

DeSales wins Class D, falls in state qualifier

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

After winning its first-ever sectional title in basketball, DeSales reverted to its inconsistent, regular-season form in the Section 5 Class D qualifier at Geneseo State last Monday, Feb. 27, as the Saints were beaten by Avoca, 66-60.

The Saints finished the season with a 17-8 record.

The win puts the undefeated Tigers (25-0) in the state Class D quarterfinals against Franklinville of Section 6 (Buffalo area). That game will be played this Saturday, March 4 at 1 p.m. at the Rochester War Memorial.

Avoca, which led by four points at halftime, broke its game against DeSales open with big plays in the second half by guard Ken Button and 6-5 center Chris Sullivan. Button scored 15 of his game-high 27 points in the second half, and Sullivan poured in 19 of his 23 after intermission. The Avoca center also collected 16 rebounds and four blocked shots.

DeSales shot a dismal 22-for-68 (32 percent) from the field during the game, including 7-for-24 (29 percent) from three-point range. The Saints continued to fire it up from the outside despite a strong performance by 6-5 center Rob McFadden.

The DeSales center finished with 20 points on 7-for-10 shooting from the field.

Avoca made four out of five three-pointers and was 23-for-49 (46 percent) from the field.

The Saints also had trouble from the free-throw line, where they shot 9-for-18. The Tigers converted 16 of 19 from the stripe.

Aaron Mantegna of DeSales finished with 12 points, all coming from three-point range.

The Saints, who were the No. 3 seed in the boys' Section 5 Class D tournament, earned the right to play Avoca by winning their first-ever sectional title in basketball with a resounding 80-47 win over top-seeded Rushford in the championship game at Alfred University last Friday night, Feb. 24.

For DeSales Coach Tony Alvaro, the sectional title was the seventh in his illustrious coaching career. He guided Romulus — where he coached for 27 years — to Class D sectional titles in 1965-1966 and 1968-70, and to the Class C title in 1982.

Alvaro said his Saints played inspired basketball in the sectionals after enduring a disappointing regular season.

"I thought the kids were really into the sectionals. They weren't pleased with

themselves after the regular season," said Alvaro, who stopped short of saying that the sectional title made up for the up-and-down regular season in which many high school basketball aficionados picked DeSales to win the Finger Lakes West title.

The Saints used their height advantage and unrelenting pressure to quickly march over all four of their sectional opponents. The average margin of victory in the sectionals for the Saints was 28 points, and all 12 DeSales players saw quality playing time during each game.

In its 33-point win over Rushford in the championship game, DeSales jumped to a 20-8 lead after the first quarter. The lead ballooned to 35-18 at intermission.

The Saints consistently took high-percentage shots and got the ball inside to McFadden, who scored 20 points against Rushford en route to being named the tour-

ney's Most Valuable Player. Joining McFadden on the all-tourney team were Pedro Rojas, Chris Ike and Peter Parshall. Ike had 13 points and Rojas collected 10 against Rushford.

The sectional title was especially sweet for Rojas, who was a freshman on the 1986 DeSales team which lost to Harley Alledale Columbia in the Class C championship game by one point.

Rojas was a one-man wrecking crew in the semifinals against second-seeded Prattsburg at Alfred last Wednesday, Feb. 22. The DeSales senior poured in 24 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and blocked three Viking shots.

The Saints jumped out to a 14-0 lead and never looked back against Prattsburg (18-5). Ike finished the game with 20 points, while McFadden collected 12 points and 12 rebounds for DeSales.

AQ drops hockey final, 4-2 so Little Irish get RFA next

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

The Aquinas ice hockey team knew the road to the state hockey tournament would eventually lead to a showdown with defending state champion Rome Free Academy, but the Little Irish were hoping to delay that trip by winning the Section 5 hockey final and drawing an easier first-round opponent.

Unfortunately for Aquinas, the Greece Lightning had other ideas. Combining persistent forechecking with excellent goaltending from sophomore Mike Mills, Greece frustrated the Little Irish on the War Memorial ice all afternoon in notching a 4-2 upset of Aquinas on Sunday, Feb. 26.

The game-winning goal came with 1:12 left in the third period after the Little Irish (21-2) had rallied from a 2-0 deficit. Greece's Jamie Bird took an errant Aquinas clear and saw Dave Schumacher moving unchecked toward the AQ goal.

Bird passed the puck to Schumacher, who went to his backhand to beat Little Irish goalie Bob Carello and give Greece a 3-2 lead. A.J. HerrNeckar added an empty-net goal with :04 left to ice the win.

Aquinas and Greece (18-5) were already assured of spots in the state quarterfinals but both teams were trying to avoid playing

Rome Free Academy in a quarterfinal matchup. The Little Irish clinched one spot by winning the regular-season, Division 1 title and Greece the other by beating Pittsford, 7-2 in a Division 1 playoff last Wednesday, Feb. 22.

Now the Little Irish must face the Black Knights, defending state champions and owners of a 47-game winning streak. RFA handed Aquinas an 8-2 loss in last year's state hockey tournament.

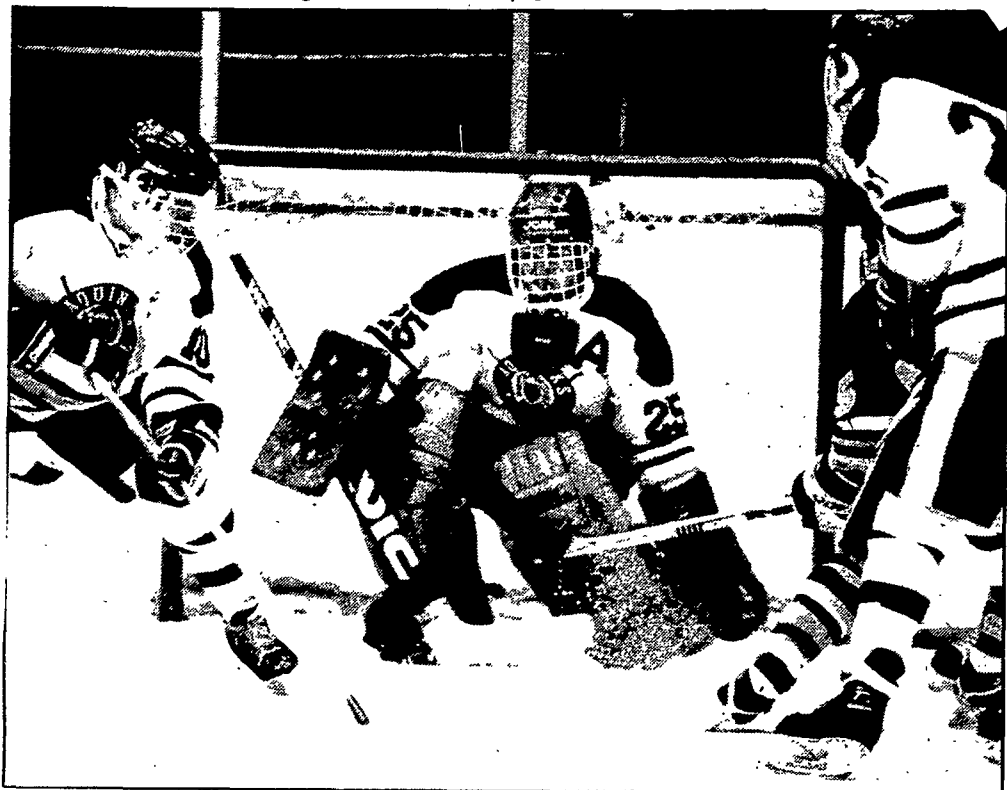
The Little Irish will travel to Utica this Saturday, March 4, to play RFA in the state Division 1 quarterfinal game at the Utica Auditorium. The game is scheduled for 3:30 p.m.

By beating Aquinas, Greece will meet Auburn (12-9) of Section 3 this Saturday in another state Division 1 playoff. That game is scheduled for 5 p.m. at Genesee Valley Park.

Aquinas, which defeated Greece three times during the regular season, couldn't get its high-powered offense in gear until the 11:04 mark of the third period. By that time Greece had a 2-0 lead on two goals by Chris Ford.

Aquinas' leading-scorer Chris Fess, who was also the top goal-scorer in the Monroe County Hockey League, scored with 4:56

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Aquinas goalie Bob Carello turns away a Greece shot during action from the Section 5 hockey final at the Rochester War Memorial.

Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

Aquinas and Notre Dame tumble in championship hoop contests

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

After winning impressively in sectional semifinal games, Aquinas and Elmira Notre Dame came up short in their efforts to extend the post-season to the boys' state basketball tournament.

Aquinas suffered a heartbreaking 57-56 loss in the Section 5 Class BB championship against Greece Arcadia at the War Memorial last Friday, Feb. 24.

Over in Section 4 Class C, sixth-seeded Elmira Notre Dame fell to top-seeded Whitney Point, 55-42, in the championship game at the Binghamton Arena on Saturday, Feb. 25.

For nearly 30 minutes of the Class BB championship against the Titans, it appeared that the fourth-seeded Little Irish were well on their way to their first-ever sectional title and an interdivisional playoff against Class B champion Geneva. Two free throws by Aquinas' Matt Hill with

1:21 left gave Mike Dianetti's team a 54-45 lead.

But the third-seeded Titans clawed their way back into the game via the three-point shot, and sent the stunned Little Irish to defeat when junior Craig Gillis nailed a three-pointer with :04 showing on the clock. Aquinas tried and missed a shot from midcourt to end the game.

Gillis, a reserve guard, made three shots from three-point range in the final 2:30 — including the game winner — to spur the Titans to the Class BB championship. He finished the game with nine points.

Greece Arcadia, which defeated Geneva at the War Memorial on Monday, Feb. 27, will play the winner of the Section 6 Class B championship game between Lackawanna and Pioneer at Geneseo this Saturday, March 4, at 3 p.m.

The Little Irish, who were 4-17 last season, finished their season at 16-8.

Aquinas grabbed a 29-23 halftime lead thanks to four three-pointers by Todd Reynders, who took the winds out of Newark's sails in a Class BB semifinal game last week with his three-point shooting.

The Titans proved to be adept at shooting three-pointers as well, after AQ was able to open up a nine-point lead with a minute left. Matt Bennett cut the margin to 54-48 with 1:06 left on the clock, and Arcadia's Dan Johnson made the team's fourth three-pointer of the final quarter to cut the margin to 56-51 with :49 remaining.

Poor foul shooting then became AQ's nemesis down the stretch, as the Little Irish failed to convert three consecutive one-

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