

Multitude of size, speed for diocesan hoop teams

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

If the five diocesan boys' basketball teams formed their own league this season, one name they could have considered was the Big Tree Conference.

DeSales, McQuaid and Elmira Notre Dame all boast players 6-6 or taller.

And while Aquinas and Bishop Kearney will rely on "shorter" players — if 6-4 can be considered short — they make up in physical bulk and numbers what they lack in height.

Barring injuries to key players, this season could prove one of the most successful ever for diocesan boys' teams, as all five schools have legitimate shots at sectional crowns.

Last season, DeSales rode the shoulders of 6-6 center Robert McFadden to the Sectional Class D title.

The junior center is back, and Coach Tony Alvaro is looking to his big man to help the Saints return to the finals. But first, DeSales must concentrate on winning the title in the rugged Finger Lakes West League.

Along with McFadden, the Saints return 6-4 senior forward Pat Mooney and 6-1 senior forward Jeff Taney, giving the Saints a formidable front line.

Joining the trio of returning starters will be 6-0 junior guard Eddie Marsteiner and 5-8 senior guard Chris Ike.

Alvaro said his team has good size and speed. Also, all his players are excellent shooters.

The main problem for Alvaro is that he only has seven players on the varsity roster. Consequently, 6-0 freshman guard Todd Hardy and 5-8 junior guard Jim McDermott will see plenty of playing time, as Alvaro hopes his players can stay out of foul trouble and away from injuries.

DeSales began its season with a 62-49 victory over host South Seneca Dec. 1. McFadden overcame early foul trouble to lead the Saints with 27 points. Mooney ad-

ded 10 points.

Another plus for the Saints this season is that 6-10 center Jason McKinney has left Red Jacket.

McQuaid is happy about Red Jacket's loss, too.

The 230-pound junior center transferred to the all boys' school on Clinton Avenue, and will help ease the loss of all-star center Drew Henderson.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, McKinney poured in 21 points, collected 16 rebounds and blocked 10 shots in McQuaid's 80-63 win over visiting St. John the Baptist of Long Island — the third-ranked team in the state.

That performance came one night after an 11-point, 11-rebound performance against Nicholson Catholic at McQuaid on Dec. 1. The Knights easily downed the Canadian team 88-48.

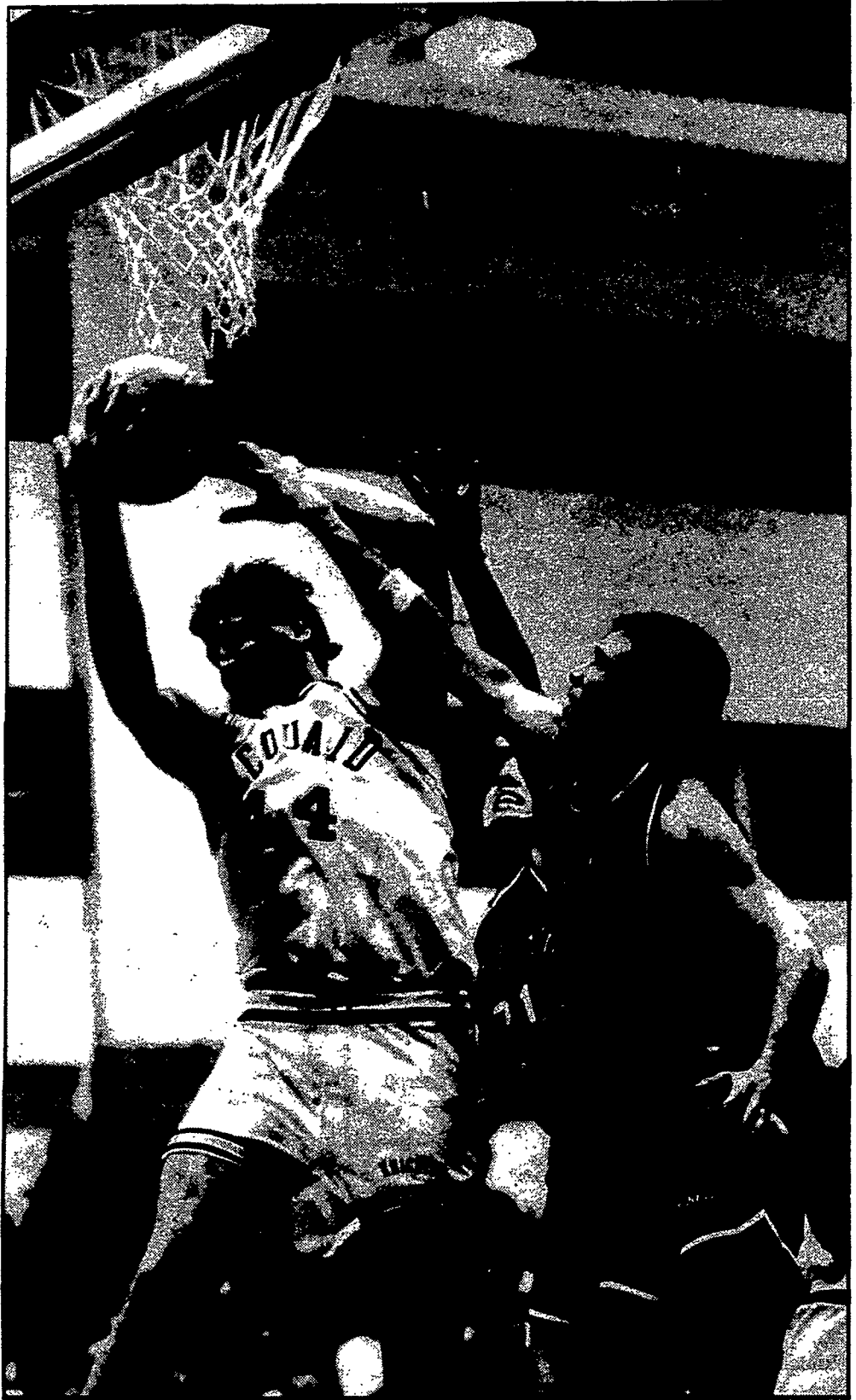
But McQuaid is not a one-man team. Jay Moore, a 6-5 senior forward, scored 16 points against Nicholson and 23 more against St. John's. Moore also helped the Knights control the boards in both games.

In addition to directing the multi-faceted McQuaid attack and using his quickness to steal the ball repeatedly, senior point guard Kevin Brown tossed in 20 points Friday night and 12 on Saturday.

The Knights will also start 6-3 junior forward Mike Montesano and 6-0 senior forward Sam Owens. Key reserves will include Jeff Reese, a 6-4 junior forward; Kevin Savage, a 6-4 senior transfer from Chicago; and 6-0 junior guard Ted Naylor.

McQuaid will not lack for size or scoring punch this season, but — except for Brown — the team lacks speed. Coach Joe Marchese said the lack of speed could hurt the Knights' defense, particularly against some of the faster city schools.

According to Marchese, East is the team to beat in the City-Catholic League. The Knights and the Orientals will be grouped with Marshall and Edison in the large-school division, while Bishop Kearney, Aquinas, Franklin and Wilson make up the



Babette G. Augustin

McQuaid center Jason McKinney (left) rips down one of his 16 rebounds against visiting St. John the Baptist of Long Island. The Knights trounced St. John's 80-63 Saturday, Dec. 2.

small-school division. The Knights will face East twice during the regular season — Dec. 22 at McQuaid and Feb. 13 at East — and the two teams may see each other again in sectional play.

In Section 4, Notre Dame appears poised for another run at the sectional title this season. Last year, the Crusaders lost in the Class C finals to Whitney Point, 55-42.

The Crusaders lost such key players as Bob Grosvenor, Bill Updyke, Mike Bernatavitz and Rowan Neal to graduation.

But first-year coach Mike D'Aloisio already has the ingredients for a very good team with the likes of returners such as 5-8 point guard Brian Sheehan, 5-10 forward Mike Bennett, 5-8 guard Geoff Woodworth, 6-0 forward Robert Agan, 6-1 center/forward Lee Heyward and 5-10 guard Mike Ramich.

The addition of 6-7 center Rick Shaw, a junior transfer from Horseheads, makes the Crusaders a team to be reckoned with in the Sullivan Trail Conference.

Notre Dame began its season with three wins, taking the Thomas A. Edison Tip Off Classic with a an 89-64 trouncing of Lans-

ing on Nov. 24, and a convincing 73-57 victory over host Edison on Nov. 25 in the championship game. Geoff Woodworth was voted the tournament's Most Valuable Player, and Shaw was named to the All-Tournament team.

And in their regular season opener Nov. 30, the Crusaders used a second half surge to pull away from visiting Dryden, 84-70.

Shaw had 17 rebounds to go along with 15 points. Sheehan led the team with 27 points, and Bennett added 19.

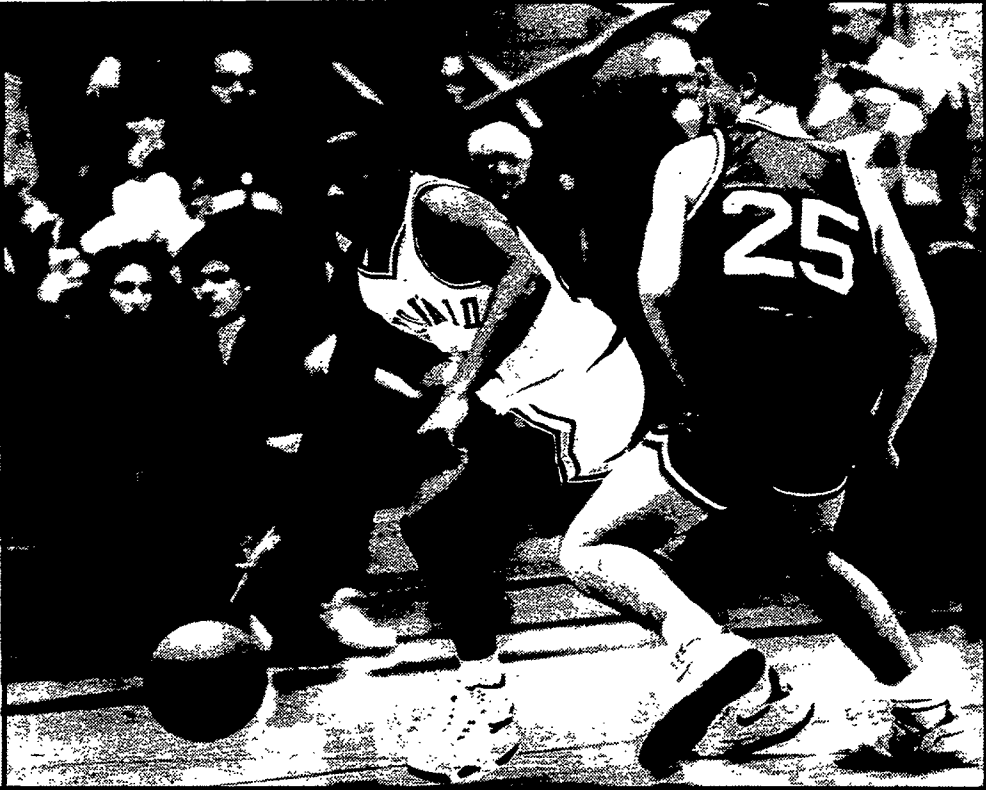
D'Aloisio said that one of his team's strengths is its speed, which enables the Crusaders to play a hustling, opportunistic style of defense.

But the Crusaders are not without problems. With the exception of Shaw, no player stands taller than 6-1.

In addition, two key players have already been sidelined by injuries.

Agan broke his wrist against Lansing, and is out for an indefinite period of time. Meanwhile, Heyward missed the Dryden game because of back problems possibly due to a slipped disc. D'Aloisio was not

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In McQuaid's first two games point guard Kevin Brown (left) combined adept ball handling, solid defense and a deft scoring touch to complement the Knights' strong inside game.

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