

McQuaid's run for state basketball crown

By Richard A. Kiley

For high school athletes and coaches, every season begins with dreams of winning a sectional title or with visions of what it would be like to battle other New York teams in gut-wrenching, pressure-packed state playoffs.

Unfortunately, many times those dreams turn out to be simply fantasies. This past school year, however, several diocesan athletic programs worked hard in making them a reality.

Fall

Diocesan football teams began practicing under sizzling conditions on August 19. Two teams — Bishop Kearney and Aquinas Institute — had all the right moves to make the playoffs.

The Fighting Kings used a stingy, hard-hitting core of defensive players — termed "The Hit Squad" late in the season — to advance all the way to the Section 5 Class AA championship game for the first time ever. The defense — which recorded four shutouts in the regular season — was led by linebackers Carlos Shippy and Wendell Spiva, who were both instrumental in stopping a potent Wilson High running attack in the Class AA semifinal. Still, Nick Teta's Kings needed a late touchdown to beat the Wildcats, 14-8, before falling to Canandaigua, 21-7, in the championship game.

With much of his team returning this September, Teta and the Kings should make another run at the title this fall.

Aquinas' grid season began and ended badly, but was simply spectacular in between. Gates-Chili stunned Aquinas, 16-12, in the season opener for both teams, and Irondequoit blanked the Little Irish, 28-0, in the Section 5 Class AAA semifinal game.

Unlike the Kings, Chris Battaglia's Little Irish used a multi-faceted offense to reach the semis. All-purpose player Mark Chapman, quarterback Brian Monteleone, running back Jermaine McGowan, and such other offensive weapons as Corey Collins and Tony Postell helped AQ treat its fans to the kind of football they hadn't seen for a long time.

Although Elmira Notre Dame failed to qualify for the post season last November, the Crusaders had a championship-like season nonetheless.

While going 7-2 — with tough losses to state titans Chenango Forks and Newark Valley — Notre Dame amassed the following overall school records this season: single-game scoring (49 points against Seton Catholic of Binghamton); number of first downs in a game (26 against Waverly); average yards per game for the season (345); most points in a season (268); most total yards (3,105); most touchdowns (30); and most points per game average (29).

THE SOCCER SEASON saw a changing of the guard in the City-Catholic League, as McQuaid Jesuit finished atop the league ahead of Cardinal Mooney for the first time in six years.

Dan Schied guided the Knights to an 18-3 season, which ended abruptly when Spencerport ousted McQuaid, 2-1, in the playoffs. Still, the Knights accomplishments were many, as they earned top seeding in the sectionals, put together a 15-game winning streak and were ranked in the top 10 of state high school soccer teams for much of the season.

Cardinal Mooney advanced to the Section 5 Class A semis before losing to Penfield, 1-0. Paul Forte's Cards (13-8-1) struggled through an inconsistent regular season, caught fire late in the season, but came up a little short in the end.

Mooney finished the season with 61 goals for and 22 against for a 3-1 scoring advantage.

Over in Class B-2, Aquinas' hopes of winning its second consecutive sectional title were ended with a 1-0 loss to Honeoye Falls-Lima in the championship game.

IN GIRLS' SOCCER, Mercy had its best year ever, as the Monarchs dethroned Cardinal Mooney in the Private-Parochial League and earned the top seed in the Class AAA soccer tournament.

Mercy went from 4-10-1 in 1986-87 to 15-2 this season, which ended with a 2-1 overtime loss to Fairport in the quarterfinals.

In just its second full season as a varsity team, Elmira Notre Dame reached the Section 4 Class C finals before losing to Groton 2-1 in the championship game. Steve Weber's Crusaders advanced to the final game with a 2-1 overtime win against top-seeded Trumansburg.

MERCY'S GIRLS weren't just tearing up the competition on the soccer field this fall. In just their third varsity cross-country season ever, the Monarchs won seven meet championships before winning the Section 5 championship over Fairport.

Mercy also placed sixth at the states on Long Island before finishing a disappointing third among Section 5 schools — behind Victor and Fairport — at the Federation Meet in Syracuse.

Winter

It's very difficult to sum up the 1987-88 season of the McQuaid boys' basketball team because enough superlatives may not exist in the English language.

The Knights trounced Liverpool, 77-67, in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Class A championship in March after dismantling Hamburg Frontier (71-47) and Saratoga (76-62) in the two games prior to the state final.

The win over Liverpool avenged a 74-73 loss to the Warriors in December. McQuaid — the first Section 5 team to ever win the Class A state public title — was led by one of the best hoop players in New York — Greg Woodard. The Villanova-bound forward scored 25, 25 and 31 points in the three games of the state tourney and was named the most valuable player.

McQuaid's hopes for the overall state boys' Class A title ended with an 80-73 loss to Our Saviour Lutheran of the Bronx in the semifinals of the Federation Tournament. The Falcons were the top-ranked small school in the state for most of the high school hoop season. Danny Tirado handed out nine of his tournament-record 15 assists in a stirring second-half comeback by OSL, which trailed 42-33 at intermission.

Woodard scored 22 points — 18 in the first half — in a losing effort. McQuaid point guard John Kelly scored a season-high 17 points and added eight assists.

Joe Marchese guided the Knights to their second consecutive Section 5 Class AAA boys' basketball title to reach the state tournament. McQuaid survived some anxious moments late in the championship game against Webster before holding on to a 62-59 win. Marchese is 47-4 (.921 winning percentage) in his two seasons as varsity coach.

IN GIRLS' BASKETBALL, Cardinal Mooney, Mercy and DeSales all advanced to the semifinals of the Section 5 tournament before all three Catholic powers lost. Mooney succumbed to Fairport, 60-48, in the Class AA semis, playing most of the game without star sophomore Marisa Shackelford who was out with the flu. Scott Morrison has coached the Cards to a 40-4 record and has brought them to the semifinals two consecutive years.

Mercy fell to eventual Class AA champion

Pittsford Mendon, 59-48, in the other semifinal. The Vikings won the game at the foul line, converting 15 of 22 free throws. Mercy went to the line four times and made two. Spurred by Julie Buntich's 23 points and 12 rebounds, Kathy Boughton's Monarchs upset Webster, 53-48, to advance to the semis.

After struggling through much of the regular season, DeSales girls' basketball team came on strong late in the season before losing to Whitesville 54-33 in the Class D semifinals.

IN HOCKEY, Aquinas Institute's dreams of winning its first-ever state championship were crushed when a senior-laden Rome Free Academy team knocked off the Little Irish, 8-2.

Rich Gamble's young squad advanced to the state hockey tournament by drubbing defending Section 5 champion Batavia, 6-3, to win the Monroe Hockey League championship. AQ's Dave Hemmerick was voted the most valuable player of the tournament. Although he will lose Rick Alloco, Hemmerick, Mark Raban and Jeff Mucha to graduation, Gamble returns much of his team next year for another possible run at the state hockey title.

IN THE STATE BOWLING championships last March, both Aquinas and Mercy were struck down by keglers from Section 6. Jim Scarfia's Aquinas team finished fourth in the boys' competition with a total pin fall of 5,434. Ann Mairer's Monarchs finished seventh out of as many sections with a six-game total of 4,235.

Lockport won the boys' title with a score of

6,142; Niagara-Wheatfield won the girls' crown with a total pin fall of 5,228.

THE MCQUAID 3,200-meter relay team earned championship honors at the National Scholastic Track and Field Championships in New Haven, Conn., last March.

The relay team of Scott

Romanowski, Chris Cusack, Chris Adin and

Brad Sumner won the 3,200 in 7:54.66.

Bob Bradley's

Knights were coming off a victory earlier

in the month in the Eastern States Inter-

scholastic Champi-

onships. The Knights

placed first in the

two-mile course

there in 8:05.09.

Spring

With a team

made up of

predominately

underclassmen,

DeSales boys'

baseball coach

Frank Payne was

hoping to steal

a couple of

wins this spring.

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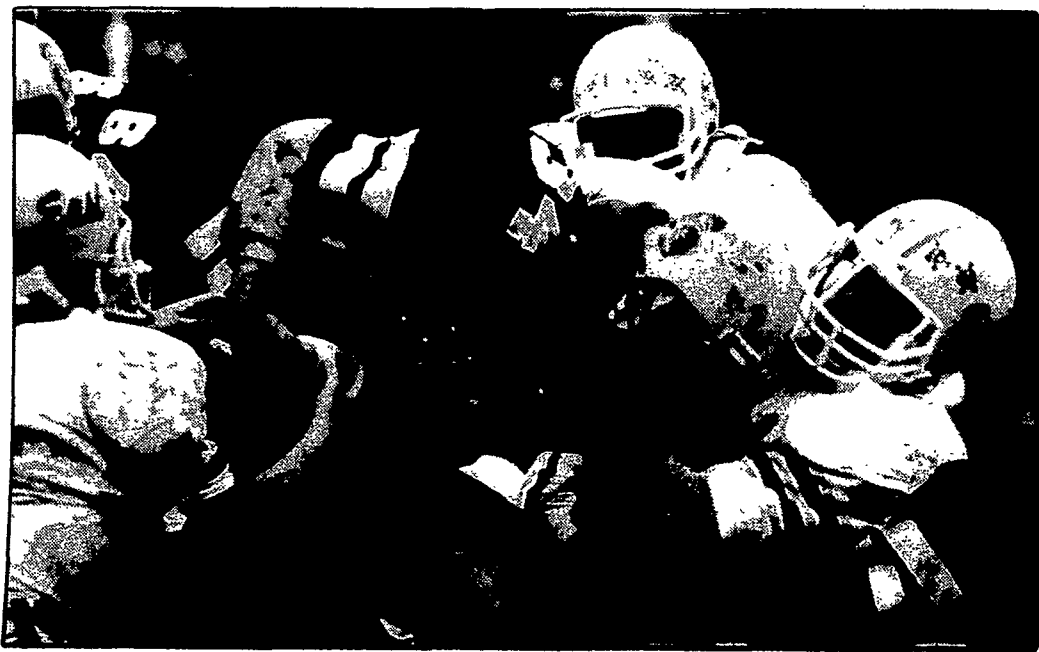
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