

SPORTS FEATURE

All-around effort carries Monarchs past BK

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

When the opponent is Our Lady of Mercy, Jennifer Zambito doesn't have to dig very deep for motivation.

Prior to last Saturday's game at Mercy, no Bishop Kearney player had scored more than 18 points in a game all season. Yet the determination to beat Mercy raged through Zambito so strongly that she went out and scored 20 points in the first half alone, keeping her Kings within one point of their Private-Parochial League rivals at halftime.

But Mercy then revealed the depth and composure that has vaulted the Monarchs to two straight Section 5 Class A championships. With key contributions coming from several players, Mercy held Zambito to one second-half point and pulled away for a 56-39 triumph.

With the win, Mercy clinched at least a tie for the Private-Parochial championship. The Monarchs also won their 10th consecutive game, raising their overall record to 13-2.

Kearney, meanwhile, lost for the first time in six games as the Kings' record slipped to 13-3.

Mercy's tiny gymnasium was mobbed with screaming spectators, many of them hopeful Kearney fans who had seen the Kings take Mercy to the wire in a 39-33 loss at BK back on Jan. 11.

This game was another close one until the fourth quarter. Mercy achieved a 16-10 lead after one quarter, but Zambito, continually driving through a sea of Monarch players for spectacular lay-ups, notched 14 second-quarter points as BK drew within 27-26.

The third quarter featured several lead changes. It was still a one-point game when Zambito, a senior forward, picked up her fourth foul with 2:50 remaining.



Laurén McFalls/Photo intern

Our Lady of Mercy's Gina Montesano (left) attempts to dribble around Ryan Barry of Bishop Kearney Feb. 5 during the host Monarchs' 56-39 victory over the Kings.

It was all Mercy from that point on. Kearney went the equivalent of an entire quarter without scoring a basket, falling behind 40-34 at the quarter break and only netting five fourth-period points.

The Monarchs got an unexpected contribution from senior guard Cassie Shea, whose sharp outside shooting resulted in eight fourth-quarter points. She finished with 10 overall, easily surpassing her previous season high of four.

Kelly O'Neill was Mercy's top scorer

with 14 points, and Gina Montesano had 10. Other key performances came from Teresa Hartman, who finished with seven blocked shots; and Tricia Russell, who shut Zambito down after halftime.

"We were in a zone defense, and she (Zambito) was just killing it. So we went man-to-man and put our best defensive player (Russell) on her," said Mercy Coach Kathy Boughton.

BK's Kate Jensen finished with 12 points. She and Zambito accounted for

all but six of the Kings' final point total.

Mercy preceded the Kearney win by rolling to a 69-51 non-league victory over host Brockport last Tuesday, Feb. 1. Four Monarchs scored in double figures that night: Montesano, 19 points; Kerri Boroski, a season-high 17; O'Neill, 16; and Russell, 10.

More girls' hoops

Elmira Notre Dame (4-13) won back-to-back games for the first time this season by scoring a 40-31 decision over host Elmira Southside on Feb. 1.

Emily Violette was ND's leading scorer with 16 points, while Jen Weinman contributed a strong all-around effort with 10 points and 15 rebounds. The Crusaders held Southside to just 14 points over the first three quarters en route to achieving a season low for points allowed in a game.

"They're starting to come together. They realize they can play with anybody," remarked Coach John Burge.

Aquinas Institute (5-13), led by 10 points from Michelle DeMunck, scored a 45-38 win over host Harley Allendale-Columbia on Feb. 2. One day later, Jenny Werner paced AQ with 11 points in a 66-39 loss at Wilson Magnet.

Lindsay Higgins of Geneva DeSales (10-7) was the Saints' high scorer in all three games last week. First,

Higgins accounted for more than half of DeSales' points by scoring 20 in a 36-27 home win over Romulus on Jan. 31. She added 14 in a 71-35 road loss to Bloomfield on Feb. 1, and 16 in a 58-31 home loss to Honeoye on Feb. 3.

Traci Sergeant's 17-point effort led Nazareth Academy (6-9) in a 53-49 loss to visiting Wilson on Feb. 4. Amy Bohan then topped the Lasers with 15 during a 50-48 overtime defeat at Harley Allendale-Columbia on Feb. 4.

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