

Boughton, Reynders team up for top honors

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ALBANY — Since Kathy Boughton has coached the girls' basketball team at Our Lady of Mercy High School for seven years, she knows what it's like to have winning teams.

According to Boughton, however, helping lead an Empire State team to a gold medal is a totally different ball game.

Boughton assisted Joseph Grzybowski of Newfane in coaching this year's Scholastic Women's Basketball Team here at the Empire State Games. The team captured the gold medal after defeating Adirondack, 75-69, on July 25; nipping New York City, 65-64, on July 26; handling Hudson Valley, 71-60, on July 27; and whipping Central New York, 65-52, on July 28.

Boughton said Grzybowski asked her to be his assistant last spring. Although she was probably chosen because of her reputation as a coach, Boughton acknowledged that her gender might have had something to do with the decision.

"I think maybe they wanted a role model as a woman as well as wanting Rochester to be represented," said the first-year ESG coach.

Although the team was made up of girls from all over Western New York, Boughton said most of Western's players already knew each other because many of them play on the Western New York Amateur Athletic Union team.

"They have played together for months, and since they have been traveling, they



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Assistant Coach Kathy Boughton (left) and Amy Reynders respond to a referee's call during Western's 65-64 win over New York City July 26.

mostly practice together all as one," explained Boughton, who said her responsibilities included getting to know the team's offensive strengths as well as providing moral support.

One of the AAU competitors, Aquinas' Amy Reynders, agreed that Boughton was a great resource during the ESG.

"She was really encouraging," noted Reynders. "If anyone came out of the game she would give them a pat on the back and give them some pointers."

Although Reynders competes against Boughton's Monarchs in the Private-Parochial League during the high school

season, the 5-foot-11 guard said she didn't think of her as "the Mercy coach" at all.

"I got along with her really well. It was easy to get along with her and she was very good as a coach. She even spent time with us in the dorms," said the Aquinas senior, who averaged 11.5 points per game during the competitions.

In return, Boughton called Reynders a major key to Western's success this year. After being named Most Valuable Player for the Women's Scholastic Basketball team, the 17-year-old AQ student was also one of 10 athletes awarded the Master Card/Norstar Bank Empire State Games

Outstanding Athlete Award. The honor will provide the athletic department at Aquinas with \$500 in Reynders' name.

In addition to Reynders' excellent ball-handling skills, Boughton cited her height, as well as that of several other team members, as a major difference between coaching at the Empire States and working with a high school team.

"Just the size of these kids is unbelievable to me," remarked Boughton. "I never have the luxury of having two or three six-footers or five-elevens at Mercy."

Although Boughton admitted that being asked to help coach the Empire State Games was an honor, she said she didn't know if she would want the responsibility as head coach of the team. Boughton said she's busy conducting basketball camps in the summer as well as gearing up for the fall soccer season at Mercy.

But Boughton didn't deny that the opportunity to coach at the Empire States was an important honor for her. "I think it shows your love for the sport — your love for basketball," she said.

And, of course, coaching the team that clinched the gold medal made the job even more worthwhile. But Boughton said she never doubted that the Western team would win top honors because of its talent and determination.

"What I have noticed is that they are so willing to listen to whatever you have to say," Boughton said.

"And they love to win," added the assistant coach, "you can see it in their eyes."

Monks helps Western team strike gold

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

TROY, N.Y. — Grady Monks discovered what it was like to lose a big game last February when the Aquinas hockey team fell to Greece, 3-2, in the Section 5 Class A semifinals.

Now he knows what it's like to win big. The 5-foot-10 winger/center played on this year's Western New York Scholastic Ice Hockey Team which earned the gold medal during the Empire State Games. The honor came after four consecutive wins at the Houston Field House on the campus of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy.

Coach Pat Rimer of Williamsville guided the Western squad to its perfect record during the ESG this year. Rimer's team crushed Central New York, 6-0, on July 25; defeated Adirondack, 5-3, on July 26; nipped Hudson Valley, 5-1, on July 27 and trounced Long Island, 9-3, on July 28.

Although Monks didn't do much scoring during the first three games — he scored one goal against Central and assisted on another against Adirondack — the Aquinas senior enjoyed a stellar game against Long Island.

Monks fired in the game's first goal only two minutes into the first period. After a goal by Western's Brian Fowler, Monks scored again just eight minutes into the period. A tally by Western's Rob Hale made the score 4-0 at the end of one stanza. After Monks found the net again three minutes into the second period, he assisted on a goal by Chad Stevens a few minutes later. In all, Monks finished with three goals and one assist in the 9-3 romp.

Monks, a member of the Western team the last two years, said competing at the Empire State Games is much different than playing against other high school teams.

"It's a higher pace — it's high intensity," said Monks, the Monroe County Hockey League's leading scorer last season.

He added that the philosophy among the coaches at the ESG is much different, too. "The coaches are really good coaches. They have a short time and they teach you a lot of things — not just hockey but what's going to happen during life."

Monks has helped the Western team con-

tinue its winning ways the last two summers. In the 10-year history of ice hockey at the Empire State Games, the Western team has come home with the gold every year but two — in 1989 when Western didn't win any medal, and in 1987 when the team captured the silver medal.

But becoming part of that winning tradition is no easy job, according to Ron Wagner, fifth-year manager of the Western ice hockey team.

Wagner estimated that approximately 200 athletes apply for a position on the team in the fall prior to the ESG. Coaches then scout the players, taking in at least three of their games that season.

After initial evaluations are finished, Wagner said coaches trim the number of applicants to 60 skaters and eight goalies. Tryouts for the team are held in April.

After the final cuts are made, a team of 20 players and four alternates is chosen.

The final team does not get much of a chance to practice together, however, because Empire State rules allow for only 16 hours of ice time per team. With nine of those hours taken up by tryouts, only seven hours of practice remain, said Wagner.

Wagner noted that just having the athletes spend time with each other and the coaches is beneficial to the players.

"The players come from diverse areas and some don't know each other," he remarked. "In a confined area they get to know each other better and the coaches get to know their characters."

In addition to getting to meet other hockey players, Wagner said the Empire State Games offer a player the opportunity to be recruited by college coaches.

"It's a showcase for colleges to look at them," said Wagner, who noted that scouts from such schools as the University of Vermont, Clarkson, Boston College, Oswego State and the U.S. Military Academy attended the ESG. In addition, scouts from several professional hockey teams — including the Montreal Canadiens, Philadelphia Flyers and Pittsburgh Penguins — were seen at the rink.

Wagner added, "It's a chance to show what they can do on the ice and show what kind of a person they are — their characteristics and ideals."

As for Monks, Wagner cited his speed and scoring ability as his greatest assets.

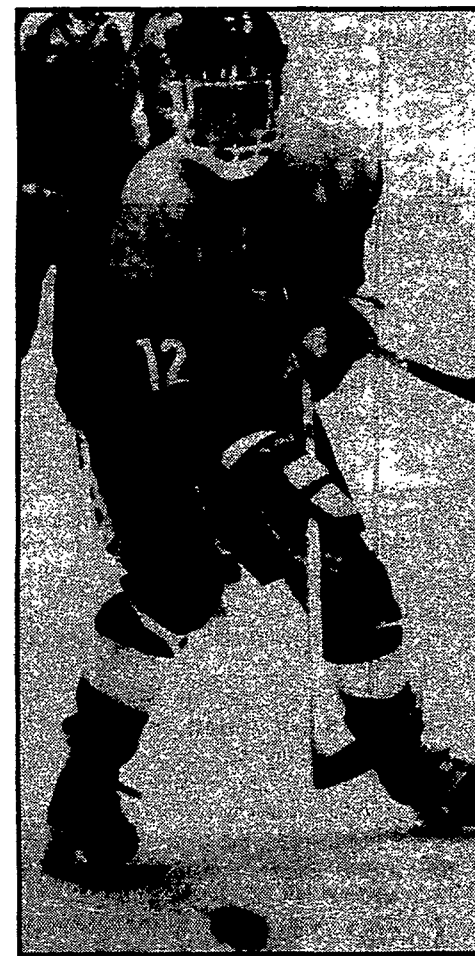
"He has speed which can't be taught, only developed in the younger years, and he is a terrific shot. He has a heavy, hard shot and he gets it away quickly," said Wagner. "Off the ice he is always smiling and easy to get along with, but on the ice he is intense and focused on what he has to do."

Since this was Monks' last year competing in the Empire State Games — he will be too old to tryout for the ice team in 1992 — he can now focus on his senior year at Aquinas. Although he plans to return to the school's varsity soccer team in the fall, he is not sure if he will be a part of the Little Irish hockey team in the winter.

"I really haven't made a decision — I don't know what to do yet. Our high school season is only 20 games and if I go Juniors (Rochester Monarchs) then they will play 60 or 70 (games)," said Monks, who plans to play college hockey at either Union College, Rochester Institute of Technology or Geneseo State.

But Monks said that no matter what he decides to do about high school hockey, the Empire State Games have been a wonderful experience.

"It's just like the Olympics — you meet a lot of new people and it's a real great time," Monks concluded.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Grady Monks fired in three goals to pace the Western ice hockey team to a 9-3 win over Long Island July 28.

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