

Fisher teams gearing for post-season

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — March Madness has taken on a double meaning at St. John Fisher College this year.

It's been a typically great season for the Fisher women's basketball team, and an unusually excellent one for the Cardinal men. Both clubs have been ranked in the NCAA Division III national top 20, and each appears to be in good position for capturing post-season berths in the national tournament.

A couple of miles down East Avenue, at Nazareth College, neither basketball club has fared quite as well on the season but both have been extremely successful in recent games.

Helping these colleges are a total of seven players who formerly starred at diocesan high schools: three for the SJF men and two for each Nazareth squad.

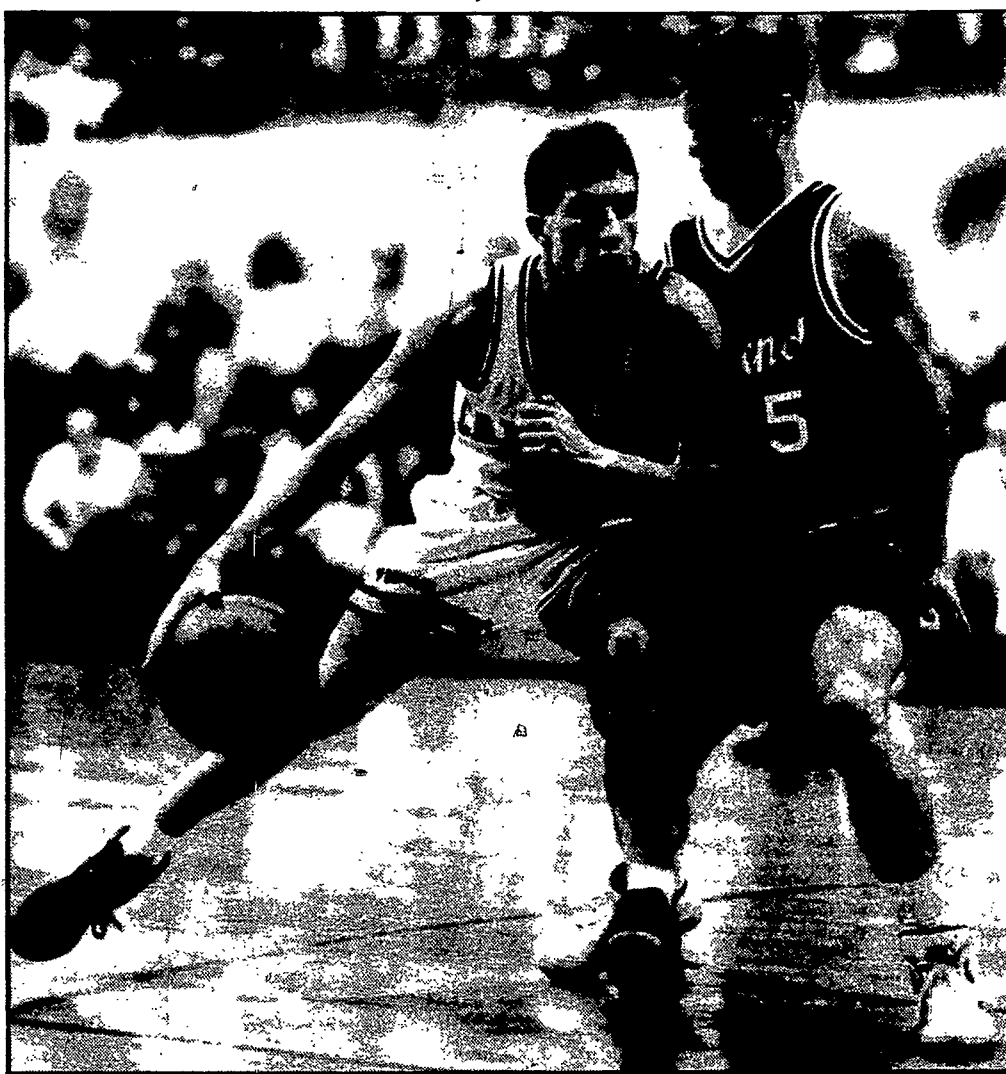
Fisher men at 15-3

With a large group of veterans leading the way, including Elmira Notre Dame High School graduate Scott Long, the St. John Fisher men have gotten off to their best start since Coach Bob Ward took over the program in 1987.

The Cardinals lost for only the third time against 15 wins this past Saturday, Feb. 1, falling 65-55 in overtime at the University of Rochester.

SJF's leading scorer is sophomore forward Chris Sullivan from Avoca, who is averaging 19.4 points per game.

Long, a senior guard, went 4-for-4 from the field and scored nine points in a 75-62 home victory over Penn State-Behrend on Jan. 30.



St. John Fisher guard Scott Long drives past Penn State-Behrend's Don Plyer during third-quarter action. Long, a graduate of Elmira Notre Dame High School, scored nine points in the Cardinals' victory over the Lions.

Two other Cardinals are junior guard Sean Trapp, a Cardinal Mooney High School graduate; and sophomore guard Kevin Brown, a graduate of McQuaid Jesuit.

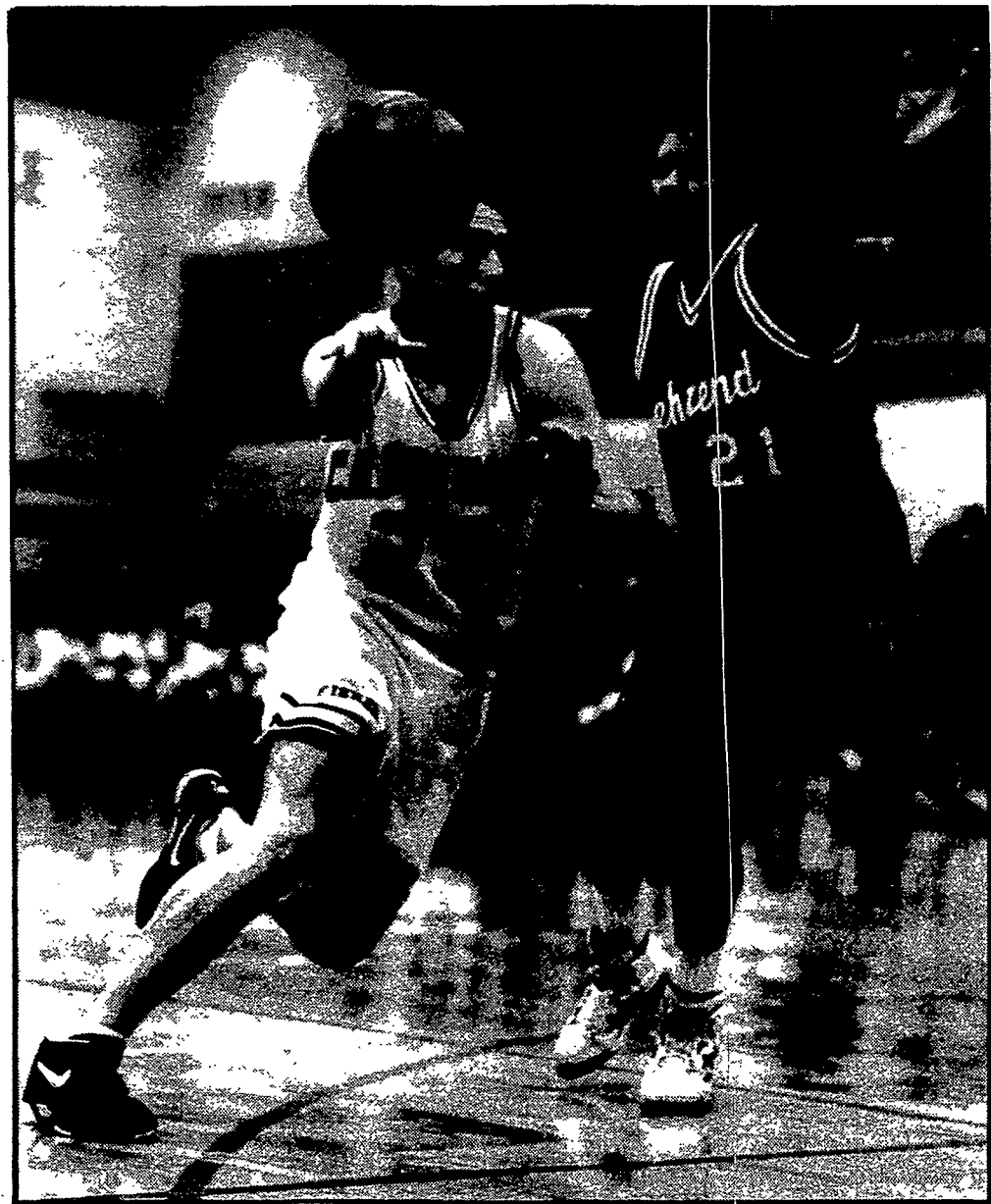
Ward estimates that the Cardinals need to win at least six of their last eight regular-season games to gain an NCAA berth. Seven of those contests will be at Fisher, with the only road game a Feb. 17 confrontation at Nazareth.



Bob Ward, head coach of the men's varsity basketball team at St. John Fisher College, instructs his players during the Cardinals' home game against Penn State-Behrend Jan. 30. Fisher defeated the Lions, 75-62. The coach of the Cardinals since 1987, Ward has guided the varsity men's team into the Division III top 20 this season.



Junior guard Sean Trapp catches his breath during the second period of the Cardinals home win over Penn State-Behrend Jan. 30. Trapp is a graduate of the former Cardinal Mooney High School.



Cardinal forward Chris Sullivan passes the ball before he is cut off by Penn State-Behrend's Stephan Respress during the first period. St. John Fisher's leading scorer this season, Sullivan is averaging 19.4 points per game.

SJF ladies still strong

Under 18th-year Coach Phil Kahler, St. John Fisher has established itself as one of the finest women's basketball programs in the country. Kahler has enjoyed 17 winning seasons, two NCAA Final Four berths and more victories (437 and counting) than any other NCAA Division III women's coach.

The 1991-92 Lady Cardinals improved their record to 16-2 with a 90-71 win at Buffalo State on Jan. 30. Fisher received 25 points from junior guard-forward Becky Armstrong (Middletown) and 24 points from junior forward Paula Keith (Naples) in the win over the Lady Bengals.

Armstrong has been SJF's top performer with 18.4 points per game.

Nazareth men coming on

After a slow start, the Nazareth College men's team has won four out of five games to improve its record to 7-13. The Golden Flyers' latest victory came on Feb. 1, an 86-70 decision over visiting Utica Tech.

Cardinal Mooney's Mike McGwin had a big night against Utica Tech. The 6-foot-10-inch junior center scored a team-high 22 points, raising his average to 12.1 for the year.

Another team member is Kevin Pawlak, a freshman guard from Bishop Kearney.

ND's Lynch paces Flyers

Kathy Lynch, an Elmira Notre Dame graduate, has been really heating up in recent games for the Nazareth women. The sophomore guard scored a career-high 21 points during an 84-51 home win over Utica Tech on Jan. 27, and added 19 points in a 60-52 victory over visiting University of Rochester on Jan. 29. Lynch's big week raised her scoring average to 11.0 PPG.

Last week's wins boosted the Golden Flyers over the 500 mark to 9-8, giving Nazareth some momentum for its Feb. 10 battle at St. John Fisher.

Also competing for Nazareth is Kim Walsh, a senior forward from Bishop Kearney. Walsh played at Monroe Community College before joining the Flyers program.