

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Aquinas girls earn improbable state soccer title

### Elmira ND's Huddle wins in cross-country

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

**BROCKPORT** — When you follow a state-championship year with a sub-.500 regular season, the notion of another state title is, to put it mildly, a stretch.

In fact, no team in the history of state Class B girls' soccer had performed such a turnaround — until now.

Aquinas Institute began post-season play with a 6-7-1 record. But the team went 8-for-8 when it really counted, and the Little Irish are once more state champs.

"I just didn't think we could pull this thing off. Eight straight wins, I was thinking, 'How am I going to sell that to the girls?'" remarked Gary Page, AQ's head coach.

Yet there was Page, shouting "Unbelievable — this team is unbelievable!" as the final horn sounded to clinch Aquinas' 2-0 title-game victory over Westhill of Section 3.

The contest was held Nov. 17 at Brockport High School. Aquinas won four Section 5 playoff games, and four more contests in state-tournament play, to post a final record of 14-7-1.

Individual title success came from Elmira Notre Dame's Molly Huddle, who earned the distinction as best female cross-country athlete in New York by winning the state federation meet Nov. 17. The race featured the finest runners from all four enrollment classifications (A, B, C and D).

A state crown may also be just around the corner for Aquinas football, which powered to a 28-0 win over Pioneer of Section 6 on Nov. 17. The Class A quarterfinal victory puts the Irish (10-1) into a semifinal matchup against Christian Brothers Academy of Section 3 on Friday, Nov. 23, at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse (11 a.m. start).

Aquinas was one of two girls' soccer teams from Catholic high schools in the diocese to go deep into the state tournament. However, *Our Lady of Mercy* (23-1) saw its bid for a perfect season end when it lost to Monroe-Woodbury of Section 9, 1-0, in a Class A semifinal Nov. 16.

By drawing Westhill in the state title game, the Aquinas girls were pitted against the same school that had beaten them 2-1 in overtime in the 1999 Class B final.

The Warriors, a Syracuse-area power, clearly dominated the first several minutes of play, but AQ reversed the momentum and got on the board with only 26 seconds remaining before halftime. Lindsay Maleski drilled a free kick from near midfield that Westhill goalie Ally Walker initially stopped, but the ball trickled out of her hands and Aquinas' Jacquie Lacey was there to nudge it across the goal line.

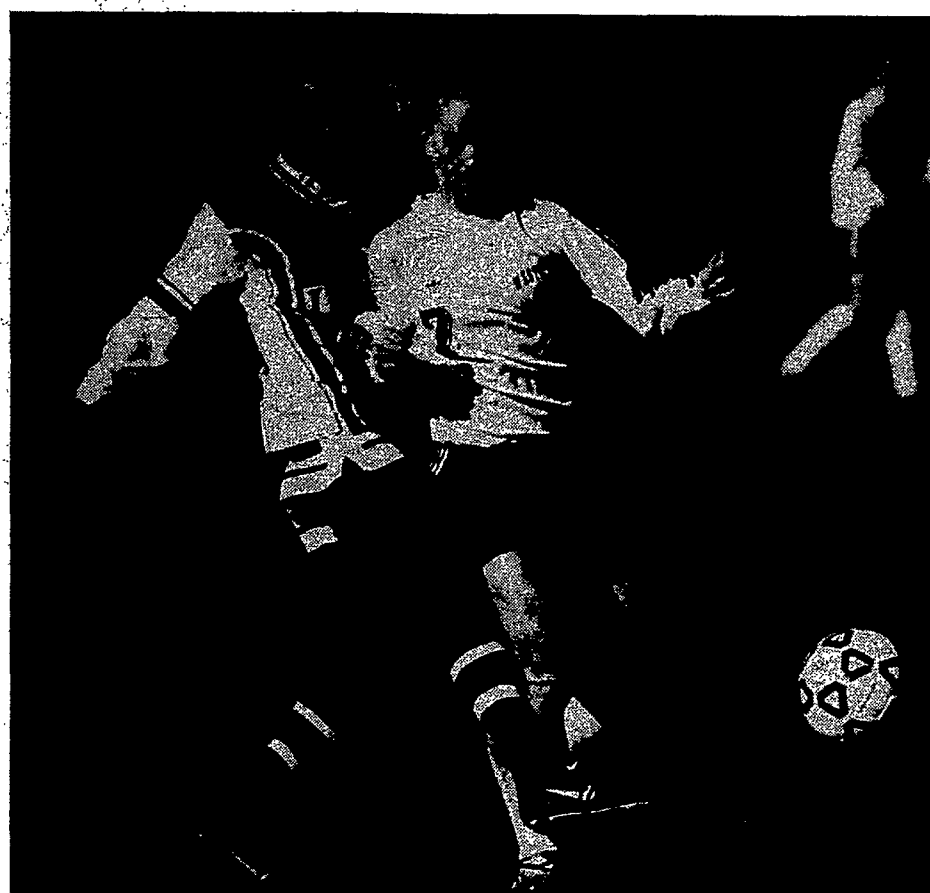
The score stood at 1-0 for most of the second half. Aquinas' offensive pressure became overwhelming in the final minutes, producing an insurance goal with 5:13 to go. Kristin Lawson delivered the final blow, converting a cross from Maleski.

### Neighborhood center changes name to Mercy Outreach

Corpus Christi Neighborhood Outreach Center, Rochester, has changed its name to Mercy Outreach Center, effective Nov. 12.

Established by Corpus Christi Parish in 1977, the center became a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester in July, 2000. The center, located at 142 Webster Ave., offers space, equipment and supplies free of charge for use by medical and dental professionals who, in turn, provide free services to the underinsured and uninsured.

"It's important to communicate to all our clients and friends that while we now have a new name, nothing else will change," said Mercy Sister Kathleen Ann Kolb, center director. "We will continue to be in the same location, with the same phone number



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

**Aquinas junior Carley King kicks the ball away from Westhill sophomore Kristen Ponchtera at the Class B soccer finals Nov. 17 in Brockport.**

The Irish gained entrance into the final with a 2-1 overtime win over Oneonta of Section 4 on Nov. 16. Lacey scored midway through the second half for a 1-0 lead, and after the Yellowjackets tied it, Lauren Popovich got the game-winner six minutes into overtime play.

Following the championship win, Lawson said her team was unfazed by its mediocre regular season.

"We played so hard," said Lawson, a junior forward. "We never give up."

Lacey, also a junior forward, noted that AQ's early-season losses were mostly by narrow margins.

"We played a tough schedule. It wasn't necessarily that we were playing bad," remarked Lacey, who led the Irish with 24 goals this season.

Lacey added that AQ's playoff success in recent years was a major factor in this year's late-season surge. The Irish have won six straight sectional titles and have played in five consecutive state championship games, with their first crown coming in 2000.

"We have been here, so it makes it more comfortable for us," Lacey said. "We're used to being here."

Page rated the victory over Westhill as Aquinas' best-played game all season. He described the Little Irish as having a "Yankee mentality," explaining that AQ acquires a fresh level of post-season toughness similar to the New York Yankees.

Elmira Notre Dame's Huddle cruised to her state-championship victory, posting a time of 18 minutes, 25.2 seconds over the 3.1-mile layout at Bowdoin Park in Wappingers Falls. For such a prestigious event,

Huddle's victory came by a decisive margin: She finished nearly nine seconds ahead of Tracey Brauksieck of Homer (18:11.37).

Huddle, a senior, has also won the Section 4 and state Class D championships this fall. She now advances to the Foot Locker Northeast Regionals on Saturday, Nov. 24, at Van Cortlandt Park in New York City. The top eight finishers from that race will move on to the national championship meet on Dec. 8 in Orlando, Fla.

Also competing in the Federation meet was Aquinas' Dave Hryvniak, who placed 81st in the boys' race with a time of 17:21. Hryvniak won this year's Section 5 Class B championship and also finished eighth at the state Class B meet.

Aquinas football, with its shutout victory over Pioneer, took one step closer to the state title it last won in 1998. The Little Irish came out smoking against the Panthers as Mark Magliocco completed two first-quarter touchdown passes — four yards to Shawn Jemison and 54 yards to Kevin McMahan — to give AQ a 13-0 advantage. Calvin Hall added five-yard scoring runs in the third and fourth quarter to complete the rout.

The Little Irish offense has been unstoppable thus far in the post-season, especially in first-half play. Aquinas has scored 112 points in three games, an average of



Sophomore Mary Palermo (right) and senior captain Katie Allardice hug after Aquinas' win.

37.3, with 84 of those points coming before halftime.

The Mercy girls' soccer team held a decisive 23-12 edge in shots over Monroe-Woodbury in its state semifinal contest, but the game's only goal came when the Crusaders' Teri Hannon scored midway through the first half. M-W went on to lose to Rockville Centre-South Side of Section 8, 1-0, in the title game Nov. 17.

The semifinal loss brings a tough end to an otherwise phenomenal year for the Monarchs. After a perfect regular season they earned the Section 5 Class A championship, rallying from a 1-0 deficit to win 3-1 over Churchville-Chili in the title game. Mercy then defeated Grand Island of Section 6, 2-0, in state quarterfinal play.

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