

N.Y. Giants tight end receives pro-life award

ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y. (NC) — New York Giants tight end Mark Bavaro, who says football has strengthened his Catholic faith, received a pro-life award from the Rockville Centre diocese for his participation in Operation Rescue.

Bavaro, who was arrested in an Operation Rescue demonstration in New York City last May, also was honored for his involvement in Athletes for Life.

In an interview with *The Long Island Catholic*, newspaper of the Rockville Cen-

tre diocese, Bavaro credited the spiritual influence of Protestant teammates at his alma mater, the University of Notre Dame, for helping him realize the importance of religion.

In college, Bavaro said, his faith was not as important to him as it is now, although attending a Catholic university made Mass attendance easy — something he said he might not have done otherwise.

But, Bavaro said it was his teammates, particularly the born-again Christians, who

made him think about God's relationship to his life in a different way. It was the first time he had heard athletes say they were playing for Christ.

"I never understood what they meant," Bavaro said. "It always seemed that God didn't get involved in that. What I learned is that what they were saying is right. So my faith has been strengthened by my involvement in football."

When he graduated from Notre Dame, Bavaro found many pro football teams were not interested in him because of a knee injury he suffered, but then the Giants "took a chance on me," he said, adding that he ended up starting for the team his rookie year.

Since then, he has played in the Pro Bowl and in the 1987 Super Bowl, which the Giants won. Bavaro said he is grateful to God for his success. He also credits his faith with helping him through some recent difficulties, including injuries last year which resulted in a below-par season and

poor relations with the news media.

"Through all of it, I had a nice inner peace, not because of my own self-confidence, but because of my faith," he said.

As a football star, Bavaro said, he has a responsibility to be a positive influence for others — something he feels some celebrities are not.

"I think God has put me in this position to do more than play football," Bavaro said. "I feel the responsibility. I don't want to be a negative example. If anything, I want to lead people toward the church."

Toward that end, he speaks at Catholic high schools about "the church and the special place it has in the life of a Catholic." Thank-you notes he receives from teachers and administrators suggest to him that the youths are listening. "The kids seem to be more willing to listen to me," he said, "They feel that the priests and sisters are saying the same things I say because it's their job."

SPORT SHORTS

AQ athletic director cites athletes for sports awards

Pat Connelly, athletic director at Aquinas Institute, recently announced winter sports awards at the Dewey Avenue high school.

From Mike Dianetti's boys basketball team, Paul Kucewicz was named most outstanding player, while Todd Reynders was tabbed most improved and Alcindor Coleman earned the most valuable player award.

Chris Fess and Bob Carello shared most valuable player honors for Rich Gamble's ice hockey team. Brian Flanagan earned the most improved player award and Grady Monks was named rookie of the year. Joe Carello was given the sportsmanship award.

The most outstanding player on Dan Bates' girls basketball team was Amy Reynders. Tammy Rice was tabbed most improved, while Michele Cerra took the most valuable player honor.

Chris MacDonald was named the most outstanding bowler on this year's bowling team. Dave Dobson and Brian Gerhardt were tabbed most improved and most valuable, respectively.

Brendan Doane and Sandy Hofford were the most outstanding performers on this winter's track and field team. Other team members to receive accolades were: Jack Reifsteck and Kim Mason as most valuable runners; Kevin Flanagan and Debbie Hof-

ford as most valuable performers in field events; Tim Rhoads and Lisa Krotz as most improved runners; and Russ Kelly and Tiffany King as most improved performers in field events.

Varsity cheerleaders honored were Rachel McDonnell, most outstanding, Tricia Williams, most improved, and Julie Cianciola, most valuable. Junior varsity cheerleaders cited were Cher Fischette as most improved and Caroline Elliott as most spirited.

ND's Sheehan, Lynch earn first team All STC spots

Two Elmira Notre Dame point guards whose best games should still lie ahead were named to Sullivan Trail Conference All-Star basketball teams last week.

Sophomore point guard Brian Sheehan was voted to the STC all-star boys team. Sheehan was the catalyst for Mike Johnston's Crusaders, who fell to Whitney Point in the Section 4 Class C final. The 5-7 sophomore averaged 16 points, eight assists and four steals per game for ND.

Notre Dame's Geoff Woodworth and Mike Bennett were tabbed for the second team.

Junior point guard Kathy Lynch was named to the STC all-star girls team. Lynch, who was sidelined for the sectionals with a broken hand, nevertheless had an outstanding season, averaging 12 points and 5.5 assists per game.

Julie Cox received honorable mention consideration.

Fisher's Heidt tabbed ECAC player of year

St. John Fisher junior forward Sue Heidt recently was named ECAC Upstate Division III player of the year and was named to the Upstate all star-basketball team.



Freshman center/forward Michelle Skovrinski was tabbed rookie of the year by the Eastern College Athletic Conference.

Phil Kahler's Lady Cardinals finished the season at 28-3.

Heidt, a native of Erie, Pa., was the

nation's leading scorer for much of the season. She ranked second in the latest NCAA poll with a 25.1 average. Heidt was also seventh in the nation in field-goal percentage (55.6) and 15th in free-throw percentage (79.8).

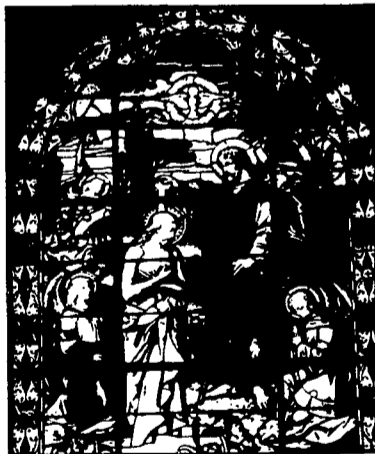
Heidt this season set school records in free-throw percentage (80.2 for her career), most points in a season (753) and most free throws in one season (213).

The announcement marked the second consecutive year that a Lady Cardinal was named ECAC Upstate Division III player of the year. Louise MacDonald won the award last season.

Skovrinski was only the second freshman in 10 years to earn a starting position with the Cardinals. She averaged 8.3 points and 6.6 rebounds per game.

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We received 11 correct entries identifying "rosin" as the kind of bag a pitcher totes to the mound.

The winner was Marie Barney of Rochester.

SPORTS TRIVIA

This week's question:

What number is given to the left fielder in baseball's scoring system?

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Each week, the Catholic Courier, in conjunction with Locker Room Sports will feature a Sports Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon and send it in to the Catholic Courier. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a certificate redeemable for \$10.00 OFF any purchase of \$25.00 or more at Locker Room Sports, 560 W. Ridge Rd. All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

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