The Farmington Observer

Sports

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Junior juices up All-Observer team

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

THE PROBLEM WITH selecting All-Area teams is that good and perhaps deserving players always get left off.

If you scan our second and third teams, and even our honorable mention listing, you will find talented basketball players — players who arguably could have made the first team.

But, if everyone were named to the first team, All-Observerland honors would mean little.

To make second and third team All-Observer is in itself an achievement. To make the first seven, well, it means you are *the* best around.

The 1984 All-Area team is led by a junior. That seems unusual until you see who that junior is — Catholic Central's John McIntyre. McIntyre was the only unanimous choice to make this team. Not only that, but the intelligent and awesomely skilled young man was a concensus all-stater as well.

Plymouth Salem, Observerland's No. 1 team this past season, is doubly represented on the team, with seniors Rick Berberet and Erich Hartnett, co-MVP's for the Rocks this year.

Combined, each player on the first team averaged 18 points and 10 rebounds per game. Those numbers become more impressive when you figure three players are primarily guards and two, Hartnett and Mark Bennett (Plymouth Canton), were their teams' playmakers.

There is no talent shortage on this team.

John McIntyre, junior, Redford Catholic Central: About the best way to describe this 6-3½" guard, without gushing, is to simply say, "He is a player."

CC coach Bernie Holowicki has had some outstanding players come through his program — players like Tom LaGarde, Barry Spencer, Frank Tanana and Tom Zaligarias. Holowicki isn't afraid to say that when McIntyre is done at CC, he will top that list.

"He is one of the most outstanding players ever to wear the blue and white of the Shamrocks. John is an artistic blind-side passer and an excellent long-range shooter — he is also a strong and smart rebounder," Holowicki said.

McIntyre had to do it all for the unusually short-of-talent Shamrocks. He was, truly, a one-man arsenal. He averaged 31 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists game.

If he continues to improve his game, McIntyre will be a strong contender for Michigan's Mr. Basketball honors next year. What higher praise is there?

Tom Domako, senior, Livonia Stevenson: This 6-8 forward would probably just as soon forget his senior season. Not because his stats were bad. He averaged 19.8 points and nine rebounds per game — fine individual numbers. But his ball club, picked to be one of the area's best, struggled.

Domako's future, though, seems bright. He is headed to Montana State, where he is projected to play swing forward as a freshman. Domako said he hopes to be moved into the shooting guard slot in his sophomore year.

Despite his wiry 6-8 frame, Domako showed that he could handle the backcourt position. He is a good passer, as his 61 assists last year attest.

"Tom is a very likeable young man," Stevenson coach George Van Wagoner said. "His future could be very interesting out at Montana State. He is a 3.2 student, too."

This is the second straight All-Observerland honor for Domako. He has also made the Free Pree all-metro west team and the all-Western Lakes team the past two years.

Mark Bennett, senior, Plymouth Canton: The Chiefs had their best season ever this year winning the Western Lakes conference and Western Division titles. Bennett was the driving force behind the team's success.

No pun intended, but few players share Bennett's talent for driving and penetrating through opposing defenses. He was Canton's creator — that is, the points the Chiefs scored, more often than not, were as a result of this man's playmaking ability.

At 6-2, he was the Chiefs' tallest player, and therefore was asked to play inside on defense and rebound.

"Mark is a team-oriented player," Canton coach Dave Van Wagoner said. "He excels at every aspect of the game. He possesses great court awareness and is a premier passer. He is just a coach's dream. He's a true winner."

In his career, Bennett dished out a school-record 423 assists. He led the area with 10.6 assists per game this year. He also averaged 12.2 points and 6.2 rebounds per game.

Bennett, a 3.8 student, appears to be headed for Alma College next fall on a basketball scholarship.

Van Wagoner's description of his ace is accurate — he's a winner.

Erich Hartnett, senior, Plymouth Salem: This 6-2½ guard-forward is a

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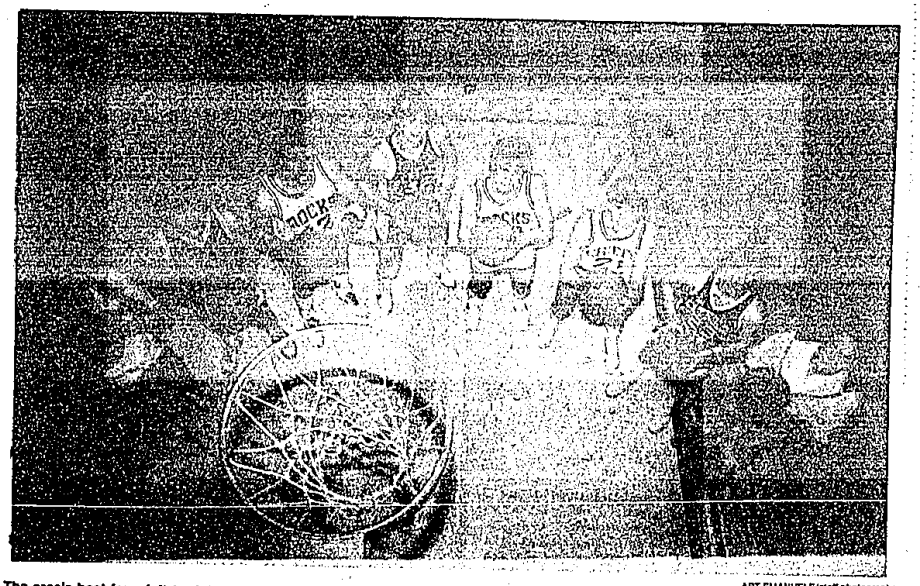

ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

The area's best from left to right: Tom Domako, Scott McCloskey, Rick Berberet, Phil Graczyk, Erich Hartnett, Mark Bennett, John McIntyre and Dave Van Wagoner.

all-area boys' basketball

1984 ALL AREA BASKETBALL TEAM

FIRST TEAM

John McIntyre	Catholic Central
Tom Domako	Stevenson
Mark Bennett	Canton
Erich Hartnett	Salem
Rick Berberet	Salem
Phil Graczyk	Bentley
Scott McCloskey	Garden City

SECOND TEAM

Joe Gregory	Bishop Borgess
Mike Seydarian	John Glenn
Dan Starkesky	Thurston
Steve Lucchesi	Churchill
Gary Thomas	Canton
Bob Skuka	Stevenson
Dave Carravallah	Franklin

THIRD TEAM

Jeff Arnold	Salem
Gary Dziokan	Bishop Borgess
John Gryzbek	Churchill
Mario Graziuda	John Glenn
Raffi Kostoglian	Thurston
John Wo	Bentley
Rick Anderson	N. Farmington

COACH OF YEAR

Dave Van Wagoner	Canton

HONORABLE MENTION: Livonia Churchill: Craig Hunter, Rob Foust, Scott Hiller. Livonia Stevenson: Tim Spencer, Ron Petrik. Livonia Clarenceville: Marvin Rone, John Scruggs. Livonia Clarenceville: Matt Burdick, Rick Rozman. Livonia Franklin: Mike Wilkins, Steve Freeman. Plymouth Canton: Mike Jennings, Elijah Rogers, Jim Schocker. Plymouth Salem: Scott Jurek, LaSean Haygood, Mike White. Plymouth Christian: Rod Windsor. Catholic Central: Paul Tavona, Ron Wendzel. Bishop Borgess: Mike Stewart, Chuck Gregory. North Farmington: Bob Chwatt, Steve Dembach, Rick Perusiki. Farmington: Tim Carruthers. Farmington Harrison: John Miller, Brian Hickey, Devin Gaster. Garden City: Paul Krol, Steve Freier. Redford Thurston: Scott Filipiak, Lars Anderson, Brian McGrath. Redford Union: Dennis Buskirk, Keith Pulcifi. Westland John Glenn: Jeff Hawley. Redford St. Agatha: Mike Balczak, Pat Haran. Redford Temple Christian: Gary Aldrich, Don Sheerty, John Greenwood.

Canton's Dave Van Wagoner Observerland's coach of year

The announcement was first made over a public address system at a trendy Milwaukee night spot named Major Goolsby's — located across the street from the MECCA Arena.

"May we have your attention, please. Can we have a round of applause for the 1984 Observer Newspaper's basketball coach of the year — Mr. Dave Van Wagoner of Plymouth Canton High School."

Van Wagoner, his family and some friends were in Milwaukee to watch the NCAA Mid-East Regional tournament.

The announcement drew a moderate round of applause from the unknowing Milwaukee crowd, but it has drawn a standing ovation from the Canton community and from the area's prep basketball community as well.

VAN WAGONER, you see, has breathed life into a stagnant basketball program. And, in so doing, has brought life to the Canton community. Van Wagoner has taken a team with a history of losing and molded them into winners in just three seasons.

This year, after 4-17 and 10-11 seasons, the Chiefs compiled a 16-6 record and brought home Western Lakes conference and Western Division championships.

"I've just tried to build the program on teamwork, togetherness and a lot of communication and hard work. I'm very proud of the things we've accomplished in three years. I hope we will continue to do as well in the future," Van Wagoner said.

Van Wagoner gives the credit for the Chiefs' success in 1984 to his players. "These guys have made me a good coach," he said at his team's banquet last Thursday night.

But his players, young men like Mark Bennett, Gary Thomas, Mike Jennings and Elijah Rogers, say they are better players because of Van Wagoner.

Both the players and the coach are correct.

FOUR YEARS ago, when an evaluation was made as to which school (Canton or Salem) got the best basketball players from the Plymouth-Canton district's middle schools — it was said that Salem got 18 of the 20 best players.

Through the players' hard work, and through Van Wagoner's tireless efforts, the four aforementioned players blossomed into outstanding ballplayers — far exceeding anyone's expectations.

"They are self-made players, all of them. They accepted the challenge that was placed before them, they worked hard during the summer months, and they made themselves better players," Van Wagoner said.

Van Wagoner has a knack for getting young men to believe in themselves.

This season his team was expected to be an also-ran in a tough Western Lakes conference. The Chiefs were small. Their tallest player was 6-foot-2. They lacked depth. They lacked in many areas.

But what they didn't lack was intelligence, intensity, and confidence. And as the season wore on, the Chiefs grew harder and harder to beat. After they stunned Livonia Stevenson in the Spartans' own gym, the basketball community knew Plymouth Canton was a force to be reckoned with — a fact that Dave Van Wagoner had instilled in his players long before the season began.

The Observer Newspapers salutes Dave Van Wagoner — 1984 Coach of the Year.

— Chris McCosky

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