

Victory!

Streaking Knights secure sectional crown

McQ heads on to 'A' regional

By Mike Latona
Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — Those two fourth-quarter jams would have done Rob Norris proud in any slam-dunk contest.

Known more for slick ball-handling skills, the 6-foot-3 Norris had a simple explanation for his electrifying acrobatics.

"Five thousand people, you know?," he said with a grin, referring to the throng gathered in the Rochester Community War Memorial.

Not to mention several thousand more who viewed WROC TV-8's live broadcast of Norris and his prime-time performing McQuaid Jesuit teammates.

Despite being seeded No. 5 in the tournament, the Knights continued their convincing late-season surge by stopping second-seeded Rush-Henrietta, 77-65, in the Section 5 Class A title game on Saturday evening, March 4.

McQuaid upped its record to 16-8 with its fifth straight triumph. The Knights had reached the finals with a 52-48 nail-biter over top-seeded Greece Olympia on March 1 at the War Memorial.

This marked McQ's fifth sectional victory in nine years under Coach Joe Marchese, who now has a 5-0 record in title games. Saturday's win also avenged a 63-54 loss to Rush-Henrietta in last year's Class A semifinal round.

Next up for the Knights is a date with undefeated Niagara Falls LaSalle, the Section 6 champ, in a state quarterfinal contest on Saturday, March 11. That game will take place at the War Memorial with an 8:45 p.m. start. The winner will advance to the state Final



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

McQuaid Jesuit forward Ben Wandtke (center) goes up for a rebound under pressure from Cordell Watkins and Darrell Cox of Rush-Henrietta during the Section 5 Class A title game at the Rochester Community War Memorial. The Knights scored a 77-65 win over the Royal Comets.

Four the following weekend in Glens Falls.

Norris, a senior, scored 10 fourth-quarter points against R-H and finished with 22 for the game. Meanwhile, sophomore center Chris Fox totaled 27 points to net tournament MVP honors while senior forward Ben Wandtke also had a big night with 18.

McQuaid started slowly, trailing 17-9; but the Knights used a 20-9 second quarter to go up 31-26 at halftime. Norris closed the half with an exclamation point, hitting nothing but net on his three-point buzzer-beater from deep in the corner. He then started out the third quarter with a tip-in off a perfect alley-oop pass from Tim Schwalm.

Those two plays came during a 9-0 run that broke a 26-26 tie, and the Royal Comets could get no closer than seven points the rest of the way.

In the Olympia game, McQuaid hit 10 of its 13 fourth-quarter free throws to maintain the slight lead it held through most of the second half. Fox and Wandtke led the Knights with 17 and 16 points, respectively.

McQuaid's upcoming game against LaSalle will give the Knights another chance to even an old score. The Explorers eliminated McQ in the 1993 state quarterfinals, 46-45.

As the Knights prepare to face LaSalle, Marchese holds cautious optimism regarding his team's chances against the state's No. 3-ranked team.

"LaSalle's a lot like Franklin. They're small and quick, so I hope we can play well against them," Marchese remarked.

Similar to Franklin? Hmmmm ... the Knights defeated the Quakers 95-73 in their final regular-season meeting, so McQuaid fans might be wise to start checking out next weekend's hotel availability in the Glens Falls area.

Kings ascend Class B throne once more with 82-57 win

By Mike Latona
Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — You know the people who worry themselves sick about an upcoming final, only to ace the exam? Ed Nietopski and Kevin Goode might fall into that category.

Entering last Friday's Section 5 Class B title game, Nietopski said he "was more concerned than the kids were" — except maybe for Goode, who admitted to being "nervous coming in."

Well, the junior guard wound up being one of the most nervous tournament MVPs ever.

And a 25-point win by the Kings did a nice job of soothing Nietopski's anxieties.

"I guess I worry too much," the veteran coach chuckled.

Goode spearheaded an inspired defensive effort, while BK's potent offense helped motor the Kings to an 82-57 win over Geneva for their second consecutive Section 5 Class B title. The championship game was played last Friday, March 3, at the Rochester Community War Memorial.

BK, the tournament's No. 1 seed, had reached the finals with a 78-49 blowout of No. 4 Dansville on Feb. 28 at the War Memorial. The win over No. 6 Geneva upped Kearney's season record to 20-3.

It also gave BK a long-anticipated matchup with Class BB champ Pittsford Sutherland, whom the Kings upset in last year's Class B finals. That state-qualifying game was scheduled for March 8, with the winner taking on either Olean or Hutchinson Tech of Section 6 in a state Class B quarterfinal contest this

Saturday, March 11, at 2:45 p.m. at the War Memorial.

BK never gave Geneva a chance last Friday, hitting its first four shots from the field for a 9-0 advantage less than 90 seconds into the game. The Kings led 25-8 at quarter's end.

"The first quarter is the most important quarter, as far as I'm concerned," commented senior forward Adam Randall, who fueled the opening-period surge with 10 points.

Although the Panthers did draw to within 11, 44-33, just before halftime, Kearney scored 26 of the next 36 points

for a 70-43 edge after three quarters.

Randall — who was limited to less than three minutes of action against Dansville after enduring a first-quarter cut on his head — came back strong Friday for a team-high 22 points. Goode was the high man against Dansville with 17.

Ultimately, though, Kearney's greatest weapon is not any one or two players. BK's remaining starters also made valuable contributions against Geneva: Vernon Banks, 18 points and eight rebounds; Patrick Goode, 12 points and eight rebounds; and Mark Jensen, seven points and 14 boards.

ND stopped in Section 4 finals

BINGHAMTON — He sports the same last name, same hairless scalp and same uniform number (33). He was the tallest player on the floor.

At this point, Elmira Notre Dame was hoping comparisons would cease between Shafi Abdul-Jabbar and ex-NBA great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Notre Dame got its wish for 16 minutes, yet ultimately Abdul-Jabbar was the main reason the Crusaders exited the Broome County Arena without a Section 4 title last Saturday, March 4.

ND held Deposit's center scoreless while forging a 22-22 halftime tie, but Abdul-Jabbar racked up 20 second-half points as the Lumberjacks scored a 59-52 win in the sectional 4 Class D finals.

Notre Dame, seeded third, had

reached the title game with a 75-56 semifinal win over No. 2 Milford on March 1 at the Arena. Saturday's loss to No. 1 Deposit gave ND a final record of 17-8.

In the opening minutes against Deposit, the Crusaders appeared upset-minded as they bolted to an 11-4 lead before the Lumberjacks used an 8-1 run for a 12-12 tie. The score was still knotted at halftime, 22-22.

Following a technical foul by Abdul-Jabbar early in the third quarter, ND's Joel Stephens reeled off two free throws and a three-point basket to break a 26-26 tie and put the Crusaders up by five. But the Lumberjacks answered with seven straight points to take the lead for good, 33-31.

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