

Little Irish focus on goal to win hockey title

Last season, the Aquinas hockey team was tabbed one of the favorites to win the Class A sectional title. The Little Irish fell short, but still managed to compile a 21-3 record before they were eliminated in the quarterfinals of the state tournament.

This season, AQ has already suffered more losses than last year's team after getting off to a 9-4 start. But coach Dave Montgomery still has a clear goal.

"Our goal is to win the sectionals," Montgomery declared.

The team began the season without such star players as leading-scorer Chris Fess



Dave Perrotta scored a goal each period to record a hat trick during Kearney's win over Brockport.

and goalie Bob Carello, both of whom decided to play for Niagara Scenic, a junior hockey team.

Fortunately for Aquinas, however, Jeff Nuccitelli opted to play for the Little Irish again this season. He is currently tied for the league lead in scoring with teammate Dave Perrotta. Both players, who play right wing on separate lines, have 28 points.

After a rough start that included two losses to league-leading Irondequoit, Mont-



Aquinas' Jeff Nuccitelli (right) fires the puck past Brockport's Geoff Church (21) and goalie Rob McCall to score a second-period goal during the Little Irish's 6-3 win Saturday, Jan. 13 at Genesee Valley Ice Rink. Nuccitelli is tied with teammate Dave Perrotta as the league's scoring leaders with 28 points.

gomery said the team is starting to come into its own.

This past week, the Little Irish handed Fairport a 5-1 loss at Lakeshore Rinks on Jan. 10, and bounced Brockport — ranked fourth in the state Division II poll — 6-3 at Genesee Valley Ice Rink on Jan. 13.

Fairport (6-3-1) managed to keep the game close, trailing only 2-1 going into the third period. But Aquinas outshot the Raiders 14-5 in the final period and scored three unanswered goals for the win.

Brad Saunders and Jeremy Giordano each had a goal and two assists.

Against Brockport (8-3), Perrotta notched a hat trick. His first goal pulled Aquinas even, 1-1, in the first period. He later broke the tie in the second period with his next goal.

Nuccitelli upped the lead to 3-1 with a goal at the 10:26 mark. Chris Schultz and Saunders scored short-handed goals just nine seconds apart — at 13:30 and 13:39 —

to up the lead to 5-1 in the period.

Perrotta earned the hat trick on a power-play goal in the third period.

Aquinas outshot Brockport in the second period, 22-4, and 40-24 for the game. Little Irish goalie Brian Kelly stopped 21 shots.

The Little Irish were scheduled to face off against Gates-Chili (6-4-1) at Lakeshore on Jan. 17.

— Lee Strong

Monarchs

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ing its record to 5-4 after registering wins over league-rivals Romulus 46-33 (Jan. 9) and Red Jacket 55-39 (Jan. 11.)

The Saints (3-2 league) took control of the game against host Romulus (0-4, 1-5) in the first quarter, building a 16-8 lead.

Danielle Boncaro hit eight of 11 foul shots and led the Saints with 14 points. Krista DeVaney chipped in 12 points, and Jeneane Donahue added 10 points while snagging 15 boards.

Against Red Jacket, the Saints again got off to a good start, building an 18-9 first-

quarter lead.

Boncaro again took scoring honors, this time with 21 points. Donahue accounted for 17 points and 9 rebounds.

Coach Steve Muzzi attributes his team's success after an 0-3 start to a change in defensive philosophy. The team began the season in a zone, he explained, but after a few games he switched them to a man-to-man. "It made them more aggressive," the coach said.

DeSales was scheduled to host Naples Jan. 16.

Aquinas rebounded from its loss to Bishop Kearney with an easy 41-28 win over Marshall on Jan. 13.

The Little Irish were in control of the game from the outset, as every player on the team scored by game's end. Amy Reynders was high scorer with 11 points.

In Elmira, Notre Dame fell out of a tie for first place after losing to host Horseheads (6-0, 9-2) 52-46 on Jan. 12.

The Crusaders (6-1, 12-3) took an early 6-2 lead, but Horseheads stormed back and scored the next 13 points on its way to 25-16 edge at the half.

Notre Dame managed to pull within four points with 1:30 remaining in the game, but an intentional foul call against the Crusaders gave Horseheads the ball and the

win.

Jenny Fagan paced the Crusaders with 13 points, and Kathy Lynch added 12. Both registered five assists. Cara Cleveland scored 9 points, and grabbed 16 rebounds.

The Crusaders had better luck earlier in the week, pulling out a 34-30 win at home over Elmira Free Academy (5-7).

The defensive struggle wasn't decided until the final 30 seconds, when Lynch (13 points) and Fagan (6 points) each connected on two free throws.

Notre Dame was slated to travel to Corning East on Jan. 16.

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