

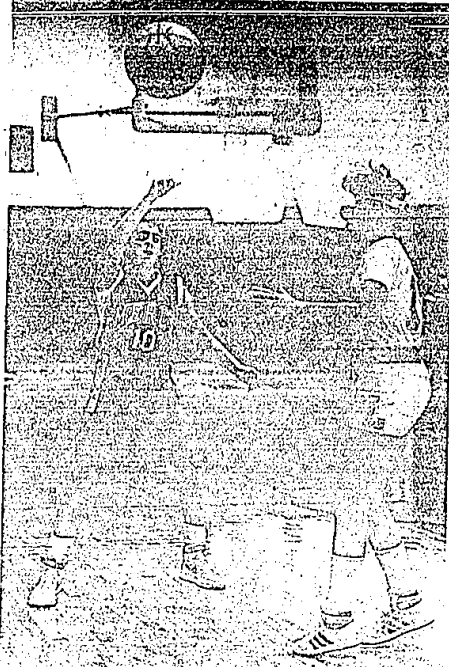
Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editor/591-2312



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photos by RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Annette Ruggiero (10) played an outstanding floor game and hit some crucial baskets down the stretch to help Mercy defeat Ladywood Thursday night. Ruggiero ended the night with 12 points.

Ladywood defeated Round 2 goes to Marlins

By Brad Emons
staff writer

The sign on the door read: SOLD OUT, NO TICKETS.

The 1,100 fans fortunate to get in witnessed another classic battle as Farmington Hills' Our Lady of Mercy won round No. 2 and all but clinched the Central Division girls' basketball title with a 54-40 victory over Livonia Ladywood.

The jam-packed crowd at Birmingham Brother Rice saw the Marlins pull out the victory with a solid stretch drive.

Terrt Ford's free throw with only 10 seconds remaining gave Mercy a three-point advantage and the victory.

"You have to look at the experience these kids have," said Larry Baker, coach of the defending Class A state champs. "They're tournament tested and have been under the pressure."

"I thought our balance did it tonight."

MERCY LED 30-23 at halftime, but trailed 41-38 at the outset of the fourth quarter as Ladywood point-guard Emily Wagner made one of her many steals and followed in with a layup.

But Mercy's Annette Ruggiero count-

girls basketball

ered with a pair of critical jumpers just off the free throw line to put the Marlins back on top.

The Blazers, except for a 16-foot jumper by Wagner, went cold during the final three minutes of play.

The dry spell was all Mercy needed as Ruggiero and center Mary Rosowski each registered key shots to keep Ladywood at bay.

Sarah Basford, Ruggiero and Rosowski each scored 12 points for the winners.

Wagner, marvelous as usual, and Char Govan netted 19 and 18 points, respectively in a losing cause.

"OBVIOUSLY one of the keys is the difference we were down — seven at halftime," said Ladywood coach Ed Kavanaugh. "And on some crucial possessions we didn't score."

"We also did not get our quota of offensive rebounds. In the first half we just gave up too many."

Baker said defense played an im-

portant role in the win.

"There were many factors but I thought Sarah Basford played outstanding defense," he said. "She had to take Govan early and Wagner late. That's a tough job because those two are All-Staters."

"She's just not an offensive player anymore, but now is one of our better defensive players and she takes pride in it."

Mercy, 11-2 overall, holds a one game lead over Ladywood (11-2, 6-2) in the division with two games remaining.

BOTH COACHES realize there could be another meeting down the road, most likely in the Catholic League playoffs.

"Number three is yet to come," said Baker. "It has become a series."

"Maybe we should play 4-of-1," Kavanaugh, meanwhile, looked at the loss philosophically.

"The situation with my team going into this season is that we had only two

players with varsity experience and to be 11-2 at this point — the Catholic League playoffs are coming up and we still have a shot," he said. "This is not the end of Ladywood's season by any means."

"This is two of the state's better teams competing. Our goal coming into the new set-up was to challenge for the division and we definitely did that."

How does Sunday, Nov. 13, at Calhoun Hall sound?



Sarah Basford (41), in addition to her 12 points, played sparkling defense for Mercy.

Raiders rough up Thurston

The North Farmington girls basketball team took time out from their march toward a Northwest Suburban League title Thursday to have a little fun.

The fun was had at the expense of Redford Thurston, 60-23.

"We thought we'd press them," said Raiders coach Greg Cassidy. "It was so overwhelming that we took it off real early."

How overwhelming was it? Well, North led after one quarter 22-7. That's when the Raiders starters sat

down and watched the second and third teams go to work.

"Everyone played, and everyone played a lot. It's good to have this type of game once in a while. It keeps everybody happy," Grodzicki said.

Amy Austin, playing less than one half of basketball, scored 18 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and dished out four assists. Austin scored 23 times in the first quarter.

Lailana Shaw, nursing sore ribs, scored 10 points off the bench, and junior Isley Butters added another 10 points.

"We took the ball away from them and ran real well tonight," Grodzicki said, summing up the night's performance.

North is now 11-1 overall this season and a perfect 6-0 in league play.

STEVENSON 41, HARRISON 32: Oh, they came so close Thursday.

Harrison, winners in 14 games this season, almost pulled a major upset Thursday night.

Trailing by three points with 1:30 left,

Please turn to Page 2.

Streak ends Chargers top Hawks

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

John Stoltzadas will forever remember this day.

The Farmington football program will not soon forget it either. They will remember a cold, rainy Saturday afternoon in late October when a 1-5 Livonia Churchill team rode into Farmington Hills and defeated the previously unbeaten defending Class A state champion Harrison team, 13-12.

Thus, Harrison's victory streak ended at 19 games. Thus, Churchill won the biggest game of its history. Thus, a lot of Hawk hearts were broken.

"I don't know what to say," said a jubilant Churchill coach Ken Kaestner. "I love the kids. They came to practice Monday believing they could do it and they did it. I just love 'em."

Stoltzadas, a junior quarterback, was a force both offensively and defensively for the Chargers. He moved the ball effectively against a stingy Hawk defense, passing for 94 yards and scoring both Charger touchdowns. He was also all over the field defensively.

"Churchill was very fired up and they had an excellent game plan," said Harrison coach John Herrington. "Their quarterback tore us apart."

HARRISON KNEW it was in for a game from the start. On a third down-and-15 play on Harrison's first possession, Hawk quarterback Scott Gilinski threw a sideline pass that was picked off by Stoltzadas. He ran down the right sidelines 40 yards for the touchdown.

After Greg Bond's extra point, Churchill led 7-0.

Harrison's all-state halfback John Miller wasn't going to see much duty offensively because of a hyperextended knee. But, after Churchill came out smoking, Herrington altered his plans. Miller ended up with 138 yards rushing.

"We had to use him. After the interception, you could see Churchill was fired up," Herrington said.

With Miller doing most of the work, Harrison went 30 yards in 12 plays, capping the drive with Miller's two-yard TD run. David Quarles, however, hooked the extra point try to the

left, and Churchill led 7-4.

That's how the half ended. And Harrison was fortunate to be behind by only a point. Twice late in the half Churchill had the ball deep in Hawk territory, once after a Bob Wasczenski punt was partially blocked and again after a Miller fumble. The Hawk defense, however, stiffened and a 23-yard field goal attempt by Matt Wiljanen missed the mark.

Harrison had a 73-yard Gilinski-to-Wasczenski TD pass nullified by an illegal motion penalty.

Harrison went ahead 12-7 on a one-yard Miller plunge late in the third quarter. However, Gilinski's two-point conversion pass to Miller was off target.

That set the stage for Stoltzadas. With 8:10 left in the game, Churchill got the ball on its 20-yard line. Stoltzadas, mixing passes and run like a seasoned pro, soon had the ball deep in Hawk territory. In the drive, he hit three passes good for 44 yards. A 15-yarder to back Robert Foust gave the Chargers a first-and-goal at the Hawk 1. Three plays later, Stoltzadas ran it in. The score was 13-12. Chargers after a missed two-point try.

Harrison, with 3:04 remaining, tried four straight passes and missed each time. Stoltzadas, roving the secondary like a center fielder, was in on each miss.

BUT HARRISON got a big break. With 2:19 left, Jerry Elsen fell on a Charger fumble at the Hawk 19. Harrison then moved the ball to the 50. On a first down play, Gilinski fumbled the snap and the Chargers recovered.

The Churchill sidelines exploded in merriment. David slew Goliath.

The loss virtually knocks the Hawks out of the state playoff picture. They remain the Western Lakes Athletic Association Western Division champs. They will take on Walled Lake Central (4) Friday night at Central for the WLA title.

Harrison defensive coach Bob Sotter put things in proper perspective in the lockerroom afterwards.

"This is part of life, men," he said. "It's not the nice part. You are going to feel this hurt for a long time. But part of life is living and coming back. We've got to come back next week and show we can overcome this."

North gets title share

North Farmington gained a share of the Northwest Suburban League football title Friday night with a 20-13 triumph over Garden City.

The Raiders finished league play at 4-1 and got some unexpected help when Livonia Franklin upset previously unbeaten Westland John Glenn, 14-11.

North used a balanced attack to top the stingy Cougars.

After GC quarterback John Romano hit Jeff Krichano with a 73-yard TD pass in the second quarter, North came back on Eric Engel's 49-yard TD toss to Scott Draper.

With only six seconds to go until halftime, GC scored again to take a 12-6 lead when defensive end Charlie Wasczenski raced 71 yards after blocking a field goal try at the Cougar 20.

Mike Rolfe, who kicked the extra point to make it 12-6, set up the play when he picked up the ball, raced 10 yards and then tossed a lateral to Wasczenski.

NORTH, however, took control in the third quarter, scoring twice on a 37-yard run by senior Ken Goss, followed by a four-yard jump by Tom Span.

The final TD was set up when GC botched the snap off the punt with North recovering at the Cougar 13.

After the bad break (Wasczenski's TD) the kids came back and showed a lot of poise in the second half," said North coach Jim O'Leary. "And Ken (Goss) just ran beautifully."

North outgained GC in total yardage (352-93) and first downs (11-5). The Cougars were a minus-25 on the ground.

Goss led all rushers with 127 yards in 21 carries. Engel, meanwhile, hit six of 16 passes for 140 yards.

North is now 4-3 overall, while GC slipped to 2-5.

Falcons stun Bentley, 14-9

It's been a long and frustrating season for first-year coach Don Kuck and his Farmington Falcons. But a lot of the pain was erased by Friday night's stunning 14-9 upset of Livonia Bentley.

Ken Walker scooped up a Bentley fumble in the second quarter and returned it 43 yards for Farmington's first score.

Sophomore Bruce Kratt kicked the extra point.

FARMINGTON made it 14-0 a short time later when senior halfback Don Haman scored from 4 yards out. Kratt again added the point after.

Then it was a matter of the defense holding on.

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