

HIGH SCHOOL PLAYOFFS

Intriguing games ahead

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Staff writer

At a time when the professional sports world takes another turn that seems tough to take with the Miami Dolphins bullying case, most of the drama in local high school athletics remains on the field.

Well, at least this week-end anyway, as teams go after Section V championships or move on to the business of advancement to state championships.

Just like in the volleyball, field hockey and soccer playoffs, the lineup of football games this week-end at Sahlen's Stadium in Rochester includes re-matches and long awaited head-to-head matchups worth seeing.

There is also room for curiosity.

Aquinas (9-0) is a season-long owner of the No. 1 ranking in the state among Class AA schools. Can the Little Irish hang on to that lofty spot against a Rush-Henrietta (7-2) team that has moved into the final, 5 p.m. Saturday with sophomores starting at quarterback, running back and receiver?

"Hey, we're in the finals," Rush-Henrietta coach Joe Montesano said. "Our kids are still hungry, that's a good sign."

Le Roy (8-1), winner of 14 sectional titles, faces Wayland-Cohocton (8-1) in the Class C final, 5 p.m. Friday. The Class A final between East Irondequoit Eastridge (8-1) and Victor (7-2) follows at 8 p.m., and is a rematch of a regular season meeting.

Wayne (6-3) and Geneva (8-1) meet at 2 p.m. on Saturday for the Class B championship, while Red Jacket and Clyde-Savannah are already champions. Class D winner Clyde-Savannah and Class DD's Red Jacket meet at 7 p.m. on Friday at Waterloo for a position in the Class D state tournament.

While it's been at least 10 years since Red Jacket or Clyde-Savannah foot-



Aquinas's QB Jake Zembiec, right, and Luch Pietropaolo have a chance to win the Class AA title with a win over Rush-Henrietta. KRIS J. MURANTE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ball have reached state tournaments, the Mercy volleyball team is familiar with the level of playoffs.

The reigning Class AA state champions take on Frontier in a quarterfinal match, noon on Saturday at Sweet Home High School. It is a rematch of sorts for Mercy with the Section VI champion, which won a 30-game match against the Monarchs in mid-October.

Fairport's undefeated boys soccer team at 17-0-2, opens its state playoffs closer to home. The Red Raiders face Clarence of the Buffalo-area, 5 p.m. on Saturday in the last of a tripleheader of state regional matches on turf at East Irondequoit Eastridge.

"This is a group that has been with me now, some for three years," Fairport coach Gianni Bussani said.

"They've been on this varsity team since they were sophomores, and so we've been kind of molding this team around this core group of players. Each year we've added some pretty strong players.

Williamson at noon and Livonia at 2:30 p.m. also face Buffalo-area champions. Class D Jasper-

Troupsburg and Class A Pittsford Mendon face their Section VI opponents at 5 and 7:30 p.m. respectively, on Friday at Eastridge.

Hornell (15-4-1), Section V's Class B girls soccer champion, Class C Keshequa (22-0) and Class D Jasper-Troupsburg (19-1) play state quarterfinal matches Friday at Amherst, just outside of Buffalo.

Webster Thomas (15-1-3) is dominant in Section V Class AA girls soccer, with three titles in the last four years. The Titans move on to the state regionals to play Section VI champion Clarence, 6:30 p.m. Saturday at Amherst High.

Honeoye Falls-Lima (19-0) faces Williamsville South at Amherst in the Class A regional, 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The Section V Girls Swimming Championships already have kicked off.

Pittsford Mendon senior Lindsay Stone has her hands on two Section V records through the Class A preliminaries.

Is it possible for Stone to lower the 200-yard freestyle record, or the 200 free relay with teammates, Friday at the Webster Aquatic Center? How

fast will Stone swim in other races? Are other records headed for changes? The first final is at 5:15 p.m. The Class B finals are 11:15 a.m. on Saturday, while the "C" final races begin 5:15 p.m. Friday.

Teams from Fairport and Clarence also meet in another playoff, the Class A field hockey regionals, 9 a.m. on Saturday at Medina High. Brighton's state quarterfinal against Amherst follows at 11 a.m., then it's East Rochester versus Barker in Class C at 1 p.m.

There may be 11 elite runners in Section V boys and girls cross country, a total higher than most seasons. They head to the state meet at Queensbury High on Saturday along with Section V's champion teams and additional qualifiers.

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