

Sports

Schied's Knights look to alter pattern of previous top seeds

By Richard A. Kiley

Now, it's McQuaid's turn.

As the 51st boys' soccer tournament began Tuesday, Oct. 27, the No. 1 seeded Knights were trying to become the first top-seeded boys' team to win the Class A sectional title in recent memory.

Dan Schied's Knights, who capped off a brilliant regular season with wins over East and Bishop Kearney last week, have the personnel to win the Class A crown, but then again so did the other No. 1 seeded teams that ended up falling by the wayside in recent seasons.

If Schied's club is to break the trend, it will need to continue to play nearly mistake-free soccer, something the Knights have been able to do most of the season.

But with the No. 1 seeding comes lots of notoriety and pressure, two intangibles that have left the last several No. 1 seeded teams watching the championship game from the sidelines.

The Knight's quest won't be easy, as they try to fend off teams like No. 2 seed Hilton, No. 3 Greece Athena, No. 4 Penfield and No. 5 Cardinal Mooney, among others.

The Knights were the Cinderella story in last year's tourney, upending then No. 1 seeded Cardinal Mooney before losing to Gates Chili in the semis. This year, teams will be gunning to put the Knights' to rest.

And Schied, who has coolly guided the Knights through a 10-0 league schedule (16-2 overall) is very conscious of the demise of previous top seeds.

"Any team can win (the sectionals), if you look at the records; there really hasn't been any consistency across the board," said Schied, whose team is in Group 1 of the 12-team field with No. 6 Spencerport, No. 7 Brighton and No. 12 Brockport.

Section 5 officials aren't making things easier on Schied, either. For reasons he's not sure of, two of McQuaid's first three games in the World Cup format were scheduled for the

home field of its opponent—at Brockport on Tuesday, Oct. 27, and at Spencerport on Tuesday, Nov. 3—making McQuaid the visiting team in games that should be played at neutral sites.

"The least they could do is schedule the Brockport game at Spencerport and the Spencerport game at Brockport," said a miffed Schied.

But the way McQuaid has played "on the road" this season—with both of McQuaid's losses coming at home—it may not matter where the Knights play.

"I think if we can play our style of game and create opportunities, we'll do well," said Schied, whose team has averaged three goals a game this fall. "But the team that wins may not necessarily be the team with the most talent, it may be the team that was just up (more) that night."

MOONEY COACH Paul Forte, meanwhile, knows all about the problems of being No. 1 and seems somewhat content with his team's No. 5 seed. The Cards are in Group 2 along with No. 2 Hilton, No. 8 Irondequoit and No. 11 Webster. Hilton and Irondequoit handed the 11-6-1 Cardinals losses earlier this season.

"We're in a position where we can pay back a couple of teams," said Forte, whose club is 3-0-1 in its last four games.

Like Schied, Forte believes the Class-A field is wide open.

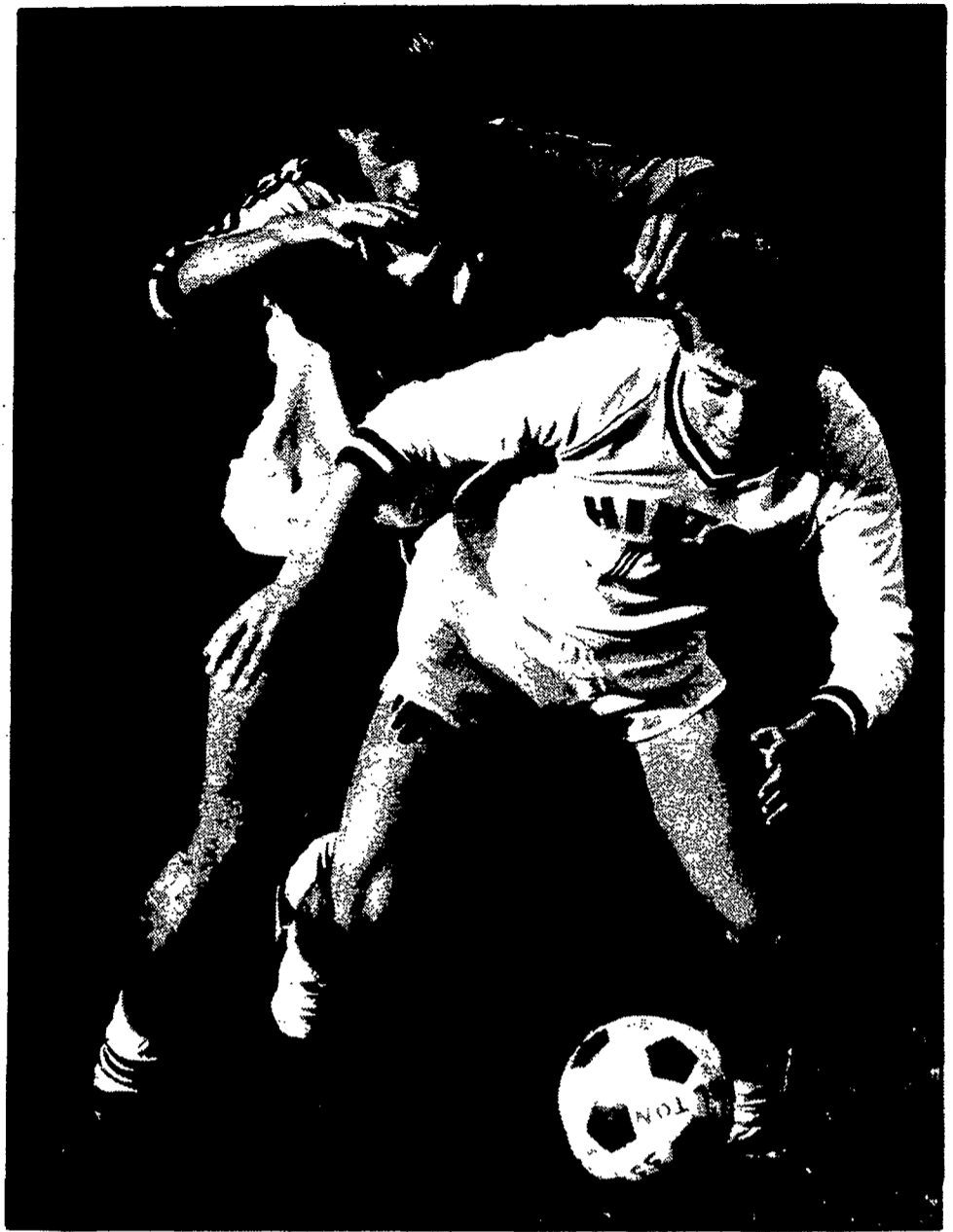
"The nature of the World Cup (format) makes it wide open," Forte said. "It helps the underdogs, but it helps the favorites too."

"If I had to pick somebody it would be McQuaid . . . but I wouldn't be surprised if they didn't (win the sectionals)."

Mooney was scheduled to play Irondequoit at Brockport Tuesday, Oct. 27, and will also play at Mooney against Webster Saturday Oct. 31, at 2 p.m. and Tuesday, Nov. 3 against Hilton at Brockport.

IN CLASS B-1, Greg Schuber's No. 9-seeded

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Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

Like all the other diocesan high school boys' soccer teams, Bishop Kearney is looking to play above the level of its opponents in the sectionals.

Mercy ends Mooney's Private-Parochial reign, earns top spot in Class AAA

By Richard A. Kiley

Now that Mercy has officially dethroned Cardinal Mooney in the Private-Parochial League, it's put-up time for the Monarchs (15-1), after being named the top seed of Class AAA.

Kathy Boughton's team earned the top spot after handing Mooney a 1-0 loss in double overtime last Thursday, Oct. 22. The winning goal came with two minutes left in the second overtime, when Julie Buntich's shot eluded Lady Cardinal goalie Julie Monfalcone.

The Private-Parochial League battle featured a goaltending clinic by Mercy keeper Andrea Colaruotolo, who turned away 33 Mooney shots for the visiting Monarchs.

Mercy, which suffered its first and only loss of the season thus far against Pittsford Mendon October 19, must now deal with the pressure that comes with being the top seed.

Boughton doesn't seem worried that her team will wilt in the post-season. After all, trying to deal with being unbeaten all season is comparable to what Mercy will try to accomplish in the sectionals.

"We're satisfied with the season, but we still have goals we want to accomplish," said Boughton, who has turned the soccer program around in just her second year as coach. "After the Mendon game there was a lot of pressure taken off us, and I think that will help us (in the sectionals)."

Colaruotolo, whom Boughton called the best in the section before the season and who hasn't proven her coach wrong, will also play a key role for Mercy. The senior goalie single-handedly thwarted Mooney, which had won the all-Catholic school league six years in a row.

Mercy certainly has the offense to go far in the tourney, having outscored opponents 68-12 this season, but its improving defense may make the difference. Due to increased pressure in the sectionals, games tend to be low scoring.

Ironically, Mercy — which receives a first-round bye — will await the winner of the game played between No. 8 Cardinal Mooney (11-5-1) and No. 9 Fairport (11-6-1). If Scott Morrison's Lady Cards get by the Red Raiders, it would mark the third meeting of the season between Mooney and Mercy.

Despite the outcome of the two pivotal games — (Mercy won both contests in double overtime) — Morrison said his team is not in awe of any Mercy mystique this season.

"In both games our kids felt we outplayed them," said Morrison, whose club came on strong at the end of the season after stumbling through the middle part of the schedule. "We're not in awe of them."

But the Lady Cards, who were beaten early in the sectionals last year, must first get by Fairport in a game Morrison said could go either way.

The Mooney-Fairport game was scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 28, at Mooney.

The winner of the Mooney-Fairport game will play Mercy at Harris-Whalen Park at 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31.

IN CLASS AA, Greg McMaster's Little Irish faced No. 9 Hornell at Geneseo on Tuesday, Oct. 2, (after C-J presstime). If Aquinas (7-7-3) was able to beat Hornell, it advanced to the quarterfinals to play either No. 1 Victor (16-2) or No. 16 Churchville-Chili (2-12-3) on Friday, Oct. 30.

No. 7 Nazareth (7-5-2) played at No. 10

Newark in the tourney's first round last Tuesday, Oct. 27. Dick Hendricks' girls would advance to the quarterfinals against either No. 15 Marshall (5-11), or, most likely, No. 2 Pittsford Mendon (13-5) with a win over Newark.

Bishop Kearney coach Sam Fame and his No. 14 Lady Fighting Kings were to play at No. 3 Midlakes (13-5) last Tuesday, Oct. 27. A win at Midlakes would put Kearney in the quarterfinals against either No. 11 North Rose-Wolcott (9-8-1) or, most likely, No. 6 Pittsford Sutherland (8-6-4) on Friday, Oct. 30.

DeSales girls' varsity soccer coach Mike Rood was hoping his No. 11 Lady Saints (3-12-1) could keep the momentum gained in the second half of the season when they battled No. 6 Lyndonville (6-10-2) on Wednesday, Oct. 28 in a first-round Class C game at Wheatland-Chili.

Although injuries and frequent personnel moves created a somewhat unstable situation for his team at times, Rood believes the knowledge and skills his girls acquired in the

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