

## Sports

# ND wins thriller; missed conversion costs DeSales

By Richard A. Kiley

Mike Bennett's nine-yard touchdown on an option play with four-and-a-half minutes left in the fourth quarter was the only score of the game as Elmira Notre Dame nipped host Whitney Point, 6-0, in a key Division II football game played in several inches of snow, rain and sleet on Saturday, Oct. 22.

The win kept the Crusaders (2-1 league, 5-2 overall) alive in the race for a league title. Whitney Point, which had more than enough chances to tie and possibly win the game in the waning moments, fell to 3-3 for the season.

Whitney Point failed to score on eight chances from inside the 10-yard line in the final minute.

After Bennett's touchdown run — spurred by excellent blocks by Mike Bernatavitz and Don Sheehan — ND went for two points but failed.

The missed conversion looked like it would come into play when Whitney Point moved the ball down to Notre Dame's nine-yard line with 1:52 remaining in the game, but ND's defense held on downs.

The Crusader offense then turned the ball over two plays later, giving Whitney Point four more chances to score with :50 left. Once again the Crusader defense was up to the challenge, much to the joy and relief of ND coach Mike D'Aloisio.

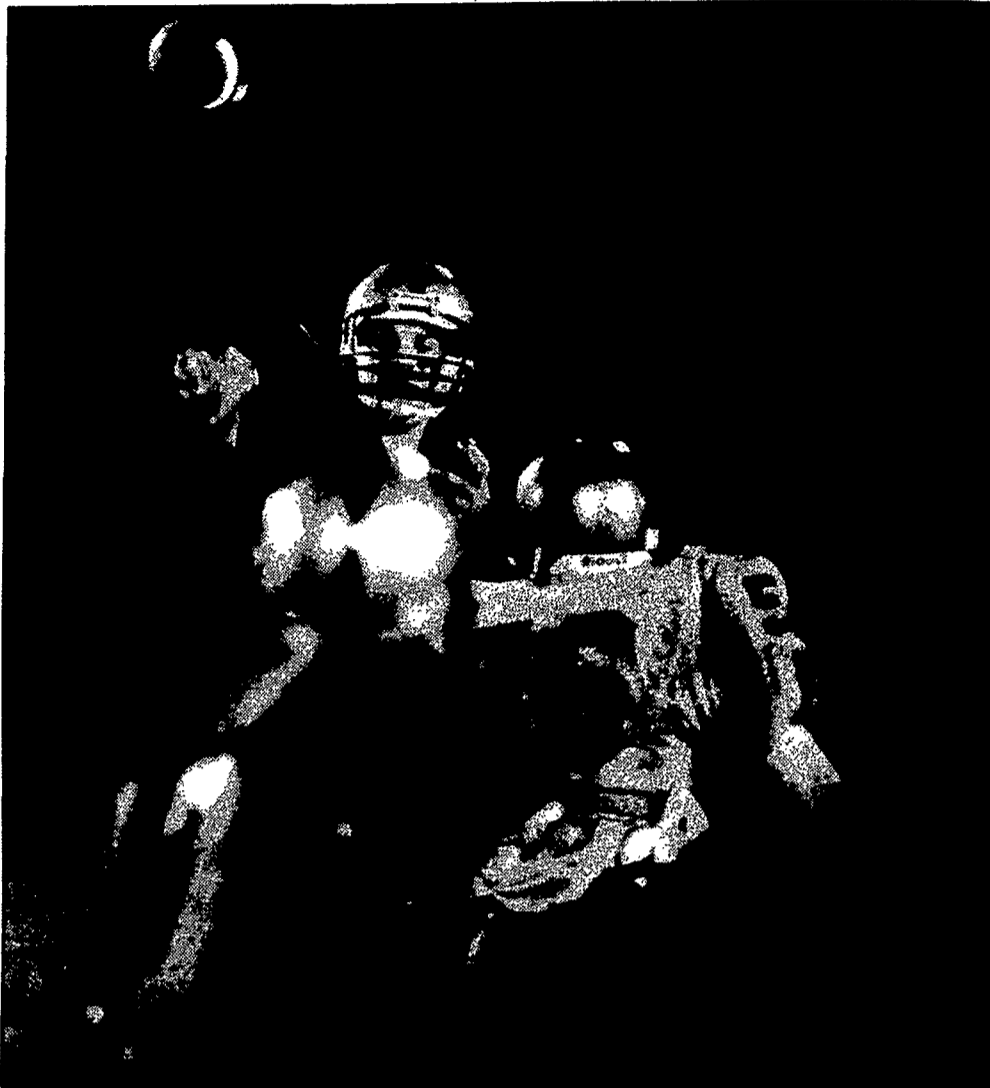
"A timeout was called with 53 seconds left, and when everybody came over to the sideline I said, 'Just hold on to the ball; let's not give them any more chances,'" D'Aloisio said. "When they (Whitney Point) recovered it with 50 seconds left I couldn't believe it."

The defensive stand by his Crusaders was unbelievable as well. Notre Dame's Tom Lockhart and Dennis Harney sacked Whitney Point's Duane Thelemin as the quarterback was rolling out on fourth down and goal.

"This was a big win for us; they're all big now," said D'Aloisio, whose Crusaders are tied for second place in the league with Waverly. Both teams have identical 2-1 records behind Windsor (3-0). "To stop them (from scoring) eight times in less than a minute is a great credit to our defense."

Notre Dame's defense was backed up near its goal line most of the first half, when Whitney Point had the ball inside the Crusaders' 20-yard line most of the time. ND blocked a field goal attempt with :10 remaining in the half.

Notre Dame's offensive numbers for the game were what they usually would have in one



Linda Dow Hayes/Courier-Journal

Bishop Kearney quarterback Craig Chodak passes down field during the second quarter of the Kings' 32-6 win over Cardinal Mooney.

quarter. The Crusaders, who were without running back Bob Grosvenor for the fourth consecutive week, compiled a mere 82 yards. As a team, ND rushed 21 times for 23 yards and Bennett was 6-for-15 for 59 yards.

Whitney Point finished with 151 yards in total offense.

D'Aloisio attributed both teams' offensive numbers to the adverse weather conditions.

"The game was played in six inches of snow, sleet, rain and whatever else was falling; it brought back memories of the ('Mud Bowl') game against Newark Valley (in 1986), but the conditions were actually worse," said D'Aloisio,

who was surprised the game was played because many other high school football contests in the area were cancelled. The conditions were doubly hard on the Crusaders, who converted to half jerseys this season.

"I think (Whitney Point) felt the weather would help their chances because they like the power game. After watching the films, I'm not really sure it did."

For Notre Dame, the win came a week after a 38-13 pasting at the hands of Seton Catholic of Binghamton.

"Practices were all business last week ... I was miserable and the kids were miserable,"

D'Aloisio said. "We came in and worked hard, and the effort paid off. It was one of the biggest victories this season."

Grosvenor will be back for ND's crucial game against Waverly this Friday night, Oct. 28, at 7:30 p.m. D'Aloisio said Waverly, which runs an offense similar to that of Notre Dame, will provide another stiff test for the defense.

League-leading Windsor has to play tough opponents in Whitney Point and Newark Valley the final two weeks. If Notre Dame can get by Waverly this week and Windsor loses to either Whitney Point or Newark Valley, the tie-breaking situations all favor ND.

## Batavia ND 15, DeSales 14

A missed extra-point cost the Saints (5-2) the game against Batavia Notre Dame on Saturday night, Oct. 22, and maybe a trip to the sectionals in Section 5 Class C in November.

The failed conversion came in the first quarter after Larry Guerri's 47-yard touchdown run. Guerri's score came on DeSales' first possession, prompting DeSales coach Bob Taney to feel it unnecessary to go for two points.

"I made an error in judgment; we should have gone for two points considering the (bad) weather conditions," said Taney, who admitted that — after watching his team move the ball against Batavia ND on its first offensive series — he thought the missed extra point would not come into play.

The kick failed when the ball could not be properly put down for Ron Cecere.

The Fighting Irish took the lead later in the first quarter, when Steve Nenni ran 75 yards for a score to tie the game at 6-6 and ran the two-point conversion into the end zone to give Batavia ND an 8-6 lead.

Nenni added a 54-yard touchdown run in the second quarter to up the lead to 14-6. The decisive extra point made the score, 15-6.

Later in the quarter, DeSales moved to within three points of the Fighting Irish, after Guerri ran the ball into the end zone from the two-yard line. The touchdown was set up by a 70-yard pass from Cecere to Chris Ike.

Ike and Cecere hooked up on the two-point conversion to pull DeSales to within 15-14. The Saints put together an impressive drive with three minutes left, but lost the ball on downs at the Notre Dame 15-yard line.

DeSales finished the game with 166 yards in total offense; 149 rushing and 117 passing. Batavia Notre Dame accrued much of its offense on Nenni's two touchdown runs.

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## Quest for Class A title looks wide open as sectionals begin

By Richard A. Kiley

No one can remember the last time the top-seeded team in Class A of the Section 5 boys' soccer tournament took all the marbles.

Just ask McQuaid soccer coach Dan Schied, whose Knights were the No. 1 seed in last year's tourney.

"I can't remember the last time one did; I think you could probably go back 10 years and not find a top seed that did (win the sectional championship)," said Schied, whose Knights were eliminated after three games last October.

Schied seemed perfectly content with his team's No. 3 seeding this time around, as his Knights (14-2-1) opened up first-round play against No. 14 Marshall (7-7) at McQuaid on Wednesday, Oct. 26. The Knights blanked the Jurists, 3-0, back on September 20. The winner of the McQuaid-Marshall game would advance to play the winner of the match between No. 6 Brighton (12-4-2) and No. 11 Canandaigua (11-6-1) in the quarterfinals. Brighton handed McQuaid one of its two losses earlier this year.

Schied said his team's play in recent weeks has been "exceptional," but that he's looking for more scoring.

"Our field play has been exceptional, but we're not getting enough shots on goal," Schied said. "When we get 25 yards from the goal we have to start thinking shot."

Opposing goalies might differ from the McQuaid coach on that point. The Knights scored 11 times in three games last week, including five in a shutout of Wilson and three against an upstart North Star team. The Knights did need some late-scoring heroics against Cardinal Mooney last week, tying the game at 2-2 with less than a minute left in regulation time. The game ended in a

3-3 standoff.

Dan Wilmot, Matt Parrinello and Mark Paris have led McQuaid offensively this fall. Wilmot has 11 goals and four assists to lead the team in scoring, while Parrinello (six goals, seven assists) and Paris (five goals, two assists) have also been offensive threats. Schied has coached all three players since they were sophomores on the junior varsity three years ago. The three are part of a group of 16 seniors, who have gone 47-5-2 on the JV and varsity with Schied over the last three years.

Due to a decline in enrollment at his school, Cardinal Mooney coach Paul Forte could have opted to drop down from the A bracket to Class BB. But the Mooney coach believes the competition from top to bottom in Class A is better than BB so that's where he wants his third-seeded Cards (8-5-5) to play.

"I figure as long as we can compete with the best, we might as well play with the best," said Forte, whose team is 4-0-1 since dropping a game in overtime to Honeoye Falls-Lima three weeks ago.

The Cards opened up against No. 10 Rush-Henrietta (8-10) on Wednesday, Oct. 26. The winner of that game would advance to play at No. 2 Webster (11-3-4) this Saturday, Oct. 29.

Aquinas and Bishop Kearney are competing in Class BB. Gary LaPietra's Little Irish (7-6-4, No. 6 seed) play at No. 3 Churchville-Chili (9-6-2) this Saturday, Oct. 29 at 2 p.m. Greg Schuber's Kings (4-14-1, No. 8 seed) played No. 9 Pittsford Sutherland (6-12) at Spencerport on Wednesday. The winner of that game would have to play at top-seeded Pittsford Mendon (16-2) in the quarterfinals on Saturday, Oct. 29, at 2:30 p.m.



Mark Parish (11) heads the ball toward the McQuaid goal in the Knights' 3-0 defeat of Northstar Christian Academy last Friday, Oct. 21.