

# Relentless Monarchs reach 12-1

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Even against outclassed opponents, Our Lady of Mercy has played like a team on a mission.

Which, if you go back to last winter, is an apt description of the Monarchs' mind-set.

Still burning in Mercy's psyche is a 58-41 loss to Greece Athena in the Section 5 Class A championship game.

"It was kind of disappointing to go in there and shoot 18-for-72," Coach Kathy Boughton remarked.

Boughton said the Athena loss has fueled her veterans to perform at peak capacity this season as they attempt to bring home Mercy's third sectional crown in four years.

With a 12-1 record, a nine-game winning streak and average victory margins of 25 points in their last six games, Boughton said, "You would think your kids would be more complacent — but mine don't seem to be."

Complacency was certainly not evident when Mercy met Private-Parochial League foe Bishop Kearney last Tuesday, Jan. 17. Although both squads entered the contest with 9-1 marks, it was all Monarchs as they stormed to a 43-13 halftime lead en route to a 75-41 victory at Mercy.

Gina Montesano's hustle provided the Monarchs' biggest spark. The senior guard, headed for the University of Pittsburgh next season, scored 23 points and added several steals and assists.

Actually, the biggest dilemma facing Boughton these days is how to get the entertaining Montesano more playing time when the game's score becomes quickly lopsided.

"It's not fair to take her out after one quarter. She's a senior and she's worked too hard," Boughton remarked.

Mercy's other high scorers last Tuesday were Kelly O'Neill with 11 points and Abby Wambach with nine. Shannon Hogan was tops for Kearney with a nine-point outing.

Weekend action saw more Mercy success as the Monarchs won their own tournament held at Nazareth College. They defeated Mount Mercy of Buffalo, 57-41, on Jan. 20; and won 61-38 over Wellsville the following night.

O'Neill, a senior forward, scored a



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Bishop Kearney's Ryan Barry (22) gets off a pass under pressure from Our Lady of Mercy's Danni LaMagna (12) and Kelly O'Neill. The Monarchs defeated the visiting Kings, 75-41, on Jan. 17.

season-high 26 points in the Mount Mercy game. Montesano led the Monarchs against Wellsville with 20.

## More hoops highlights

BK's girls (10-2) bounced back from the Mercy loss with a 58-50 home victory over Rush-Henrietta on Jan. 20 as freshman Shannon Rene poured in a season-best 24 points.

Elmira Notre Dame's boys (11-4) gained a 67-58 Sullivan Trail Conference win over host Hornell on Jan. 17 behind a season-high 20 points from Mike Valeant. Joel Stephens added 16

as ND improved its conference record to 6-1.

Notre Dame's girls (5-10) also topped Hornell with a 63-49 road win on Jan. 18. Emily Violette scored 16 points, and Christie Garwood and Liz Buckley had 15 each as the Crusaders far exceeded their previous high single-game point total (49) of 1994-95.

Aquinas Institute's girls (5-7) used a balanced effort to post a 53-37 win at Franklin on Jan. 17. Jenny Werner topped the Little Irish with 11 points, and four other AQ players finished with at least seven points each.

# Fueled by faith, Charger coach is a big winner

By Tracy Walsh  
Catholic News Service

SAN DIEGO — The change in the San Diego Chargers from being mediocre to becoming a Super Bowl team is due in large part to its Catholic head coach, Bobby Ross.

Success is no stranger to Ross, 58, who first made football history in 1984 when he led the University of Maryland from a 31-0 halftime deficit a 42-40 defeat of top-10 team Miami. He's hoping for a similar odds-defying game this coming Sunday, Jan. 29, when his Chargers take on the heavily favored San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl XXIX at Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami.

Ross went on to turn around Georgia Tech's lagging program, leading the Yellowjackets to their first-ever national championship and conference title in 1990 as the only unbeaten team in the nation.

Ross, however, refuses to take credit for the amazing success his teams have achieved time and again. His sense of humility has taken him all the way from playing football at St. Paul Elementary School and later at Benedictine High School in his hometown of Richmond, Va.

New York Jets quarterback Boomer Esiason, who played for Ross at Maryland, said, "Everywhere he goes he wins. There is something about him that creates wins."

He added, "He's a human being first and a football coach second. Some coaches become callous but he never did and he treated everyone on the team — whether it was the star or the 110th guy as a walk-on — with the same respect."

Ross credits his success to his strong Catholic faith.

"There's a lot of pressure in coaching," he told the *Southern Cross*, San Diego's diocesan newspaper, in a 1993 interview.

"At Maryland we lost our first two games (in 1982). We were picked to be very good, but we weren't really. We had Boomer and that was it."

"We were on the way to West Virginia for the third game and I just kind of said, 'Hey, God, it's in your hands,' and when you finally let loose and really believe that, you don't get let down."

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