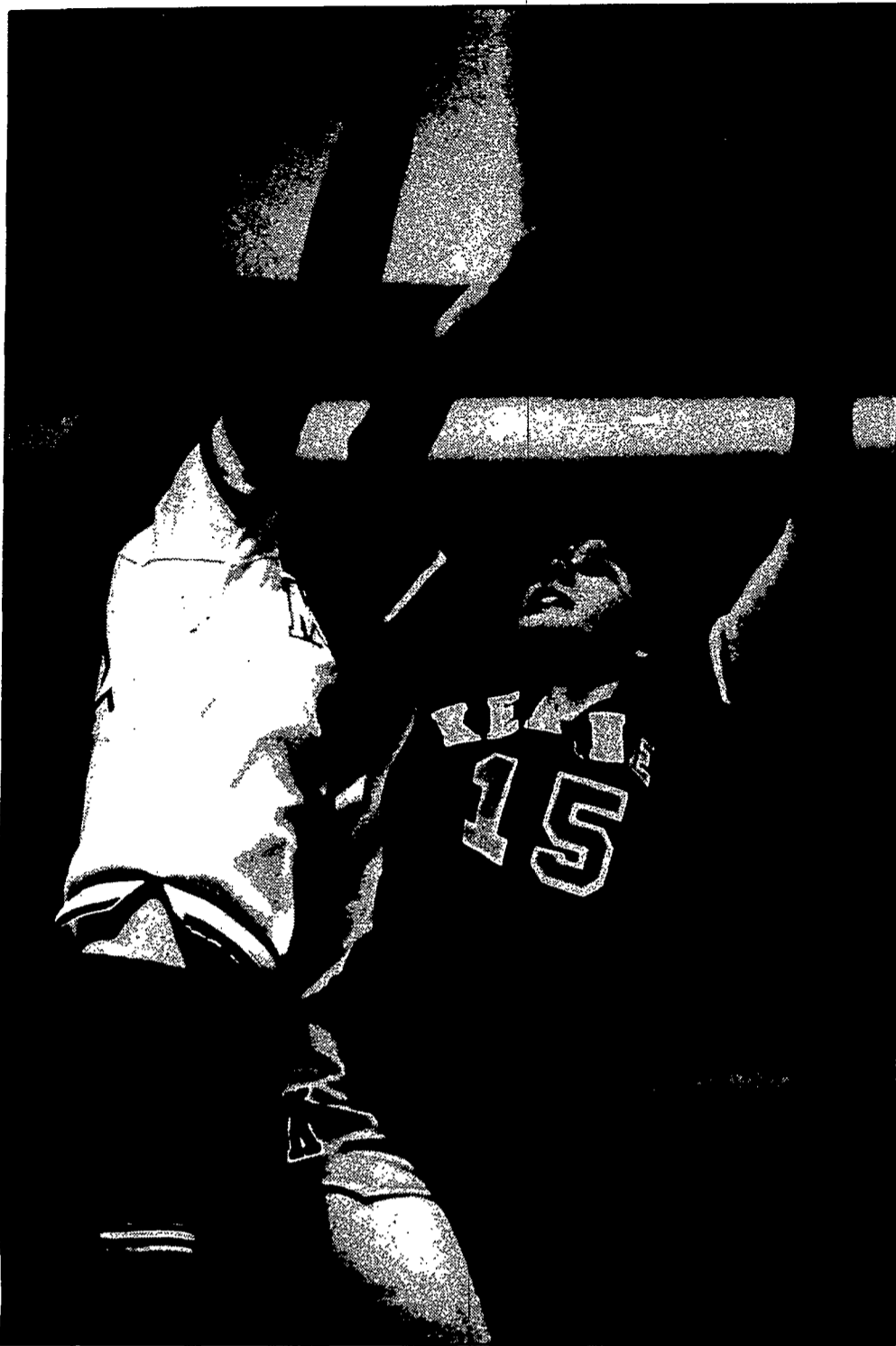


Sports



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal
Marisa Shackelford (left) attempts to block a shot from Kearney's Kelly Curcio during second-quarter action of Mooney's Private-Parochial League win over the Lady Fighting Kings. The win kept Mooney's perfect record this season intact.

Cards feeling no pressure against Mercy in title game

By Richard A. Kiley

The upstart Cardinal Mooney Lady Cards and the "never-say-die" Monarchs of Our Lady of Mercy are scheduled to meet Thursday, Feb. 11, in yet another clash that may decide the outright winner of the Private-Parochial League.

Undefeated Mooney (16-0), which nipped Mercy back on January 14, can clinch the league title for the second consecutive year. If the Monarchs (13-2) win, they would force a tie for the crown, giving both teams identical 7-1 league marks.

Mooney coach Scott Morrison, whose team is coming off two solid efforts against Canandaigua (53-46) and Donna Sortino's Bishop Kearney team (49-18), believes his squad is much improved since the last battle with the Monarchs.

"I've now got four excellent shooters from the floor, and the bench is much stronger," Morrison said. Those are pretty scary words coming from a coach whose team still hasn't lost this season.

Although Cheryl Lennox, Marisa Shackelford and Margie McGuire have been the offensive standouts most of the year, other players like Shannon Barry — a gutsy three-point shooter — as well as Casey Maxim, Dusty Tinsley, Amy Harrison and Liz Furey have been contributing regularly for Morrison.

The Mooney coach also said his girls are taking a nothing-to-lose attitude into the game, knowing that Mercy can only tie for the league title and not win it outright.

"We don't think there is any pressure on us," he said. "A win by them only gives them a share of the title; there's no pressure there."

The game will be played at Mercy, where Mooney shot phenomenally well enough to win last year. Mercy coach Kathy Boughton and returning players remember the game well.

The Monarchs are on a roll of their own right now. In their last two games — a 71-20 win over Nazareth and a 69-36 victory over Churchville-Chili — they've continued to be able to run and gun like the Mercy teams of old. The Monarchs shot 52 percent in the win over Walt Gordnier's Nazareth team.

And just like Mooney, Mercy's defense has

improved as well. "We played the best man-to-man defense we've played all year when we beat Nazareth," she said.

THE LADY SAINTS of DeSales are 4-4 in league play and 8-6 overall after losing to Red Jacket and drubbing Dundee last week.

Against Red Jacket, which is tied with Bloomfield and Naples for first place in the Finger Lakes West Division, the Lady Saints were victimized by the scoring of Courtney Romeiser. The flashy Red Jacket scored 35 of her team's 42 points during a 42-33 win over host DeSales on Thursday, Feb. 4.

Steve Muzzi's girls trailed by just one point, 17-16, at halftime, but were not able to stop Romeiser in the second half.

Michele Hughes led the Lady Saints with eight points.

It was a far different story against Dundee on Tuesday, Feb. 2, when Muzzi's squad rolled to a 51-17 win. DeSales led 27-4 at intermission and was never threatened in the second half.

Stacey Marsteiner scored 13 points for the Lady Saints, and teammate Danielle Boncaro added 10 points in the win.

Muzzi, who this week will welcome the return of Jeneane Donahue — sidelined with a knee injury for several weeks — believes his team may be coming around just in time for the sectionals.

"We've made improvements; defensively we've been playing very well," he said. "Our last five games (all against tough opponents) will get us ready for the tournament."

IT WAS ANOTHER up-and-down week for Pat Quinn's Notre Dame team, which after losing to Hornell early in the week rebounded to beat Corning West, 38-33, on Friday, Feb. 5.

After jumping out to an 11-7 first-quarter lead, the Lady Crusaders (4-6, 10-7) built up a 25-13 halftime advantage. The lead ballooned to 35-21 after three quarters, enabling Quinn to empty the bench down the stretch.

Nat Kozlowski and Melissa Jaskolka led ND with 10 points apiece. Tina Maloney added eight points.

In another telling statistic, Notre Dame out-rebounded Corning West 41-29. Seven of those

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McQuaid thrashes East, Franklin; DeSales losing nailbiters

By Richard A. Kiley

Heavyweight champion Mike Tyson and the McQuaid varsity basketball team have a lot in common of late. In recent weeks, both powerhouses have been knocking out their opponents early.

Tyson knocked out former champion Larry Holmes in the fourth round of their title bout earlier this month, and simply put, if the Knights' last seven basketball games were boxing matches, they would have been stopped. Since a 59-57 scare against Wilson on January 12, the Knights (13-0, 15-1) have been winning and winning big.

"We're finally beginning to perform at a consistent level," said Knights coach Joe Marchese, who took last year's team to the state regionals in his first year as varsity coach. "This is an important time for us."

That's because the Knights will undoubtedly be the top seed among Class AAA schools in this year's sectionals. And Marchese and his players know that each opponent will be gunning to upset McQuaid.

What will make Marchese's club tough to beat this year — even more so than last year's Class AAA champion was — is the balance. Whereas last year's team depended heavily on the scoring of Greg Woodard and Glenn Taggart, this year's Knights have been receiving scoring help from all over — much like the way Tyson is all over an opponent when he smells a knockout.

"We've got more weapons this year, and this year's team is probably more talented than last year's was," Marchese said. "But I don't think this team is as quick."

What his Knights lack in speed, they make up with size.

"Most of our opponents know they're only going to get one shot per possession, and that puts a lot of pressure on them offensively," Marchese said.

The latest two teams to crumble against the Knights were the formidable opponents of East and Franklin. Against the Orientals on Friday, Feb. 5, nearly all five McQuaid starters reached

double figures, as the host Knights prevailed 72-60.

Woodard led the Knights with 18 points and 10 rebounds, while teammate Drew Henderson added 17 points. Jay Gangemi also reached double figures, scoring 16 points. McQuaid's other leading men, Scott Martzloff and John Kelly, scored 11 points and eight points respectively.

"Scott has gotten a lot more aggressive over the last five games," Marchese said. "And John Kelly played a tremendous game against Franklin. He's really begun to assert himself."

Against the Quakers on Tuesday, Feb. 2, just about all the Knights asserted themselves, as McQuaid routed Franklin 76-47 in what was supposed to be a close City-Catholic contest.

Kelly was the difference for McQuaid in front of a delirious home crowd, dishing out 10 assists to go with 16 points for the night.

But he wasn't the only Knight in shining armor for McQuaid. Martzloff scored 14 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and blocked five shots to spur his teammates. The domineering center scored seven first-quarter points, including four on dunks in the first 2:30, to help McQuaid jump out to a 23-12 lead. Woodard led all scorers with 24 points as McQuaid opened up a 44-24 halftime bulge and never looked back.

IN OTHER CITY-CATHOLIC action last week, Aquinas dropped two games to Monroe and Charlotte. Against Monroe on Friday, Feb. 5, Mike Dianetti's host Little Irish team fell, 71-57.

Aquinas (3-10, 4-13) committed 20 turnovers and once again struggled offensively. Dianetti, who likes to press teams into making mistakes, said the lack of offense is conversely hurting the defense.

"We haven't shot well for the season — we're something like 30 percent from the floor — and that hurts us defensively because we can't set up defensively," he said.

Losses to graduation and injuries have wreaked havoc on AQ this season, and Dianetti has had to use inexperienced players on the



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal
McQuaid's John Kelly has been slicing up opposing teams' defenses with some nifty passing of late.

floor. "They've been getting an education this year," he said.

After Aquinas managed a 14-13 lead after one quarter, Monroe roared to a 34-23 lead at halftime and was never threatened in the second half.

Dwayne Postell paced the Little Irish with 13 points. Todd Reynolds and Mike Tuttle contributed 10 points apiece.

Against Charlotte on Tuesday, Feb. 2, the Little Irish were outshot 68-54, and the Lakesiders converted on 12 of 15 foul shots as visiting Charlotte defeated AQ, 58-56.

Aquinas carried the play early, leading 14-11 after one quarter, but Charlotte moved out to a 29-27 lead at intermission. The Lakesiders were able to prevail despite shooting a dismal 20 for 68 from the field. Aquinas shot 23 for

54.

Postell was the scoring leader once again, pouring in 12 points while Mike Compisi added 10.

CARDINAL MOONEY HANDED Bishop Kearney a 68-50 defeat on Friday, Feb. 5, as the Kings were unable to offset Mooney's height advantage.

Mike Ruff's Kings shot just 29 percent from the floor, a statistic the Kearney coach attributed to his team's lack of size and experience. R.D. Long and Bob Nicolay paced the Kings with 13 points apiece. Mike McGwin was a pivotal force for Mooney, scoring 17 points.

GENEVA DESALES DROPPED two more league games last week by a total of eight points. The Saints' (7-7, 9-9) last four losses

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