

Mercy edges Aquinas in battle of unbeatens

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Amy Reynders and Sheila Doyle on the bench with a game on the line?

That development seemed reflective of the intensity surrounding this season's first matchup between Private-Parochial League foes Aquinas Institute and Our Lady of Mercy. Reynders, the Aquinas star, and Doyle, Mercy's big gun, both fouled out midway through the fourth quarter of this fiercely contested game.

In the end, it was a star of the future who made the biggest impact. Freshman guard Gina Montesano, a first-year varsity player, converted two free throws with 22 seconds remaining as Mercy rallied for a 38-37 win on Saturday, Jan. 4, in the Mercy Tournament finals. The match-up was played before a packed house at Nazareth College.

Mercy's record improved to 4-0 with the victory, while Aquinas suffered its first defeat against seven triumphs.

"It wasn't pretty, but it was a win," remarked Mercy Head Coach Kathy Boughton.

The Monarchs led 19-13 at halftime before Reynders scored 11 of her game-high 18 points in the third quarter to create a 26-26 tie with one period to go.

Aquinas then took a 35-30 lead before Reynders and Doyle fouled out. Montesano took over at that point, hitting a three-point basket and two free throws to tie the score at 35-35.

Montesano went on to hit her decisive free throws at the :22 mark. Aquinas had three one-and-one oppor-



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
DeSales' Lindsay Higgins reaches for a pass as she is closely guarded by Nuala Hetzler of Nazareth Academy. The Saints won 32-27 over the host Lasers Jan. 3.

tunities after that, but missed them all.

Montesano, who finished with 16 points, was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"Gina wanted the ball; she had the confidence. She likes pressure," said Boughton.

Mercy had advanced to the finals with a 54-37 win over Nardin on Jan. 3 as Doyle poured in 23 points. Aquinas won 37-32 over Buffalo Holy School of Angels that night, with Reynders gaining 21 points and 14 rebounds.

In another battle featuring two diocesan girls' teams, GENEVA DeSALES earned a 32-27 decision over host Nazareth Academy on Jan. 3.

Cecilia McCann scored nine points to lead DeSales (2-3), while Mary Staropoli topped Nazareth (3-4) with 10 points.

"Our switching to a full-court man-to-man defense in the second quarter was the key," said DeSales Coach Steve Muzzi. "Our defense is really improved."

Both of DeSales' wins this season have come against Nazareth.

BISHOP KEARNEY has been on a roll in boys' basketball. After dropping their first five games of 1991-92, the Kings won four of their next five to improve their record to 4-6.

"We're starting to see a little daylight," said Coach Ed Nietopski.

Kearney's latest victory came on Jan. 3, a 59-48 decision over visiting Hilton. BK pulled away from a 21-20 halftime lead by outscoring Hilton 19-9 in the third quarter.

Joe Raniewicz and Demond Mack were the Kings' top scorers that night with 18 points each. Raniewicz, a jun-



Laser Mary Staropoli (center) wrestles for the ball with DeSales' Emily Parshall (left) and Lindsay Higgins.

ior guard, has averaged 22 points per game during BK's hot streak after getting only 10.8 PPG during his club's 0-5 start.

ELMIRA NOTRE DAME was also victorious over the weekend, winning 79-56 over host Edison on Jan. 4.

The Crusaders (4-5) were led by Aaron Mekos' 21-point performance. Reserve guard Brian Murray had a season-high 12 points, and Bryan Woodworth chipped in with 10 points and 15 rebounds.

Notre Dame's 79-point outburst against Edison was a full 25 points ahead of its previous season-high. The Crusaders had been averaging 44.3 PPG.

"We ran the offense well, had open shots and hit them for a change," said ND Coach Mike D'Aloisio.

Little Irish hold their own against quality opponents

Even in defeat, Aquinas Institute proved that it ranks among the state's best hockey clubs.

The Little Irish played some tremendous hockey over the holiday break, beginning with their first-place finish in the Aquinas Tournament held Dec. 27-28 at Lakeshore Rinks. Following a 4-2 win over Potsdam in the opening round, the Irish shocked Albany Academy, last year's state Class A champion, by a 5-2 count in the tournament final.

Last Saturday, Jan. 4, Aquinas rallied from a 4-2 deficit before falling in overtime to arch-rival Greece, 5-4, before a standing-room-only crowd at Lakeshore.

The Greece loss left Aquinas' record at 5-2 in Monroe County Division 1

and 7-2 overall, while the Lightning went to 7-0, 7-1. The game marked the first meeting between the two schools since Greece, the defending Section 5 Class A champion, upset Aquinas in last year's sectional semifinals.

"This was a tough loss because we played so well, but we came away knowing we're as good as them," said AQ Coach Dave Montgomery.

The Little Irish took their only lead against Greece on an early goal by Jeremy Giordano, but the Lightning exploded for three unanswered goals over a stretch of three minutes, 27 seconds to lead 3-1 after one period.

Chris Schultz brought Aquinas to within 3-2 with a second-period goal before Jason Bonsignore gave Greece a 4-2 lead late in the period.

Aquinas rallied with Schultz scoring 21 seconds into the third period and Giordano getting the tying goal halfway through the period.

The Lightning netted the winning goal with 1:33 left in overtime as Mike Sippel scored shorthanded.

Aquinas lost despite holding a 32-23 edge in shots on goal. The Irish outshot Greece 26-11 over the second and third periods.

One week prior to the Greece game, Aquinas used a strong first period to take control against Albany Academy, which had its 33-game winning streak snapped.

Chris Sichak scored the opening goal and Grady Monks added a pair to give the Irish a 3-0 edge after one period. Giordano and Schultz also scored in

that game.

BISHOP KEARNEY (3-4) picked up a win on Jan. 4, defeating Spencerport 9-2 at Lakeshore. Rob Chirappi, Joe Albert and Dave Flanigan had two goals each in the victory.

IN WRESTLING last week, Kearney, got first-place finishes from Gracen Porreca and Sam Lopez in the Jan. 4 Irondequoit Tournament. Porreca triumphed at 112 pounds, and Lopez was the 132-pound champion.

ELMIRA NOTRE DAME was also in wrestling action last weekend, finishing seventh among 32 schools in the Genesee Valley Tournament Jan. 3-4 at Genesee High. The Crusaders' top performer was Mike Clune, who reached the finals in the 167-pound class.

—Mike Latona



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