



Rochester Monarch Derek Sylvester, wearing his jersey inside out, relaxes after a March 25 practice at Genesee Valley Ice Arena.

Diocesan stars spark Monarchs to big year

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Rochester Monarchs have developed into one of the finest Junior B hockey programs in the country, and much of that success can be traced to team members with Catholic high school connections.

In 1991-92, Rochester qualified for the national Junior B championships for the third consecutive year. Although they didn't fare too well in the national tournament held last weekend, the Monarchs still ended up with a sparkling 46-11-3 record this season.

Rochester had gained entrance into the nationals by capturing the Northeastern Junior Hockey League playoff championship, defeating Cleveland three games to two in the final round. Prior to that, the Monarchs successfully defended their league regular-season title by posting a 27-3-0 record against their Northeast opponents.

The season ended on a sour note as Rochester lost all three of its national tournament contests at Sabreland Rink near Niagara Falls. The Monarchs fell 6-2 to the Metro Jets of Michigan on March 26; 4-3 to the Northland Voyageurs of Minnesota on March 27; and 8-1 to the New Jersey Junior Devils on March 28.

"We had an outstanding season, but we were quite young and that was a big factor at the nationals," said Coach Barry Smith, who played center for the Rochester Americans from 1975-79. "All the teams there had players who were 18 and 19 years old, and most of our players are 16 and 17."

Dave Simpson, a former McQuaid Jesuit High School student now attending Livonia Central High School, led the team in scoring this season. He finished with 26 goals and 29 assists.

The Monarchs' fourth-leading scorer was Dave Perrotta, an Aquinas Institute graduate who finished with 21



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor
Dave Perrotta moves the puck up the ice during practice drills March 25. The Monarchs' fourth-leading scorer, Perrotta finished the 1991-92 season with 21 goals and 18 assists.

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goals and 18 assists for the year. He played a key role in Rochester's playoff victory over Cleveland, recording two assists during a 4-3 triumph in the fifth and deciding game.

Perrotta, a Monroe Community College freshman who is being recruited by Elmira College and SUNY College at Brockport, was a four-year varsity player at AQ and played on Section 5 championship teams his freshman and junior years. After graduating in 1991, he opted for the Monarchs rather than college hockey.

"I didn't feel I was ready to go away yet. But right now I'm looking at a few schools and feel I'm ready to play in college," said Perrotta, who scored one goal during the loss to Northland. "It's been fabulous (playing for the Monarchs). I've learned a lot."

Derek Sylvester, currently a senior at McQuaid, collected 12 goals and 18 as-

sists for the year and had one goal and one assist in the Northland defeat. He joined the Monarchs this season after playing for the McQuaid varsity the two previous years.

"The competition (in Junior B) is a lot better than high school hockey. I feel this helps you to become a better player," Sylvester said of his decision to play for the Monarchs.

Sylvester is looking to take his 6-3, 220-pound frame to the Ontario Hockey League in Canada next year. OHL is a Junior A league, the highest level in junior hockey. Two 1990-91 Monarchs, Brandon Piccarreto and Jamie Bird, played Junior A hockey in Quebec this season.

Brian Flanagan, an AQ graduate, had five goals and 15 assists for the 1991-92 Monarchs. Steve Sawyer, a McQuaid sophomore, totaled four assists.

The team's No. 1 goalie was Dick Schouten, a former Bishop Kearney and Webster High School netminder, who had a 16-2-0 regular-season record and a 1.84 goals-against average.

Also shining between the pipes was McQuaid junior Jeff Ozminkowski, who went 7-1-0 and posted a 1.74 goals-against average.

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