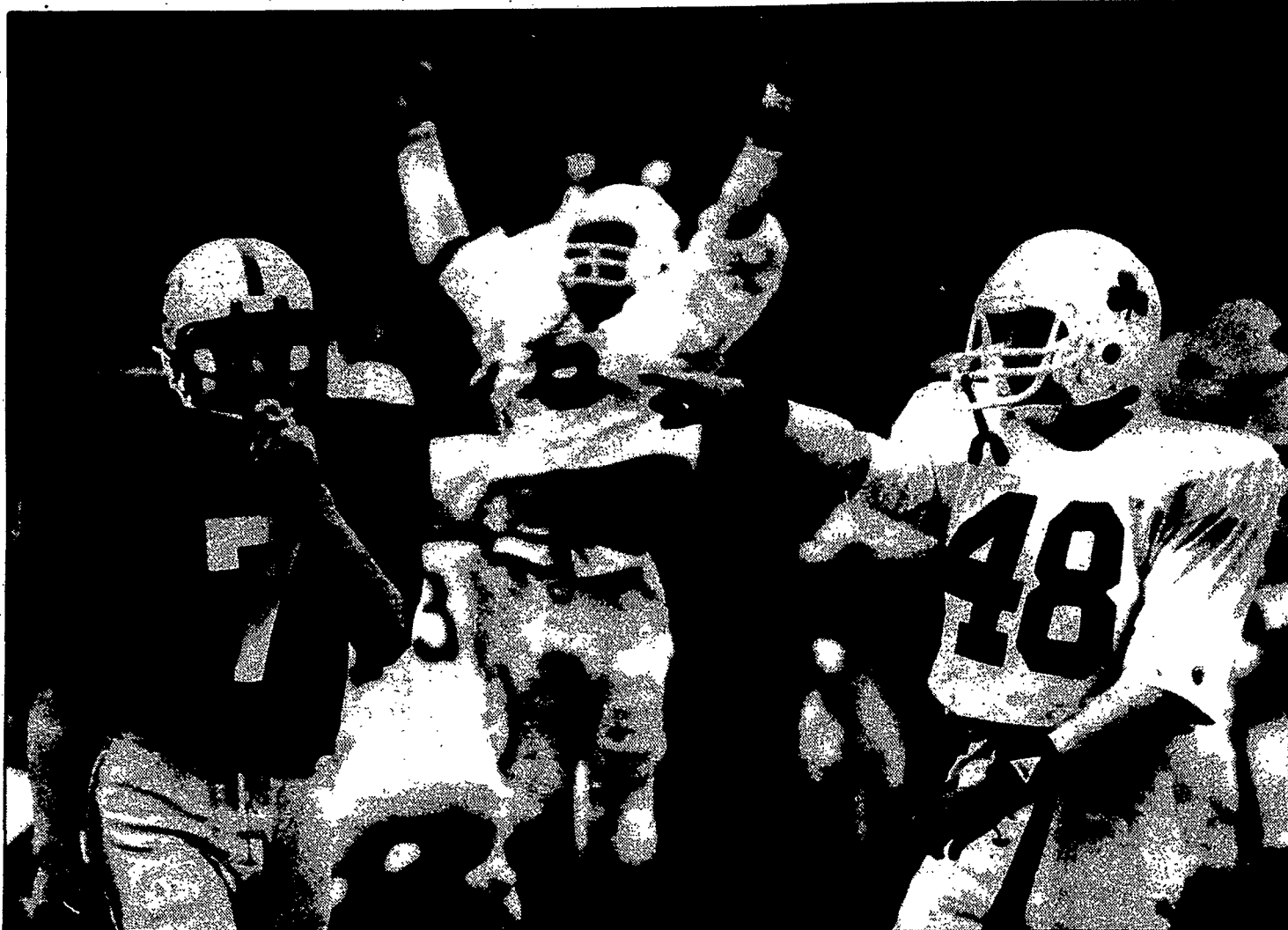


## Sports



Above, Aquinas back Jermaine McGowan fends off a Kearney tackler during second quarter action of the win by the Little Irish. At right, AQ players celebrate after Brian Bode's missed field-goal attempt in the fourth quarter.



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

## AQ rally nips Kearney; McQuaid, ND grid teams still alive

By Richard A. Kiley

Most diocesan high school football teams in contention for sectional bids are still in control of their own destiny as the regular season heads into the second-to-last weekend of play.

### Aquinas 20, Kearney 13

Aquinas clinched at least a share of the City-Catholic League Division 1 crown with an exciting and controversial 20-13 City-Catholic League victory over host Bishop Kearney.

After rolling through its previous four wins by a total of 114-13, the Little Irish (5-0 league, 5-1 overall) found themselves trailing 13-0 at the half against the Fighting Kings (2-2, 4-2).

The running of Lamin Massaquoi (13 carries, 69 yards and one TD) and the foot of Brian Bode (field goals of 25 and 29 yards), opened up a 13-point, first half cushion for Nick Teta's Kings.

Much to the dismay of Little Irish coach Chris Battaglia, the Fighting Kings clearly outplayed his sluggish club in the first half.

"We came out real flat," said Battaglia, who played for Teta in his football years at Aquinas. "The kids had just played so firey the last couple of weeks. They were really high on themselves."

The Fighting Kings were playing highly emotional football until a controversial call with 1:30 remaining in the third quarter appeared to take the wind out of their sails.

As Aquinas quarterback Brian Monteleone dropped back to pass on a third-and-goal situation at the five-yard line, he was pressured by several Kearney lineman and dropped the ball behind him. Blocking back Tony Postell then scooped up the ball and scampered into the end zone, as several shocked Kearney players looked on. The controversial touchdown spurred the stirring AQ comeback.

Not surprisingly, both teams and coaches saw the play differently.

"The ball was definitely a fumble; either one of them could have picked it up," said Battaglia, referring to Postell and Kearney lineman Garland Sweeney. "Tony was blocking the kid and when he (Postell) saw the ball on the ground he picked it up. The whistle never blew."

Teta didn't see the dramatic turn of events the same way.

"It all depends on what side of the field you were on," said Teta, who compiled more than 50 wins in eight seasons while he coached at Aquinas. "He (Monteleone) looked like he was down, and then the ball popped loose. Even their (Aquinas') team stopped."

AQ kept the momentum in its favor by forcing a Kearney punt early in the fourth quarter, and captured the lead for the first time when junior back Jermaine McGowan rumbled 40 yards for a touchdown. The ensuing successful point-after attempt gave Aquinas a 14-13 lead it would never relinquish. After a long, sustained drive by the Kings — something they accomplished to take the lead

in the first half — Brian Bode's field-goal try into the wind from 32 yards out sailed to the right of the goal posts.

The Little Irish closed out the scoring with less than a minute left in the game when Mark Chapman returned an interception 67 yards for a touchdown.

"Chapman's return just broke their backs," Battaglia said. "Our talented kids made the big plays in the second half to win the game."

"It was a big change from the first half. 'We made our own mistakes; there were a couple of roughing-the-quarterback penalties that had our kids wondering what they could and couldn't do,' Battaglia said. "It was an emotional game. We were the better team."

The game also proved a gut check for Aquinas, which lost a somewhat similar game to Gates-Chili in its season opener.

"Games like this build character. We had to fight to win," Battaglia said. "We found out once again that you can't make mistakes and win."

For Kearney, which led last year's game between the two Catholic schools most of the way only to lose 13-9, the game featured a bitter turnaround.

"We played as perfect as we could play in the first half," Teta said. "We came out, intercepted the first pass and rolled down the field and scored. That hasn't happened to them all year."

AQ will look to clinch the league title with a win at East this Saturday at 1 p.m.

Kearney, which is still in control of its own destiny will face Franklin at home this Saturday at 1 p.m.

### Notre Dame 49, Seton 43

The Syracuse Orangemen weren't the only football team posting astronomical numbers last weekend.

In a game in which the defenses forgot to show up, Notre Dame rallied from a 21-6 first-quarter deficit to score 36 unanswered points before holding on for a 49-43 win at Seton Catholic in Binghamton.

Fans in attendance were treated to three games in one as Seton roared to an early lead in the first quarter and a half; ND controlled the play for the next two quarters; and Seton staged a tremendous comeback that fell just short.

Mike D'Aloisio and his Crusaders utilized an awesome ground attack with backs Bob Grosvenor (16 carries, 174 yards, 2 touchdowns) and Mike Bernatavitz (16 carries, 121 yards, three TDs). Grosvenor had 135 yards rushing in the first half alone.

And "Air D'Aloisio" wasn't exactly grounded either as quarterback Kevin Harney (9-19, 96 yards) threw successfully when he had to.

The game featured one big play after another from the opening kickoff. Seton — which has explosive offensive personnel in quarterback Ron Smith, running back Josh Wiggins

and Joe McWiggin — jumped out to a 21-6 lead in the first quarter before two consecutive Crusader scores gave Notre Dame a 22-21 lead at the half. Grosvenor accounted for the TD to pull ND to within six points when he trotted 63 yards for a score, and Bernatavitz went over from the two-yard line with :01 on the clock in the first half to give ND the lead for good.

The Crusaders opened up their passing game in the second half to increase the lead to 42-21 after three quarters. Included in the offensive deluge on Seton was a 30-yard TD pass to Jim Ermold and a nine-yard toss to John Philipps.

After Grosvenor rumbled for his second TD of the day in the fourth quarter, making the score 49-29, the Crusaders had to hold off a Seton rally in the fourth quarter to secure the win.

Unlike its two losses this season to Newark Valley and Chenango Forks, the Crusaders were able to cash in on the big numbers they rolled up on offense.

"When you're averaging more than 300 yards a game on offense, you should score at least five times a game," D'Aloisio said. "We've been moving the ball, but we've been hurting ourselves with penalties and turnovers; we've been stopping ourselves."

It didn't look like anything could stop Notre Dame against Seton.

"The key to this win was that we cut down on turnovers," said D'Aloisio, adding that the ball was thrown 56 times total with just one turnover by Seton. "Last week (against Newark Valley) we just beat ourselves."

Both teams compiled impressive numbers offensively. Notre Dame rushed for most of its 390 total yards (294 on the ground) and Seton passed (271 yards) for most of its 359 total yards.

The Crusaders now set their eyes on Whitney Point, which played state-ranked Newark Valley pretty evenly in a 14-7 loss earlier in the season. The league battle will take place Friday night at 7:30 p.m.

### McQuaid 21, Edison 20

For the first time this season, McQuaid was able to pass the ball consistently and win. Knight quarterback Pete Clark threw for 175 yards, including a touchdown pass to Sean O'Neil late in the fourth quarter, as the Knights nipped the Inventors, 21-20, at Edison. The game was nip-and-tuck the whole way, as Tom Sprague's Knights (2-2, 3-2-1) kept their hopes alive for a sectional bid with their win against Edison (1-3, 2-4).

McQuaid fell behind in the game after leading 14-6, when the Inventors' Jerome Davis and Craig Kirkland each scored on short touchdown runs to give Edison a 20-14 lead.

But Clark's toss to O'Neil with three and a half minutes remaining earned the win for the Knights. The key play on the drive was a catch on a tipped ball by Steve Peacock to keep the

Knights' winning drive alive.

For Sprague, it was encouraging to see his passing game arrive, especially after finding out last week that fullback Joe Ritchie is gone for the season.

"They were playing us to run," said Sprague, who added that Kevin Flanagan's three successful extra points were also key to the win. "I think we caught them by surprise."

Sprague knows there will be no surprises against Canandaigua this Saturday. Mike Foster's Braves are always one of the most well-disciplined and poised teams in the section.

"(Beating Canandaigua) could make our whole season," said Sprague, whose Knights lost their season opener to the Braves last fall. "They wait for you to make mistakes and don't usually make any themselves. We'll have to work hard."

### Romulus 32, DeSales 8

Inexperience was once again the downfall for DeSales, as Romulus (6-0) rolled over the Saints (0-6), 32-8, in Romulus' homecoming game last weekend.

Romulus outgained DeSales 280-139 offensively, using its experience to wear down the Saints.

Although his team lost its sixth consecutive game, DeSales coach Jim McNicholas saw continued improvement from the previous week's game against Whitman.

"We played a lot more aggressively," said McNicholas, who took over the grid program from Harry Furman last season. "I saw a lot of improvement out there."

McNicholas, who is yet to see the dividends from a new weight program he implemented this season but will probably next season, will have no problem getting his young Saints up for Midlakes this weekend. The grid contest marks DeSales' homecoming game and is part of a weekend-long gala to celebrate DeSales' diamond jubilee.

McNicholas said his players were already talking about their homecoming on the way home from Romulus.

"It doesn't take young players too much time to rebound from a loss; they don't brood over a loss very long." The game is scheduled for Friday night at 7:30 p.m.

### Franklin 12, Moonéy 7

A five-yard TD run by Jimmy Session early in the fourth quarter provided Franklin (3-1, 3-3 overall) with a 12-7 win over John Heck's Cardinals (1-4, 1-5).

The game was marred by seven turnovers on both sides. Quaker quarterback Scooter Hendricks passed for 150 yards, including a 21-yard toss to Lionel Austin for a score.

Mooney's Eric Heinsler scored on a 10-yard run as the Cardinals continued to struggle offensively.

Mooney squares off against Edison Tech at Edison this Saturday at 1 p.m.