

# BK's stingy defense keys sectional victories

GREECE — Given the intensity of Section 5 hockey tournament play, and the fact that he's a freshman, you couldn't blame Chris Ashton if he might have wilted a little under the pressure.

Well, he sure did look like a freshman against Brighton and Brockport. A college freshman.

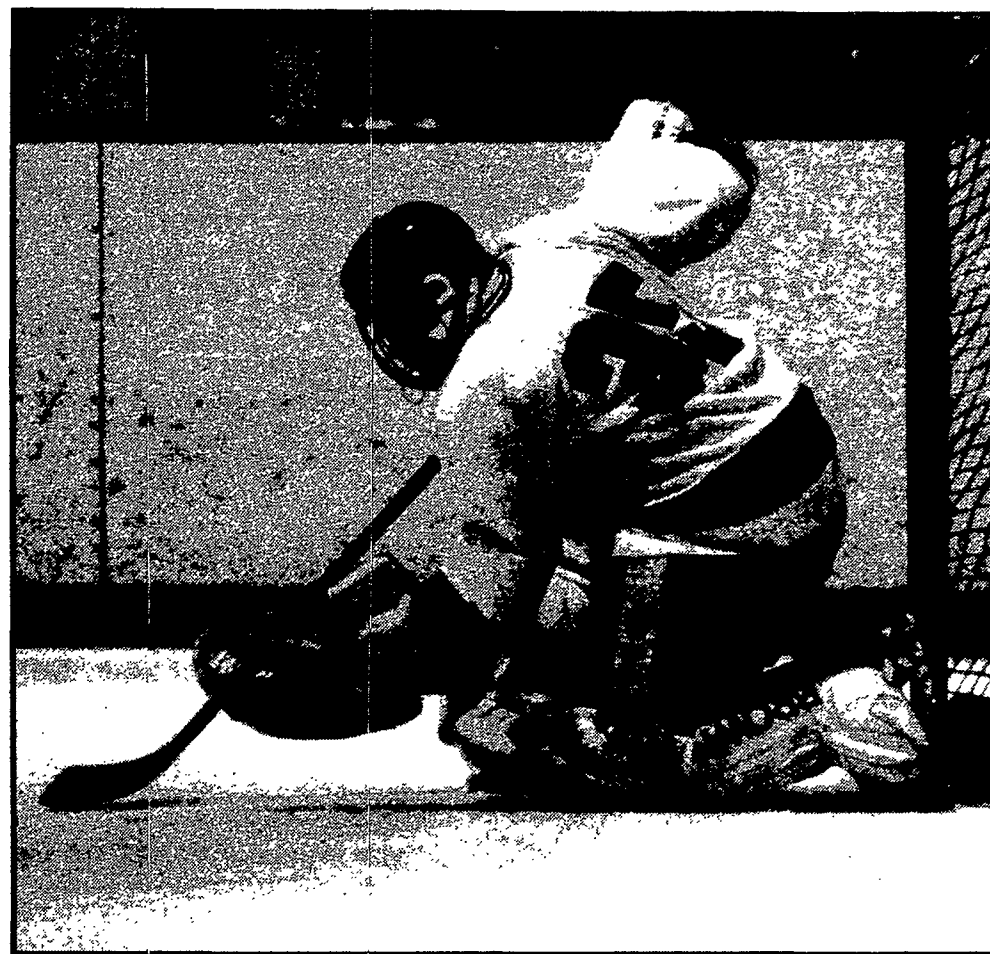
Ashton gave up a total of just two goals in those games, and as a result, his Bishop Kearney hockey team has reached the Section 5 Class B Final Four.

The Kings held on for a 1-0 victory over Brighton in a first-round game played Wednesday, Feb. 19. Kearney went on to a 6-2 rout of Brockport in quarterfinal action three days later. Both contests were played at Lakeshore Rinks.

Ashton made 29 saves to earn the shutout against Brighton, and he turned away 23 in the Brockport win.

"We're getting good goaltending from Chris, and the defense is playing real solid. They're forcing teams to shoot from bad angles," said BK Coach Rob Liberatore, whose club raised its record to 8-13.

Kearney was scheduled to face Pittsford in a semifinal meeting at Genesee Valley Ice Rink on Feb. 26. The finals are this Saturday, Feb. 29, at State University of New York College at Brockport.



Bishop Kearney netminder Chris Ashton turns a shot away against Brighton during the Kings' first-round game at Lakeshore Feb. 19. Ashton stopped all 29 shots he faced as the Kings blanked the Barons, 1-0. Kearney's win over Brockport Feb. 22 advanced the Kings to the Section 5 Class B Final Four.

Kellie McCann/Photo intern

The Kings' only goal in the victory over Brighton came off the stick of Dan Flanigen with nine seconds remaining in the first period.

The Brockport game saw BK take an early 3-0 advantage. After the Blue Devils closed to within 3-2, the Kings' Trevor Smith scored a crucial goal 4:27 into the third period. Joe Albert added a breakaway goal one minute later.

Rob Chinappi finished with two goals and two assists against Brockport, and Marcus Pace contributed a goal and three assists. Dave Flanigen also had a goal.

In other hockey action involving area Catholic high schools, McQuaid Jesuit (10-8) closed out its regular season last Tuesday, Feb. 18, with a 6-5 loss to Greece at Lakeshore. The Knights were scheduled to face the Lightning again in a sectional Class A semifinal matchup at Lakeshore on Feb. 25.

The other Class A semifinal, involving Aquinas Institute (18-2) and Irondequoit, was scheduled for Feb. 26. The finals are this Saturday at Brockport State.

Aquinas, which had last week off, recently won the Monroe County Division 1 title for the second consecutive year. The Little Irish's final league record was 16-2.

—Mike Latona

## Mercy earns No. 1 seed; DeSales ties for league title

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

If you ever need a living definition of "banner performance," check in with the Our Lady of Mercy girls and Geneva DeSales boys.

Those two basketball teams went about winning their league championships in entirely different ways, but both did so in memorable fashion.

In Mercy's case, the team not only went undefeated in Private-Parochial League play (5-0) but also ended its regular season with a perfect record for the first time in school history.

The Monarchs' 67-56 win over host Franklin last Tuesday, Feb. 18, raised their mark to 17-0. Sheila Doyle led the offense with 24 points.

"I'm real pleased, because in the beginning of the season I kind of questioned our inexperience," said Coach Kathy Boughton. "We started two freshmen (Gina Montesano and Kelly O'Neill) and only one senior (Doyle). We've really made a big step forward."

Mercy has earned the No. 1 seed, as well as a first-round bye, for the Section 5 Class A playoffs. The Monarchs will play a quarterfinal game this Friday, Feb. 28, at Penfield High School (7:30 p.m. start) against the winner of the Feb. 25 playoff between No. 8 Gates-Chili and No. 9 Webster.

The DeSales boys, meanwhile, had to come from way behind to gain a share of the Finger Lakes West title.

The Saints, who at one point were three games off the pace, ended their regular season with a six-game winning streak to tie Bloomfield for top honors in FL West with a 12-4 record (14-4 overall). It marked the school's first league title since 1977.

"It's been a real pleasing year because a lot of people didn't think we were going to do much," said Coach Tony Alvaro. "The players have amazed me, and they've amazed anyone who knows anything about

basketball."

DeSales won convincingly in both its games last week, 76-56 over visiting Dundee on Feb. 17 and 65-50 over host Red Jacket on Feb. 19. Mark Higgins was the Saints' leading scorer each night, pouring in 25 points against Dundee and 17 against Red Jacket.

The Saints pulled down the No. 5 seed for the Section 5 Class DD tournament. They were scheduled to host No. 12 Mount Morris on Feb. 25, with the winner moving on to the Feb. 28 quarterfinals against either No. 4 Jasper-Troupsburg or No. 13 Alfred-Almond.

Many other Catholic high schools in the diocese have also looked strong heading into sectionals.

The Aquinas Institute girls (17-3) are seeded third in Class BB and have a first-round bye. The Little Irish will be in quarterfinal action this Saturday, Feb. 29, at 2:45 p.m. at Hilton High School against either No. 6 Greece Arcadia or No. 11 Victor.

Bishop Kearney's boys, who began the year with five consecutive losses, are guaranteed of a winning season after entering the Class B playoffs with an 11-9 record. The Kings were seeded ninth and were scheduled to play at No. 8 Geneva on Feb. 26, with the winner moving on to a quarterfinal encounter with No. 1 Palmyra-Macedon on Feb. 29.

The BK girls, with a record of 12-8, earned the sixth seed in Class B. They were set to host No. 11 Hornell on Feb. 25, with that game's winner advancing to the quarterfinals against No. 3 Waterloo on Feb. 28.

And the McQuaid boys, despite their 9-11 record, have been impressive lately with consecutive overtime upset wins over Edison Tech and East McQuaid, the defending Class A champion, gained the No. 8 seed and was scheduled to host No. 9 Penfield on Feb. 26. The winner will play No. 1 Greece Athena on Feb. 29.

The Knights won 71-69 in OT over

visiting East in a Feb. 18 rematch of last year's sectional finalists. Jay Wandtke scored with :01 left in OT as McQuaid gained revenge for a 102-76 loss to the Orientals on Jan. 14.

Other Catholic high school teams qualifying for sectionals were the Elmira Notre Dame boys (8-11), seeded No. 6 in the Section 4 Class C East Division; the ND girls (6-13), No. 8 in Section 4 Class C East; the Geneva DeSales girls (4-14), No. 15 in Section 5 Class D; and the Aquinas boys (1-19),

No. 15 in Section 5 Class BB.

The ND boys were scheduled to play Feb. 25 against Tioga; the ND girls, Feb. 26 against Newark Valley; the DeSales girls, Feb. 25 against Prattsburg; and the AQ boys, Feb. 25 against Wilson Magnet.

Nazareth Academy's girls, despite a 7-13 record, barely missed qualifying for the 12-team Section 5 Class B playoffs.

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