

League title up for grabs; ND seeks consistency

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

Last season, Cardinal Mooney High School won the Private-Parochial League title and went on to the Class BB Sectional finals before losing to Pittsford Mendon.

With the closing of Mooney last June, the league title is now up for grabs. Aquinas, Bishop Kearney, Mercy and Nazareth will all field teams capable of winning on any given day. Meanwhile, Elmira Notre Dame looks for consistency in its quest for a post-season berth in Section 4.

Bishop Kearney is off to a fast start with a 4-1-1 record. Last fall, the Kings dropped six of their first eight games before finishing strong and recording a 9-10-1 season. The team lost to Pittsford Sutherland in the sectional quarterfinals.

Last week, Kearney registered its first win in league action this season with a 4-2 victory over Nazareth Academy (0-1). Stephanie Fame, the Kings' leading scorer so far, registered three assists and a goal. Bishop Kearney got off to an early lead, scoring twice in the first half.

But Nazareth scored early in the second half to cut the lead to 2-1. Kearney extended the lead to 3-1, only to have Nazareth score again to close to 3-2. The Kings scored their final goal in the closing seconds.

On Saturday, Sept. 16, Bishop Kearney downed Bloomfield 1-0 on a goal by Michelle Pecor, with an assist by Mandy Darlak.

Second-year coach Leo Teerlink will be looking to such players as Darlak, Pecor and Fame to keep the team winning. "I think we're in any game that we play for the rest of the season," he predicted. "I don't see anybody running over us."

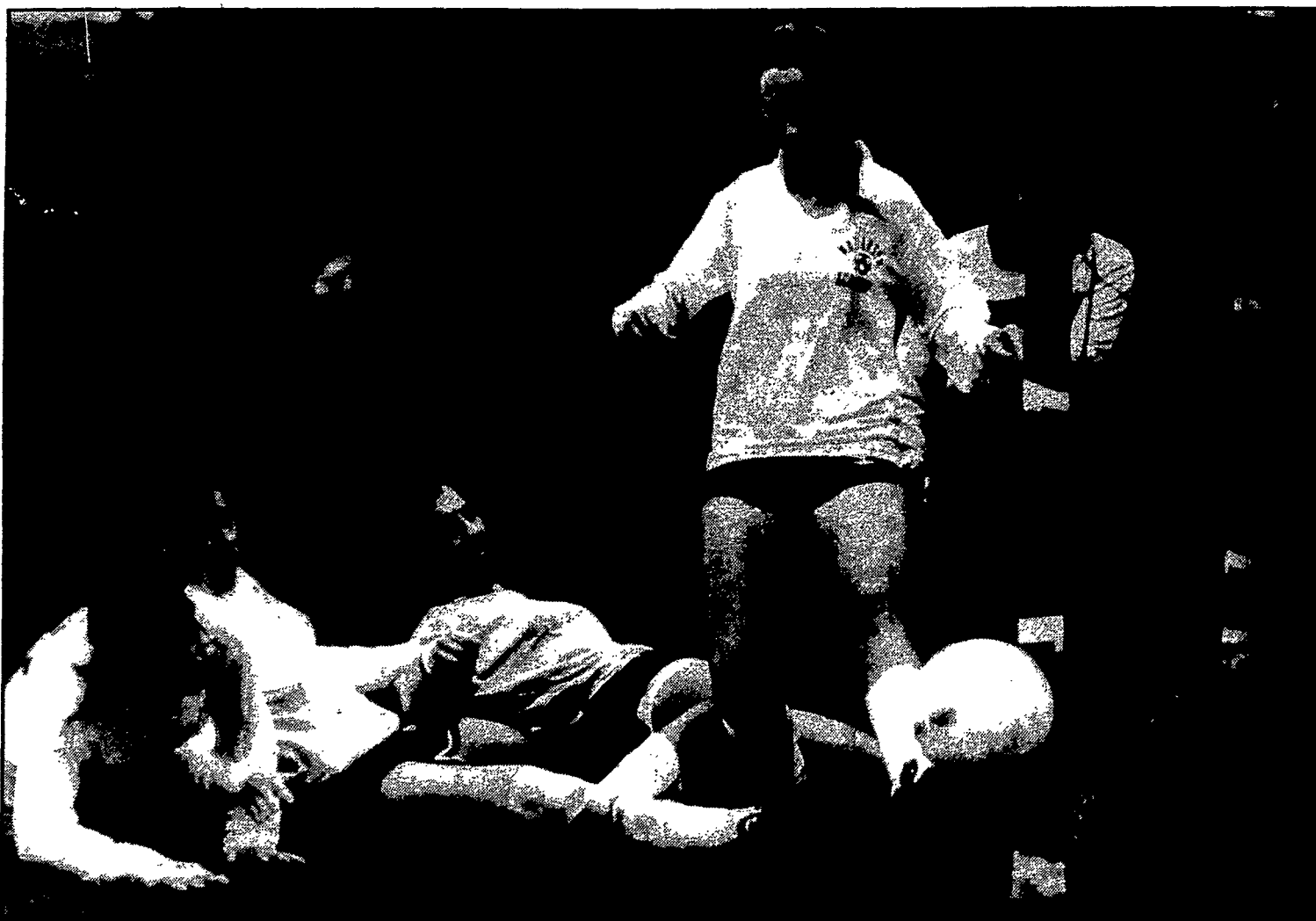
Teerlink's prediction was put to the test Tuesday, Sept. 19, when the Kings faced Aquinas.

The Little Irish, meanwhile, are picking up where they left off last season when Aquinas posted a 13-8 record and advanced to the semifinals in sectional play. The Little Irish (2-2-1) have lost only to powerful Pittsford Sutherland and to league rival Mercy this season.

In the game at Mercy, the Monarchs won the league contest with a minute to play. Aquinas coach Greg McMaster attributed the loss to poor play on the part of his team and a good performance by Mercy. "(Mercy) played better than us," he said. "They beat us to the ball. They were more aggressive than we were."

Aquinas, which played to a scoreless tie against host Gates-Chili the day prior to the Mercy game, traveled to North Rose-Wolcott two days later and posted a convincing 6-0 victory. Senior Kathy Thies, who has led the team in scoring each of her four years on the varsity, scored in the first three minutes of the game. Thies finished the game with three goals.

McMaster said that the league will be tough this season because "everybody is



Becky Bachman of Nazareth clears the ball away from a crowd of players in front of her team's goal. Kearney won the Private-Parochial League game, which was played in a steady downpour.

Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

capable of scoring. It's a real strong league this year."

So far this season, Mercy (3-2) has played three undefeated teams, emerging from those games with two losses and one victory, a 2-1 win over host Victor. But Monarchs' coach Kathy Boughton said even those losses to unbeaten Penfield in overtime during the Penfield Tournament, and to host Hilton, 4-0, proved to her that Mercy can play with any team this season.

"What excites me is our losses are to teams that are really tough," Boughton said. She added that the team's loss to Hilton was deceptive. "We weren't outclassed," she said. "I don't think they had the edge on us talent-wise."

Mercy's one weakness may be its inexperience. Among the starters are five sophomores and two juniors.

But two of those sophomores are Sheila Doyle, the team's leading scorer, and goalie Ellen Lennox. The keeper came to Mercy from Cardinal Mooney.

She (Lennox) was the missing piece in our puzzle," Boughton said.

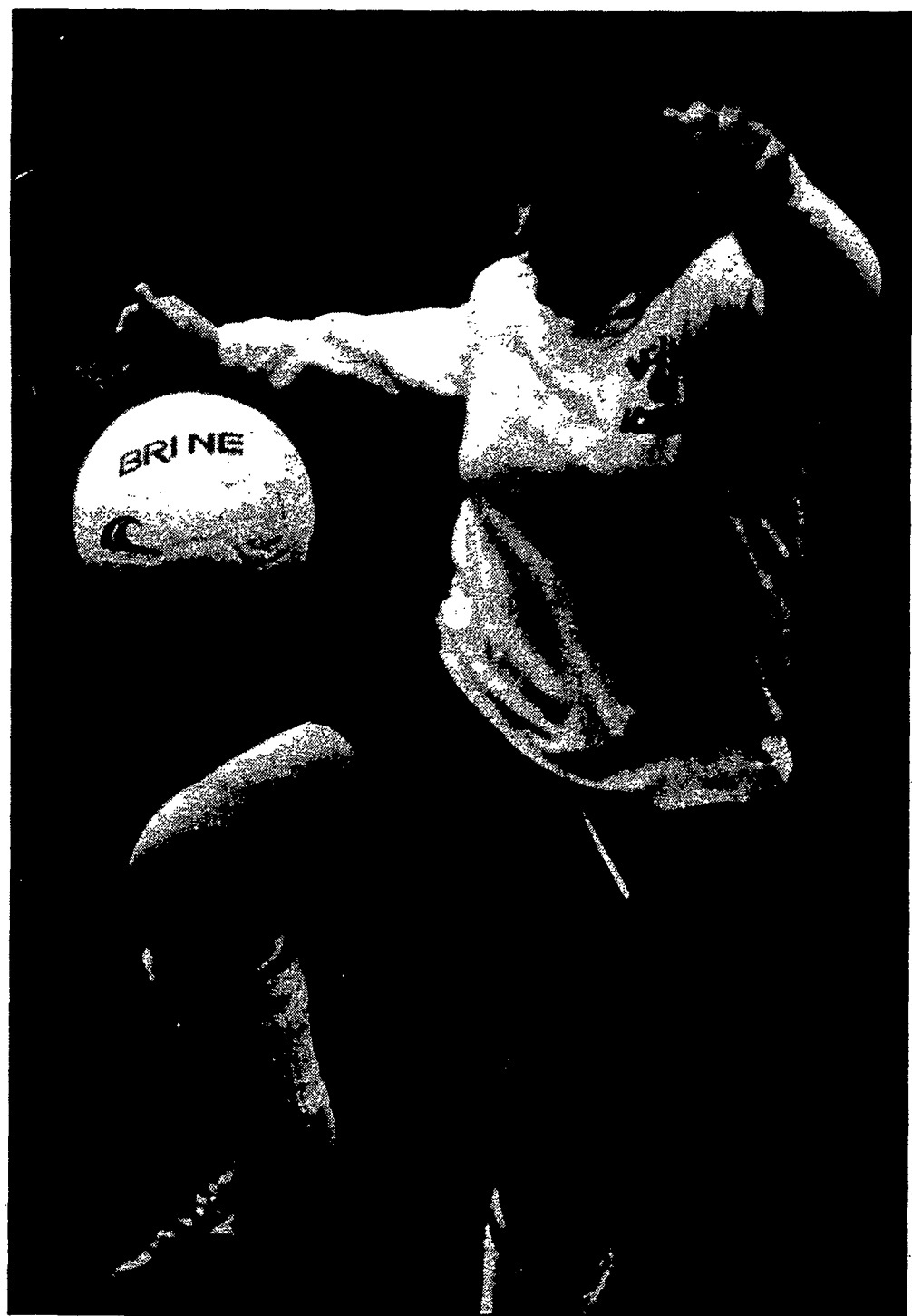
Meanwhile, it was Doyle who scored twice against Aquinas, including the game-winning goal. Doyle plays on a line that includes her sister, Amy — the team's second-leading scorer — and Leslie Hyatt, who scored in the victory over Victor.

On Thursday, Sept. 21, Mercy will play host to a determined Nazareth team that has already served notice that it will be competitive this season.

In its first game of the season, Nazareth, (0-1) kept pace with Bishop Kearney before losing, 4-2. After losing its goalie, senior Rory Cottrell, to an injury on the Kings' second goal, Nazareth trailed 2-0 at the half. Cottrell needed four stitches to close a cut in her eyelid.

Nazareth fought back in the second half, however. Sophomore Liz Sawyko scored to pull Nazareth within one goal (2-1) and again to cut the lead to one (3-2).

Coach Dick Hendricks said his team is extremely balanced with the return of such experienced players as senior co-captains Cottrell and Amy Farrell. The team boasts seven seniors, seven juniors, five sophomores and seven freshmen.



Nazareth senior Melissa Creamer dribbles the ball off her knee as she makes her way toward the Kearney goal during action at LaGrange Field Thursday, Sept. 14.

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