

Defense carries McQuaid; Bennett spurs ND

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

The season's fourth week was a rough one for three diocesan high school football teams. Bishop Kearney fell from the ranks of the undefeated, and DeSales and Aquinas lost according to all-too-familiar scripts.

On the brighter side, McQuaid took sole possession of first place in the City-Catholic League with a win over Edison, and Elmira Notre Dame won with a new-look offense.

McQuaid 10, Edison 0

Host McQuaid (4-0, 4-0) defeated Edison (3-1, 3-1), 10-0, in a key City-Catholic League game on Saturday, Sept. 30.

The two grid teams entered the game undefeated and tied for first place in the City-Catholic League. Both the Knights and Inventors have also earned reputations as tough, defensive squads.

The game opened with a surprise offensive play, however. Edison tried a halfback option pass that caught the McQuaid defense off guard. But the Knights' Jamal Dunbar, who was playing free safety, managed to save a touchdown by catching the Edison receiver at the McQuaid 25.

Dunbar's play proved crucial as the Inventors were unable to punch the ball in from there.

Until the game's closing moments, the only points in the game came on Jim Flanagan's 36-yard field goal with 2:19 left in the first quarter.

McQuaid clung to its 3-0 lead into the fourth quarter, when Knights' coach Tom Sprague decided to keep the ball on the ground and just eat up the clock. The



McQuaid's Bernie Lipka (46) is tackled by a host of Edison players during the City-Catholic League game on Saturday, Sept. 30.

Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

Knights controlled the ball for all but three offensive plays in the quarter, and scored the only touchdown of the day on a two-yard plunge by Bernie Lipka with just two seconds to play. The score followed a 72-yard drive that consumed the final 8:33 off the clock.

The Knights compiled 220 yards of

offense, with Lipka accounting for 72 yards on 18 carries and Dunbar running for 69 yards on 15 carries.

McQuaid will not get a breather this Saturday. The Knights will travel to Buffalo to face another team that boasts a strong defense, St. Joseph's.

ND 19, Newark Valley 6

Most coaches blessed with a quarterback who earned all-league honors last season — and who was coming off his best offensive performance of the season — would be content to stand pat.

But not Notre Dame's Mike D'Aloisio.

On Saturday, Sept. 30, D'Aloisio allowed Crusader quarterback Mike Bennett — who last week threw for two touchdowns and ran for two more — to run the offense for the first two offensive series against Newark Valley. But on the last play of a scoreless first quarter, he switched Bennett to fullback and inserted sophomore Brion Woodworth.

Bennett responded to his coach's move by churning out 142 yards on 17 carries and scoring a one-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter. In addition to Bennett, Geoff Woodworth scored two touchdowns in the second quarter. Woodworth gained 101 yards on 12 carries.

For the game, Notre Dame finished with 249 yards on the ground and 86 though the air for 345 yards in total offense. Meanwhile, the Notre Dame defense held Newark Valley to 179 total yards.

This Friday, Notre Dame will play host to league rival Whitney Point.

Midlakes 12, Kearney 6

Kearney (2-1-1) traveled to Midlakes on Saturday, Sept. 30, to lock horns with one of the top Class B teams in the state, and the Kings (2-1-1) came away 12-6 losers.

The game was a tight defensive battle, as Kearney's ground game — which had been averaging more than 200 yards a game — was held to only 125 yards. Kearney's

offense suffered a serious blow in the third quarter when Lamin Massaquoi, who had been averaging better than 100 yards his first three games, sprained his ankle. He finished with 52 yards on nine carries.

Kearney mustered 211 yards in total offense for the game.

The Kings had opportunities to score, but they hurt themselves with turnovers. One fumble occurred on the three-yard line in the waning minutes of the second quarter, and another came on the five-yard line in the third quarter.

The game ended with a potential tying touchdown pass falling just beyond the reach of Kearney's Shawn Rhodes.

The Kings' lone score came on an 18-yard pass from Dave Armanini to Marty Alexander in the third quarter.

With the exception of a 70-yard drive in the first quarter and a 60-yard drive at the end of the third quarter, Kearney's defense kept Midlakes at bay most of the game.

The Kings held Screaming Eagles running back Doug Middlebrook, who gained 215 yards the previous week, to just 77 yards on 14 carries.

Kearney will attempt to regain its scoring when the Kings travel to Canisius this Saturday, Oct. 7.

Canisteo 25, DeSales 14

DeSales' players must feel as if they're trapped in a rerun of some bad situation comedy. Perhaps a comedy of errors would be more accurate.

Turnovers once again hampered the Saints' offense, leading to a 25-14 non-league loss at Canisteo on Saturday, Sept. 30.

The way the game began, it appeared the Saints (1-3) were going to break away from the old script. They led 7-0 after a mistake-free first half, thanks to John Connor's six-yard touchdown run in the second quarter.

But in the third quarter, DeSales fumbled a punt at its own eight-yard line to allow Canisteo an easy score to cut the lead to 7-6. The Saints' Chris Ike, who finished the day with 115 yards on 12 carries, then responded with a 75-yard touchdown run to increase the lead to 14-6.

Yet another fumbled punt inside the DeSales 20, however, allowed Canisteo to score again and cut the lead to 14-12 at the end of the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, two more DeSales miscues — a blocked punt and an interception — enabled Canisteo to score 13 unanswered points to put the game out of reach.

The Saints finished with five turnovers against Canisteo.

Unless the Saints are able to stop committing errors, they could be in for a long afternoon this Saturday as they play host to undefeated and state-ranked Clyde-Savannah.

Buf. St. Joe's 40, Aquinas 8

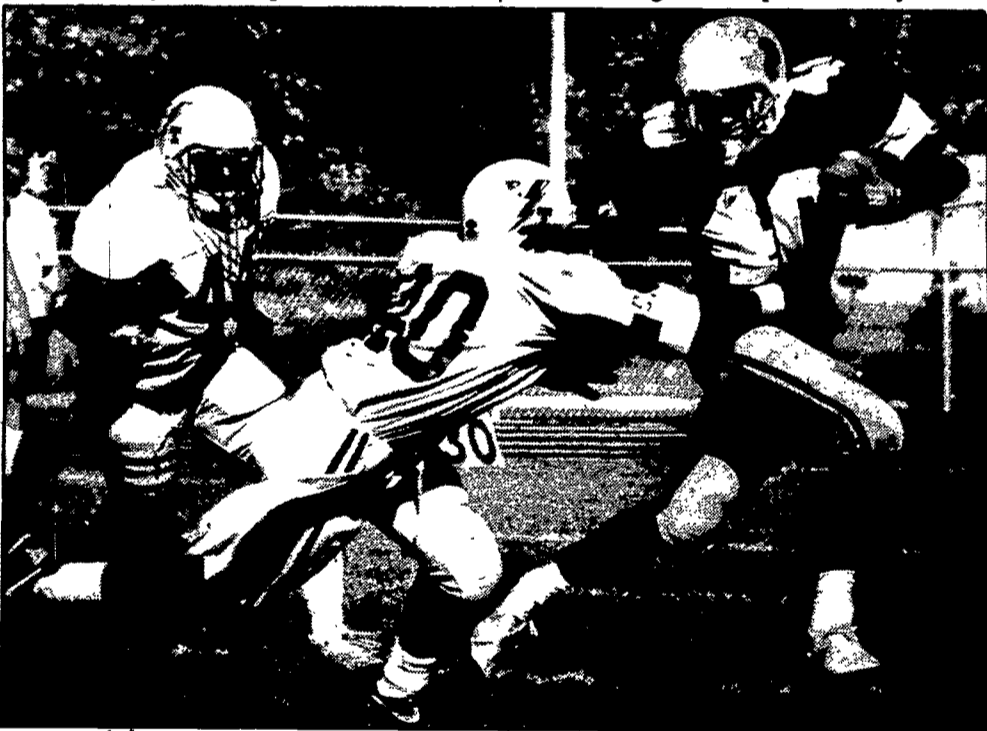
Aquinas (1-0-1, 1-2-1) is another team in search of scoring. For the third consecutive week, the Little Irish offense could only put six points on the board as they fell to powerful St. Joseph's of Buffalo, 40-8.

St. Joseph's unleashed a blitzing defense that produced several sacks and kept Aquinas' offense off balance all day. The only scoring by the Little Irish came on a safety in the first quarter, and a 52-yard touchdown pass from Joseph Bianchi to Greg Pelletier with 13 seconds left in the second quarter. The touchdown pulled Aquinas to within 13-8 at the half.

In the second half, St. Joseph's offense was able to move the ball easily against the usually strong Aquinas defense, scoring 27 unanswered points.

"We had them well-scouted," Aquinas coach Bob D'Ettore said. "We knew every play that they scored on. We just couldn't stop them."

Aquinas will probably find little relief at home this Saturday, Oct. 7, when it faces another strong team in Edison.



Jamal Dunbar tries to elude the grasp of an Edison defender.

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