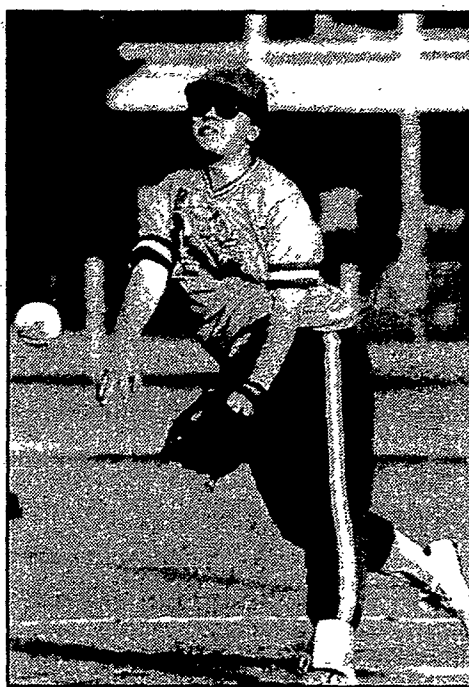
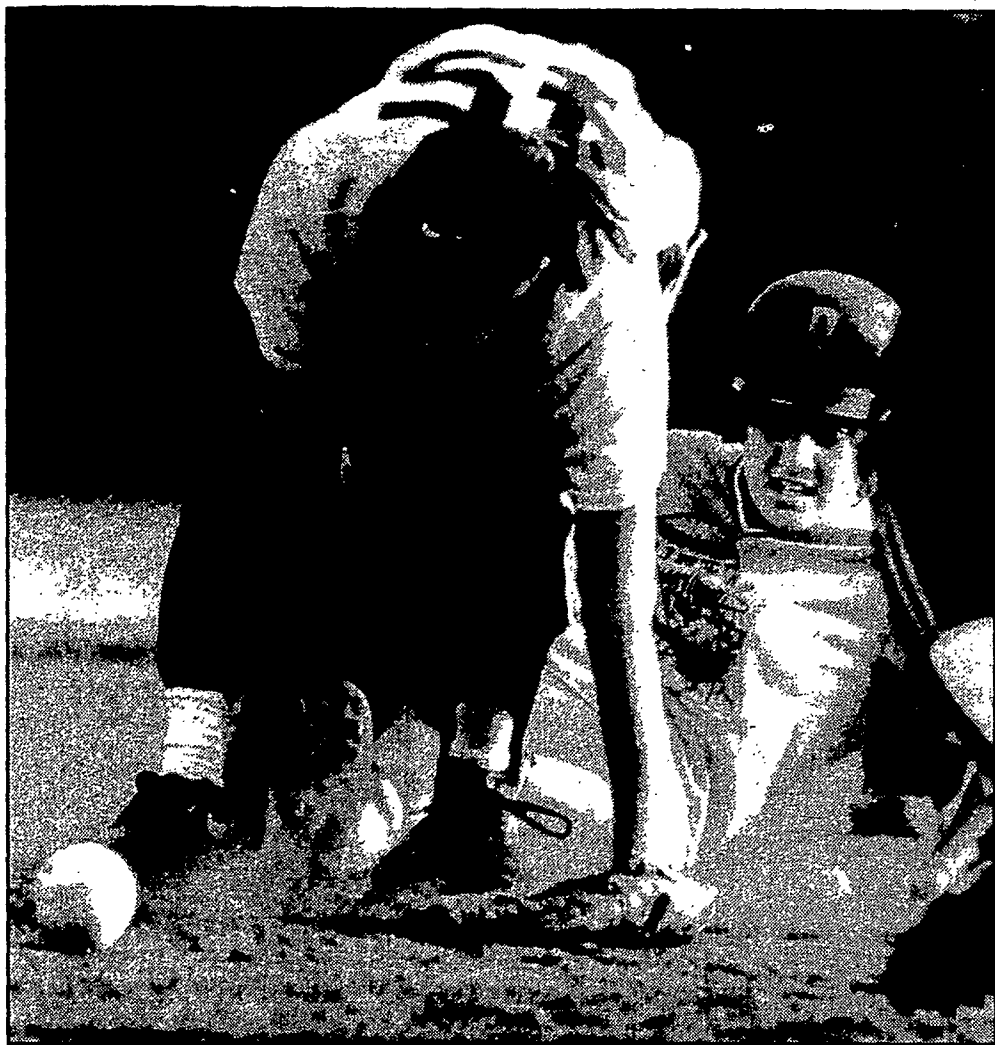


## DeSales: big winners



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

(Photo at left) Becky Balsley slides safely into second base as the ball rolls away from Elba's Martha Cassidy during a sixth-inning rally by DeSales. (Above) Hurler Melanie Chelenza's strong pitching performance against the Lancers enabled the Saints to earn a 6-2 victory and their first-ever sectional softball title.

## Comeback kids bring home title

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

HORNELL — Not until she'd thrown her last pitch did Melanie Chelenza finally remove her sunglasses.

"I have contacts (lenses). The sun irritates my contacts and makes it seem like the world is upside down," Chelenza explained.

Last week, it was Chelenza and her teammates who turned scores upside down by rallying for the two biggest softball wins of their lives.

So, as Chelenza clutched the ball used for the game's final out, the Geneva DeSales sophomore took a few exhilarating moments to enjoy her well-deserved day in the sun.

Her opponents, however, received a little too much sun.

Chelenza's teammates took full advantage of two glare-related miscues by Elba in a five-run, sixth-inning rally. The end result: a 6-2 victory for DeSales, and the first Section 5 softball championship in school history.

DeSales' title-game heroics — staged last Friday, June 9 at Hornell High School — marked the Saints' second come-from-behind win last week. DeSales, seeded No. 2 in Class D, reached the finals against No. 1 Elba with an amazing rally June 6: down 3-0 against No. 3 Prattsburg, DeSales scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh and final inning for a 4-3 win at Hornell.

"The whole game, everyone said, 'We can win, we can win,'" Chelenza said of the Prattsburg victory.

Junior catcher Emily Krakowiak also vouched for the Saints' never-say-die attitude, saying, "We know how to pull each other back up."

In the finals, DeSales allowed single runs in the first and second innings before scoring once in the third. The score remained 2-1 until the pivotal sixth inning — when a bright, sinking sun took a direct toll on the left side of the Elba defense.

Chelenza began the rally with a single, and Theresa Patrick reached base on a fielder's choice. Bridget Buckley's single brought home pinch-runner Becky Balsley with the tying run, and pinch-hitter Heather Pike gave DeSales its first lead with another RBI single.



DeSales' Kelly Van Sickle embraces Melanie Chelenza after the final out is recorded in the sectional finals. The Saints earned their title last week with come-from-behind wins over Prattsburg and Elba.

The score became 4-2 when Lancer shortstop Missy Bieber could not locate Melissa Liberatore's pop-up. Then Krakowiak delivered a shot that left fielder Kathy Riggs hesitated slightly on; by the time she reacted, the ball was over her glove and Krakowiak was the proud owner of a two-run double.

Chelenza then blanked the Lancers in the sixth and seventh innings to preserve the win. She allowed only two earned runs in three sectional games and tossed a seven-hitter Friday.

"She went all out. She had the speed and the accuracy — if I asked for a strike, she gave me a strike," Krakowiak said of Chelenza's June 9 performance.

Meanwhile, Krakowiak netted tournament MVP honors. She went 3-for-4 in the title game and hit a team-leading .491 for the season.

Three days prior to the Elba win, it was Krakowiak's sacrifice fly which brought home Liberatore with the winning run against Prattsburg. Other key plays in the rally were Liberatore's two-run single which cut DeSales' deficit to

3-2, and Allison Hilberer's squeeze bunt which scored Balsley with the tying run.

DeSales' final 1995 record was 15-5. According to Coach Vic Harris, the Saints' comeback ability was heightened by its off-season dedication to the sport.

"This began last June. They played last July and August, and they were in the gyms from January to March," said Harris. "We talked about this from day one. We did too much and we were not going to let it fall apart."

## Summer sports camps available for youths

The *Catholic Courier* has been notified of the following summer sports camps available to Rochester-area youths:

•**Aquinas Institute Boys' Basketball Camp:** sessions will be held for: grades 4-8 — June 26-July 7, 8-11 a.m.; grade 9 — June 26-July 7, noon-3 p.m.; and grades 10-12 — July 10-21, noon-3 p.m. The camp will take place in AQ's Wegman-Napier Center, 1127 Dewey Ave.

Michael Dianetti, athletic director and head boys' basketball coach at Aquinas, will direct the camp. For further details, call him at 716/458-5900 or 436-0435.

•**McQuaid Jesuit Baseball Camp:** McQuaid Jesuit High School, 1800 Clinton Ave. S., Brighton.

The camp is open to boys and girls ages 8-13. There will be three sessions to choose from: June 26-30; July 3-8 (no camp July 4); and July 10-14. Sessions will run from 9 a.m. to noon each day.

Serving as camp instructor will be Tim Jordan, former head baseball coach and current athletic director at McQuaid. For registration information, contact Jordan at 716/473-1130.

•**Nazareth Schools Basketball Camp:** June 26-30, at Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., Rochester.

Morning sessions, from 9 a.m.-noon, will be for boys and girls entering grades 4-7. Afternoon sessions, from 12:30-3:30 p.m., are for girls entering grades 8-12.

Cost is \$50 per person. The camp will be conducted by Chris Belmont, head varsity coach and physical education instructor at Nazareth Academy; and David Simon, physical education instructor at Nazareth Hall. For details, call Belmont at 716/647-8721.

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