

Sports

McQuaid reaches semis with wins over Brockport, Edison

By Richard A. Kiley

When McQuaid Jesuit's season ends, Coach Joe Marchese may go on a personal crusade to bring the shot clock back to high school basketball.

For the sixth time this season — almost a third of their games — the second-seeded Knights had to overcome a stall offense by an opponent to achieve victory. The most recent team to take that approach was Brockport in a Section 5 Class AA quarterfinal game on Saturday, Feb. 27. The 10th-seeded Blue Devils (13-8) held on to the ball for minutes at a time, but the Knights (20-1) slowly pulled away for a 41-29 win in the game played at Edison Tech.

Although Marchese said he and his team have become accustomed to the stalling game, it can be frustrating for his players — and McQuaid's fans — at times.

"It's part of the game; we kind of expect it now," Marchese said. "The important thing is keeping patient and keeping your composure."

"There is a certain element of frustration, but Kearney did it, Mooney did it twice ... we've seen it before so it's less anxiety-provoking," he added.

McQuaid took a 3-2 lead in the first quarter before opening up a 17-7 halftime advantage. Even though Brockport had something to do with it, Marchese was extremely pleased with the way his team played without the ball.

"This was one of our best defensive efforts of the season," he said. "Defensively, they didn't beat us at all. We also forced them to turn over the ball. I was pleased with the way we played."

The McQuaid coach was also happy with his team's free-throw shooting. The Knights converted 16 of 22 from the stripe. Greg Woodard led McQuaid with 12 points, and Scott Martzloff and Drew Henderson gathered in 10 rebounds each.

McQuaid advanced to play Brockport by disposing of No. 15 Edison, 80-54, in a second-round game played at Pittsford Mendon on Wednesday, Feb. 24.

Woodard paced the Knights with a game-high 28 points. Teammate Scott Martzloff added 17 points. Woodard and Drew Henderson had 11 rebounds each.

McQuaid played No. 3 Rush-Henrietta in one of two semifinal games at the War Memorial on Wednesday, March 2. The Knights were to tip-off at 7 p.m., with the other Class AAA semifinal game between top-seeded Webster (20-1) and fourth-seeded Canandaigua (19-3) to follow at 8:30 p.m. The Class AAA championship game is scheduled for 8 p.m. on Saturday, March 5.

CANANDAIGUA ADVANCED to play Webster by nipping 12th-seeded Cardinal Mooney, 47-44, at Rush-Henrietta on Friday, Feb. 26.

The Braves and Ed Nietopski's Cardinals were no strangers to one another, having split two games during the regular season. The game was tied at halftime before Canandaigua opened up a six-point lead in the third quarter. Mooney came back to go ahead by four points with two minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, but crucial free-throw shooting by Canandaigua down the stretch proved to be the difference.

"They're a good ball club; they move the ball well and they don't have a bad shooter on the floor," said Nietopski, whose team finished 11-9 for the season. "We just made some key turnovers down the stretch that hurt us and they made their foul shots when they needed them."

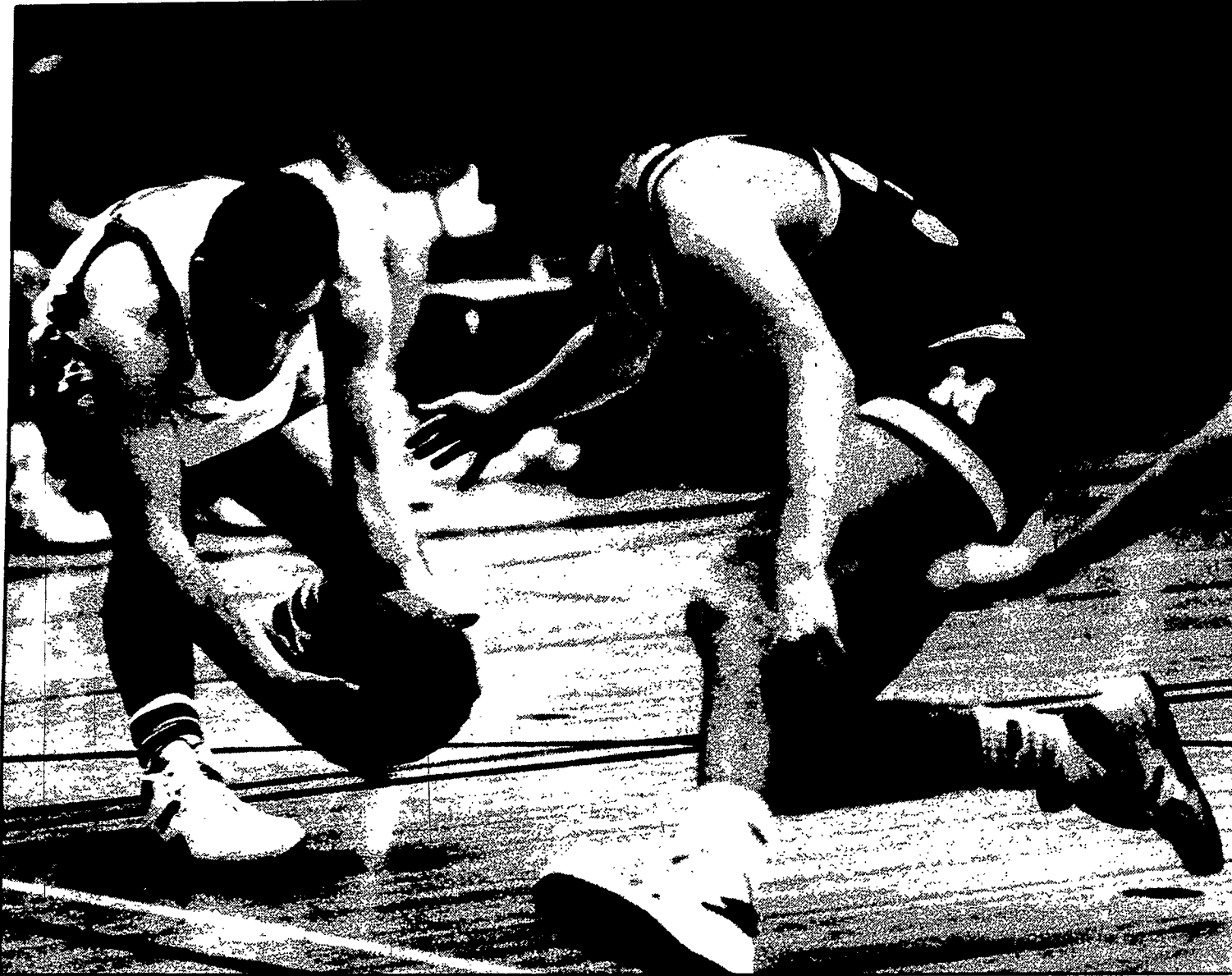
Mooney had beaten Franklin for the second time in a week to reach the quarterfinals. The Cards, who beat the Quakers in their season finale, used some clutch foul shooting of their own in a second-round game on Tuesday, Feb. 23, to beat fifth-seeded Franklin, 55-52, in overtime at Greece Athena.

Mooney made seven of eight free throws in the fourth quarter and three more in OT to secure the win over Trent Jackson's Quakers (16-5).

Mike Leonardo led Mooney with 23 points. **IN OTHER SECTIONAL** games, Wilson Coach Chris Connell has obviously had his Wildcats at the foul line during practice. Craig Bell converted five of six foul shots in the last two minutes as the third-seeded Wildcats held off an upstart and upset-minded Kearney team, 76-72, at Edison Tech on Wednesday, Feb. 24.

Wilson converted 21 of 30 foul shots — take notice, Syracuse — with Charles Alexander a perfect eight-for-eight from the stripe.

Mike Ruff's 14th-seeded Kings led most of the first half before Wilson tied the game, 33-33, at intermission. The Wildcats ballooned the lead to as many as nine in the third quarter, but the Kings — coming off an impressive



Mooney's Peter Mojsej (right) attempts to steal the ball during second-quarter action of the Cardinals' heartbreaking 47-44 loss to Canandaigua. The Braves advanced to play top-seeded Webster in one of two Class AAA semifinal games.

blowout of Penn Yan — were able to climb back in the game thanks to the three-point shooting of Bob Nicolay and R.D. Long. The Wildcats' foul shooting down the stretch kept Kearney from pulling off an upset.

"(Wilson) wouldn't leave the door open for us," a subdued Ruff said after the game. "We would come down the floor, score and then foul them; but give them credit, they made their (foul) shots when they really counted."

The Kearney coach, whose Kings finished 5-17 for the year, said Wilson's rebounding prowess was another factor. "They really hurt us on the boards; they got a lot of second and third opportunities," he said.

Long, who Ruff believes will be the premier guard in the City-Catholic League next year, finished with a game-high 26 points. Wendell Spiva and Nicolay added 14 points and 13 points respectively.

OVER IN CLASS C, 10th-seeded Jasper-Troupsburg used an unrelenting press in the second half to erase a 10-point halftime deficit and upset seventh-seeded Geneva DeSales, 52-49, at Bath on Wednesday, Feb. 24.

Tony Alvaro's Saints (10-11) jumped out to a 27-17 halftime lead, but were unable to handle the Wildcats' stiff pressure in the final two quarters, turning the ball over 12 times.

The Saints coach said he didn't think his club played well, even though it built up the seemingly-comfortable halftime advantage.

"Every time we'd get a few points ahead, they would come back; I thought Jasper-Troupsburg played a fine game," Alvaro said.

Pedro Rojas (13 points) and Peter Parshall (11 points) led DeSales.

The Saints' biggest enemy this season was inexperience. Alvaro believes next year's players — he's only losing reserve Sean Sturgeon to graduation — should play much better as a unit.

"If you take a look at Avoca (18-1 and seeded No. 1 this year), they were very young last year," Alvaro said. "We get players from all over, so it takes some time for them to come together as a unit."

DEFENDING SECTION 4 Class C champion Notre Dame had its hopes for a second-consecutive sectional title dashed when third-seeded Lansing (19-3) defeated the seventh-seeded Crusaders, 65-61, in a quarterfinal game played at Dryden on Friday, Feb. 26.

Lansing played second-seeded Tioga (21-1) in one of two Section 4 (Binghamton area) Class C semifinal games this week.

ND Coach Mike Johnston called the



With Canandaigua coaches and players celebrating behind him, Mojsej reflects on what could have been for Mooney in this year's Class AAA tournament.

contest against Lansing "a game of runs," and unfortunately for his Crusaders, Lansing had the last one in the fourth quarter to win. Notre Dame was outscored 14-6 in the game's final eight minutes.

Both teams came out on fire in the first quarter, which ended tied at 19-19. With the first of their scoring surges, the Crusaders were able to build up as much as an 11-point lead in the second quarter, but a run by Lansing in the waning minutes before halftime enabled it to pull within five points, 41-36, at intermission.

ND pushed the lead to eight at one point in the third quarter, but Lansing was able to cut the margin to five, 51-36, heading into the final period.

Missed opportunities down the floor — due mainly to Lansing's relentless man-to-man defense — and the failure to convert key free-throw opportunities in the final quarter spelled doom for Notre Dame. Although they shot a respectable 10-for-17 from the line during the game, the Crusaders were able to convert just two of six from the

stripe down the stretch.

Christian Falkenberg and Scott Long paced ND with 23 points each. Falkenberg made four three-point field goals for the night. Long and John Philipps (13 points) nailed two each from three-point range.

ND reached the Class C quarterfinals by crushing Greene, 66-53, in a first-round game at Waverly on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

The Crusaders began the game ice cold from the floor, making just two of 16 field goals in the opening eight minutes. Greene led 14-4 after one quarter.

ND had a NBA-like second quarter, scoring 29 points to Greene's 14 to open up a 33-28 halftime advantage. The Crusaders put the game away in the fourth quarter by nailing 10 of 11 free throws, including a perfect six for six from the stripe for Falkenberg and two of two by reserve Brian Sheehan.

Falkenberg paced ND with 23 points. Philipps and Long scored 16 points and 13 points respectively.