

Madonna fails to get invite

As it turned out, Madonna University volleyball coach Jerry Abraham was right: The only sure way to make the NAIA National Tournament was to win your district tournament and not rely on at-large berths.

The Lady Crusaders lost in the NAIA District 23 Tournament final to Northwest University, leaving them hoping to land one of four at-large spots. Considering they were ranked 10th in the final NAIA poll, and that last year the team ranked 14th in the NAIA made it, they might have felt confident.

As it turned out, Madonna didn't really come close. Upsets reigned in the district and bi-district tournaments, which left Madonna and two teams ranked ahead of it out of the tournament.

One of the at-large berths went to Point Loma Nazarene, which will host the NAIA tournament in San Diego. Hawaii-Hilo, ranked sixth and a loser in the district tournament to top-ranked Brigham Young-Hawaii,

VOLLEYBALL

landed another.

Two more went to teams upset in the bi-district round: Northwestern Iowa, ranked fourth, lost to unranked St. Francis College (Ill.), and Western Oregon, ranked second, fell to No. 14 Puget Sound (Wash.).

Top-10 teams left out, other than Madonna, were No. 5 Westmont (Calif.), which lost in the districts to No. 13 California Baptist, and No. 3 Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis, which was beaten by No. 9 Georgetown (Ky.) University in the districts.

Northwood, which successfully completed its final season in the NAIA (the school is switching back to the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and the NCAA II next year), will be ranked third in the tournament, which starts Wednesday. The Northwomen finished third last year.

CC posts hockey win over Stevenson

By NEAL ZIPSER
Staff Writer

The "new" Redford Catholic Central hockey team may have gained a little revenge for its predecessors Wednesday as the Shamrocks beat Livonia Stevenson, 6-4, at Eddie Edgar Arena.

The Spartans ousted CC from the Class A regional playoffs last March with a 4-2 victory. This time, a barely recognizable CC squad held off a furious comeback by Stevenson (0-2) to secure its first win.

Only six Shamrocks return from last year's team — one being senior forward Mike Giordano, who scored twice and added an assist.

"I'm doing my best along with the other (four) seniors to keep the team together," he said. "All I've seen during our practices is hard work and I believe we will have a good season."

It was Giordano's second goal, a slap shot from about 25 feet away, which was the eventual game winner.

After CC carried a 4-1 lead into the third period, Stevenson struck quickly to get back into the game.

The Spartans' Scott Johnson ripped a shot from the blue line which traveled and deflected off several players and through CC goalie Jamie Ronayne. Mark Peterson recorded an assist.

One minute later, senior Doug Gulaus fed junior Dino Gauci, who faked out Ronayne and scored on a backhand.

The Spartans tied the game at 4-4 with 4:50 remaining when senior Ryan Schmidt tipped in the puck off a scramble in front of the CC net.

"It was a great comeback and I couldn't ask for more," Stevenson coach Matt Mulcahy said. "We played two good periods of hockey. I was pleased with the way we played in the first and third periods."

Stevenson looked to take the lead on a rush down ice 30 seconds later, but after Frank Novok knocked the puck away from a Stevenson forward, junior Jon

Heady fed Giordano, who wound up for the go-ahead goal.

Stevenson goalie Daryl Chamberlain stopped the puck with his glove, but the puck trickled behind him and into the net.

Novok added an empty-netter for the final score. Brian Ronayne drew the assist.

"It shocked me that they were able to come back, but I think we came back just as well," Giordano said.

The Spartans jumped out to a quick 1-0 lead when Schmidt one-timed it past Jamie Ronayne. Scott Worthen and Ryan Gushick drew assists.

The Shamrocks tied it up with the first of their two short-handed goals. Novok stole the puck at the CC blue line and skated in on goal. Chamberlain made the first save but Novok scored on the rebound.

CC dominated the second period. Brian Ronayne stole a Stevenson pass at center ice and passed to Giordano. Chamberlain made an outstanding save on Giordano's first shot, but Giordano tipped in the rebound.

"I would've heard it (from the team) if I didn't score — thank

God for the rebound," Giordano said.

With 6:00 remaining in the period, Giordano and Novok skated in two-on-one on the Stevenson net. Giordano's shot was wide, but Novok fed Craig Wasen from behind the goal. Wasen then scored into the wide open net to give CC a 3-1 lead.

Off the ensuing face-off, Justin Ronayne buried a 15-foot shot into the upper right corner of the Stevenson net. Assists went to Chris Gonzalez and Jason Bellinger.

"It looked like to me that we didn't know the second period was on," Mulcahy said. "We have a lot of new players and we will have to learn how to put three good periods of hockey together."

"But we have to learn to back down some. It's possible you can overhit. You have to hit at the right time."

"For our first game, we showed we had the ability to move the puck around," Gumbleton said. "But we have to learn to back down some. It's possible you can overhit. You have to hit at the right time."



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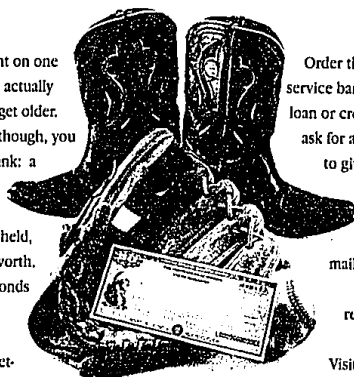
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