



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Michael McCaskill (above) was Southfield's main weapon as the versatile senior played many roles during the Blue Jays' 24-3 season. McCaskill averaged 17.8 points, 10.2 rebounds, eight assists and nearly three blocked shots and steals per game. Country Day senior standout Troy Hudson (below) helped the Yellow Jackets enjoy their finest season in recent history, as he quarterbacked the team to a 20-3 season.



## Class of the court

### McCaskill returns to All-Area cage crew

By Jim Hughes  
staff writer

**P**RIOR TO the start of the recent All-Area basketball meeting, Detroit Country Day School coach Kurt Keener glanced at a page displaying last year's honor team and quipped, "I think I could win a few games with that team."

No doubt Keener will be thinking along those lines when he looks at this year's first team, which fields five of the best senior basketball players in Oakland County.

Of those honored last season, two talented individuals make return visits — Southfield coach Greg Sliwka and his versatile senior standout, Michael McCaskill. Also selected to the first team were Avondale's Hank Woodmore, Southfield's Joey Walton, Country Day's Troy Hudson and Birmingham Groves' Mark McGrath.

The leading vote-getter on the first-team ballot was McCaskill, who was a unanimous choice when the coaches gathered to select the top players. McCaskill, a 6-foot-4 "swing man," had the talents to play like he's 6-10 or 5-11.

McCaskill CAN rebound with the best centers and run the fast break like the swiftest of point guards. When you watched Southfield play the game, your eyes automatically riveted on McCaskill. He wasn't a one-man show, but one man who could put on a show. It's just a matter of time before you'll find his name listed in Roget's Thesaurus along with other synonyms of excitement.

McCaskill averaged 17.8 points, 10.2 rebounds, eight assists and 2.4 blocked shots and steals per game.

"He gave us a lot of confidence as a team, because we knew if we made a mistake, Michael was going to make up for it," Sliwka said. "He had a desire to win, and he did what we needed to win. When we needed the inside game, he went inside. When we needed to get the

ball to someone, he came out and passed the ball. When we needed to press, he led the press."

That style was evidenced in Southfield's semifinal loss to Detroit Southwestern. With teammate Walton sidelined with an ankle injury, McCaskill attempted to carry the load.

"Michael took it upon himself to do everything — including guard Antoine (Joubert)," Sliwka said. "I literally had to take him off Antoine. I thought when he checked Antoine he did reasonably well. But when I did take him off, Antoine went wild."

WOODMORE, AVONDALE'S 6-1 senior point guard, averaged 18.8 points, 6.1 rebounds, 5.3 assists and 3.2 steals per game. The two-year starter was Avondale's floor leader. Without him, the Yellowjackets were hardly the same team.

"Hank was the reason we were 12-3 over two years," coach Larry Mahrie said. "He got the team up and down the court. His leadership spoke on the court. He was a very unselfish player."

"His quickness was one of the keys to his outstanding defensive play. Offensively, he made the other teams play him, and that opened up the other ballplayers."

HUDSON WAS A four-year starter for Country Day, and in his senior season, the 5-9 point guard averaged 10.6 points, 8.5 assists, 5.5 steals and three rebounds per game.

"He was our quarterback," Keener said. "We weren't nearly as effective without him in there. He's a tremendous ball handler and he had a very positive attitude."

"He was the best practice player I've ever coached. He worked just as hard in practice as he did in the games."

WALTON'S IMPORTANCE to Southfield was magnified in the Southwestern game when he was on the

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DAVID FRANK/staff photographer

Hank Woodmore, Avondale's talented senior floor leader, averaged 18.8 points per game in leading the Yellowjackets to a 23-1 season.

## Sliwka retains coaching honor

**S**OUTHFIELD'S Greg Sliwka, for the second year in a row, was named by his peers as the All-Area coach of the year.

Sliwka, who was a talented basketball player himself during his high school days at Wyandotte Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, coached Southfield to a return trip to the Class A semifinals this season, with just one starter back from last year.

He said a key to his coaching success was being surrounded by some of the better teams in the state.

"What helps is the willingness to learn and adapt once you see what the better teams have," Sliwka said.

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Greg Sliwka honored again



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Mark McGrath was Birmingham Groves' inside strength with his rebounding abilities and smart shot selection. McGrath averaged 17.2 points and 12 rebounds per game for the Falcons. The versatile senior forward shot 58 percent from the field and 70 percent from the free-throw line.



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Joey Walton, Southfield's senior point guard, led the Blue Jays with a 19-point-per-game scoring average.