



Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier
Mercy coach Kathy Boughton celebrates with MVP Julie Buntich after the Monarchs' 61-38 rout of Penfield in the Class A girls' championship game.

Mercy, Mooney take home girls' sectional hoop titles

By Richard A. Kiley
 Staff writer

Our Lady of Mercy and Cardinal Mooney, two intense rivals on the basketball court, may have had a lot to do with each other's winning sectional titles last weekend.

After clashing three-times this season — with all three games won by Mercy in dramatic fashion — the two Private-Parochial League teams took the experience gained from those battles into the sectionals and took home titles.

Top-seeded Mercy (23-1) combined relentless pressure on defense with an amazing shooting performance by Julie Buntich to pound Penfield, 61-38, in the girls' Class A championship game at Fairport last Friday night, Feb. 24.

In the Class BB championship the following night, second-seeded Cardinal Mooney (20-3) overcame a sluggish first half to beat Wayne, 39-35, at Genesee State.

Mercy advances automatically to the Class A Western Regionals against Lockport this Saturday, March 4. The game will be played at Eric Community College North. The Monarchs defeated Lockport, 52-46, in a non-league game Jan. 21.

The Cardinals were scheduled to play Class B champion Penn Yan (22-1) in an interdivisional playoff game at Genesee on Tuesday, Feb. 28. The Lady Mustangs are ranked No. 1 in the latest poll of state Class B girls' basketball teams. Penn Yan won the Class B title with a 57-48 win over second-seeded Wellsville.

Mercy, which won its fourth sectional title in six years, set the tone for its rout of Penfield from the opening tip. Buntich, who finished with 30 points despite playing against a box-and-one defense for most of the night, scored the game's first six points. Two of the senior point guard's baskets were a direct result of steals off of the press.

"I had seen Penfield seven times this season and saw that they would have trouble against the press," said Mercy coach Kathy Boughton. "They panicked under the pressure."

And how. The Monarchs stretched their lead to 10-2 with 3:29 left in the first quarter, before Penfield narrowed the lead to 10-4 on a basket by Rebecca Lynch.

Mercy then closed out the first quarter with a 10-0 run, which featured eight points by Buntich and a jump shot by Catherine Robinson, to give Mercy a 20-4 lead after eight minutes.

The Monarchs — especially Buntich — picked right up where they left off in the first quarter by scoring 10 unanswered points in the second. Buntich had eight of the 10, and added another basket to give her 24 first-quarter points and Mercy a staggering 34-15 lead at halftime.

"It was the best performance I've seen in my years of coaching," said Boughton,

Hoop finals

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and-one situations. Arcadia took advantage of the misses at the stripe, and pulled to within one point after Gillis' second three pointer.

Another errant free throw with :18 seconds left set up Gillis' winning shot from the right corner of the floor.

Three players for Aquinas, which lost the Class AAA to Franklin in 1986, were named to the all-tournament team. Junior Alcindor Coleman, who finished with 12 points against Arcadia, was named the Most Valuable Player. Reynders (17 points) and Paul Kuczewicz (14 points) were also tabbed as all tourney, as were Arcadia's Johnson and Bennett.

For all intents and purposes, Elmira Notre Dame lost the Section 4 Class C championship to Whitney Point (23-0) in the first three minutes of the third quarter. The Crusaders, who only trailed 31-26 at the half, found themselves down by nine points quickly. Whitney Point increased its lead to 50-32 with a 19-6 third quarter.

Notre Dame Coach Mike Johnston, whose team finished 11-13, said his young squad may have been the victim of championship jitters.

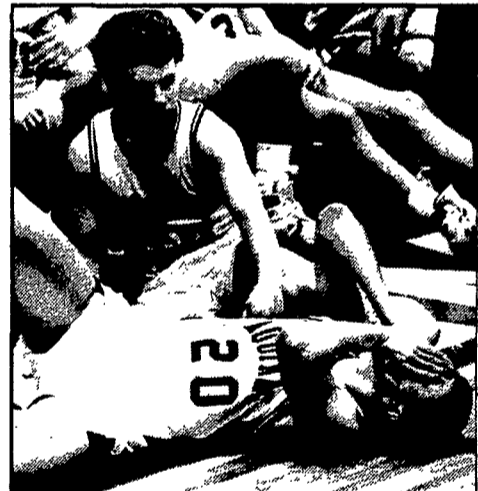
"We didn't play as well as we had the last six to 10 ball games," Johnston said. "But give Whitney Point credit. Their defense really gave us a lot of problems."

That defense took ND out of its offense, which relies heavily on the outside shooting of Mike Bennett and Geoff Woodworth. "They (Whitney Point) were constantly getting their long arms in the way of our shots, and we really didn't make the adjustments in the second half," Johnston said. "We seemed to wait too long to shoot."

The Crusaders were also dealt a serious setback when sophomore point guard Brian Sheehan left the game in the third quarter with a twisted ankle. Mike Ramich came in and did an admirable job running the offense, but the Crusaders would have had a tough time coming back with anyone — including Sheehan — at the point against Whitney Point. The top-seeded club has been winning its games this season by an average of 28.5 points.

Woodworth (11 points) was the only player to reach double figures for ND, which advanced to the championship game with an exciting 77-73 win over No. 2 Trumansburg at Ithaca College Tuesday, Feb. 21.

ND, which handed T-burg three of its five defeats this season, led 17-15 after one quarter and 42-36 at the half. Trumansburg trimmed the lead to 60-55 after three quar-



Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier
Aquinas' Matt Hill (10) consoles Todd Reynders after Arcadia's win.

ters, and had a chance to tie the game in the waning seconds of the fourth quarter.

As Trumansburg tried to set up for the tying basket, however, Woodworth stole the ball and hit a streaking Bob Grosvenor for a layup with :08 left to give ND a four-point lead.

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ND NOTES: The Crusaders will lose Grosvenor, Bill Updyke, Mike Bernatavitz and Rowan Neal to graduation this June, but will return a lot of talent from a team with four sophomores, two juniors and even a freshman ... Johnston hopes the pattern of the last four Section 4 Class C tournaments continues next year. Whitney Point's win marked the fourth consecutive year that the sectional runner-up the previous year won the championship the following season, beginning with Notre Dame's 1986 Class C champion. Whitney Point lost to Tioga in last year's Class C final.

Hockey

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left in the third period on a shot from directly in front of Mills. Teammate Paul Colucci added a power-play goal with 3:28 remaining in the game to tie the contest, 2-2.

Greece then struck twice in the final 1:12 to win the title.

AQ reached the hockey final by beating McQuaid, 4-3, in double overtime on Tuesday, Feb. 21. Fess scored the winning goal at 8:28 of sudden death overtime to propel the Little Irish past the Knights (10-9-1) at Genesee Valley Park.

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