

Several squads win at sectionals

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

Among Catholic high schools in the diocese, teams with traditional post-season success once again made an impact this fall.

Section 5 crowns were captured by Aquinas Institute girls' soccer, McQuaid Jesuit boys' volleyball and Bishop Kearney boys' soccer. In Section 4, Elmira Notre Dame girls' soccer won a sectional title as well. Meanwhile, Aquinas boys' soccer — which, like the Notre Dame girls, was a defending state champ — had to settle for being sectional runner-up after an undefeated regular season.

All four sectional winners saw their seasons halted in state-tourna-

AQ'S BATEMAN RUNS TO FABULOUS FINISHES

Aquinas Institute cross-country star Noel Bateman had a terrific post-season, running to a first-place finish in the Section 5 meet and a second place in the state.

Bateman won the Section 5 Class B title on Nov. 6. His time of 16 minutes, 42.9 seconds on the course at Marcus Whitman High School near Canandaigua was the best of all sectional classifications that day — nearly 10 seconds faster than the second-place time of 16:52.3 by Honeoye Falls-Lima's Trevor Rundle.

The AQ junior went on to another great finish on Nov. 13, finishing second in Class B at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association title race. Bateman posted a time of 16:14.0 at Chenango Valley State Park near Binghamton. Dan Busby of New Paltz won the race in 15:50.9.

Bateman, who was named Section 5 boys' Runner of the Year, also performed very respectably at the state Federation championships, held Nov. 20 at Bowdoin Park near Poughkeepsie. He placed 17th with a time of 16:22.8, which was the best time among any Section 5 participant. The Federation race combines all public, private and New York City schools as well as enrollment classifications.

— Mike Latona

ment play on Saturday, Nov. 13.

AQUINAS SOCCER

Even with a 7-10-1 record going into sectionals, the AQ girls showed the magic that carried them to seven consecutive sectional titles (1996-2002) and three straight state championships (2000-02).

This year the Irish reclaimed their sectional crown despite being a No. 9 seed, winning 2-1 in overtime over third-seeded Honeoye Falls-Lima in the Class A final played Nov. 6. Erica Henderson scored both of AQ's goals, in the first half and in the second overtime. Aquinas' path to the final included an upset win in quarterfinal play over No. 1 Pittsford Mendon. The team's season finally ended with a 2-0 loss to Grand Island in state quarterfinal play on Nov. 13, leaving the Irish with a final record of 11-11-1.

The AQ boys, despite a perfect record in the regular season, didn't fare as well as the girls in sectional play. An incredible 43-game unbeaten streak — dating back to 2002 and including sectional and state titles in 2003 — ended in the Section 5 Class A final with a 1-0 loss to second-seeded Pittsford Mendon on Nov. 6. Top-seeded AQ was ranked No. 1 in the state and No. 8 in the country going into the game. Aquinas' final record was 19-1.

MCQUAID VOLLEYBALL

The top-seeded Knights earned the Section 5 Class A title with a 25-20, 9-25, 25-19, 25-19 victory over No. 3 Penfield in the championship match on Nov. 10. The Knights were led by Dennis Sullivan, who was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, and Joe Combs and Steve Bintz, who also made the all-tournament team. McQuaid had reached the final with a 25-22, 16-25, 25-18, 20-25, 25-21 semifinal win on Nov. 6 over No. 4 Churchville-Chili, which had defeated the Knights in last year's sectional final.

McQuaid's terrific season, which featured a final record of 23-2, ended with a 26-24, 25-23, 20-25, 25-18 loss to Hamburg of Section 6 in state-tournament action on Nov. 13.

KEARNEY SOCCER

BK won its Section 5 Class B title in heart-stopping fashion. The Kings, seeded No. 6, upset top-seeded Bath on Nov. 9 in a game that was decided by penalty kicks. The teams battled to a 0-0 tie in regulation and



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Pittsford Mendon's Josh Ray (left) battles with Michael Gaden of Aquinas Institute during the Section 5 Class A championship game Nov. 6 at East Rochester High School. Aquinas, previously undefeated, lost the game 1-0.

overtime before Kearney won the shootout, 5-3, with Quincy Tisdale getting the deciding goal.

Prior to the win over Bath, BK registered upset victories over No. 3 Palmyra-Macedon in the quarterfinals and No. 2 Mynderse in semifinal action — giving the Kings a sweep of the tournament's top three seeds.

Kearney was stopped by Section 6's Royalton-Hartland, 2-0, in a state quarterfinal game on Nov. 13. The Kings' final record was 13-7-1.

NOTRE DAME SOCCER

A miraculous comeback marked Elmira Notre Dame's ascent to its third straight Section 4 Class C title.

The second-seeded Crusaders rallied from a 3-0 second-half deficit to force overtime, settling for a 4-4 tie against top seed Seton Catholic of Binghamton in the Class C final played Nov. 6. Notre Dame then won the shootout round, 5-4, earning the right to advance to state play. Margie McKinery scored three goals to lead the Crusaders,

and also made the clinching save when inserted as goalie for the shootout.

However, the Crusaders were halted by Watertown Immaculate Heart Central of Section 3, 2-0, in a state Class C quarterfinal match played Nov. 13. Notre Dame's final record was 18-3-1. The season was a solid follow-up to a magical 2003 year in which the Crusaders captured the first state girls' soccer title in school history.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Lady of Mercy girls' tennis star Holly Phillips had a stellar post-season, winning the Section 5 Class B singles title. Phillips also qualified for state-tournament play, where she advanced to the second round.

Both Aquinas and Bishop Kearney won Section 5 cheerleading championships in the sectional tournament held Oct. 26 at Rochester's Blue Cross Arena. Aquinas won in Class A, and Kearney was the champ in Class C.