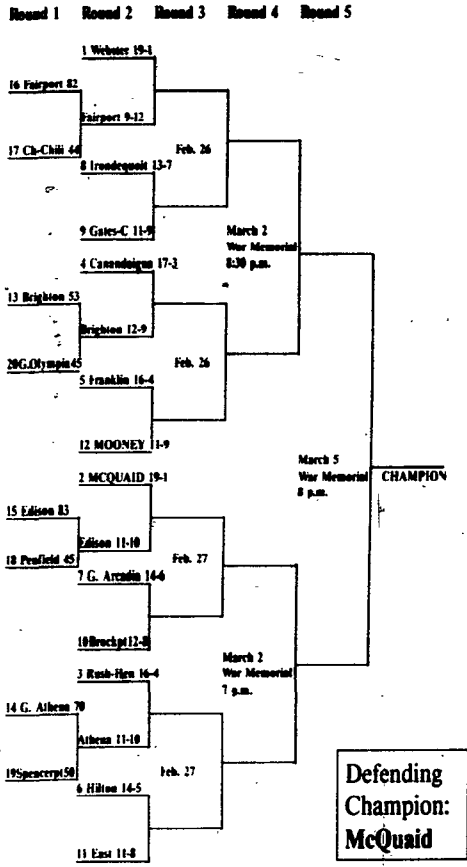
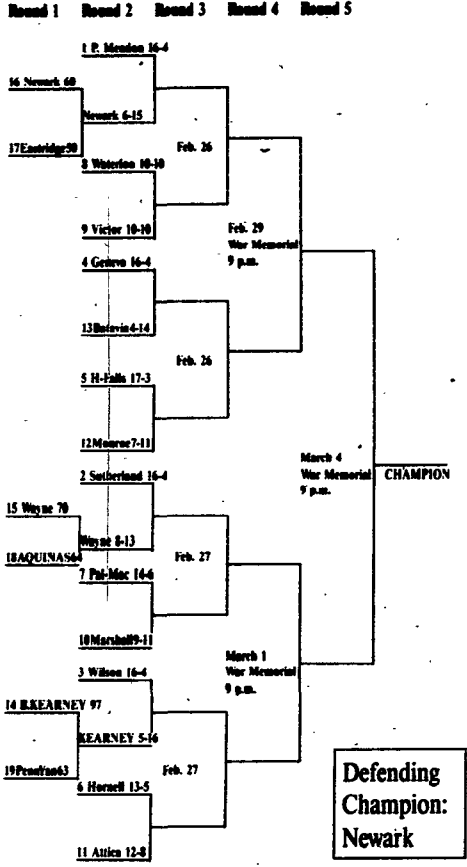


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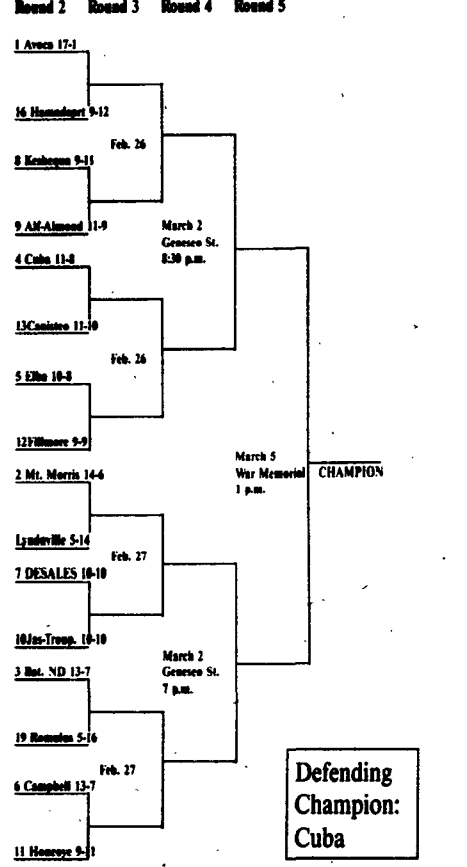
CLASS AAA



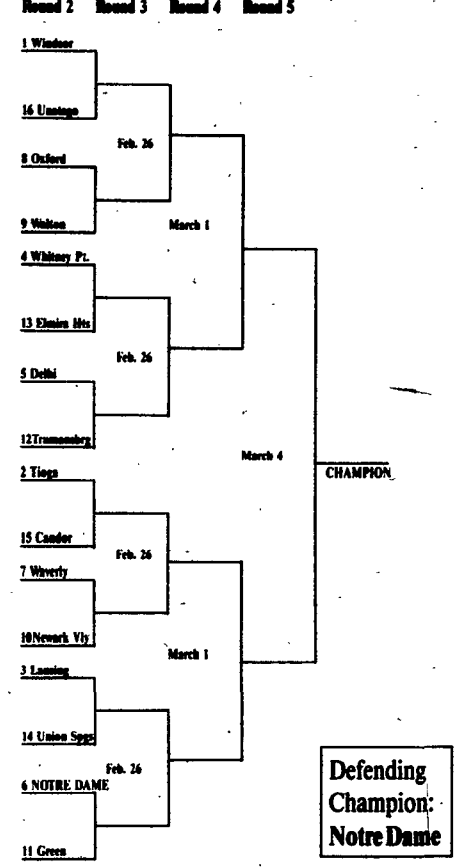
CLASS AA



CLASS C



SECTION 4 CLASS C



Kearney advances in AA; McQuaid peaking at right time

By Richard A. Kiley
Well high school hoop fans, it's that time once again. Sectional tournaments around the state began last Friday, Feb. 19, and a couple of games in the 67th annual Section 5 tourney involved diocesan teams.

The 112-game, 118-school tourney, which began with 22 first-round games last Friday night, will conclude with the finals of the annual tournament on March 4-5 at the War Memorial and at Alfred University.

Mike Ruff's Fighting Kings of Bishop Kearney — seeded No. 14 in the Section 5 Class AA bracket — overwhelmed 19th-seeded Penn Yan, 97-63, at Victor High School on Friday, Feb. 19. Kearney (5-16) held a 60-28 lead at intermission over the Mustangs and cruised in the second half. Although he was keeping the win in perspective, Ruff, whose team was plagued by early-season transfers of key players as well as nagging injuries, was impressed by his team's play.

"Even though Penn Yan isn't an area powerhouse, the win is still encouraging," Ruff said after the game. "The kids came through even with the added pressure that if you lose you're out (of the tournament). We played good on defense and offensively, and things just snowballed. Although it was a painful year for us, playing teams like McQuaid, Franklin and Mooney twice really honed our skills."

Ruff gave much of the credit for the win to Wendell Spiva (25 points) and R.D. Long (21 points). Long achieved a triple double in points, rebounds and assists, and Spiva was in double figures in both points and rebounds. Greg Mikels, who had been struggling in recent weeks, also contributed to the cause with 13 points.

The Kings, who play mostly Class AAA teams in the regular season but compete in the Class AA bracket in the sectionals, had little time to savor the first-round win. Kearney faced third-seeded Wilson (16-4), which nipped the Kings in a tight game back on January 15, in a second-round game at Edison Tech on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m.

Two of the Wildcats who hurt Kearney in the regular season game, Mike Sheppard and Cory Smith, were no longer playing for Wilson after Coach Chris Connell suspended them from the team.

A disappointing regular season ended the same way for Mike Dianetti and Aquinas (4-17) on Friday, Feb. 19, as host and 15th-seeded Wayne knocked off the 18th-seeded Little Irish, 70-64.

AQ was a Cinderella story in last year's Class AA tourney before falling to a tough Rush-Henrietta Roth team in the quarterfinals.

The game marked the return of Mike Whitfield, who went down with a serious knee injury early in the season. Even with their leading scorer, however, AQ squandered a 34-29 lead at halftime. Four Aquinas players did reach double figures. Paul Kucwicz (14 points), Whitfield (13 points), Michael Compisi (12 points) and Todd Reyners (11 points) all played well in AQ's season finale.

Defending Section 5 Class AAA champion and No. 2 seed McQuaid toned up for its title defense with a 72-54 win over visiting Edison

on Tuesday, Feb. 16. Ironically, the Knights' second-round opponent will be the 15th-seeded Inventors, who demolished Penfield, 83-45, at Edison on Saturday, Feb. 20.

McQuaid (17-0 league, 19-1 overall) — still ranked seventh among large schools in the most recent New York State high school basketball poll — overcame a box-and-one defense on Greg Woodard to notch its most recent win over Edison.

Scott Martzloff scored 13 of his 21 points in the first half to help the Knights gain a 38-25 halftime lead. The McQuaid center, who will be attending Holy Cross next fall, also finished with 15 rebounds. Woodard was able to wrestle free for 19 points during the win.

Although he said he is not taking any team lightly in the Class AAA bracket, McQuaid Coach Joe Marchese believed his team was feeling a little less pressure by playing a team — namely Edison — it had already seen twice this year. McQuaid trounced the Inventors, 89-50, back on December 23. The second-round game was to be played at Pittsford Mendon High School on Wednesday, Feb. 24.

"(Playing Edison for the third time) does take away a lot of the pressure (of playing a lesser-known opponent); we've seen their weaknesses twice but they've seen our weaknesses as well," Marchese said. "Beating a team three times in a year is tough also."

The McQuaid coach added that his Knights are also an extremely well-balanced team. "All five starters are capable of playing a great game," he said. "There's not as much pressure on any one individual player."

Woodard, Martzloff and Drew Henderson make up the most imposing front court in the Rochester-area, and role players like John Kelly, Jay Gangemi and Reggie White make McQuaid the favorite in the tourney even though Webster is seeded No. 1 in Class AAA.

"(Webster) is excellent; we scrimmaged them back in November, and they're similar to us in that (Webster's starters) are all capable of having big nights," Marchese said. "They're a better team than Fairport (last year's No. 1 seed) because of their balance."

If McQuaid advanced over Edison, it would play the winner of the second-round game between seventh-seeded Greece Arcadia (14-6) and 10th-seeded Brockport (12-8).

Third-seeded Rush-Henrietta (16-4) or 11th-seeded East (11-8) loom as the two teams the Knights will face if they reach the semifinals at the War Memorial on March 2.

TWELFTH-SEEDED Cardinal Mooney (11-9) faced a tough second-round opponent in fifth-seeded Franklin (16-4) on Tuesday, Feb. 23. Ed Nietopski's Cards did upset the Quakers, 51-45, in the regular-season finale for both teams on Tuesday, Feb. 16, but Franklin always seems to play well in the second season.

The visiting Cardinals used a match-up zone to deny Franklin's star player, Alvin Mobley, the ball during Mooney's six-point win last week. Nietopski's club erased a two-point deficit in the first quarter by moving out front at the half, 22-20. The advantage grew to 36-32 after three quarters, and the Cards were able to hang on for the win.

If Mooney was able to knock off the Quak-



The Kings were all over the ball during their 97-63 win over Penn Yan last weekend, but a much tougher opponent in Wilson awaited Kearney this week.

ers, it would most likely face Canandaigua in the Class AAA quarterfinals on February 26.

OVER IN CLASS C, Tony Alvaro's seventh-seeded Saints of DeSales were to play 10th-seeded Jaspars-Trousborg on Wednesday, Feb. 24. The Saints were able to advance as far as the semifinals of Class C a year ago before falling to Batavia Notre Dame.

Playing against rigorous Finger Lakes West divisional opponents usually adequately prepares the Saints for anything they see in the sectionals. Alvaro will need to get plenty of scoring from Pedro Rojas and Chris Ike, two of the Finger Lakes West Division's top scorers, if he and his Saints wish to go far in the tourney.

The next opponent for DeSales will most likely be second-seeded Mt. Morris (14-6) on Saturday, Feb. 27.

OVER IN SECTION 4 Class C, Mike Johnston finally has his starting unit intact for the first time since January 21, after injuries kept a couple of his standouts watching from the sidelines in recent weeks.

The return of center Christian Falkenberg comes just in time for the sectionals. Elmira ND is seeded sixth in Class C, and faced 11th-seeded Green (14-6) on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at Waverly. Green finished second in the Susquehanna League this season.

The Crusaders (10-10) played inspired

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