



Coach Larry Baker urged his team to "Fire up."



Team captain Jean Otto accepted the state runner-up trophy.



Late in the final game, Diane Dietz stole the ball from Detroit Northeastern to pull Mercy within four points.

Tough team

Mercy cagers reach finals

Larry Baker stood quietly in the noisy hallway in East Kentwood High School near Grand Rapids.

Baker, who coached Farmington Our Lady of Mercy's girls' basketball team all the way to the state Class A finals, had just finished watching his girls lose to Detroit Northeastern, 67-62, before 2,600 fans in Kentwood's gym.

And Baker was not anxious for conversation.

"There was a lot of pressure on us to win it this year," said Baker, who walked into a winner when he accepted the Mercy coaching job last fall. "People have come to expect a winner here at Mercy, and I'm just glad we were able to provide it this season."

Mercy's girls did lots of winning before falling to Northeastern in the

finals. The Marlins compiled a 20-3 record, winning the Catholic League Northwest Division, the Catholic League playoffs, state regional and district titles, quarter and semi-final games.

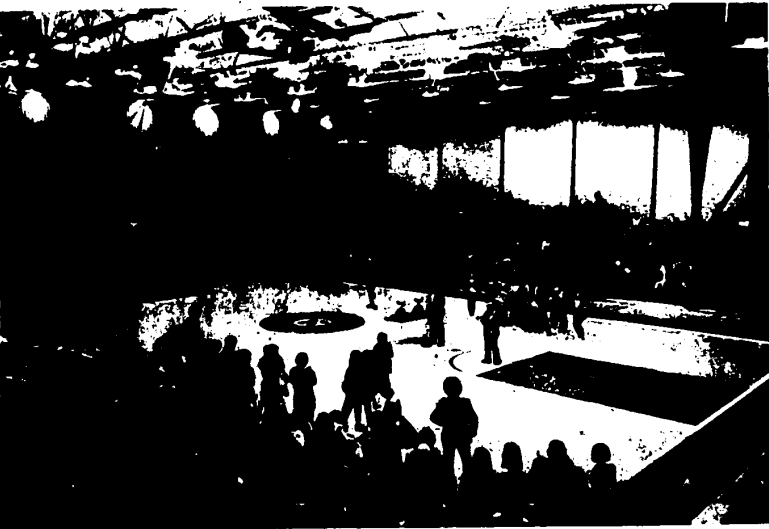
And then Mercy met Northeastern in the finals. Coach Brenda Galin's Falcons were just too much for Mercy. Northeastern's sister combination of Helen and Sheila Williams dominated the scoring and rebounding. Helen came off the bench to score 31 points, while Sheila grabbed 24 rebounds.

Mercy will lose three starters—Jean Otto, Karen Gilbooley and Judeen Bartos. But Mercy's basketball future looks bright for next season. Stars like K.D. Harte and Diane Dietz will return, and Baker has a strong bench to replace the graduated players.



Despite the loss, Mercy cheerleaders maintained their spirit.

Staff photos
by
Harry Mauthe



A sad moment for Mercy as Northeastern was presented with the state Class A girls' championship trophy.



Deanna Law was ecstatic about Mercy's victory over Marquette.