

Hot goaltending carries AQ over McQuaid

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

If he's required to endure this kind of pressure every game, Alex Vigneri might burn out long before his high-school days are over.

With a hockey program as strong as Aquinas Institute's, that isn't likely to happen. However, the sophomore goalie was put to the extreme test this past Saturday, Feb. 19.

Facing a relentless attack from AQ's chief rival, McQuaid Jesuit, Vigneri came up big. He stopped 37 of 38 shots — including several from close range — as the Little Irish scored a 3-1 victory over the Knights in a Section 5 Class A quarterfinal contest at Lakeshore Rinks in Greece.

Vigneri's performance was especially crucial since AQ players spent a large chunk of time in the penalty box, leaving Coach Dave Montgomery less than thrilled with the officiating.

"It seems like we were playing a man down the whole second and third periods. We were fighting two teams — McQuaid and the officials," Montgomery commented. "If it wasn't for Alex, we would have lost that game."

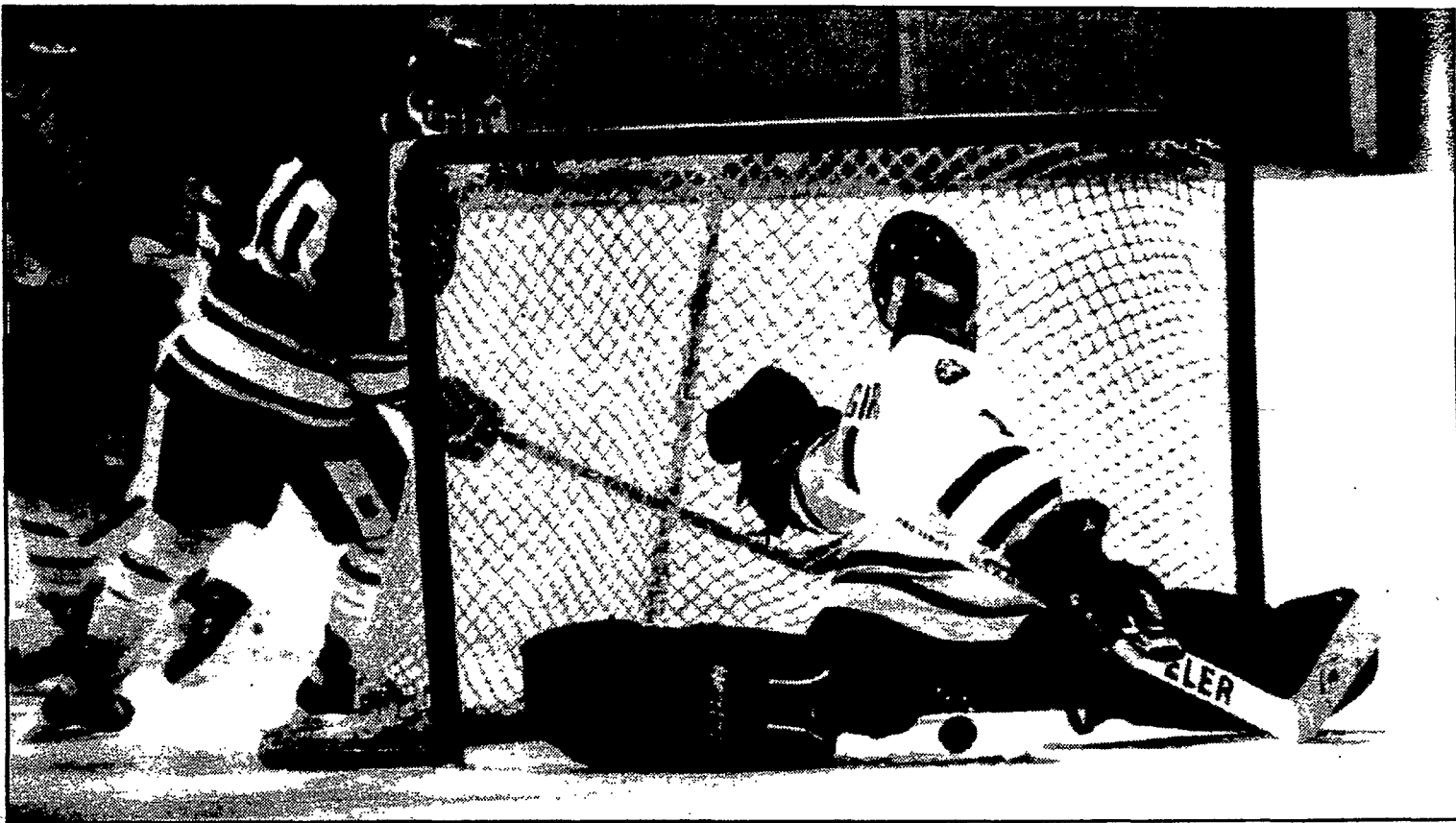
This marks the third straight year Aquinas and McQuaid have clashed in the sectional playoffs. AQ, the two-time defending Class A champ, defeated McQuaid in both the 1992 and 1993 finals.

The Little Irish raised their record to 13-8 with the win. McQuaid ended its season at 6-14-1.

AQ was scheduled to face Pittsford in a semifinal game on Feb. 23, with the winner playing either Greece or Batavia in the finals this Saturday, Feb. 26, at Rochester Institute of Technology's Ritter Arena (8 p.m. start).

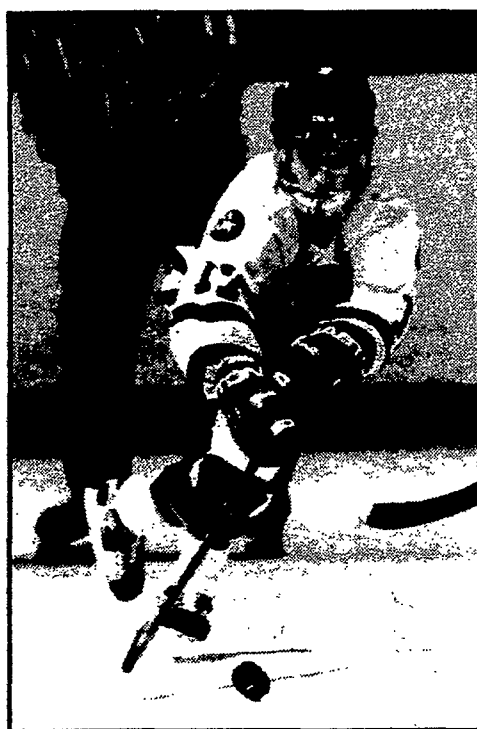
Also reaching sectional quarterfinal play last week was Bishop Kearney, which scored a 7-5 win over Batavia Notre Dame in Section 5 Class B first-round action on Feb. 17 at Lakeshore. The win featured two goals each by Dave Principe and Mike DeWind, as well as a four-assist effort from Charlie Nersinger.

However, the Kings' season was ended on Feb. 19 by Rush-Henrietta, 5-2, at Genesee Valley Ice Arena. BK's final record was 3-19.



Aquinas Institute's Alex Vigneri blocks a shot during a Section 5 playoff game against McQuaid Jesuit. The Little Irish overcame the Knights 3-1 at Lakeshore Rinks Feb. 19.

Lauren McFalls/Photo intern



Little Irish forward Brian Gionta carries the puck into Knights territory.

Aquinas, following a scoreless first period, took a 1-0 advantage with 1 minute, 10 seconds gone in the second period as Joe Gionta scored on assists from Jeff Camelio and Joe Zabawa.

AQ scored what proved to be the winning goal with 9:49 remaining in the second after Matt Miller intercepted McQuaid goalie Jake Eisenhauer's attempt to clear the puck to the corner. Miller quickly fed to Mike Callahan, who tipped a shot past Eisenhauer.

McQuaid cut its deficit in half when Mike Viscardi broke up ice and dished off to Nate Lukaszonas, who was left unprotected in front of the AQ goal and beat Vigneri with 1:56 remaining in the second.

The score stayed at 2-1 until Aquinas' Brian Gionta got the clincher with 1:20 left in the game on assists from Miller and Shane Kavanagh.

McQuaid held a 37-30 edge in shots on goal. Eisenhauer matched Vigneri's excellence most of the way, turning away 27 shots.

BK cheerleaders win

GENESEEO — Cheerleaders from Bishop Kearney High School captured first place at the Section 5 championships held Saturday, Feb. 5, at State University of New York College at Geneseo.

BK won the 14-school Class B division with 98.70 points, besting second-place Geneva's 96.57 score. Kearney's point total was also the highest among all eight sectional classifications entered in the competition.

The win marked Kearney's third sectional championship in Coach Mary Anne Walker's 14 years as varsity coach.

Other diocesan teams taking part in the event included Geneva DeSales, which placed fourth in Class DD; and Aquinas Institute, which took fifth in Class BB.

Basketball squads gain high seedings as playoffs begin

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Rematches involving last year's Section 5 Class A basketball finalists are looming as distinct possibilities.

And if this possibility becomes reality, you won't get any complaints from the Our Lady of Mercy girls or McQuaid Jesuit boys.

Mercy and McQuaid were both looking to defend their sectional championships as playoffs began this week. Mercy has earned the No. 2 sectional seed, while McQuaid is No. 4.

Mercy, with an overall record of 18-2, is going after its third consecutive Class A crown. The Monarchs have won their last 15 games.

However, an even hotter squad could well be the one battling it out with Mercy in the finals. Top-seeded Greece Athena — which the Monarchs defeated in a double-overtime thriller in the 1992-93 title game — posted a 20-0 regular-season record.

Mercy finished its 1993-94 regular season with a 57-32 win over Fairport on Feb. 15 at Roberts Wesleyan College. The Monarchs received a first-round bye and were scheduled to play either No. 7 Canandaigua or No. 10 Brockport in

quarterfinal action on Friday, Feb. 25, at Gates-Chili High School.

Although McQuaid is in the No. 4 position with a 14-6 record, the Knights have an excellent chance in one of the most wide-open fields ever for Class A boys. Second-seeded Fairport — a team the Knights defeated in the 1993 finals — is also 14-6, while Rush-Henrietta has gained the top seed despite having lost four regular-season games (16-4 overall).

The Knights, who ended their regular season with a 67-56 home win over East on Feb. 15, have also earned a first-round bye. McQ faces either No. 5 Webster or No. 12 Spencerport on Feb. 26 at the Rochester Community War Memorial.

More playoff pairings

Bishop Kearney's girls, touting a 17-3 record, have soared to the No. 2 seed in Section 5 Class BB. The Kings come into the playoffs on a high note, winning 45-28 at home over Harley Allendale-Columbia on Feb. 15.

BK received a first-round bye and will host either No. 7 Irondequoit or No. 10 Edison Tech on Feb. 26.

The Kearney boys also entered sectionals with a winning record. They ended their regular season at 11-7 after winning 35-34 at Aquinas Institute on Feb.

17 and losing 71-63 at Buffalo Turner Carroll on Feb. 19.

BK, the No. 3 seed in Section 5 Class B, was scheduled to face No. 14 Wayne on Feb. 23. The winner will play either No. 6 Dansville or No. 11 Honeoye Falls-Lima on Feb. 26.

The Aquinas boys (8-12), whose one-point loss to BK on Feb. 17 marked the first game ever played in the school's new athletic complex, are seeded No. 8 in Class BB. AQ was scheduled to play No. 9 Wilson Magnet on Feb. 22, with the winner facing top-seeded Franklin on Feb. 25.

AQ's girls (7-13) picked up the 12th seed in Section 5 Class BB and were scheduled for a first-round game against No. 5 Newark on Feb. 23. The winner plays No. 4 Churchville-Chili on Feb. 26. Aquinas suffered a 56-42 loss at Nazareth Academy on Feb. 15 to end the regular season.

Nazareth, meanwhile, was seeded 10th in Section 5 Class CC. The Lasers (7-12) were scheduled to play No. 7 Williamson on Feb. 23, with the winner opposing No. 2 Perry on Feb. 26. Nazareth's 14-point win over Aquinas last week marked a substantial turnaround from a 72-39 loss to the Little Irish back on Dec. 11.

The Geneva DeSales girls (10-10), despite losing their last five regular-season games, gained the No. 6 seed in Section 5 Class DD. DeSales was scheduled for a Feb. 23 meeting with No. 11 Romulus, with the winner playing No. 3 Avoca on Feb. 26.

The DeSales boys (5-15) were also hoping to reverse their fortunes this week. The Saints, seeded No. 11 in Section 5 Class DD, were scheduled to play No. 6 Scio on Feb. 22. The winner plays No. 3 Belfast on Feb. 25.

Elmira Notre Dame's boys (7-12) received the eighth seed in Section 4 Class D. The Crusaders were scheduled to play No. 9 Oxford on Feb. 22, with the winner advancing to play either No. 1 Greene or No. 16 Watkins Glen on Feb. 25.

The Notre Dame girls were the only diocesan basketball team not to qualify for sectional play. However, the Crusaders' final 1993-94 record of 4-16 was a noticeable improvement over their winless 1992-93 season.

EDITORS' NOTE: Win-loss records involving McQuaid, Aquinas, and Kearney reflect regular-season losses which became victories by forfeit after the Edison Tech boys' and girls' teams were penalized last week for using academically ineligible players.