

McQuaid, AQ swimmers are making big splash

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

February 10 can't come soon enough for the McQuaid Jesuit boys' swim team. That's when the Knights will have a chance to exact revenge on Wilson Magnet. The Wildcats handed McQuaid a 44-42 defeat on Jan. 18, saddling the Knights with their first loss of the season against six wins.

First-year Coach Marijo Phillips said that getting even with Wilson would be the season's crowning achievement for her club.

"That's their ultimate goal. Every meet, that's what they have in mind," said Phillips.

Two brother combinations are among the top McQuaid swimmers: Doug and Bryan Kazley, along with Chris and Andy Stirling.

Doug Kazley, a senior, competes in the 100-yard backstroke and 50 freestyle while Bryan, a junior, specializes in the 100 breaststroke and 50 free. The Stirling twins, both freshmen, feature Chris in the 500 free and 200 individual medley while Andy swims the 100 breast and 200 free.

Other McQuaid swimmers and their events include junior John Halligan, 200 free and 100 butterfly; junior Chris Downs, 500 and 200 free; senior Kieran Bezila, 50 and 100 free; freshman Mike Webb, 200 individual medley and 500 free; senior Joe Perry, 100 breast; freshman Aaron Sweeney, 50 free; and freshman Steve Bezila, 100 back.

Phillips, the former varsity swimming coach at Aquinas Institute, has replaced John Tobin at McQuaid. Tobin coached the Knights for 24 seasons before his retirement last year.

The 1993-94 Knights, noted Phillips, "have broken almost all of our school records. Almost all of them have met their mid-season goals."

Also enjoying a winning season thus far is Aquinas, which improved its record to 3-2 with a 52-26 victory over Harley Al-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

McQuaid Jesuit's John Halligan takes a deep breath as he makes his way toward winning the 500-meter freestyle during a meet held at Penfield High School Jan. 28. The Knights fell to the Chiefs 50-36.

lendale-Columbia last Thursday, Jan. 27. "This is an extremely talented bunch of kids," stated first-year Coach Jim Koch.

Event winners against H-A-C were: 200 medley relay — senior Steve Cudzilo, junior Kris Schramm, and sophomores Steve Martini and Jeff Conte; 200 individual medley — Conte; 100 fly — Martini; 500 and 200 free — freshman Todd Brown; 200 free relay — junior Willis Curtis, Conte, junior Wade Brown and Martini; 100 back — Cudzilo; 100 breast — Schramm; and 400

free relay — Todd Brown, freshman Elizabeth Rinaldi, Wade Brown and Curtis.

Remaining team members are sophomores Joe Curtis, Joe Kessler, Albert Gallmon, Linda Forward and Jeanine Hengstler; and freshmen Rachel Guay, Brian Quinn and Karlee Schramm.

Other sports highlights

The Aquinas Institute hockey team (10-6) earned a 3-1 win over host Batavia on Jan. 29. Mike Saporito, Matt Miller and

Dennis Annechino scored for the Little Irish.

In wrestling, Elmira Notre Dame's Adam Atwell (132 pounds) and Dan Wilson (167) each won their weight divisions at the Watkins Glen Tournament held Jan. 28-29. The Crusaders finished sixth among 20 schools in team scoring.

McQuaid Jesuit also competed in the Watkins Glen tourney, placing 12th. The Knights' top performer was John Zicari, who took second place at 138 pounds.

Cowboys receiver supports alma mater

\$30,000 donated by Michael Irvin

By Steve Paradis
Catholic News Service

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Dallas Cowboys all-pro wide receiver Michael Irvin started down a new path in life when he transferred to St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale in 1982.

And, by giving a \$30,000 endowment to his alma mater in memory of his father, Irvin hopes to help others down a new path.

"I will always be there for St. Thomas because St. Thomas was always there for me," he said in a phone interview from Dallas prior to his Cowboys' 30-13 Super Bowl XXVIII win over the Buffalo Bills on Jan. 30 in Atlanta.

"People need to support Catholic schools 2 million percent because they not only build a person up mentally and physically, but spiritually."

Irvin supported the Cowboys' win over Buffalo by catching five passes for 66 yards.

What young people need, he said, is a relationship with God and a chance to succeed.

"There's no better way to put it," Irvin told *The Florida Catholic*, newspaper of the Miami archdiocese. "Many kids just don't get the opportunity to excel. A lot of kids don't have a connection with the man upstairs."

Irvin, 27, had it rough at times. He

was the 15th of 17 children and was suspended from a public high school after his sophomore year.

His father, Walter Irvin, a roofer on weekdays and a traveling Baptist preacher on weekends, compared nonpublic schools and chose St. Thomas Aquinas.

Then the public school sued St. Thomas Aquinas to prevent the budding football star from playing sports in his first year at the Catholic school.

Irvin recalled that during that rough first year, coach George Smith told him, "Look, we believe you can be all you want to be ... maybe things aren't going to go your way. You can't get upset about things you can't control."

Smith then sent Irvin to see Father L. Yates Harris, school chaplain. The priest recalls the first conversation.

"Michael said, 'Coach Smith said you would be a good person to get to know, but I've never talked to a Catholic priest before,'" he said.

Father Harris told Irvin to talk with him like he would his own father.

"When I felt badly or lonely about not playing, he was always there," Irvin said of Father Harris. "I was his black son."

Their bond strengthened when Walter Irvin was diagnosed with cancer.

Almost every day, Irvin asked Father Harris to go to the hospital to see his dad.

When the elder Irvin died, Michael Irvin ran the three miles from home to St. Thomas Aquinas, appearing at Father Harris' door and saying, "You're now my white father" — a term Irvin still uses.

The school also was responsible for

breaking down the race issue for Irvin. Before St. Thomas Aquinas, he judged people along racial lines. The school taught him to view people as individuals, he said.

Irvin made good grades and excelled in athletics, setting school records with 59 receptions and 938 yards gained receiving. He got a football scholarship to the University of Miami, and played on national championship teams there. He's now won two Super Bowl rings with the Cowboys.

At Miami, Irvin would call Father Harris before games and say, "Don't forget to pray for me, Father." He still calls the priest before some Cowboys games.

He also used to wear a plastic image of the Sacred Heart in his sock that Father Harris gave him.

Although he hasn't done that lately, Irvin said, "I refuse to play a football game without going to Mass or to the chapel, without talking to God."

One student is in Irvin's scholarship program, and Irvin receives progress reports about the student. That student's younger siblings also go to St. Thomas Aquinas because of Irvin's example. Irvin's nephew, Derrick, graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas with a football scholarship to the University of Kansas.

"I want them to learn the same values I did at St. Thomas," he said.

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