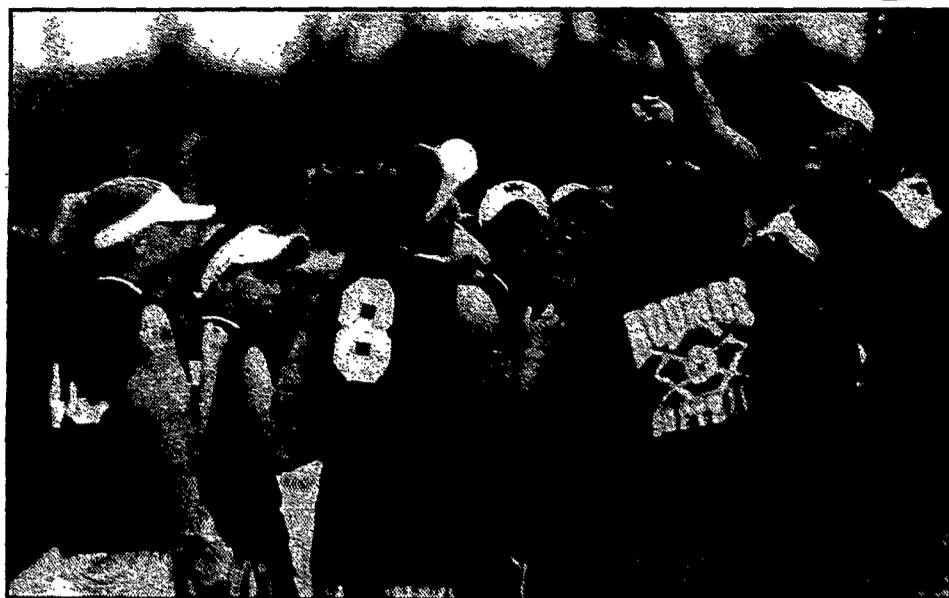


# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Elmira Notre Dame, Aquinas, McQuaid earn titles



James Stein/Photo Intern

The Aquinas girls softball team celebrates its May 30 win over Newark in the Section 5, Class BB sectional finals at the State University of New York at Brockport.

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Catapulted by an abundance of clutch play, three Catholic high-school sports teams in the diocese earned sectional championships last week.

Elmira Notre Dame softball scored an 11-0 win over Marathon in the Section 4 Class C championship contest played June 1. It was the Crusaders' fourth consecutive sectional crown. ND had earned its way into the final with a dramatic 2-1 semifinal win over Seton Catholic on May 31.

Aquinas softball also survived a squeaker en route to the Section 5 Class BB crown. The Little Irish earned a 3-1 victory over Newark in the title contest on May

30, two days after scoring a 1-0 semifinal victory over top-seeded and previously unbeaten Victor.

Few nail-biters were as dramatic as that involving McQuaid Jesuit baseball in its Section 5 Class A final. The Knights rallied from a big early deficit and scored four runs in the bottom of the final inning to down Canandaigua, 9-8, on June 1 for their second consecutive Class A title. That was preceded by a 10-5 semifinal win over Spencerport on May 29.

McQuaid and Aquinas went on to suffer elimination in their state-qualifier games. McQuaid lost 11-1 to Greece Athena on June 3 in Class A action, finishing its year with a record of 19-6. Aquinas lost 2-0 to Wayland-Cohocton in a Class B qualifier



Gina Oliveri of Aquinas slides into home plate for a run.

game on June 2, completing a 16-6 season. Meanwhile, Notre Dame (21-4) was scheduled to face Canastota-Sandy Creek in a state quarterfinal game on June 4.

### Elmira ND 11, Marathon 1

Natalie Frost ignited the second-seeded Crusaders with two triples, including a base-clearing blow in the fifth inning, and five runs batted in. Lisa Meck recorded four RBI and also pitched five scoreless innings as her team cruised to victory against No. 1-seed Marathon.

Notre Dame's semifinal win over Seton Catholic was much more challenging. The game was scoreless until the fifth inning, when ND scored both its runs. Third-seeded Seton Catholic scored one run in the sixth and got a leadoff double in the seventh, but Meck then recorded three straight outs — including a game-ending strikeout — as the Crusaders hung on.

With their sectional win, the Crusaders earned a chance to advance to the state Final Four for the third consecutive year. They were state Class C runners-up in 2000.

### Aquinas 3, Newark 1

Aquinas, seeded fourth, earned its first-ever sectional title behind a strong pitching performance from Sara Burke, who limited Newark to six hits. The Little Irish scored once in the fourth inning and twice more in the fifth, while the third-seeded Reds' only run came in the fifth inning.

AQ had reached the title game by scoring a major upset over Victor, which entered the semifinal contest with a 22-0 record. Burke pitched a three-hit shutout, and the game's only run came in the fifth inning when Aquinas' Sharon Elliot scored on Kristie Scipioni's sacrifice fly.

The Little Irish beat Victor and Newark despite low run production, and that factor finally caught up with them in the state-qualifier loss to Wayland-Cohocton June 2. The Eagles ended Aquinas' season behind Heidi Brooks, who pitched a two-hit shutout and scored both of her team's runs.



Michelle Oliveri (from left), Sara Burke and Erika Eckam prepare to take the field for Aquinas.

### McQuaid 9, Canandaigua 8

Victory had appeared quite unlikely for the second-seeded Knights against top-seeded Canandaigua. Down 7-1 in the fourth inning, the Knights' offense began to come alive, but they still trailed the Braves 8-5 entering the final inning. A stirring four-run rally, capped by Bryan Morrell's two-out, two-run game-winning single, helped McQuaid retain its sectional crown.

McQuaid also piled on the runs in its semifinal win over sixth-seeded Spencerport. Jon Matt led the offense with three hits and three runs batted in.

The Knights were not so fortunate in their state-qualifier game against Greece Athena, allowing five first-inning runs and giving up 14 hits to the high-powered Trojans, who had won the Section 5 Class AA crown.

This year's sectional win by McQuaid was a stirring tribute to the Knights' former head coach, Mike Fennell, who died May 15 from non-smokers' lung cancer. One year earlier, with an ailing Fennell in the dugout, the Knights had won their first-ever sectional title.

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### Run for the Young honors fundraisers, participants

Award winners have been announced in the sixth annual Run for the Young, held May 11 at St. Lawrence Church in Greece.

Winning the "Bishop's Most Holy Left Shoe" honor for most funds raised was St. Mary's Parish in Auburn. St. Mary's collected \$1,500, while second-place Our Lady of Mercy in Greece came in with \$1,400.

Capturing the "Bishop's Most Holy Right Shoe" for the third straight year was St. Theresa, Stanley/St. Mary, Rushville. This award recognizes greatest participation based on parish size. St. Theresa/St. Mary had 95 participants.

Monies collected from the run help fund various diocesan youth-ministry programs.