

Mercy shoots down Eisenhower

By Brad Emmons
staff writer

Utica Eisenhower, touted as a contender for the Class A state girls basketball championship, found out Thursday night that the Mercy Marlinas are impossible to reel in.

In the opening round of the Farmington Hills tournament, Redford Union upset Walled Lake Central, 45-41, earning the right to meet host Mercy, a 53-41 winner over the Eagles, in the championship game Saturday. Complete results will appear in Thursday's Observer.

Mercy Coach Larry Baker, who notched his 129th career victory, called it "one of my biggest wins."

"I'm amazed," he said. "We beat an outstanding team with size and speed. We went from YMCA ball last Tuesday to mid-season form tonight."

The game featured two teams which sported identical 24-2 records last year. Both squads were also eliminated in the quarterfinals.

Eisenhower, with all five starters returning, crumbled under Mercy's relentless man-to-man defense.

The Eagles also ran into trouble early as 6-1 junior center Ann Gothard picked up three quick personal fouls in the first quarter.

Eisenhower went ahead 16-14 after one quarter, but that lead quickly disappeared in the second period as Mercy exploded for 20 points to take a nine-point halftime advantage.

KAREN SHOOK, a 5-foot-10 forward who delights in mixing it up under the boards, did most of the damage as she scored 12 of her game-high 18 points in the first half. She also finished the night with 14 rebounds.

In the third quarter, Mercy guards Kathy Landry and Denise Basford unraveled the Eagles' offensive attack with their constant ball-hawking.

Eisenhower looked disorganized for the most part, showing signs of unnecessary one-on-one play.

"We had difficulty getting in our offense," said Eisenhower coach Jim Shawver. "Ann (Gothard) was slowed down by the fouls. I don't remember her getting more than two in a game all last year."

And that kind of threw a blanket on our plans."

Gothard, ineffective most of the evening, eventually fouled out midway through the final period, but it didn't matter, Mercy was in control.

"I think they (Utica) were surprised to see somebody as aggressive as we were," said Baker. "I know they played a 1-2-1 defense so we went to Karen (Shook) on the baseline more than Kathy (Landry)."

Steffi Coe, a 5-10 guard, paced Utica with 13 points, but seven came in the final period when the game was out of reach.

Landry added 13 for Mercy and Basford, who directed Baker's four-corner offense in the second half, scored six.

Peggy Fitzgerald, who held Gothard off the boards, tallied seven points.

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Scott's clutch tosses save Groves

Groves got off to a slow start but rallied to nip Southfield-Lathrup in a girls' basketball game Thursday 36-35.

The winning points were tossed in by Ann Scott when she canned two free throws with just 10 seconds left. Scott, who was 8-for-8 from the line, had 10 points and 12 rebounds for the Falcons.

Senior Pam Schepansky added 16 points for Groves.

Lista Harding had 15 points for Lathrup, which jumped to a 9-0 lead and an eventual 11-4 advantage after the first quarter. Groves outscored the Chargers in the second quarter to take an 18-16 halftime lead.

It was the opening Metro Suburban Activities Association (MSAA) game for each team.

Groves (2-1) will play a non-league game tomorrow afternoon at Oak Park. Lathrup (1-2) will be at home tomorrow against Hazel Park.

SEAHOLM 39
HAZEL PARK 28

Senior guards Julie Fremuth and Pam Brooks supplied all the fire power as Seaholm defeated Hazel Park in this Southeastern Michigan Association (SMA) game Thursday.

Fremuth had four baskets and made 5-of-6 free throws for 13 points, while Pam Brooks added 10

points on four baskets and two free throws.

Maple coach Jim Boreland said senior forwards Jenny Quinn and E.J. Jolliffe played "outstanding defensive games."

Seaholm held a 21-7 halftime lead but was outscored 19-18 in the second half.

The Maples (2-1) will host Royal Oak Kimball in another SMA game tomorrow.

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