

Sports

Mercy upsets Lockport; Crusaders press to win

By Richard A. Kiley

After winning the girls' Class AA sectional title in 1986 with a resounding win over Rush-Henrietta, Our Lady of Mercy ventured to the Far West regionals in Buffalo where it was rudely thrashed by Lockport.

Since then, Kathy Boughton's Monarchs have gone 2-0 against the mighty Lions, including a 52-46 win last Saturday, Jan. 21. Lockport (9-1) came into the game ranked No. 7 in the latest New York State Sports Writers' rating of Class A teams, while Mercy was No. 13.

The Monarchs (12-0) will surely climb in this week's rankings, thanks to another solid effort by senior guard Julie Buntich (20 points, six assists) and inspiring performances from 6-foot-0 sophomore Natalie White and freshman Sheila Doyle.

White was a dominating force inside for the Monarchs, scoring 12 points and hauling down 12 rebounds. Doyle came off the bench in the second quarter to ignite a Mercy offense that sputtered in the first quarter. Mercy led 8-7 after one quarter, but increased the lead to 26-20 at the half. Doyle finished the game with nine points and five steals.

"Both teams were playing tough man-to-man defense in the first quarter, and it showed on the scoreboard," said Boughton, whose team defeated Lockport in the Lions' tournament last winter. "Sheila came off the bench in the second quarter and really got things going for us."

Lockport pulled to within two points after three quarters and — after falling behind by eight — tied the game at 42-42 with four minutes to go.

That was Buntich's cue to take over on offense, as the senior scored eight of her team's 10 points down the stretch. The Mercy defense showed the Lions who was king by allowing just four points in the final four minutes.

Maggie Whelehan played another strong game for Mercy, scoring nine points and grabbing 12 rebounds.

The Monarchs were not as severely tested in their two games prior to the win over Lockport. Mercy drubbed host Bishop Kearney, 50-25, in a Private-Parochial League game on Thursday, Jan. 19. Buntich led her team with 19 points.

In a non-league game at Wilson on Wednesday, Jan. 18, Buntich had 13 points and Mary Beth Cleary had 10 as Mercy blasted the Wildcats, 70-45.

The Monarchs play host to Marshall on Thursday, Jan. 26, before traveling to East on Friday.

In Kearney's other two games last week, the Kings fell to host Marshall, 31-23, on Saturday, Jan. 21, and defeated visiting Franklin, 40-27, on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Cardinal Mooney (4-1, 12-2) remained a game behind Mercy in the Private-Parochial League standings after a 46-34 win over Aquinas on Thursday, Jan. 19. Scott Morrison's Cards used a 22-9 fourth quarter to piff the Little Irish away. Dan Bates' AQ team fell to 2-4 in the league.

Over in Section 4 Class C, Jeff Sobkowski has Elmira Notre Dame playing well as the regular season winds down.

The Crusaders blitzed host Trumansburg 54-25 on Saturday, Jan. 21, after dropping a tough 40-39 decision to Sullivan Trail Conference powerhouse Southside on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

In the win over Trumansburg, the Crusaders (3-5 league, 9-7 overall) jumped out to an 18-2 lead after one quarter and led 32-11 at intermission as T-burg couldn't beat ND's full-court pressure. Notre Dame also dominated on the boards, pulling down a season-high 54 rebounds.

Sobkowski was able to rest his starters over the final two quarters, giving his reserves a chance to play. ND led 40-19 heading into the final quarter.

Kathy Lynch led the Crusaders with 18 points. The Crusader point guard also pulled down eight rebounds.

Julie Cox added six points, 10 rebounds and five assists for ND.

Against visiting Southside, the Crusaders used their relentless pressure defense to stay close, but in the end came up a point short.

Notre Dame lost to Southside, 58-43, back in late December.

Jenny Fagan did a masterful job on Southside's leading-scorer Lisa Holleran, who scored just four points. Holleran came into the game averaging 17 points per game.

Fagan scored two points, grabbed six rebounds, dished out seven assists and made three steals. Cox had 12 points and nine rebounds and Lynch scored eight points and collected six rebounds.

With the emergence of Cara Cleveland, who is back after winning a battle with mononucleosis, ND may be tough to beat in the Class C sectionals. Cleveland had eight rebounds in ND's win over T-burg.

"We're looking pretty good for the sectionals," Sobkowski said. "Our defense is starting to play the way I want them to, and our rebounding has helped our offense."



Linda Dow Hayes -- Courier Journal
Tammy Rice of Aquinas (40) blocks a shot by Cardinal Mooney's Margie McGuire (22) during the Thursday night, Jan. 19, game. The Lady Cards claimed a victory over Aquinas, 46-34.

City-Catholic

Continued from page 12

Both Nietopski and Teta are busy trying to schedule opponents for this fall. The move does not affect the two schools in such other sports as soccer, basketball and baseball, in which Kearney and Mooney compete in the City-Catholic League, but Teta did say that he's seeing "the same pattern" occurring in basketball.

The next meeting between school and league officials is in March.

In news affecting another diocesan high

school's football program, the Section 5 football committee has asked for a one-year ban on schools that choose to play in a larger class than the ones dictated by their enrollment.

The move could affect Aquinas, which has traditionally butted helmets with Rochester's best high school football teams. The Little Irish competed among Class AA schools last fall, but may be placed in a smaller Class A bracket if the measure is approved.

The move may cause some schools to "duck" Aquinas because large schools would have much to lose as far as sectional points and credibility by losing to a school in a smaller classification.

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