

Athletes discover gold at Empire State Games

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Franco Bari is well aware of the Empire State Games guidelines: if you're not at the top of your game, you're probably going to get left in the dust.

"Empire State Games is a higher competition than high school. There's a lot more speed and competitiveness; a real high level," said Bari, a senior-to-be at McQuaid Jesuit High School. "High school is more kick-and-run, rather than short passes."

Fortunately, after missing all but seven games of McQuaid's fall 1992 soccer season due to leg and ankle injuries, Bari is back on track. He made key defensive contributions as the Western Region men's scholastic team turned in a gold-medal performance this past weekend.

Western clinched the gold with a 1-0 victory over Hudson Valley this past Sunday, Aug. 8, at Rochester Institute of Technology. Bari's team posted a 2-0-1 record during the Games.

Joining Bari on the winning scholastic soccer team were McQuaid teammate Tristan Burton, who gained an assist in a 2-1 opening-game win over New York City on Aug. 5; and Lin Douangtavilay, the leading scorer for Aquinas Institute last fall.

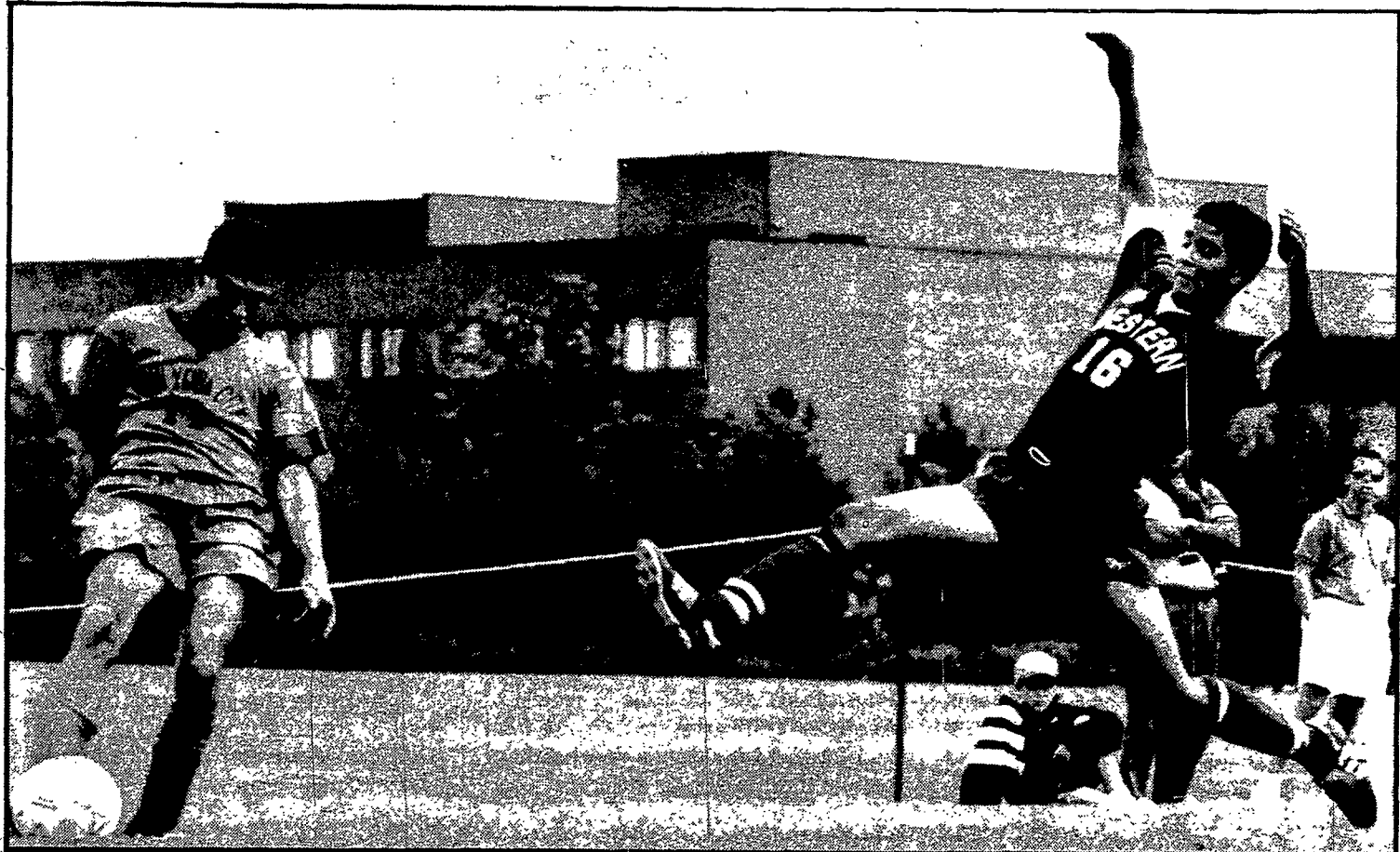
This marked the first time in the Empire State Games' 16-year history that the statewide amateur athletic spectacular was held in Rochester.

According to Bari, who also played on last year's scholastic soccer squad, playing in his own back yard provided quite a thrill.

"I love the crowd support; we've been getting a lot of people at our games," said Bari, who is a high-scoring forward for McQuaid but was used defensively in ESG competition.

Several other medal-winning ESG performances were achieved by athletes who are graduates or students of Catholic high schools in the diocese. Highlights included:

- Renee Rombaut, a graduate of the former Cardinal Mooney High School, cruised to a gold medal in the women's open 10,000-meter run on Aug. 5. Her time of 36:40.94 was nearly 1:40 faster than the second-place time of 38:19.17 posted by Hudson Valley's Dorothy Donnelly.
- Shawn Watts, a senior-to-be at McQuaid, took a silver medal in the



The Western team's Franco Bari (right) extends himself to reach the ball during a scholastic men's division soccer game against New York City Aug. 5. The McQuaid Jesuit senior-to-be helped the Western squad to a 2-1 win at RIT.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer



Bari (left) gets pressure from a NYC player as he kicks the ball down field.

scholastic men's 800-meter run with a time of 2:00.81. Watts also earned a bronze as a member of the scholastic men's 1,600-meter relay.

- Stephanie Nearpass, a junior-to-be at DeSales High School, gained a bronze in the women's scholastic 5,000-meter run. Her time was 18:36.91.

- Marcie Meagher, an Aquinas graduate, played for the Western open women's soccer team which captured the gold. Western earned a 1-0 win over Hudson Valley on Aug. 8 to clinch top honors.

- McQuaid graduates Byron Schneider and Quentin Spiegel, who helped the Western open men's volleyball team to a gold medal. Western won in dominating fashion, downing Adirondack 15-3, 15-5, 15-5 in the championship match on Aug. 7.

- Melanie Heeder, a senior-to-be at our Lady of Mercy, played for the Western women's scholastic soccer team which gained a bronze medal.

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