



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

Aquinas' Mark Simmons (on the ice) and Tim Tarantello (4) battle Oswego's Adam Michalski (11) for the puck during the Irish's 8-3 win in the state Class A quarterfinals at Brockport State March 3. AQ lost 6-4 to Albany Academy in the semifinals March 10 at the Utica War Memorial, but still recorded the best season ever by an Irish hockey squad.

Albany edges Aquinas in state hockey semis

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Aquinas hockey team appeared ready to continue its string of firsts in the Class A state semifinals against Albany Academy on Saturday, March 10.

The Little Irish — the first Aquinas squad to ever reach the state semifinals — took a 2-0 lead in the first period against the state's top-ranked Class A team at Utica Memorial Auditorium.

A win would have advanced Aquinas to the state finals — an accomplishment no other Section 5 hockey team had ever achieved.

Albany Academy (27-2) ended those hopes, however, with a four-goal outburst in the second period. The Section 2 champion held on to beat Aquinas, 6-4.

The Irish began the scoring in the first period with Dave Perotta's goal at the 10:55 mark. Jeff Nuccitelli — the career scoring leader at AQ — netted the first of his three goals at 12:21 to increase the Aquinas lead to 2-0. The lead held up until the end of the period, although Albany outshot Aquinas 8-4.

Albany — which later lost 1-0 in triple overtime against West Genesee (Section 3) in the state final — scored two quick goals in first four minutes of the second period to tie the score, and later took its first lead of the game at the 7:32 mark.

Little Irish Coach Dave Montgomery noted that the go-ahead goal came just as two of his players serving penalties stepped back onto the ice.

Albany Academy upped the lead to 4-2 later in the second period, then increased the advantage to 5-2 early in the third period.

But the Irish continued to fight back, and Nuccitelli scored his second goal of the game to cut the lead to 5-3 with two minutes left in the third period.

The Aquinas senior registered the hat trick with 13 seconds left to pull the Little Irish to within one. Albany added an empty-net goal with six seconds left for the final margin.

"I was happy with the effort," Montgomery said, adding that "with three minutes to go, down by three goals, they never gave up."

Albany outshot the Irish 32-22 for the game. AQ goalie Brian Kelly recorded 26 saves. Jason Mucha had three assists.

The loss ended the best hockey season ever at Aquinas. Next year may be even better, with only four seniors on the roster and many players returning.

Nuccitelli will be one of the key losses, but this past season's leading scorer, Perotta, may also leave the squad to play junior hockey. If he returns, Perotta could threaten Nuccitelli's career scoring record.

"If we can get everyone else back next year, we should be a powerful team," Montgomery predicted.

ND falls in state 'C' quarterfinals, 70-69

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ELMIRA — The basketball season for Elmira Notre Dame came down to 25 seconds.

With just 25 seconds left in the fourth quarter of their state quarterfinal game against Syracuse Westhill (Section 3) on Saturday, March 10, the Crusaders were leading, 66-65, at Colgate University in Hamilton. Notre Dame only had to hold the lead for those final seconds to qualify for the state Class C Final Four in Glens Falls.

But the game turned when the Crusaders took a shot and missed. Westhill then grabbed the rebound and hit a three-pointer to go up 68-66 with 18 seconds remaining on the clock.

A subsequent foul put Westhill at the line, and two foul shots later the score was 70-66. A three-point shot from midcourt by Mike Bennett (22 points) with two seconds left provided the final score of 70-69.

"We had a chance to win it," Notre Dame Coach Mike D'Aloisio said. "They (Westhill) executed better in the last four minutes."

During the last four minutes, the Crusaders (17-8) squandered a seven point lead in a game marked by spurts for both teams.

The contest opened with Westhill (22-3) taking an 18-6 lead in the first quarter. The Crusaders battled back to cut the lead to 31-30 at the half. In the second half, the lead changed hands several times until the

Warriors iced the contest in the final seconds.

"There was a lot of excellent defense," D'Aloisio observed. "It came down to who had the ball last."

The two teams were evenly matched, the first-year coach said. He attributed the loss to Westhill's balance, noting that all five of the Warriors' starters scored in double figures.

In addition to Bennett, Geoff Woodworth (19 points) and point guard Brian Sheehan (12 points) also hit double figures.

D'Aloisio acknowledged that he can take comfort in knowing that all five starters for Notre Dame will be back next season. The loss, he added, "gives us something to shoot for next year."

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SPORTSHORTS

Boughton, Alvaro tabbed top coaches in Section 5

Section 5 basketball officials recently named Our Lady of Mercy's Kathy Boughton and DeSales' Tony Alvaro Coaches of the Year in their respective basketball classes.
Boughton, who has accrued a 97-15 record and two sectional titles in five seasons at Mercy, was recognized as the top coach in girls' Class A. Boughton guided the Monarchs to a 20-2 record this season, which ended with a loss to Brockport in the sectional finals.
Alvaro was named the top coach in boys' Class D, marking the fifth time he has been honored as Coach of the Year by his peers. Alvaro has recorded more than 400 wins as a high school coach and his teams have won seven sectional titles. DeSales won the Class D crown in 1989.
Alvaro guided the Saints to a 16-6 record this season. The Saints lost in the Class D semifinals against Prattsburg.

Fisher's Heidt named 'Sportswoman of 1989'

ROCHESTER — Sue Heidt, a senior forward for the St. John Fisher College women's basketball team, has been named College Sportswoman of 1989 by the Rochester Press-Radio Club and radio station WVOR (FM 100).
As a junior, Heidt was named to the Kodak and American Women's Sports Federation All-America teams, and Upstate Division III Player of the Year by the Eastern College Athletic Conference.
This season, Heidt leads the Cardinals (30-1) in scoring, rebounding and steals. St. John Fisher is scheduled to play in the NCAA Division III Final Four this coming weekend.