

Jays douse fired-up Chargers

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The final score — Blue Jays 74, Chargers 61 — would indicate the Blue Jays blowout everyone expected. But the game, a state Class-A regional opener Tuesday night at Ferndale High School, was closer — and certainly more exciting — than that 13-point final spread might show.

That's because for the first half and then some, fired-up Southfield-Lathrup stood an excellent chance of pulling off a huge upset over state-ranked Southfield (22-3) before a

large and noisy crowd at Ferndale. For three quarters of the game, Lathrup, the snarling underdog, stayed close enough to keep its fans hoping. Southfield led by two (16-13) at the quarter, by one (30-29) at the half and by two (36-34) with less than four minutes to play in the third.

But then Southfield substitute Jerry Lagroy made a three-point play, and teammate Ray Kelsor started streak shooting to send the Jays on to another rout, their fourth straight in tournament play.

"Lathrup games are always emotional," said Southfield starter Terry Darden after the game. "Maybe we'd have started faster if we'd been playing Birmingham Groves (Lathrup's victim in its district final last Saturday)."

"Lathrup games are always so emotional."

'Maybe we thought all we had to do was show up, and Lathrup would fold. Well, Lathrup didn't fold.'

Greg Silwka
Southfield coach

Activities Association, got off to a slow start, but have gone 14-3 since the holiday break.

SOUTHFIELD'S MICHAEL McCaskill played an excellent game, but it wasn't his usual game. The 6-foot-4 senior, who can bring the

crowd to life with his slam dunks, did his scoring from the outside against Lathrup. He finished with a game high 30 points on six field goals and eight of eight free throws.

Guard Joey Walton, another capable outside shooter, followed with 14 points, and Kelsor added 10, six coming on 16-20 jumpers in the third quarter when the Jays pulled away.

"If he lets that shot go from 15-17 feet, he's terrific," said Silwka of Kelsor. "He's a 60-percent shooter. But if he takes it from around 20, he'll be off."

Based on his potential, I'd give him about a B-plus. And I'd have to give (Southfield's) Vince Baldwin an A for the defense he played tonight."

Ron Smith, Lathrup's 5-9 senior guard, scored 15 points. Morris

Baxter and Curtis Riley each added 10.

"We couldn't make the damn free throws," Kourakis said, "and Southfield just couldn't miss."

"But our kids played their hearts out. Give them credit for that. I can't fault them at all. Southfield's a great team. We played super against a great team."

SOUTHFIELD SANK 30 of 36 free throws, while Lathrup hit on 13 of 23. The Jays shot 43 percent from the field, making 27 of 62. Lathrup made 24 of 55 for 44 percent.

McCaskill (16 rebounds) and Darden (6) helped Southfield control the boards, 43 rebounds to 33.

Friday's regional final has an 8 p.m. start.



photo by MINDY BAUNDERS/staff photographer

Lathrup's Morris Baxter (30) maneuvers around Southfield's Terry Darden during Tuesday's regional game at Ferndale.



The basketball drew a crowd — (from left) Michael McCaskill, Terry Darden, Mike Carithers, Charlie Hart, Morris Baxter and Vince Baldwin — during the Class A district opener Tuesday at Ferndale.

SOUTHFIELD 74 — LATHRUP 61

SOUTHFIELD (74) — Joey Walton 6, 2-3, 14; Michael McCaskill 6, 4-4, 30; Charlie Hart 3, 2-2, 6; Terry Darden 3, 2-3, 8; Ray Kelsor 1, 0-0, 10; Vince Baldwin 2, 2-4, 6; Lorenzo McCaskill 1, 1-1, 2; Jerry Lagroy 1, 1-1, 2; Tim Ford 6, 0-1, 0; Matt Hixon 0, 1-1, 1; TOTAL 74, 29-26, 24.

LATHRUP (61) — Ron Smith 7, 1-2, 15; Morris Baxter 3, 4-4, 10; Mike Carithers 6, 0-1, 0; Scott Slater 3, 2-10, 8; Curtis Riley 5, 0-0, 10; Vic Miller 2, 0-4, 4; Darryl Stokes 1, 0-0, 2; John Stasiuk 1, 2-2, 4; Eddie Hulse 1, 3-4, 5; Sean Tracey 1, 0-0, 2; TOTAL 61, 12-23, 41.

TOTAL FOULS — Southfield 16, Lathrup 18. Fouling Slater (6), Riley (5). SOUTHFIELD 12 15 15 20 24 — 74 LATHRUP 12 16 11 21 61

A toast to Irish sportsmen

You certainly need not be Irish to be an active participant in the festivities which annually are associated with today, St. Patrick's Day has a universal appeal.

Just take a look at any Irish pub today. Wall-to-wall partiers at every establishment. Now, there aren't that many Irishmen in the state of Michigan, much less the suburbs of Detroit.

But today is the day everybody can claim to be a wee bit Irish. And it's a day when you can prove how Irish you are by taking the inebriation test, which says an Irishman can never be declared legally drunk if he can hang onto a patch of grass with one hand and not fall off the face of the earth.

THIS COLUMN is for those who journey out to the local watering holes today to celebrate St. Paddy's Day. It must be read before the venture though, because as the day progresses, the words on this paper will result in slurring sounds which uncontrollably are emitted from your mouth.

The following is a sports salute to the Irish. There should be enough categories here to please the vast majority. So, while you're holding up a tigger of Bailey's, here are some athletes and topics you can toast to.

All in the Irish spirit of course.

• Like the monk from the University of Notre Dame suggests, the Irish were successful with their fists. The "Fighting Irish" ruled the boxing divisions in the early years, beginning with bare knuckles heavy-weight champ John L. Sullivan. Since then, there have been many fine Irish pugilists, including some personal favorites: Gerry Cooney, Sean O'Grady, Bob Murphy and Robert Fitzsimmons.

• Also characteristic of the fighting ways of the Irish are some professional hockey players, like "Terrible" Ted Lindsay and Bob "Battleship" Kelly. And you can't omit brawlers like Terry O'Reilly and Dan Maloney.

• Like all nationalities, the Irish are victims of stereotyping. One truth, though, is the wit of the Irish, made famous by former President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. And in the world of sports, there have been some classic comments.

Walter O'Malley, the late owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers, once defended his ethnic background with this line: "Only half the



Jim Hughes

lies they tell about the Irish are true."

Another one of my favorite lines of logic came from Edward Murphy, a former sports writer in New York. "Never underestimate the stupidity of the American public," he once commented in reference to the public's acceptance of what he saw as a deliberate breach of faith with the fans by baseball owners.

And then there was the legendary Casey Stengel, the baseball manager who mangled the English language. In his own words, we can say that Casey is "dead at the present time."

Or how about this definition of football by former Michigan State University coach Duffy Daugherty, who said of the sport, "Football is not a contact sport, it's a collision sport. Dancing is a contact sport."

• Professional football players who earn their paycheck with their foot often make the headlines, especially since kicking is an important phase of the game. Some Irish standouts included Jim O'Brien, whose 32-yard field goal helped the Baltimore Colts defeat the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl V.

In 1959, New York Jets punter Steve O'Neill booted the football from the one-yard line 98 yards to the Denver Broncos' one. A year later, a kicker by the name of Tom Dempsey beat the Detroit Lions when his record-setting 63-yard field goal gave the New Orleans Saints a 19-17 victory.

• For novelty's sake, here's the first-ever documented edition of the all-time all-Irish Notre Dame basketball team, with years played in parentheses. First-team members include Timothy Moynihan (1925-29), Francis Quinn (1940-42), James O'Halloran (1947-49), Martin O'Shaughnessy (1950-52), and Joe Gilligan (1953). Second teamers are Thomas Finnegan (1928-29), Charlie Swency (1936), Dan Coughlin (1921-23), Frank Gillicoley (1943-46) and Harold Mulcahy (1921). The coach of this honor unit Irish all-star team is George Keogan. Sorry, Digger.

• And now, the winner of the first "Living Proof That We're Irish" award, which

goes to the most Irish-sounding family. The undisputed champs are the McCarty's of Redford. The clan of Robert and Isabelle McCarty include Linda, Robert, Shawn, Devin, Patty, Brendan, Erin and Megan. Try as they did, they couldn't get Bishop Borgess to change its nickname to the Shamrocks.

• Look through the pages of the history books from Detroit professional teams and you're sure to find enough Irishmen to form a St. Patrick's Day parade. More personal favorites include, from the Detroit Tigers: Dick McAuliffe (1959-73), Denny McLain (1963-70), Charlie O'Leary (1964-12), Mickey Cochran (1934-1937) and Wild Bill Donovan (1903-12, 1918).

From the Lions: Hugh McElbenny (1964), Ed O'Neill (1974-79), Mike McCoy (1980), Ed Flanagan (1965-74) and Darris McCord (1955-57).

From the Pistons: Kevin Loughery (1962-64), Dick McGuire (1957-60), Dan Doyle (1962-63), and Eddie Conlin (1958-60).

From the Red Wings: Dale McCourt (1977-81), Al McDonough (1977-78), Mike McMahon (1969-70), Brian Murphy (1964-66) and Dan Maloney (1975-79).

• If you need some names to toast to, try these from the coaching circle of college and professional sports: Connie Mack, Duffy Daugherty, Frank Leahy, Al McGuire and John McKay. From the winner's circle at Wimbledon, there's America's John McEnroe (1981) and Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly (1952-54). Track stars bearing the Irish name include Jim Ryan, Ron Delany and Robert Tisdall, and the most famous — Eamonn Coghlin — who was featured in "Sports Illustrated" magazine under my favorite headline, "When Irish Guys Are Milling."

Hopefully, the names and lists provided give you something to drink to as you while the time away. I know there's more Irish names that could have been provided for more toasts, but most of you have to work tomorrow.

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