

McMail's pitching sends ND into state tournament

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

The Notre Dame girls' softball team capped an up-and-down regular season by beating Seton Catholic, 1-0, in the Section 4 Class C title game in Elmira on Saturday, June 2. ND now advances to the state tournament.

The Crusaders' lone run — and their only three hits — came in the first inning of what proved to be a pitchers' duel.

Melanie Crisco reached base with a single. Lisa Punzo advanced her to second with a sacrifice fly, before Bobbi Jo McMail — who also pitched for ND — drove Crisco home with a single. McMail and Becky Sherman, who also singled, successfully executed a double steal, but were unable to score as Seton's pitcher put a clamp on the Crusaders' bats.

But McMail, who pitched Notre Dame to all four of its post-season wins, was in control most of the way against Seton (13-11). The ND pitcher scattered two hits through the first six innings.

In the bottom of the seventh, however, Seton finally managed to get to McMail. But after putting together three hits, Seton left runners stranded on second and third.

McMail allowed only one run throughout the sectionals. Along the way, she pitched a no-hitter, a one-hitter, and a two-hitter to go along with the five-hitter in the title game.

"The key to our success has got to be Bobbi Jo," coach Dave Potter said. "(She) kept us in all the games until we could get some runs."

The Crusaders' defense backed McMail

by committing only one error in the four games.

In a semifinal win May 31, McMail tossed a two-hitter as the Crusaders downed Harpursville (15-5), 7-1, in Moravia.

Punzo, who is only a freshman, drove in a run in the second inning to tie the game at 1-1, and Heidi Hodder — another freshman brought up from the jayvee team for the sectionals — drove in the winning run in the third inning.

For the game, the Crusaders recorded eight hits. Kathy Lynch went 2-for-4 and drove in a run.

On May 30, McMail worked her way out of a bases-loaded jam in the first inning to pitch a one-hitter in a 3-0 win over Greene (16-3). The Crusaders scored all the runs they would need on a two-run single by Heather Hanrahan in the second inning. Kelly Fitzgerald drove home the third run in the same inning.

Notre Dame was scheduled to play June 5 in Oneida against the Section 3 Class C champion.

In post-season play from Section 5, none of the teams could match Notre Dame's success as Nazareth, Aquinas, Bishop Kearney and DeSales all fell in first-round games.

The most surprising — and perhaps most controversial — loss was second-seeded Nazareth's 6-5 setback on May 30 against 15th-seeded Midlakes (11-9) in a Class A game played at Nazareth.

The Lasers (15-4) entered the tournament with high hopes after winning their first Private-Parochial League title in dominating fashion.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Notre Dame assistant coach Bruce McMail gives Heather Hanrahan a congratulatory hug after the Crusaders beat Harpursville, 7-1, May 31 to advance to the Section 4 Class C title game June 2. Notre Dame defeated Seton Catholic, 1-0.

But the Screaming Eagles were not intimidated, taking an early 3-0 lead before Nazareth broke through for a single run in the fourth inning. Midlakes then extended its lead to 6-1 after six innings.

Nazareth mounted a seventh-inning rally, scoring four runs to pull within 6-5 with just one out and two runners on base. But on a bunt play down the third base line, the Midlakes third baseman — while trying to get to the ball — ran into Amy Farrell, who was trying to score from third. The umpire ruled that Farrell had interfered with the play, and called her out.

Nazareth coach Dave Pisano said he tried to argue the call, but could not get it reversed. The final out came on a strike-out.

The loss ruined another strong pitching performance by sophomore Lenore Suraci,

who struck out five and allowed 10 hits. She and Farrell also went 3-for-3 at the plate.

Nazareth had eight hits in the game. Aquinas (7-11) squeezed into the Class A tournament as the 16th seed, but top-seeded and host Wilson made sure the Little Irish's stay was short by winning 17-14 on May 30.

Aquinas did not fall easily, however. The Irish jumped out to an early 7-0 lead in the first two innings. In the bottom of the second, Wilson (13-1) scored six runs thanks to four walks and timely hits.

The Irish upped the score to 10-6 in the third inning, but Wilson came back in its half of the third. Taking advantage of five walks, the Wildcats scored eight runs to take the lead for good. Aquinas mounted a late rally, scoring three runs in the top of the seventh, but fell short.

For the game, Aquinas pitchers allowed 14 walks. According to coach Carol Jones, 10 of Wilson's 17 runs were the result of walks.

The Irish outit the Wildcats 13-9. Patty Heydens went 4-for-5 and Stacie Pullinzi had three hits in five at bats to lead Aquinas.

Thirteenth-seeded Bishop Kearney (10-10) was pounded by fourth-seeded and host Batavia (15-5) 17-8 on May 30.

The Blue Devils pounded out 15 hits — including five doubles and two triples — prompting Kings' coach Paul Forte to observe, "They were probably the best hitting team we faced all year."

Batavia scored four runs in the first inning, three in the second, and built a 12-0 lead before Kearney hitters scored six runs in the fourth inning. Michelle Pinckney provided the key hit in the fourth inning, smacking a three-run triple.

The Kings ended the game with seven hits.

In Class D action, sixth-seeded DeSales (9-7) was upset by 11th-seeded Belfast (9-6) 5-2 on May 30 at Cohocton.

The game was a pitching duel, as Krista DeVaney allowed just four hits and struck out seven. Belfast pitchers held the Saints to three hits — all singles.

Belfast scored two runs in the first to go up 2-0, but DeSales came back to knot the score at 2-2 in the fourth inning. The Saints capitalized on two walks, three stolen bases, an RBI single by Devaney, and a sacrifice fly by Megan Jenkins.

In the fifth inning, however, the Bulldogs scored two runs on a throwing error to break the tie.

Bike-for-Breath planned

ROCHESTER — The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation has scheduled its annual Bike-for-Breath for June 9 at four sites in Monroe County. The four venues are Greece Athena High School (three miles), Monroe Community College (two miles), Penfield Community Center (three miles) and along the Lake Ontario State Parkway in Greece (a 25-mile route for adults only).

For information, call the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation at 716/546-5890.

McQ's relay team gains chance to defend state title

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — McQuaid Jesuit's 3,200-meter relay team qualified for the state tournament in Baldwinsville June 8-9 — and a chance to defend its state title — after an easy win at the Section 5 state qualifiers June 1 at the University of Rochester.

The relay team, which won the Section 5 Class AAA title May 26 at Brockport State, ran the distance in 8:02.67. The Knights finished in front of second-place Fairport by more than 10 seconds.

Mark Spagnola, Paul Hammond, Tim Kelly and Jason Fahy thus earned the right to defend the state title won by McQuaid the past two seasons.

No other diocesan relay team or individual competitor qualified for the state track meet.

Fahy was the closest individual runner to qualify for the states, finishing second in the 800-meter race with a time of 1:58.73. He had to finish the distance in 1:58 or less to qualify for the state meet.

In the girls' competition, Our Lady of Mercy's three relay teams — the 400-meter, the 1,600-meter and the 3,200-meter — each finished first in their respective races, but failed to advance to Baldwinsville.

The 1,600-meter relay team, which won the Class AA title May 26 at Brockport, finished nearly five seconds slower (4:12.62) than its sectional winning time of 4:07.4.

McQuaid and Mercy, as they have consistently done in track in recent seasons, provided the best finishes among diocesan schools at the sectional races.

The Knights entered the sectionals as the defending Section 5 Class AAA champion. But coach Bob Bradley noted that his team had graduated 14 seniors, accounting for 75 of his team's 89 points in 1989.

This year, McQuaid finished seventh with 28 points, led by the 3,200-meter team's first place and the 400-meter relay team's second-place finish.

Mercy finished third in girls' Class AA competition with 51 points. In addition to winning the 1,600-meter relay, the Monarchs collected three third-place finishes: Romy Muoio (3,000 meters); Gabby LaMagna (long jump); and Christina Arena (shot put).

Other strong finishers among diocesan competitors included the Aquinas boys' team, which finished fourth in Class A with 51 1/2 points. Alva Royston led the Irish with second-place finishes in the 100- and 200-meter dashes. Russell Kelly finished third in the triple jump.

In girls' Class A, Bishop Kearney's Crissy Laboski finished third in the 400-meter hurdles. Aquinas' Josie Walters placed third in the 100-meter hurdles, and Nazareth's Lisa Urgola finished third in the discus.

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