

Late scoring spree spurs Mercy over Aquinas

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Somewhere in here, there's got to be some kind of school record.

How do you explain going nearly 300 minutes last year without scoring a goal on a team, but then scoring two goals just 30 seconds apart against that same squad in this season's first clash?

That unlikely turn of events helped Our Lady of Mercy come away with a 4-2 overtime victory over host Aquinas Institute in an early-season Private-Parochial League girls' soccer showdown last Thursday, Sept. 16.

Mercy came from behind twice in that game, and took the lead for good in the first 10-minute overtime period. That's when Gina Montesano, who had just scored the tying goal to make it 2-2, dribbled the ball from midfield without a defender touching her — and ricocheted the ball in off the crossbar for yet another goal for a 3-2 edge.

"It was a good character win for us," commented Mercy Coach Kathy Boughton, whose club ended last week with a 6-2 record. "It showed they've got guts. If you win these games when you're down, that's certainly going to help you when you get to post (season) play."

Mercy finished second to AQ in last year's league battle and posted a 12-6-2 overall record. The Monarchs tied 0-0 and lost 1-0 to the Little Irish during the 1992 regular season, and also suffered a 1-0 defeat — by sudden-death shootout — in the Section 5 Class A semifinals.

Aquinas, meanwhile, was edged 2-1 by Webster in the sectional championship game and finished with a 13-2-1 mark.

Many key players from that great AQ team have graduated, but Coach Gary Page still expects his club to be highly competitive this year.

"We can still do as well as we have any other year," said Page, whose team stood at 3-2-1 through last week. "We're probably more skillful than we've been in the past; we just don't have experience."

Elmira Notre Dame, like Aquinas, reached the sectional finals in 1992. The Crusaders lost 2-1 to South Cortright in the Section 4 Class D title contest and finished with an 18-2-2 record.

This season ND has started strongly, going 7-2 in its first nine games.

"Probably if anything, we're dis-



Mercy's Abby Wambach (right) kicks the ball away from Aquinas' Lisa Bellavia during a Sept. 16 league game won in overtime by visiting Mercy. S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

appointed being 7-2," said Coach Steve Weber. "We've lost in two tournament finals, and we outplayed the other team in both games."

Bishop Kearney has a new coach in Paul Forte, who replaces Leo Teerlinck. Forte, whose Cardinal Mooney boys' team won the state Class A championship 10 years ago, is returning to soccer coaching after a three-year layoff.

"I've really missed it. Soccer is really special to me; it's the sport I identify with the most," acknowledged Forte, who is also the varsity girls' basketball and softball coach at BK.

The Kings, who went 6-12-1 last year, have started off 1993 at 2-1-1. BK raised some eyebrows by holding Mercy to one goal in a 1-0 home loss on Sept. 18.

Nazareth Academy also features a first-year coach in Dick DiGiacomo. He replaces Dave Prophet, who guided the 1992 Lasers to an 11-7-1 finish.

The young 1993 Nazareth squad finished last week with a 1-3 record. Their lone win came on Sept. 13 against visiting Geneva DeSales, 4-1.

"I'm in a developmental stage. Only four of our players play summer soccer," commented DiGiacomo, whose

roster features numerous freshmen and sophomores.

DeSales, meanwhile, is another team hoping for better days in the future. The Saints finished 0-13-1 last year and have begun this season with five straight losses.

"I take freshman first-time players and put them in along with the seniors. It's always a battle," commented Coach Greg Lavin.

Mercy has veteran leadership in abundance this year. Among the prominent seniors are sweeper Cassie Shea, forward Melanie Heeder, midfielder Jenny Smith, and defenders Shawna Selner and Beth Roberts.

Montesano, a striker, leads a strong list of juniors, including midfielder Danni LaMagna, goalie Kelly O'Neill and forward Tracy Green.

A future star is Abby Wambach, only an eighth-grader, who is already starting at midfield. Her sisters Beth and Laura are former standout athletes at Mercy.

Top returning Aquinas players are senior defenders April Baker, Katie Clendenning and Lynsey Hopkins; junior forward Tricia DiQuattro, and senior midfielder Julie May.

Other leading Little Irish are senior goalie Lynda Limma, freshman midfielder Jessica Parmalee, junior forward Katya Metidieri, sophomore defender Kelly Kocis, and senior forward Shelly Pagano.

AQ followed up its Sept. 16 loss to Mercy by reaching the finals of the Clarence Tournament in Buffalo. The Little Irish won 3-0 over Williamsville North on Sept. 17 before falling 2-1 in overtime to Clarence on Sept. 18.

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