

## Sports

# Crusaders, Saints labor through volatile seasons

By Richard A. Kiley

A year or two from now, Elmira Notre Dame may have one of the best small-school basketball teams in upstate New York.

For now, however, Crusader coach Mike Johnston is dealing with the trials and tribulations that come with having a young and sometimes inconsistent team.

During the last two weeks, Johnston — who was named vice principal at the Elmira Catholic school last summer — has experienced a gamut of emotions, as his Crusaders (1-6 league, 5-9 overall) struggled to gain some consistency.

Notre Dame dropped two Sullivan Trail Conference games to Corning East and Horseheads last week, after beating two-upstart teams — Dryden and Corning West — just the week before.

Notre Dame's 80-61 loss to STC-opponent Corning East last Friday, Jan. 13, was not entirely unexpected. After all, Kevin Havens and Co. have been one of the STC's dominant teams this season, possessing just too much height and experience for the Crusaders to overcome.

Visiting ND did spread out the floor on offense early on and were able to gain a 17-16 edge. Too many turnovers and too much of Havens — who finished with 25 points for the night — proved to be the Crusaders' downfall as the game wore on. Corning East upped its lead to 12 at the half.

Notre Dame was able to trim the margin to 10 after three quarters, but East's perimeter shooting kept the Crusaders from making a run in the final quarter.

Johnston said the loss wasn't as frustrating as was the way Corning East accomplished it.

"The first two ball games against them (this season) they killed us inside with their big men so we sagged back," Johnston explained. "Then their guards kept making their shots; they've got good perimeter shooters this year, and that's what makes them so tough."

Brian Sheehan led ND with 17 points. Bob Grosvenor and Mike Bennett finished with 16 points and 11 points, respectively.

Earlier in the week, the Crusaders lost one Johnston said he would have liked to have back, when ND succumbed to host Horseheads, 75-70, in an STC league game played on Tuesday, Jan. 10.

The Crusaders came out flat against Horseheads — which lost all five of its starters from last year's team to graduation — and were never able to recover.

## ND players tabbed All State

By Richard A. Kiley

The New York State Sports Writers Association recently provided yet another testament to the exceptional football program at Elmira Notre High School, by naming two-way standouts Bob Grosvenor and Mike Bernatavitz to the first-team All-State selections in Class C-D.

This marked the second consecutive year that one of Mike D'Aloisio's grid players was named to the All-State squad. Randy Harvey, who graduated from ND in 1988, was tabbed a first-team lineman after last season.

Grosvenor and Bernatavitz received much attention for their ability to run with the ball, but both Crusaders were honored for their outstanding defensive play.

In a statement released with the All-State team listing, the NYSSWA stated that "players are occasionally shifted from their normal positions slightly, or moved to or from offense, because there are too many running backs and linebackers nominated."

Grosvenor culminated his career at Notre Dame as the Twin Tier's (Southern Tier-Pennsylvania border) No. 6 all-time career rusher with 2,657 yards. He rushed for 28 touchdowns and scored 34 overall.

This season was bittersweet for Grosvenor. He was plagued by a knee injury that kept him out of nearly four games but he still rumbled for 778 yards and eight rushing touchdowns. According to D'Aloisio, Grosvenor averaged more than eight yards per carry.

Bernatavitz played a key role in the Crusaders' success running the ball last season, as D'Aloisio opted to pass the ball far less than in previous years. The Waverly native led Notre Dame with 865 yards and 10 rushing touchdowns.

"They both have completely different styles (running the ball) and they're both outstanding at what they do," D'Aloisio said. "One was never in the other one's shadow. They were really happy for each other when they heard the team announced; that's what makes them both such a credit to the program."

Horseheads led 20-12 after one quarter, 37-30 at the half and 54-40 after three quarters. Sheehan, one of four sophomores for ND, led the Crusaders with 18 points. Bennett had 15, Grosvenor 14 and Bill Updyke had 10 for ND.

Johnston cited his team's problems at the foul line — where they converted just 11 of 23 from the stripe — and cold shooting in the first half for the loss.

"We went up there, came out and didn't shoot that well," said Johnston, who added that his team's pressure defense also wasn't able to force Horseheads into making many mistakes. "We've played well when we've really gotten after people. Against Horseheads we just didn't press them into making turnovers."

Just three nights earlier against Dryden, a tough opponent from the IAC, the Crusaders were far more proficient from the foul line (20-for-29) and used their press to perfection during an impressive 74-58 non-league win on Saturday, Jan. 7.

The win over Dryden came after what Johnston called his team's best game of the year, which was a 78-54 win at Corning West on Tuesday, Jan. 3. It marked the first time in four years that Johnston's team traveled to the Corning high school and emerged with a win.

Geoff Woodworth scored 20 points to lead ND, which used a ferocious to keep West off balance all night. The Vikings shot just 6-for-30 from the field in the first half, and just 6-for-15 from the foul line. West finished the game 9-for-27 from the stripe.

The win snapped a five-game losing streak for the Crusaders, who roared out to a 38-18 lead on the stunned Vikings.

Johnston unleashed three players — Bennett, Sheehan and Updyke — on West guard Jay Pieri, who scored just nine points after spending much of the night on the bench because of foul trouble.

Woodworth was the main weapon in the second half, scoring 15 of ND's 40 points. Bennett finished with 15, while Rob Agan contributed 14 points and collected 13 rebounds. Sheehan had 10 points and eight assists.

Johnston would love to see his team put together efforts like the ones against Corning West and Dryden, as his team enters the last month of the season. Southside (Jan. 17) and Trumansburg (Jan. 21) loomed this week. The Crusaders have dropped two tough games to Southside already this season: 78-71 at ND and 67-62 at Southside during the Elmira Christmas Tournament.

Although the ND coach said that the honoring of his two players was "a plus for our sports program, these guys worked so hard in their careers and did it with a lot of hard work on their own."

According to D'Aloisio, Grosvenor is being actively recruited as a defensive back by Syracuse and Boston College, and as a running back by Rutgers. He is hoping to be offered a scholarship to play at SU.

D'Aloisio said that Bernatavitz's small frame — he stands 5-foot-8 and weighs 158 pounds — will not enable him to play at the Division I level in college. His outstanding ability and fierce defensive play, however, should fit in well with a Division II or III program; D'Aloisio said. Bernatavitz will first attend a year of prep school.

In a related matter, D'Aloisio and three of his football players are featured in the current issue of *Scholastic Coach Magazine*.

The Crusader coach wrote a piece concerning a drill for his pass receivers — "I call it my drills for the good-hands people" — and the New York City-based periodical printed the article, written with the help of assistant Jeff Sobkowski.

"Last year I decided to sit down and write the article," D'Aloisio said. "It's basically a tribute to the kids because we've had such a successful program by passing the ball."

Sobkowski photographed Bernatavitz, Grosvenor and wide receiver Scott Long — who graduated last year — going through the drill.

"There are times in almost every football game when a receiver will drop a pass that hit him right in the hands," D'Aloisio writes. "Such things happen to the best of receivers and about all the coach can do is go back to the practice field and drill even harder on pass receiving."

The ND coach is the architect of a high school football program that passes the ball often, but rarely turns the ball over. In the article, D'Aloisio lists 14 drills so other schools may develop more "good-hands people."

"The game against Southside could really be a pivotal one for us," Johnston said. "We need to get on a roll before the sectionals."

A team that should be considered one of the favorites in Section 4 Class C when the sectionals roll around is Trumansburg, which ND defeated 76-68 back on December 10.

**TURNOVERS AND POOR** foul shooting have been the demise of DeSales thus far this season. Tony Alvaro's Saints (5-5 league, 7-5 overall) were picked by many high school coaches to battle Red Jacket for the Finger Lakes West title. Alvaro said his club has conceded the league title — Red Jacket is 10-0 while Bloomfield and Naples are both 8-2 — and must now set its sights on getting ready for sectional play.

"I would hope now that we could win all our games the rest of the season. That would get us in a good frame of mind for the sectionals," Alvaro said.

The veteran coach admits he is surprised by the way his team has struggled at times this season, but the Saints' record is extremely deceiving.

Before last Friday night's 73-63 loss to host Bloomfield, DeSales' previous four losses had come by a total of nine points.

Alvaro said it has been a "Syracuse-like" season thus far, as his team has struggled at the foul line and has been plagued by poor shot selection.

"I don't believe that in today's game, we can shoot 50 percent from the foul line and expect to win," Alvaro said. "I really believe a lot of our

problems (at the foul line) are psychological. Subconsciously, they think they're going to miss when they step up to the line."

They're just like many of this year's Orangemen, who seem to turn green at the foul line. Against visiting Red Jacket on Wednesday, Jan. 11, the Saints shot just 12-for-24 from the foul line and lost 53-51. Red Jacket was 23-for-38 from the stripe.

It was the second consecutive low-scoring game between the two Finger Lakes West rivals; the Saints fell to the Indians, 40-36, in the season-opener for both teams back on November 30.

"I think both teams play extra hard against each other. That and great defense by both teams keeps the scores low," Alvaro said.

Despite his team's inconsistent play this season, Alvaro still believes his Saints can vie for the Class D crown come sectionals. He thinks many coaches may have picked the Saints in the pre-season simply because of 6-foot-5 center Rob McFadden, but the DeSales center is just a sophomore and has his best seasons to come.

The Saints have also been slowed by injuries, mainly to senior center-forward Pedro Rojas. Rojas sliced open one of his fingers during gym class recently and "hasn't really played to his potential" since.

If Rojas can get on track and McFadden continues to improve, the Saints will be tough to best in late February with a good supporting cast of Peter Parshall, Chris Ike and Jeff Taney.

"I think the team's best play is yet to come," Alvaro said.

## Knight returns to school following collapse

McQuaid center Drew Henderson returned to school this week after collapsing during the last minute of a Jan. 10 basketball game at Franklin High School.

The 6-foot-8 Knights center dropped to the gym floor near the McQuaid bench after being taken out with 56 seconds remaining in a 77-52 loss to the Quakers.

Coaches and officials chose not to resume the game as Henderson lost and regained consciousness for more than 15 minutes. He was then taken by ambulance to Rochester General Hospital.

A hospital official said Henderson regained consciousness around 11 p.m., and, after tests and observation, was released at around 3:30 a.m.

McQuaid Coach Joe Marchese said Henderson had been plagued by tonsillitis during the Knights' holiday trip to Florida in late December and subsequently lost

weight. Doctors believed that a combination of dehydration and low blood sugar may have resulted in Henderson's collapse.

The McQuaid center accepted a full basketball scholarship from Division I Fairfield University, Connecticut during last fall's early signing period.

Before Henderson's collapse halted the game, four Franklin starters scored in double figures as the Quakers pulled away from the Knights. Junior guard Mike Sheppard led Franklin with 19 points, while center Alvin Mobley finished with 18 points and 15 rebounds.

Reggie Wade led McQuaid with 17 points. Henderson had 12.

Henderson did not play in McQuaid's 70-65 loss to visiting Edison Tech on Friday, Jan. 13.

## Winfield, baseball coaches head table for gala

GENEVA — George Valesente, a Seneca Falls native who coaches the Ithaca College baseball team, will join three other Geneva-area coaches at the head table for DeSales Sports Nite '89 on Sunday, Jan. 29, according to dinner organizer George Lamson.

Valesente will be joined at the head table by DeSales baseball coach Frank Pane, William Smith soccer coach Aliceann Wilber, and field hockey and lacrosse coach Pat Genovese.

The featured guest for the dinner is New York Yankee outfielder Dave Winfield.

Harold Weber, sports director for Seneca Falls radio station WSWF, will be the master of ceremonies.

A 1966 graduate of Ithaca, Valesente has led the Bombers to a school-record 287-95-3 mark (.749 winning percentage) in his 10 years. During that period, Ithaca has won a pair of Division III national championships (1983 and 1988). The Bombers have also finished second twice and third once in the tournament.

Valesente lettered in soccer, baseball and basketball at Ithaca and pitched four years in the Washington Senators organization before he began his coaching career. In addition to coaching at Ithaca, he has coached at Brockport, New Paltz and New York Maritime — guiding his teams to a 378-144-3 mark (.723 winning percentage).

Pane has guided the Saints baseball team for eight seasons, accruing an 86-31 record during that time. The DeSales graduate, who was recently named Geneva's new police chief, has four Finger Lakes West league championships to his credit, and two Section 5 titles as well. His club won the Class C championship last spring with a thrilling, comeback win over Pavillion.

Wilber led the soccer Herons to the first

national championship in school history in November. She has compiled an 88-49-8 career record at William Smith, including last season's 18-1-1 campaign which culminated with a national championship win over California-San Diego.

Last spring, Genovese guided the William Smith lacrosse team to the national championship game, where they lost to Trenton State 14-11.

Tickets for Sports Nite are \$20. Proceeds are earmarked for the DeSales Gym Campaign. Call 315/789-0979 after 5 p.m. for information.

Tickets can be obtained by contacting Dom Vedora or Ed Kenny at Kenny Carpet; Steve Murczek at Murzy's Pizza and Pasta; Rob Sellene at the National Bank of Geneva; Gene McFadden at the Finger Lakes Credit Union; DeSales basketball coach Anthony Alvaro; Baroody's Cigar Store in Geneva; Bruce Ike in Waterloo; or Dick Guinan, George Lamson, Bill Riley or Tom Higgins in Geneva.

## Franklin forfeits three wins

ROCHESTER — Unbeaten Franklin High must forfeit three basketball games for using an ineligible player, the City School District announced last week. Aquinas and Bishop Kearney are two of the teams that will be affected by the finding.

The unidentified player is in his fifth year of high school and had no eligibility remaining.

The Quakers' record now stands at 9-3 overall and 4-3 in the City Catholic League. The games the player competed in were victories over Marshall, 98-62, on December 2; Aquinas, 80-64, on December 23; and Bishop Kearney, 107-64, on January 3.

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