

Little Irish rolling as soccer sectionals begin

By Jim Coffman
Freelance writer

Everything that could go right went fantastically for the Aquinas Institute girls soccer team this regular season, and the Little Irish revved up for the post-season by sweeping their final two games against Pittsford Mendon and Livonia last week.

Second-seeded Aquinas will host a Section 5 Class BB second-round game on Friday, Oct. 25 against the winner of the match-up between seventh-seeded Greece Arcadia and 10th-seeded Canandaigua Oct. 22.

Coach Gary Page is very optimistic about his team's post-season chances.

"We certainly hope to make it to the BB sectional final and get a shot at (top seeded) Pittsford Sutherland," said Page of his Little Irish. "We didn't get a shot at them during the regular season but we pretty much beat everyone else, including the first two seeds in the A division (Penfield and Mercy)."

Aquinas ran its record to 15-1-2 by outscoring Mendon 4-1 on Oct. 17 and Livonia 1-0 on Oct. 19. The stars of the Mendon game were striker Missy Page and sweeper April Baker. And their performances offer conclusive proof that the Little Irish were exempt from Murphy's Law.

Page is a senior and, yes, the name sounds familiar because she is the coach's daughter. Her first career hat trick accounted for the final three-fourths of the Little Irish attack against Mendon, a traditional power in girls soccer and Aquinas' arch-rival.

Her goals, one of which came on a right-footed breakaway chip that flew over a charging goaltender and dropped into the net, were less than half the story. After the game, her father revealed that Page was sidelined for the past two weeks with the proverbial water on her left knee and had grown impatient with efforts to simply wait out the swelling.

The Pages decided the waiting was a little too hard, and on the morning of the Mendon contest Missy had her knee

drained. Relieved of the excess fluid, Missy went out that afternoon and played the game of her life.

Aquinas' first goal resulted from a corner kick. Baker took control as she moved into position and headed the ball into the Mendon net. Her header was the first goal of her career. Coach Page said of the sophomore, who is Aquinas' last line of defense, "She was so excited she ran off the field. I had to go get her and remind her that the game wasn't over yet."

The 1-0 victory over Livonia was due almost exclusively to the goaltending of Mary Beth Bell, according to Page. Bell, who recorded her 10th shutout of the season, stopped 12 shots on goal and made an early Marci Meagher tally stand up.

"She (Bell) kept us in the game in the second half," said her coach.

Meagher finished the season with 14 goals and 12 assists and Page's hat trick left her with a total of eight goals and five assists. Neither led the team, however. That honor went to junior striker Michele Khuns, who contributed 19 goals and 12 assists.

Other diocesan high school girls teams and their seedings are: in Class A, No. 2 seeded Our Lady of Mercy (9-2-2), which is scheduled to host No. 7 Fairport (6-9-2) at 2 p.m. Oct. 26; in Class B, sixth-seeded Bishop Kearney (6-11-1) is scheduled to play at No. 3 Penn Yan (10-6) at 3 p.m. Oct. 25; no information was available on the girls soccer team at Elmira Notre Dame in Section 4; Nazareth Academy and Geneva DeSales did not qualify for the post-season.

For the diocesan boys teams, fourth-seeded McQuaid Jesuit (11-3-4) will host No. 5 Edison (8-2-2) in a Section 5 Class A first-round game at 3 p.m. Oct. 24; in Class BB, No. 5 Aquinas (12-6-0) will visit No. 4 Greece Arcadia (12-3-2) at 3 p.m. Oct. 24; in Class B, eighth-seeded Bishop Kearney (5-11-0) will meet top-seeded Newark (10-3-3) at 2 p.m. Oct. 26; information on the seeding of Elmira Notre Dame in Section 4 was not available as the *Catholic Courier* went to press.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

Michele Khuns (left) of Aquinas garners control of the ball despite Ama Rivers' attempt to gain possession for Pittsford Mendon during the Little Irish's 4-1 win Oct. 17. Khuns, a junior striker, led AQ in scoring during the regular season with 19 goals and 12 assists. Aquinas is scheduled to host a second round Section 5 Class BB sectional match-up on Friday, Oct. 26.

Aquinas (6-0) ekes out another win; mistakes bury ND

By Jim Coffman
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When football coaches sit down to analyze the latest efforts of potential opponents, they search for habitual reactions to gridiron stimuli that they label "tendencies."

All five diocesan football teams were true to their tendencies last weekend. And if those trends continue, the prognosis for widespread improvement during the season's final weeks is tentative at best.

Homestanding Aquinas Institute (6-0) tenderized Wilson for three quarters before hanging on for a 10-8 win. The underclassman-dominated Elmira Notre Dame Crusaders (4-2) proved that they are still prone to mistakes as they dropped a turnover-marred 30-20 contest to Chenango Valley of Binghamton.

Meanwhile, Bishop Kearney (3-3) improved to .500 for the season with a 22-14 win over Altmar-Parish-Williamstown; McQuaid put up its tent in Webster, but came up a touchdown short, 14-7; and Dundee blew out Geneva DeSales, 60-0.

Aquinas again eked out a win and stayed undefeated, but the playoffs are fast approaching and Coach Joe Munno acknowledged that the Little Irish might be in for a big fall if they don't stop relying on good fortune.

"It is the sign of a good team to not play well and still win but we can't keep doing that forever," said Munno after Aquinas defeated winless Wilson 10-8 on Oct. 19

to improve its league record to 4-0 in the City Catholic League.

Senior kicker Mike Sloan was the difference for the home team, totaling four points on a first half, 27-yard field goal and a third quarter extra point. On the season, Sloan has missed only one of 14 conversion kicks.



His latest PAT followed Matt Piccone's 1-yard touchdown run midway through the third quarter and gave Aquinas a 10-0 lead. Aquinas' lone trip to the end zone was set up by a Mark Johnson fumble recovery at the Wilson 38-yard line and three Phil Wegman runs.

On the fourth play after the fumble Piccone lunged in for the decisive score.

Johnson also set up Sloan's field goal ... from the other side of the line of scrimmage. Quarterback Tony Fanale, who was later intercepted in the Wilson end zone with five seconds remaining in the half, tossed Johnson a 38-yard pass to get the Little Irish into field goal range.

"There has been a lot of interest in him (Sloan) as a potential college kicker," Munno said after the game. "He has been contacted by a number of schools." The 27-yarder was only Sloan's second successful field goal on the season, but he did

bounce a 52-yard try off the crossbar earlier in the season.

The fourth quarter was all Wilson as the Wildcats (0-3-2) pushed across one score and quarterback Ricky Gamble's conversion run was good. After Aquinas failed to convert a fourth down later in the quarter, Wilson got the ball back one last time, but ran out of downs at its own 45 and never got the ball back.

Over in Section 4, turnovers killed Notre Dame for the second week in a row. Chenango Valley converted two turnovers into third quarter touchdowns, breaking a halftime tie and never looking back on its way to its non-league victory.

In all, Notre Dame fumbled four times and quarterback Bryan Woodworth threw one costly interception as the Crusaders' record dropped to 4-2, 1-0 in league play. "We're going to have to stop giving the ball away and we will because that's not the kind of football we play at Notre Dame," Coach Mike D'Aloisio said.

The combination of Woodworth and receiver Chris O'Herron continued to click, however. The two connected on scoring passes of 5, 30 and 40 yards to account for all of Notre Dame's touchdowns. Woodworth finished the game with 19 completions in 30 attempts for 276 yards and the three TDs.

O'Herron caught eight of those completions for 146 yards. "Chris O'Herron is among the best all-around receivers we've ever had at Notre Dame and we have a tradition of great pass catchers," said

D'Aloisio. "He has to rank in the top three receivers we've had here in my 15 years as a coach."

Back in the City-Catholic League, the defense, offense and special teams all contributed points during Bishop Kearney's eight-point triumph on Oct. 19. The defense, in the form of Kevin Miner's 25-yard interception return for a touchdown, asserted itself first and posted Kearney's only first half points.

Williamstown led 14-8 at halftime, but then in rapid succession, running back Mark Tytler rushed in from eight yards out to tie the game. And then on the ensuing kickoff return, Sherrard Sloan scooped up a fumble and sprinted in from 45 yards out to give Kearney the lead and eventually the win.

Tytler finished with 230 yards on 35 carries and it was his workmanlike runs down the stretch that kept the Williamstown offense on the sideline and enabled Kearney to hang on for the win.

Special teams betrayed McQuaid as a muffed punt set Webster up at the Knight's 19-yard line midway through the fourth quarter. Webster played the part of the gracious host and took advantage of the McQuaid miscue to go on top 14-0.

Christian Klein posted a 12-yard touch-down run later in the quarter but the Knights fell short.

Over in the Finger Lakes West, DeSales never got going in its thrashing by Dundee.