

Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editor/591-2312



(F)1C

Thursday, December 1, 1983 O&F

High time preps paid their way

To: Vern Norris
Michigan High School Athletic Association
East Lansing, Mich.

DEAR VERN,
Been keeping busy? I'm certain you have, what with all the state tournaments, and now the winter sports seasons getting started. How do you find time to file lawsuits in answer to lawsuits filed against the MHSAA?

Anyway, Vern, there are some serious problems facing high school sports, as I'm sure you're aware. Claims that the guys get a better shake than the girls. There aren't enough qualified coaches. Or officials.

And recruiting: Remember, Birmingham Brother Rice just won the state football championship and Redford Catholic Central was light years ahead of its nearest competition in the Class A cross country finals. That spells trouble.

Well, Vern, I got the answer to your problems. I mean, why put up with all this stuff when there's an easy way out?

While my solution isn't that original, it is American. It came to me in a flash—or maybe a twinkie, as in the twinkie of the lights adorning Christmas trees in department stores shortly after Halloween.

"Christmas is so commercial," I thought. "Somewhere, someone is pocketing some big bucks because of all this."

Which depressed me. Because I wasn't in on it. Why can't I turn something sweet and innocent into a gold mine?

That's when I thought of you. Let's shake high school sports out of its doldrums, I decided.

Let's go Big Time!
It wouldn't be so terribly difficult. I was at Plymouth Salem the other night for a girls' state regional basketball game. The host team was playing. Know how many fans from Salem were in the stands? Maybe 30.

A poor showing considering the quality of play, which was good. But maybe people don't think it's good enough. They say the best players are recruited to play at the Catholic schools. Well...

Let everyone recruit. Give each school a certain amount of tenders, an allowable number of recruits to sign. Let 'em go anywhere in the state to sign players—or, even better, to any state.

True, the talent wars may be bloody, but at least everyone will be in the same size boat with the same number of oars to sink or paddle with.

It would also force schools to upgrade their programs. Don't you see? They'd have to build new stadiums just to keep up with the competition. Successful coaches would start getting paid big bucks. Unsuccessful coaches—hit the pavement.

Junior Achievement would discover a new golden age. Imagine the knowledge on the inner workings of our capitalist society high school kids could obtain by working in a sports program? Hawking tickets, writing PR releases, setting up alumni donations and gimmicks like halftime car giveaways.

The possibilities are limitless. The MHSAA would no longer get involved in a sports program? Taking a trip to the state capital to do some heavy lobbying. Make high school sports tickets tax deductible. That would really get the ball rolling.

Identity is important, too. A personality. Like Antoine Joubert. Or Magic Johnson. Some truly gifted athlete to build into a god. Someone to exploit.

And remember, statistics are the foundation of athletics. Where would sports be without stats? The state's top players all reduced to a listing of numbers.

There's so much to work with. But think of the benefits. No more sports cutbacks because of millage failures. In fact, the increase in revenue would probably lead to sparking new 10,000-seat gymnasiums.

Football would be played on the kind of surface it was meant to be played on: artificial. No more mudbaths like the Rice-Henry Ford fiasco at Birmingham Graves.

And the crowds. Think of it. Parents would actually come out to see their sons and daughters play. Not only that, all the parents' friends would be in the crowd. So if the kid screwed up, you can bet he'd get a 20-page program with color photos that he'd get a bawling out at home.

Parental pressure alone would give us better athletes. And, consequently, better games, which would keep the crowds packed into the stands, completing the circle.

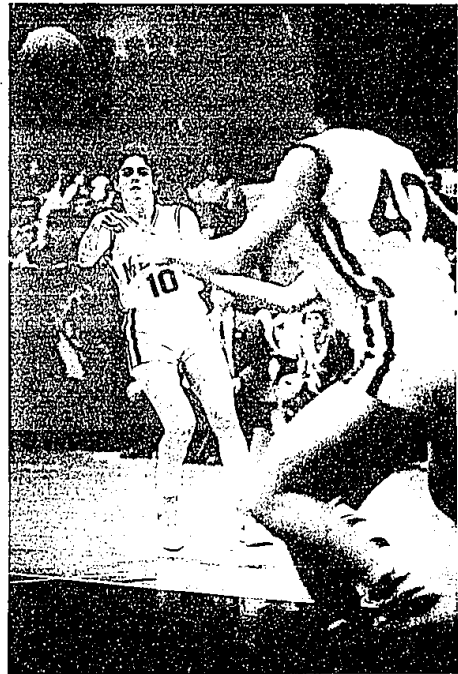
There's so much else to consider: TV and radio contracts, incentives for attending games (like blacking out all television broadcasts on game days if the local contest is not sold out), starting a high school Names of Fame.

Anyway, you get the idea. I really believe we could convince the public this thing would not only work, but it would be good for the kids. It would teach them the value of a dollar. It's time they started learning that at an earlier age anyway, don't you think?

I mean, who says high school sports should be fun? I say make 'em work for it.
Well, let me know what you think.

Your pal and mine,
CJR

Mercy defense stalls Tractors



RANDY BOKST/Staff photographer

Annette Ruggiero (10), Mercy point guard, feeds inside to teammate Amy DeMatia for one of her five assists against Fordson Tuesday night. She also scored eight points and made four steals in the Marlins win.

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Shutting down potential All-State players is becoming Sarah Basford's forte.

Basford, a potential All-Stater in her own right, held Dearborn Fordson star Kim Chandler at bay and tallied 16 points to lead Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy to an easy 59-36 triumph in the opening round of the state Class A girls basketball regional tournament Tuesday at Southfield High.

Chandler, who entered the game with a 23.5 points per game scoring average, made just two of 11 shots in the first half. She made just two of eight in the third quarter. With Basford covering, Chandler scored 10 points, four off the fastbreak.

With Basford on the bench and the game long since decided, Chandler scored 12 fourth-quarter points to finish with 22.

"SARAH DID ANOTHER outstanding job," said Mercy coach Larry Baker. "She had a hand in her (Chandler's) face all night."

In the district finale last Wednesday, Basford shut down another potential All-Stater—North Farmington's Amy Austin.

"They are both equally good," Basford said afterwards. "Both have real quick first steps and both are excellent shooters."

Besides her 16 points, Basford had five assists and eight rebounds. Both teams began the game jittery. Seven consecutive turnovers were committed and three shots missed before Mercy's Terri Ford broke the ice with a swish from the corner.

"I think we stressed their pressure and their double-teaming so much in preparing for this game, that we hurried our shots. Once we realized that if we got inside we could take the shots we wanted,

we settled down," Baker said.

Mercy led 12-2 after one quarter. Fordson made a brief 7-4 run at the beginning of the second quarter, and Baker called timeout.

WHATEVER BAKER said to his team during that timeout worked. The Marlins ran off 11 straight points at the end of the half and carried a 27-9 lead into the third quarter.

"I told them that we could put them away right now if we would just be more selective on the shot. Our vision on the court really improved after that," Baker said.

Fordson, taken completely out of their game plan by Mercy's tenacious man-to-man defense, could net just four of its 27 shots in the first half.

Mercy continued to roll in the third quarter. Amy DeMatia, who sat out much of the first half with two fouls, scored six third quarter points. Basford tallied eight points, making four of her five shots in the quarter. She was seven of 14 from the floor for the night.

Annette Ruggiero made three key steals in the quarter and finished the game with eight points, four steals, and five assists.

After three quarters, Mercy led 49-19. And the Mercy starters took a powder and watched the fourth quarter from the bench.

MARY ROSOWSKI had another strong game inside for Mercy. She finished with eight points and nine rebounds. Terri Ford added nine points and seven rebounds and Bev White chipped in with eight points.

Mercy (22-3) will play Murray-Wright (18-3) for the regional championship at 7:30 p.m. Thursday night at Southfield High (located on 10 Mile Road at Lahser).

It's Marlins vs. Pilots

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Livonia Bentley girls basketball coach Tom Lang found himself in an ugly Catch-22 dilemma Tuesday night at Southfield High.

His Bulldogs faced a very tall Detroit Murray-Wright team in the opening round of the state Class A regional tournament.

Lang could do one of two things to combat the Lady Pilots' size. He could have his team sit uncharacteristically back in a zone defense.

"There's no way we can sit back in a zone. We

can't play that way. We'd get murdered," Lang said at the game.

Fine.

THE ONLY OTHER alternative was to play man-to-man against a taller and quicker team—what Bentley did.

The result: A lopsided 68-49 victory for Murray-Wright.

Murray-Wright, with sophomore point guard Regina Wise doing the handy work, consistently got

Please turn to Page 3

Kids, want to bowl? O&E tourney for you

By Brad Emons
staff writer

land, Garden City, Farmington-Hills and Redford.

Young bowlers will have something to shoot for during the Christmas holidays.

Livonia VFW Post 3941, Pro Am Bowling & Trophy Sales and the Observer Newspapers got together to sponsor the second annual Open Junior Bowling Tournament for boys and girls ages 8-17.

The event will be Thursday, Dec. 22, and Friday, Dec. 30, at Livonia's Wonderland Lanes, 28455 Plymouth Road, located between Middlebelt and Inkster.

"We had a tournament for Livonia only, and it went well last year (in March)," said Ernie Jones of the VFW and chairman of the event. "We had about 70 entries."

"We'd like to see it go over. We can take about 320 bowlers this year."

Jones is joined on the committee by Ken Kosack of Pro Am, Harold Stobb, Walter Cox and Joe Charnawskas.

The tournament is open to residents of Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, West-

TROPHIES, donated by Pro-Am, will be awarded to the top three finishers in each of the following age brackets: A, 15-17 years; B, 13-14; C, 11-12; and D, 8-10. Flight winners will be honored in a ceremony at the hall.

The cost is \$3 per bowler. The fee includes three games, shoe rental and a small token of appreciation.

The closing date is Friday, Dec. 23. Checks should be made payable to: Livonia Post 3941 V.F.W., 29155 W. Seven Mile, Livonia 48152.

Non-league bowlers will use the following blind handicap averages: A, boys (150) and girls (135); B, boys (125) and girls (115); C, boys (110) and girls (100); D, boys (90) and girls (80). Automatic scorers will also be used.

Starting times are 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day.

Applications are available at VFW 3941 Hall, 29155 W. Seven Mile, Livonia; Pro Am Bowling & Trophy, Six Mile and Farmington roads, Livonia; and Wonderland Lanes (see above).

For more information, call 474-6733.

Open Junior bowling tournament (boys and girls ages 8-17)

Sponsors: Livonia VFW Post 3941, Pro Am Bowling and Trophy Sales, Observer Newspapers

Thursday, Dec. 29, through Friday, Dec. 30
Wonderland Lanes, 28455 Plymouth Road, Livonia

Name Age

Address City

Telephone number

Bowl in league: No Yes If Yes, average as of Dec. 1

Parental consent:

Time preference: Thursday, Dec. 29 10 a.m. 1 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 30 10 a.m. 1 p.m.

Entry fee: \$3 per bowler (includes three games, shoes and small gift)
Make checks payable to Livonia Post 3941 VFW, 29155 W. Seven Mile Road, Livonia MI 48152

Closing date: Friday, Dec. 23

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