

# Crusaders succumb in state semifinals, 3-1

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ELMIRA — All season long, Notre Dame's softball team lived by one motto: "One run's enough."

In the state Class C semifinals June 9, Notre Dame (15-10) died by that motto, as the Crusaders fell to Northern Adirondack Central, 3-1, at Newburgh.

Notre Dame began the game in typical fashion by scoring a run without a hit. In the first inning, Melanie Crisco reached third on a three-base throwing error. She later scored on a sacrifice bunt by Lisa Punzo.

Normally, one run has been enough for the Crusaders because of the heroics of Bobbi McMail. After firing a no-hitter in the Section 4, Class C playoffs, McMail threw yet another no-hitter in a 22-0 romp over Section 6 champion Akron in the Western Regional championship game on June 6.

McMail looked strong against Adirondack (Section 7), striking out nine and allowing just six hits.

But Adirondack (18-3), which later in

the day lost 6-1 to Eastchester (Section 1) in the Class C state finals, was able to break through in the bottom of the second on a triple and a single to tie the score.

In the third inning, McMail yielded her only walk of the game. The free pass came back to haunt her later when the runner raced home on a double. A single brought the runner home from second to give Adirondack a 3-1 edge.

The Crusaders mounted a threat of their own in the fourth inning, collecting their only two hits of the game. McMail and Becky Sherman hit back-to-back singles with just one out. A sacrifice bunt moved them both into scoring position, but they were stranded at second and third.

Notre Dame softball coach Dave Potter noted that his team lacked consistent hitting all season, but that pitching and fielding had carried them along. He said his players were unable to time Adirondack pitcher Anne Scott, who varied her pitching speeds to keep the Crusaders off balance the entire game.

Early on in the western regionals at Elmira, Notre Dame faced a hitting prob-

lem of a different sort in their 22-0 pounding of Akron.

Akron's pitcher tossed 13 consecutive pitches out of the strike zone to start the game. "The girl couldn't find the plate," Potter said. "In fact, for a while there she couldn't even find the catcher."

The first five Notre Dame hitters all walked, and three of them scored on wild pitches. The hapless pitcher uncorked 12 wild pitches in the game while walking 10 Crusaders. She did not put enough pitches over the plate for Notre Dame to collect 12 hits in just four innings.

McMail, meanwhile, cruised through five innings, allowing no hits and striking out six. The game was eventually ended in the fifth inning because of the score.

ND had a tougher time advancing to the Western Regional finals, squeaking past Section 3's West Canada 2-1 at Oneida on June 5.

Once again the Crusaders took advantage of an opponent's pitching woes, with Crisco and Punzo scoring on three consecutive wild pitches in the fourth inning.

Notre Dame managed only one hit in the game — a bunt single by Crisco to begin the fourth inning.

West Canada (20-5) eked out just three hits against McMail. The Indians scored their lone run in the top of the seventh on an error.

In reaching the state semifinals, the Crusaders advanced further than any Notre Dame softball team ever. Potter coached the girls' softball team at ND from 1980-85, then returned this season after a four-year hiatus.

The Crusaders had won sectional titles in 1983, 1986 and 1987, but had always been eliminated in the first round of the state tournament.

With only shortstop Kathy Lynch and catcher Kelly Fitzgerald graduating later this month, the Crusaders will return several outstanding players to defend their Section 4, Class C crown next season.

Potter noted, however, that the team will have to find a few consistent hitters to have any chance of making a long run in post-season play next year.

## Saints

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the past two seasons.

Jim Vedora was also the winner on June 5, as the Saints pounded fourth-seeded Andover, 24-5, in the Class D semifinals at Cohocton.

Once again, DeSales trailed at the outset, as the Panthers (14-4) scored a run in the top of the first. But the Saints responded with four runs of their own in the bottom of the inning.

The lead grew to 10-2 heading into DeSales' half of the fifth inning, when the Saints exploded for 14 runs on 12 hits. The huge rally included two triples and three doubles. Paul Priebe had two doubles in the 14-run inning.

DeSales outhit Andover 22-8 for the game. Priebe went 3-for-5 with 3 RBI. Jim Walters also collected three RBI, going 3-for-4 at the plate. Hardy blasted a three-run, inside-the-park home run in the fourth inning.

For the Saints, the sectional title is their fourth championship in the past 10 years with Pane at the helm. They have a realistic shot at a fifth title next year.

The Saints will lose to graduation such key players as Taney, Priebe, Barnard, Walters and Ed Saldone. But the entire pitching rotation — Jim Vedora, Frank Pane Jr. (6-0), Joe Vedora (1-0) and Bill Sweeney (1-0) — as well as McDermott and Hardy will return.

In other action from the sectionals, Bishop Kearney (16-7) — the only other diocesan baseball team still playing at the beginning of last week — fell short in its bid to beat eventual Class AA champion Eastridge. The Kings lost 4-3 at Newark on June 5.

The sixth-seeded Lancers (16-9) took an early 4-0 lead on the second-seeded Kings. Kearney rallied in the top of the seventh, however, by scoring three runs. But with one out and runners on second and third, the Kings tried a suicide squeeze and the runner on third was caught off base. The game ended with a strikeout.

Eastridge outhit the Kings, 9-3. Two of Kearney's hits came in the seventh inning, when Dave Armanini stroked an RBI single and Cory Khuns smashed a two-run triple.

After losing their first five games this season, the Kings won 16 of their next 18 games to earn a spot in the semifinals. This year's squad set a school record for team-batting average (.346). In addition, senior Marty Alexander set a number of individual records, including batting average for a season (.521), most career hits and most career RBI.

In action from the state tournament, Section 4, Class C champion Notre Dame (15-9) succumbed to Section 6 champion Falconer (22-4), 8-1, in Jamestown on June 5.

The Crusaders, who outhit the Falcons 6-5, stranded 10 runners during the game. Notre Dame loaded the bases in the second



DeSales catcher Jim McDermott catches Canaseraga's Brian Brewster at home in the top of the first inning. The out ended the inning and killed an Indian rally.

inning, but failed to score. With one out in the third inning, Mike Bennett reached on a single and Brian Sheehan brought him home with a triple for the Crusaders' lone run. The inning ended, however, with Sheehan stuck at third.

Despite the loss, coach John Cain was pleased by his team's success this year.

Notre Dame rebounded from a 6-15 record in 1989 to win the Class C title. "When the year began, no one expected much from us," he said. "The kids played great."

Notre Dame will be lose second baseman Bryan Granger, pitcher Blake Pierce and left fielder Mike Mustico to graduation, but will return a core of key players.

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