

Sports

Aquinas earns sectional bid; fate of ND, Kearney in balance

By Richard A. Kiley

Aquinas clinched the title in Division 1 of the City-Catholic League, but the fate of some other diocesan high school football teams is still yet to be determined as the season winds down.

Aquinas 27, East 0

Chris Battaglia's Little Irish put an exclamation point on its championship-clinching game by drubbing the host Orientals (1-4, 3-4), 27-0, Saturday, Oct. 24.

The win earns Aquinas (6-0 league, 6-1 overall) an automatic bid to this year's sectionals.

Unlike last week's come-from-behind win over Bishop Kearney, during this game, the Little Irish controlled the tempo from the opening kickoff.

Jermaine McGowan, who rushed for 145 yards on 12 carries, rumbled 60 yards to the Oriental one-yard line on the first play from scrimmage. Mark Chapman then scored on the next play and, after Todd Moore's successful conversion on the point-after attempt, AQ led 7-0.

The Little Irish padded the lead later in the opening quarter with Tony Postell's four-yard TD run and McGowan's 12-yard scamper into the end zone, giving Aquinas a 20-0 bulge.

AQ's final score came in the second quarter on a 16-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Brian Monteleone to Chris Culver.

The early rout of East enabled Battaglia to rest some of his weary players, who had been forced to stage some late-game heroics to defeat Kearney 20-13 a week earlier.

Although some of the team's mainstays were looking on from the bench, the Little Irish still managed to rack up impressive numbers on offense and force four turnovers on defense. In all, AQ outgained East 325-64 on offense.

Battaglia said his team was well prepared mentally and physically to face the Orientals.

"We wanted to play a mentally tough game; I think that's why we got up real quickly on them," Battaglia said. "I felt more pressure in this one, because this was one of those games you're expected to win."

The third-year coach said that one of the keys to AQ's success this year — in addition to having great players like Chapman, McGowan and Culver among others — has been its ability to avoid devastating injuries.

"There are a couple of good teams in the (City Catholic) league," Battaglia said. "We stayed healthy and got the big plays when we needed them."

Battaglia is looking for his players to keep the wins coming. "This is a real exciting season for us; we have to gather momentum and keep it going," he said.

Aquinas will get its second taste of Monroe County Division 1 football this Saturday when it battles Rush-Henrietta in its traditional regular-season finale against the Royal Comets. Although Rush-Henrietta (3-4, 3-4) is having an off year, the game will provide the Little Irish with some exposure to the caliber of play seen in Rochester's suburbs.

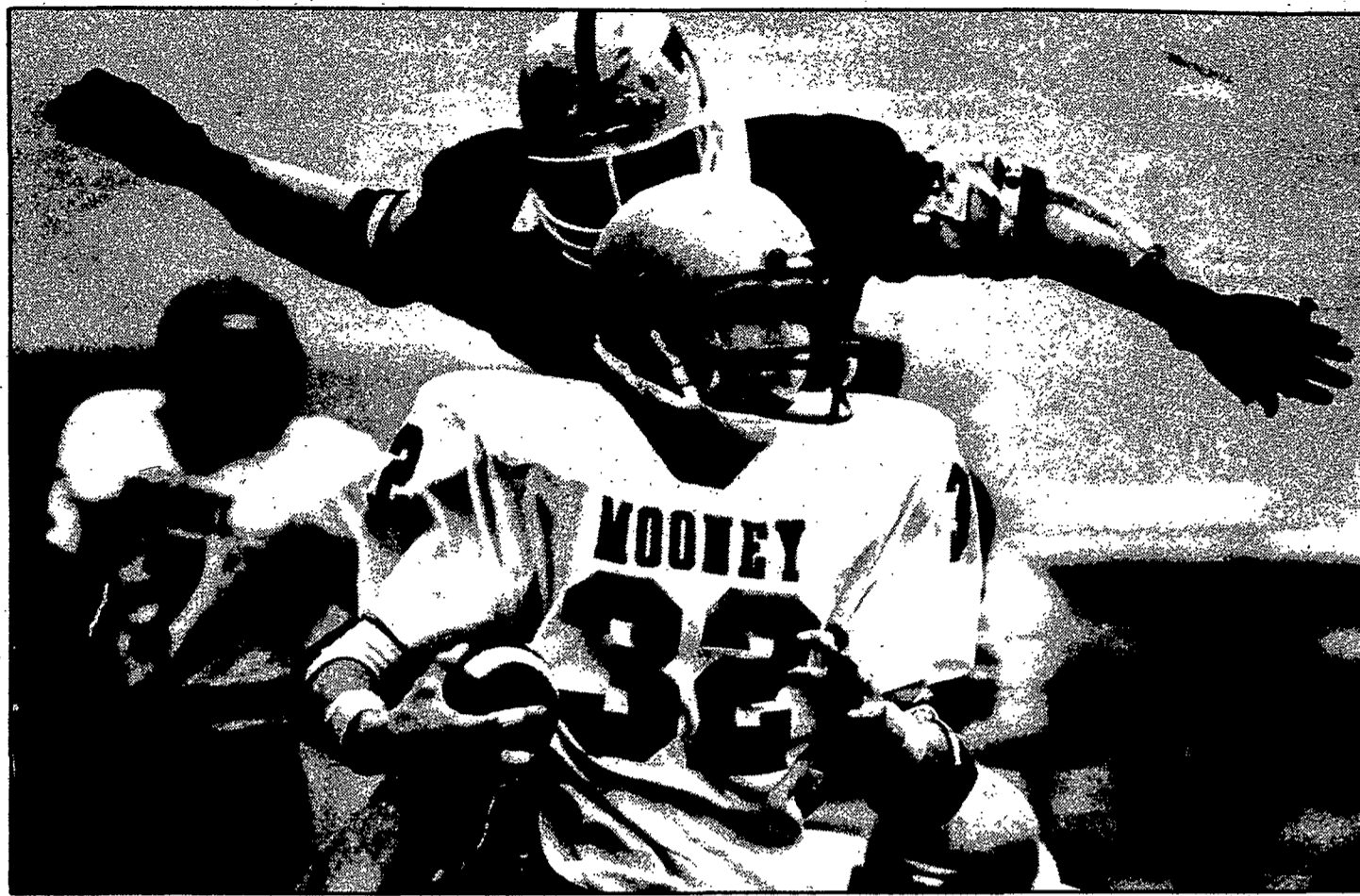
Last year, the Royal Comets scored two late touchdowns in a 20-3 win over the Little Irish at Rush.

This year's final regular-season game is scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday at Aquinas.

ND 40, Whitney Point 18

For the second consecutive week, the Notre Dame offense rolled up impressive numbers as the host Crusaders (5-2) routed Whitney Point, 40-18, Friday night, Oct. 23.

Coach Mike D'Aloisio's squad, which set a single-game scoring record last week with 49 points against Seton Catholic of Binghamton,



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

Mooney's running game had Edison defenders going every which way until the Inventors' defense stiffened in the second half. Edison came from 10 points down to forge a tie against the Cardinals.

broke the mark for most total yards on offense this week with 429.

D'Aloisio praised his offensive line for the win against Whitney Point, after watching his team score 40 points on a defense that had previously given up just 65 points in six previous games. The ND offense has now gained more than 650 yards and has scored 89 points in its last two wins alone.

D'Aloisio's defense also turned in yet another stellar effort as the Crusaders held Whitney Point to five yards in total offense in the first half. ND led 40-0 before the ND coach emptied the bench in the final quarter.

In three quarters of play, ND's Bob Grosvenor (17 carries, 175 yards, 2 TD) and Mike Bernatavitz (20 rushes, 132 yards, 2 TD) ran at will for D'Aloisio. Quarterback Kevin Harney (7-for-11, 66 yards, 2 TD, 0 INT) moved the ball through the air when he had to.

Judging by what they've done the last two weeks, D'Aloisio believes his players have finally removed the glitches that haunted them in losses to Chenango Forks and Newark Valley.

"They're picking up the system better; where there was a little hesitation before, there is not any now," D'Aloisio said.

D'Aloisio believes his decision to run shorter but more intense practices has helped in getting his players better acquainted with the complicated offensive system he likes to run.

"Even in our losses to Newark Valley and (Chenango) Forks, we moved the ball on offense. We doubled Newark Valley statistically (on offense), but I always tell my team (that) statistics are for losers," D'Aloisio said. "We'd like to see (Chenango) Forks again."

In order for that to happen, ND must hope for Newark Valley to lose one of its last two league games against Windsor or Waverly. "Windsor is going to be the big game there,"

the ND coach observed.

In the event of a tie for the top spot in the league, a complicated array of tie-breaking procedures will be used to determine the winner. D'Aloisio said the division may be decided by how his team, Newark Valley and Windsor fared against high-caliber opposition.

"We've played the tougher schedule of the three schools," said D'Aloisio referring to games with Watkins Glen, Chenango Forks and Seton Catholic.

ND faces another physical team in Waverly this Friday night. Many of the grid players at Waverly also wrestle and usually are among the top teams in the state on the mats.

The game, which takes place on Parent's Night at ND, is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30.

Kearney 21, Franklin 0

Nick Teta's Fighting Kings rebounded from their disheartening loss to Aquinas last week-

end by blanking the visiting Quakers of Franklin 21-0 Saturday, Oct. 24.

Kearney quarterback Craig Chodak ran for one score and hooked up with Tim Dieter on a 13-yard touchdown pass to lead the Kings (3-2 league, 5-2 overall) to victory.

Kearney solidified its chances of making the Class AA sectionals with the win.

Dieter also ran for 54 yards in the win, and picked off two of Scooter Hendricks' passes.

Kearney closes out its regular season against the Orientals at East this Saturday, Oct. 31, at 1 p.m.

Canandaigua 42, McQuaid 7

In last season's home-opener against Mike Foster's Braves, Tom Sprague's Knights were victimized by turnovers and crucial mistakes on special teams play in a 21-16 loss.

It was a similar story Saturday, Oct. 24, when Canandaigua took three Knight turn-

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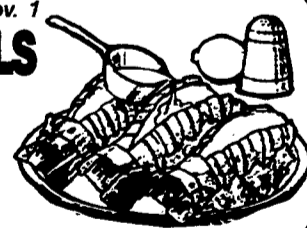
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