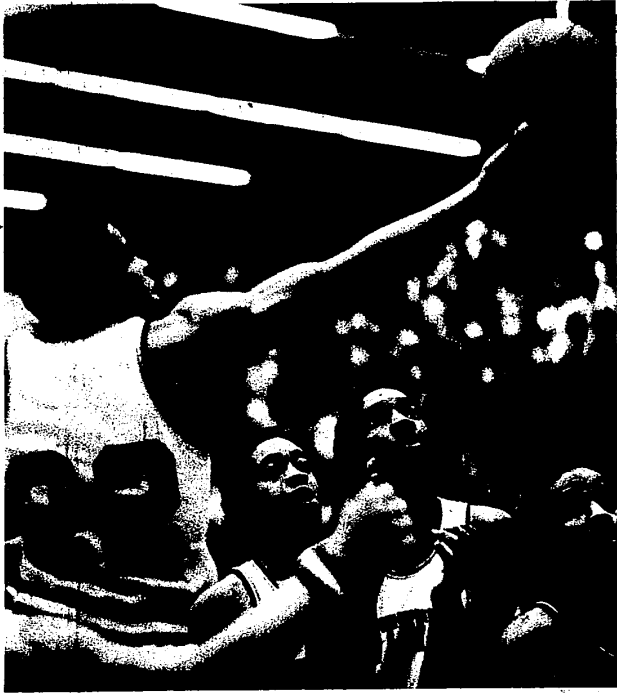


Blue Jays earn trip to semifinals



Southfield's Mike Priest (22) tries a shot while the Walker brothers, Jerome and Ralph, look on during a recent tournament game.

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Textbook basketball it 'certainly wasn't, but Southfield High School displayed patience and court smarts while hitting a bundle of free throws last night to knock out Mt. Clemens, 73-64, in a state Class A quarterfinal game at the University of Detroit's Calihan Hall.

The victory advances coach Greg Silwa's Southfield team, now 25-1, to the Class A semifinals at 3 p.m. tomorrow at Jenison Fieldhouse on the campus of Michigan State University.

The Blue Jays will play the winner of the Flint quarterfinal — possibly defending Class A champion Flint Central.

"These kids are perfectionists, and that's why it's not too noisy in here," said Silwa in the noticeably subdued Southfield locker room after the Mt. Clemens game. "They know they didn't perform to their ability."

"The victory's important, obviously, but their mental state is more important. That's why it'll be good to go into practice tomorrow (Thursday) with

something to work on. They didn't handle Mt. Clemens' press, and they know it."

MT. CLEMENS, 22-3 and the Eastern Michigan League champion, never really came back after getting clobbered, 22-10, in the opening quarter. The Jays led by 12 (36-24) at halftime and by 11 (52-41) after three quarters.

And if the Bathers, who closed it to nine (the final spread) a couple of times in the last quarter, ever entertained thoughts of making a serious run, there was Southfield's Mike McCaskill to play spoiler.

McCaskill, a junior forward with quick hands and tremendous leaping ability, scored six unanswered points (a couple of tip-ins and two free throws) as the Jays pulled away for good in the last quarter.

McCaskill, one of five Jay starters to score in double figures, finished with 17 points and four blocked shots. Jerome Walker led with 20, Darwin Cornell had 13, Mike Priest 12 and Ralph Walker 10.

Chris Chappis, Mt. Clemens' outstand-

ing 6-5 junior forward, scored 23 points and snagged 18 rebounds. Robert Thompson, a 6-2 forward, added 12.

"We never gave up," said Bather coach Al Snyder, on crutches after a fall from the roof of his home, "but you have to go back to that first quarter, and we lost, 22-10."

"After that, we had to foul. Every time I looked up we were in foul trouble. We didn't hit that many foul shots, and they (Southfield) hit a bundle."

Southfield put down 23 of 34 free throws in the game. Mt. Clemens dropped in 20 of 30.

SOUTHFIELD 73 — MT. CLEMENS 64

SOUTHFIELD (73) — Mike Priest 5, 2-2, 12; Mike McCaskill 6, 4-4, 17; Jerome Walker 3, 2-4, 20; Darwin Cornell 4, 3-7, 13; Ralph Walker 1, 0-4, 10; DeVon Cornell 0, 1-2, 1; Brent Halston 0, 0-1, 0. TOTALS: 73, 25-34, 73.

MT. CLEMENS (64) — Robert Thompson 5, 2-3, 12; Milton Gower 3, 0-3, 6; Chris Chappis 9, 3-7, 22; Leon James 2, 1-4, 5; Bonner Upham 3, 3-3, 9; Ken Clark 0, 5-6, 5; Tyrone McBride 0, 4-4, 4. TOTALS: 64, 20-30, 64.

TOTAL FOULS — Southfield 24, Mt. Clemens 21. FOULED OUT: Thompson (MC), James (MC), Clark (MC).

SOUTHFIELD 73 22 14 16 21 — 73
MT. CLEMENS 64 10 14 17 23 — 64

St. Mary's advances

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Orchard Lake St. Mary's has reached the semifinals of the Michigan High School Athletic Association Class C state basketball playoffs for the second straight year.

The Eagles advanced in the tourney by defeating Flint Hamady in a quarterfinal game played last night at Troy Athens High School, 74-63.

Last year, Hamady built up a five-point lead with less than two minutes but the Eagles eventually rallied for a one-point victory. This year, St. Mary's took the lead in the first quarter and never trailed the rest of the game. It was St. Mary's most productive effort in six state playoff games.

"We were very patient on offense, and I thought our shot selection was super," said St. Mary's coach Bob Shoemaker.

"What we tried to do defensively was throw a lot of combination of defenses at them. In the second half, we gave them basically a matchup zone, and that's the most successful thing we did all night."

"It took them out of their running game, and that worked to our advantage," he said. "Now we're in the semis, and that feels great."

ST. MARY'S plays at 8:30 p.m. Friday at the University of Michigan's Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor the winner of the Grand Rapids South Christian-Lansing Catholic quarterfinal game,

which also was played last night. Last year, the Eagles lost their semifinal game to Three Oaks River Valley.

"I think we've had a tougher road than any other team in the tournament," said Shoemaker.

"We've had to beat Redford St. Mary, Hamady and Dundee, and they're all rated in the top five, plus Country Day, which was rated in the top 10," he said. "So, we've earned everything we've gotten so far."

St. Mary's had a sizzling first half as it shot 58 percent from the floor (16 of 27).

The first quarter was a foot race as St. Mary's scored a season-high first-quarter total of 27 points, and Flint Hamady added 21. Each team scored 14 points in the second quarter as St. Mary's took a 41-35 halftime lead.



C.J. Risak

Recruiting wars

Some coaches (public and private) attempt to entice the best top athletes

This is the first of a series on high school basketball recruiting.

Bill Croteau was fired last week. He was fired because, in the assessment of his peers, he was unsuccessful.

Croteau coached Redford Bishop Borgess basketball for the past three seasons. He never had a winning record. But things were looking up. This season, Borgess finished with an 8-13 record.

Croteau was fired anyway because his record wasn't good enough.

He can tell you why he was fired. And so can nearly any other coach.

"He got fired because he's not winning," said Don Albertson, coach of Livonia Churchill. "They didn't look at who he played. Do you think Livonia Stevenson would have won 18 games with a schedule like that?"

That isn't news to Croteau. And he isn't the first Catholic League coach to lose his job for failing to beat such perennial powers as Birmingham Brother Rice or Detroit Catholic Central.

CROTEAU'S FIRING points to the pressures applied to Catholic coaches. Stated simply, coaches are paid to win, and win they must or they're gone.

That isn't necessarily the case in public schools. If a team struggles through a poor season, it can be overlooked because the talent is weak.

But it's different in the Catholic League. Catholic coaches can go out and get the athletes they want. They can recruit.

According to the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), it is perfectly allowable for a high school coach to talk to an eighth-grader and try to convince him to come to his school.

It is improper for a coach to talk to a

ninth-grader in another school. It is also improper to offer any sort of inducements, including athletic scholarships, to athletes.

BUT IT HAPPENS. Often, if you believe the public school coaches. They hint at such violations but refuse to name the violator. "I've been on both sides of the fence," said Gary Fralick, Redford Thurston coach and former assistant coach at Madison Heights Bishop Foley. "We did not recruit (at Foley) or actively seek people outside of our three feeder schools."

"Maybe that's why we lost a lot," he added with a laugh.

Actually, Fralick has been on three sides of the aforementioned fence. In high school, he played from 1964-67, first at Redford St. Mary, then Birmingham Groves.

He remembers inducements. "Benedictine offered me free tuition in 1964 if I'd go to school there," Fralick recalled, an offer that would amount to \$75 per semester.

OTHER COACHES point to sudden influxes of talent into Catholic schools that turn it from average to super. One team that benefited from Pontiac's cancellation of prep sports was Orchard Lake St. Mary.

St. Mary was good. The addition of Chris Horze and Lance Davis, both Pontiac transfers, made the Eagles great.

But neither was recruited, according to athletic director Tim Domke. In fact, Domke said, St. Mary basketball coach Bob Shoemaker refuses to even talk to prospects.

"I think he should talk to kids," Domke said. "This is a business."

Domke is another coach who also served in the public school system. As

West Bloomfield's mentor, he saw David Abel go from his system to Catholic Central and help the Shamrocks win a state title in 1977.

"He lived 100 yards from our school," Domke said of Abel.

CATHOLIC COACHES say the same thing when asked about their alleged recruiting. They point to the players that got away.

Domke called to attention Aubin Williams, who went from Orchard Lake St. Mary to Royal Oak Shrine to Redford St. Mary this year. OLSM also lost Jeff Sewell, a star at Walled Lake Central.

CC coach Bernie Holowicki points to Carl Lang, a 6-5 center who could have helped the Shamrocks battle more evenly with the Brother Rice giants. Lang instead went to Northville this year when CC turned him away.

There are other examples, but few convince public school coaches who see their star players suddenly lost to a parochial school. The public coaches know the reasons behind the recruiting: Catholic coaches must win.

"There are some great, great coaches in the public schools, but few work as hard as Catholic League coaches," because, the St. Mary AD said, "Catholic schools will fire a coach for having a bad season."

Croteau agreed. Asked to compare coaching at Thurston in the Northwest Suburban League and Borgess in the Catholic League, he replied, "Like night and day."

"In the Catholic League, the toughest thing is watching the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) games and then persuading the kids to send their kids to the school you're at."

Next: Pressurized winning — both sides of the recruiting wars.

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