

Lesser runs to state title

ITHACA — He needed four extra months, but McQuaid Jesuit distance runner Dan Lesser has finally accomplished a monumental goal: earning a state championship.

The McQuaid senior won the 3,200-meter event in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association indoor track meet. The competition was held Saturday, March 5, at Cornell University.

Lesser posted a time of 9 minutes, 32.8 seconds in winning McQuaid's first state indoor title since Brad Sumner in 1989.

"He beat a super-quality field," McQuaid Coach Dave Warth remarked. "The top kids in the state were there."

The victory helped make up for a disappointing experience at the state cross-country championships this past November in Newark. Lesser, considered one of the favorites, was beset by illness and struggled to a seventh-place finish.

In addition to his winning race at Cornell, Lesser ran on the Knights' 3,200 relay which placed second with a time of 8:08.1. Rounding out that relay were Jim Barnum, Adam Reitz and Shawn Watts.

Other Knights placing at the state meet were Shawn Watts, fifth in the 600 run; Greg Schlachter, 20th in the pole vault; and Tim Tyre, who ran on Section 5's inter-sectional relay which took seventh.

Aquinas Institute's Joe Hayes also placed at states, taking 17th in the shot put.

The indoor season will conclude this weekend when Lesser leads McQuaid into the National Scholastic Championships at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse.

— Mike Latona

College swim star wins five events at state meet

Kim Schneider, a standout swimmer from Nazareth College, captured an incredible five events at the New York State Women's Collegiate Athletic Association meet. The state competition was held in mid-February at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.

Schneider broke three school records at the meet, and has now won nine state titles over the past three seasons. Her 1994 state championships came in the following events: the 50-yard freestyle (24 seconds flat); 50 butterfly (:25.74); 200 free (1:53.11); 100 fly (:56.90); and 100 free (:52.24).

Schneider now advances to the NCAA Division III championships March 10-12 at Williams College in Massachusetts. She placed second at nationals last year in both the 100 fly and 100 free.

In other Nazareth College sports news, Bill Slape has become the ninth player in Golden Flyer men's basketball history to score 1,000 career points. The senior guard achieved the feat when he scored 24 points in an 83-78 loss at Rochester Institute of Technology on Feb. 15.

Finally, Nazareth's Diane Slocum, a senior guard for the Golden Flyer women's basketball team, has been named to the GTE-CoSIDA District I Academic All-American team. Slocum, a history major, carries a 3.69 grade-point average.

Mercy stopped by Athena in finals

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — It had the all-out hustle and crisp passing you'd expect to find in an Our Lady of Mercy basketball performance.

But the shooting? Ouch.

A 25-percent night from the field (18-for-72) provided an agonizing ending to the Monarchs' season. The myriad of misfires resulted in a 58-41 loss to Greece Athena in the Section 5 Class A championship game held Thursday, March 3, at the Rochester Community War Memorial.

"It was the worst night of shooting I've ever seen," Coach Kathy Boughton stated flatly. "I've never seen four of our five starters off like that."

The defeat prevented Mercy, the tournament's No. 2 seed, from capturing its third straight Class A crown. The Monarchs also had a 15-game winning streak snapped as they finished their 1993-94 season with a 20-3 record.

Top-seeded Greece Athena (23-0) used a strong transition game and considerable height

advantage to avenge a 72-66 double-overtime loss to the Monarchs in last year's finals.

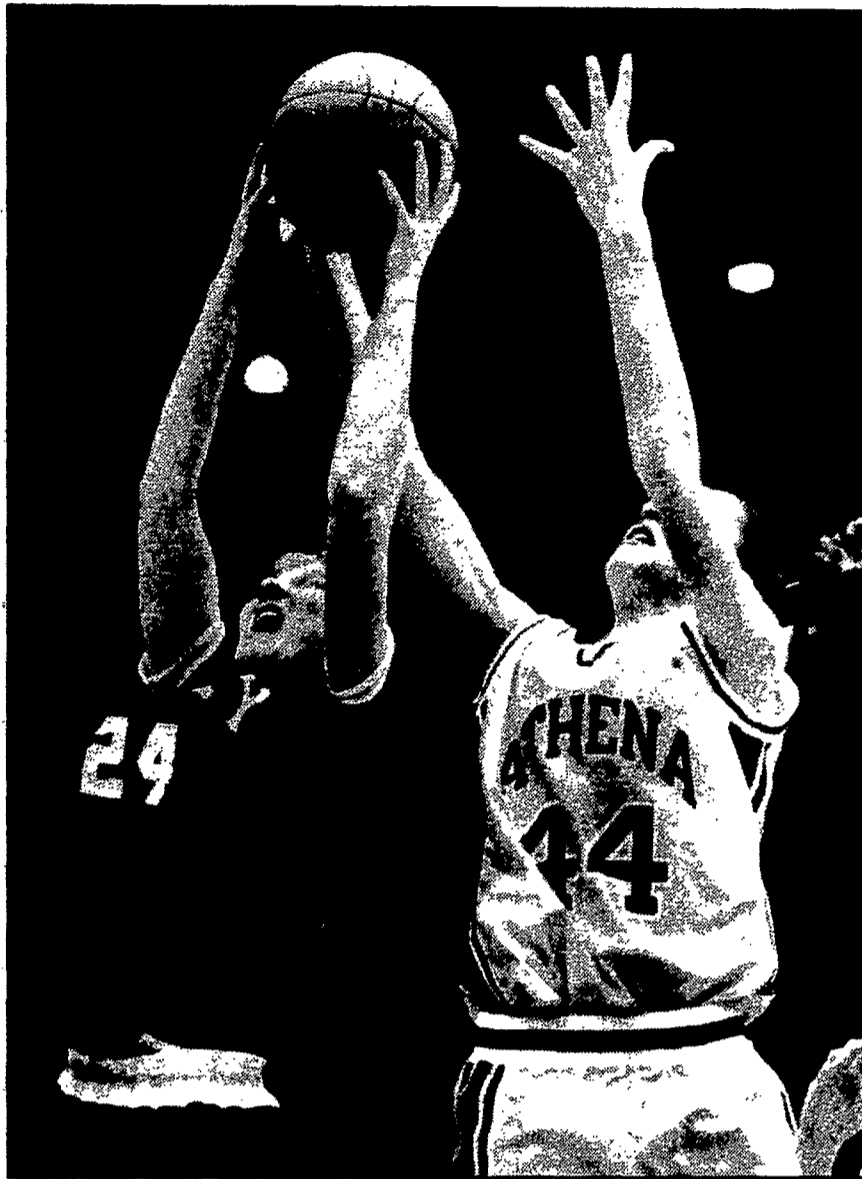
Mercy never led in the title contest, falling behind 9-2 at the outset and 17-12 after one quarter.

Two free throws by forward Kelly O'Neill drew the Monarchs to within three points early in the second period, but Athena went on a 12-point run to go up 29-14. An O'Neill basket with 12

seconds to go provided Mercy with its only other points of that quarter, making the score 29-16 at halftime.

The Monarchs' deficit fluctuated between 13 and 15 points for most of the third period, before a seven-point Athena surge to close out the quarter extended the Trojans' lead to 46-26.

Despite the 20-point hole, the Monarchs refused to roll over and die. Consecutive three-pointers from guards



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Our Lady of Mercy's Kelly O'Neill (left) and Amy Drechsler of Greece Athena battle for a rebound during the Section 5 Class A championship girls' basketball game held March 3 at the Rochester Community War Memorial. The Monarchs fell to the Trojans, 58-41.

Cassie Shea and Gina Montesano, along with two baskets by O'Neill, provided Mercy with 10 straight points and chopped the deficit in half, 46-36. So, with 5:20 still remaining, the house was rocking as Mercy fans sensed a comeback of epic proportions.

Yet Athena quickly snuffed out that possibility by reeling off 10 unanswered points of its own for an insurmountable 56-36 edge with 1:44 to go.

Boughton observed that although her team wore Athena down, it could not overcome the Trojans' size and talent.

"They (Athena) were tired, but they have too many weapons," Boughton remarked.

O'Neill, a junior forward, had a great all-around night with 18 points and 12 rebounds. She shot 8-for-12 from the field.

However, the remaining Monarchs only went 10-for-60. Montesano, the team's leading regular-season scorer, suffered through a 3-for-21 night and collected seven points; and another high-scoring guard, Kerri Boroski, shot 2-for-11 to finish with four points.

Athena was led by 6-foot-2-inch forward Amy Drechsler and 5-foot-10

guard Kendra Damann, who matched O'Neill with 18 points each.

Despite the defeat, Boughton said she was happy with Mercy's season-long effort which culminated in another title-game appearance.

"A lot of people didn't expect us to be here because we lost (1992-93 stars) Mimi (LaMagna) and Amy (Martin)," Boughton commented. "So I'm pleased that we made it back."

Cardinal women reach final 16

PITTSFORD — The St. John Fisher women's basketball team is now the only undefeated Division III college squad — either men or women — in the country.

The Lady Cardinals will strive to preserve their season-long winning streak for four more games. If they succeed, they will bring Phil Kahler his first national championship in 20 years as Fisher's head coach.

Fisher advanced to the NCAA Division III tournament's final field of 16 with a 68-63 second-round home win over SUNY College at Geneseo (25-3) on Saturday, March 5. Senior guard Becky Armstrong

led the way with 26 points as the Cardinals raised their record to 28-0.

The Fisher women are scheduled to return to action on Friday, March 11, when they travel to Columbus, Ohio, to face Defiance College (24-2).

Meanwhile, the Fisher men's basketball team was knocked out of NCAA play in the second round by Albany State, 84-72, on March 5 at Albany.

The Cardinals' high scorer was sophomore forward-center Adam Moore, who poured in 25 points. Fisher ended the year with a 22-5 record, while Albany improved to 24-2.

Junior high cheerleaders earn several top-10 finishes

IRONDEQUOIT — Cheerleaders from Northeastern Junior High School, 125 Kings Highway S., performed well at the CYO eighth-grade individual tournament held Jan. 22 at Holy Cross School in Rochester.

Finishing in first place from Northeastern were Paula DiGuardi and Car-

olyn Griffith. Every other team member placed in the top 10 as well, including: Katie Tytler, third place; Carrie Sadler and Lauren Muccino, tied for fourth; Beth Enes and Lana Scialo, tied for fifth; Liz Hutchinson, sixth; Christine Perlo, eighth; and Amanda Zaleski and Missy Torres, tied for 10th.

CYO basketball coach achieves 300th career victory

CANANDAIGUA — A temporary end to Dick O'Donnell's 17-year retirement proved successful.

O'Donnell, who had retired after the 1976-77 season with 299 victories as a Catholic Youth Organization basketball coach, recently came back to guide the

St. Mary's CYO team for one game in an effort to gain his 300th career win.

O'Donnell's club rose to the occasion by putting together a 77-66 victory over St. Francis/St. Stephen of Geneva. The game was held at the St. Mary's gymnasium.

Kazley to swim in two events at state championship meet

Doug Kazley, a senior swim star from McQuaid Jesuit, has advanced to state competition in two events.

Kazley qualified for states in the 100-yard backstroke and 50 freestyle after excelling at the Section 5 state qualifier held Saturday, March 5, at the University of Rochester.

The state championships will take place this coming Friday and Saturday, March 11-12, at Nottingham High School in Syracuse.

Kazley's achievements at the March 5 qualifier included a second-place showing in the 100 backstroke, during which he posted a time of 54.45 seconds after having won the event at the Section 5 Class A championships one week earlier. Fairport's Ryan Prosser finished first in the state qualifier with a :52.84 clocking, and Eastridge's Ian Stringer was third in :55.35.

Although Kazley finished sixth in the 50 free at the qualifying meet, he moves on to states because his time of :22.26 met pre-determined qualifying standards.