

# On the MOVE

## State soccer mania!

Story by Mike Latona

Photo by John Powell

**A**n already great season is getting even better for three Catholic high-school soccer teams in Monroe County. In light of that, *On the Move* is devoting this week to the following accounts of their latest successes.

The boys' and girls' squads from Aquinas Institute, along with the Bishop Kearney boys, are all on the verge of state championships. Each team won its last two games to advance to state semifinal play, with Final Four games looming over the next few days.

Aquinas' girls won 3-0 over Williamsville East on Friday, Nov. 10, to move into the state Class B semis. The Little Irish, with a record of 20-2-1, will face Burnt Hills (Albany) on Friday, Nov. 17, at 1 p.m. at Webster High School. The state final will take place the following day. AQ is shooting for its first-ever state title after losing in the finals in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

AQ's boys reached the state Class B Final Four with a 2-1 shootout win over East Aurora on Nov. 11. The Little Irish (18-2-3) are set to face Manhasset (Long Island) at 3:45 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 18, at Liverpool High School near Syracuse. The title game is Nov. 19. This is AQ's first trip to the state semifinals since 1992.

Kearney continued its post-season streak with a 3-0 Class C quarterfinal win over Buffalo City Honors on Nov. 11. The Kings (21-2-0) will face North Salem (Albany) at 11:15 a.m. on Nov. 18 at Liverpool High School, with the title game one day later. Earlier this month, BK won the first Section 5 boys' soccer title in school history.

### AQ girls 3, Williamsville East 0

The 2000 season began on a sour note when Aquinas lost its star forward, Lindsay Bach, to a year-ending knee injury. But, as forward Kristin Lawson said, "Different people have stepped up."

That's an understatement. Talent has come from everywhere, especially from underclassmen, landing Aquinas into the state Final Four for the fourth consecutive year.

Lawson, a sophomore, scored the opening goal in the state quarterfinal game against Williamsville East. Two freshmen, Mary Palermo and Lindsay Kulas, had the other goals. And freshman goalie Allison Sharpe picked up the shutout.

"I thought they'd just come in and help out a little. But they've responded with a lot of confidence," said Coach Gary Page of his young stars.

Aquinas reached the quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over Livonia in state qualifier play on Nov. 7. The Irish got goals from senior Erin McConnell and yet another freshman, Lauren Popovich.



Erin McConnell, No. 2, and Lauren Popovich, No. 5, of Aquinas' Tera Galante, No. 1, for the ball Nov. 10.

AQ's scoring has been extremely balanced: senior Sarah Elnicky has 11 goals to lead the team, and six other Little Irish have scored at least five goals. Sharpe has logged 17 shutouts.

### AQ boys 2, E. Aurora 1

Junior goalie Bobby Marsala starred on both ends of the field in AQ's state quarterfinal win. He made two crucial saves during the shootout, then kicked the clinching penalty shot to extend the Irish season at least one more game.

AQ's only goal during regulation came from senior Eric Lauricella in the first half, giving his team a 1-0 lead. Coach Joe LaPietra noted that his team dominated the game, outshooting East Aurora 27-13 — including 10-2 in overtime.

"It was just a matter of putting the ball in the net," LaPietra said.

Aquinas had advanced to the state quarterfinals with a 4-0 win over Hornell in a qualifying game on Nov. 7. The Irish were led by two goals from Lauricella, and one each from seniors Tim Cupello and Tyler Ferrara.

AQ's leading scorer this year is Ferrara, with 22 goals, while Marsala has recorded 14 shutouts. Aquinas has allowed just one goal in its last eight games.

The Irish's only previous trip to the state Final Four came in 1992 when LaPietra's brother Gary was the head coach.

### BK boys 3, City Honors 0

Kearney was entrenched in a 0-0 halftime tie in its state quarterfinal contest, but second-half goals by senior Mike Bates, sophomore Kamil Witkowski and junior Halil Yollu made the difference. Meanwhile, junior goalie Severyn Makuch logged his 18th shutout of the year.

The Kings have now outscored their opposition 136-8 as they continue adding to the success of their best boys' soccer season ever.

"The players are very well skilled and have come in here with tremendous knowledge," Coach Bill McKee said.

Kearney had advanced to the state quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over Naples on Nov. 8 in a qualifying contest. Yollu and Ken Hastings each scored goals in ousting Naples, which was the defending state Class C champ.

Season statistics show Yollu with 32 goals and 12 assists; Witkowski, with 26 goals and 14 assists; and sophomore Cihan Nuhoglu, with 22 goals and 22 assists. Meanwhile, Makuch has recorded a school-record 18 shutouts thus far.

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COMING NEXT WEEK: Giving thanks

### Nazareth girls win sectional

Nazareth Academy ended the 2000 girls' volleyball season with the best finish in school history, winning the Section 5 Class CC title and advancing to the state Class C quarterfinals.

The Lasers won the sectional crown on Nov. 3 by sweeping Attica, 15-13, 15-9, 15-4. It was the school's first sectional volleyball title.

Last Wednesday, Nov. 8, the Lasers outlasted Letchworth in state qualifier play, 15-13, 5-15, 15-8, 14-16, 15-10. Nazareth's win over the Indians was led by sophomore Megan Dahlman, who had 28 kills.

Nazareth's season then came to a close with a 15-1, 15-1, 15-2 loss to Eden of Section 6 in state quarterfinal play Nov. 11. Despite the defeat, it was a tremendously successful year for the Lasers, who posted a final record of 13-4. Nazareth also finished 5-1 in Private-Parochial League play, tying for the league crown with Aquinas.

"A lot of it had to do with team chemistry at the end of the season," Coach Mike Hamden said of the Lasers' recent success. Nazareth's leading players were Dahlman, who set a school record with 452 kills during the year; senior Cathy Brant, with 88 aces and a school-record 621 assists; juniors Erin Magas and Tegan Fidor, with 52 and 46 blocks respectively; and senior back-row specialists Nichole Usher and Tina Davis.



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