

Southfield roars into 'A' quarters

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The game wasn't two minutes old when Greg Sliwka ripped off his necktie and tossed it on the floor behind Southfield High School's bench.

Ferndale's gymnasium — steamy, noisy and packed to capacity — was no place for a closed collar on a coach. After the game, a state Class A regional final, Sliwka wasn't even aware that he'd left the tie on the court as he chatted with reporters in the locker room.

Coaches tend to forget those minor details after their teams overcome some problems to win the big ones. And that's just what Southfield did Friday with its 73-60 victory over host Ferndale.

By winning, Southfield lifted its season record to 23-2 and survived to play in Wednesday night's Class A quarterfinal game against Sterling Heights Stevenson at the University of Detroit's Cullen Hall.

The Sterling Heights squad earned a quarterfinal berth by beating Mt. Clemens, 62-58, in two overtimes Friday in a regional final at Warren Tower.

Southfield's problems against Ferndale? For starters the Blue Jays started slow against fired-up Ferndale and fell behind by five points (9-4) after the opening quarter.

For another thing, Southfield star Michael "Springs" McCaskill, a 6-foot-4 all-state candidate, just wasn't much of an offensive threat. He had only five points when he fouled out with 5:48 left to play.

But what McCaskill lacked in scoring punch, teammate Joey Walton more than made up for with his game-high 29 points. Walton, a 3-foot-9 senior guard hit on 13 of 22 field goal attempts and three of four free throws.

"Walton's capable of doing that and a lot more besides," Sliwka said. "Actually, I thought he had kind of an off shooting night."

WHAT WAS McCASKILL's problem, Sliwka was asked. "Mostly Ferndale," he answered. But an off-night by the

star can have its benefits — as long as the team still wins.

"It's important for the other kids to see that they can still maintain with him (McCaskill) on the bench," Sliwka said. "Even on the bench with five fouls he's still valuable to us. He was constantly showing encouragement. The kids always knew he was there."

Southfield got all the additional scoring help it needed for seniors Terry Darden (11 points) and Ray Kelsor (10). Following its slow start, Southfield scored 25 second-quarter points to Ferndale's 12 for a 29-19 halftime lead.

"Southfield's playing badly and still beating us by 10 points," observed Ferndale Athletic Director Donna Giltrow during halftime. "I'd say that's the mark of a pretty good team."

But Ferndale wasn't quite dead. Coach Gary Sophia's Eagles roared back to score nine straight points at the start of the third quarter to pull to within three (33-30) with 5:18 left in the quarter.

Then Southfield exploded for nine points in a row and went up, 42-30. The Jays led by eight points (48-40) after three quarters.

THE SPARKLING play of Ferndale standout Randy Bolden and Darrin Carter kept the game from becoming a total rout. Bolden finished with 28 points, 19 coming in the second half. Carter scored 10 of his 18 points after intermission.

The game wasn't really out of reach until Darden completed a three-point play to put Southfield up, 65-52, with about 2:00 left to play.

"We didn't play as good as we can play, but that's because of the way that Ferndale played," Sliwka said. "Ferndale's kids worked their butts off. They did everything they could to stop us."

Southfield shot well from the free throw line (11 of 15) while Ferndale had its problems (12 of 24). Southfield made 31 of 70 field goal attempts. Ferndale hit on 24 of 68 floor shots.

Ferndale, which finished with a 17-8 record, and Southfield are members of the same conference — the Southeastern Michigan Association. Southfield whipped the Eagles twice during the regular season.



Southfield's Ray Kelsor puts up a shot against Ferndale. Kelsor scored 10 points to help the Blue Jays win and advance to the state Class A quarterfinals.

Rice wrestling coach honored by his peers

Continued from Page 1

son, Schimon, who has a 3.85 grade-point average, accumulated a 131-26-1 record.

Mike Basso (senior): Basso finished second in the district tournament at Troy High School. In the regionals, he took fourth place. John Major (Rice coach): Major started the Brother Rice wrestling program in 1978. He wrestled collegiately at Oakland University, where he also served as an assistant for two years. He wrestled on three world teams and two Olympic teams, winning three bronze medals in world competi-

tion. He graduated from OU with a bachelor of arts degree in social studies. "I believe in work on takedowns and turning your opponent quickly, which seems to be our strong point at Brother Rice," Major said. "I believe you must have the desire of the kids to make any program succeed — it takes the kids and a coach working in perfect harmony to make a good program." Rice has had three state place winners, seven state qualifiers, seven Catholic League champions and two second-place finishes as a team at the Catholic League meet over the years.



John Major
Birmingham Brother Rice

Plymouth Salem scuttled

By C.J. Risk
staff writer

An equation for success on a basketball court: Force your opponent to make mistakes.

Then capitalize on them.

Plymouth Salem got the first part right. The Rocks forced Detroit Western to commit 25 miscues in their first-round state regional tournament game Thursday at Eastern Michigan University. But Salem failed to take advantage of enough of those opportunities.

Summation: A 53-49 Western victory.

The season-ending loss left the Rocks with a sparkling 21-3 mark. Western was 16-6 going into Saturday's regional final against Antoine Joubert and Detroit Southwestern.

After falling behind early, Salem stormed back to within four at the start of the fourth quarter but never overtook the Cowboys. And, ultimately, the Rocks' inability to cash in on several scoring opportunities in that last quarter cost them the victory.

IT WAS A GUTTY final-game performance for Salem. Playing away from home for the first time in eight games, the Rocks came out tight, and, as coach Fred Thomann admitted, it took them awhile to adjust defensively.

The Cowboys scored six points before Salem got a shot at the basket and led, 18-10, after one quarter.

A blowout was clearly a possibility after Western outpointed the Rocks, 9-3, in the first 3 1/2 minutes of the second quarter to take a 14-point advantage.

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Published: March 21 and 24, 1983

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