

Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editor/591-2312

entertainment, business inside



(F1C)

AAU hoops brings out best



Sarah Basford, a senior at Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy who will attend the University of Michigan on a basketball

scholarship next fall, is one of the many stars competing in the AAU tourney this weekend.

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

The motto of this year's Michigan AAU girls basketball qualifying tournament may well be, "Quality not quantity."

Only three teams will assemble at Schoolcraft Community College this weekend to compete in the 18-and-under division of the AAU state tourney. (In total there are 31 teams competing in four age divisions.) That's not the kind of turnout tournament director Ed Kavanaugh had hoped for, but he's far from discouraged.

"I'm surprised there aren't more teams," said Kavanaugh, the women's basketball coach at Schoolcraft and at Livonia Ladywood High School. "But, it's going to be a good tournament. There will be plenty of college scouts here and a good group of players."

THAT'S AN understatement.

Some of the best high-school girls basketball talent in the state will be showcased in the 18-and-under division. And some of the state's future stars will be playing in the other divisions: 12 under, 14 under and 16 under.

"There's only three teams in 18 under this year," Kavanaugh said. "But, there are five teams in 16 under and we are looking for them to move up into 18 next year. That, plus some other new teams — I think we are still in the growth stage."

The teams may not be there, but the talent certainly is — that's why the Schoolcraft College gym should be jumping this Saturday and Sunday.

The three teams — the Metro team, coached by Kavanaugh, made up of players from the metropolitan Detroit area; the Michigan team, made up of players from out-state areas like Flint and Saginaw; and the Brick City Bombers from Detroit — are loaded with outstanding ballplayers.

The Metro team drew a bye in the opening round. Michigan will take on the Bombers at 8 p.m. Saturday. Most

likely it will be Metro vs. Michigan in the finals at 6:30 p.m. Sunday.

The starting five for Kavanaugh's team is, literally, an all-state team: Alana Cummings from Troy-Athens, Sarah Basford from Farmington Hills, Mary, Jolynn Schneider from Harper Woods, Regina, Emily Wagner and Char Gowan from Ladywood — all named to an all-state team last season.

Off the bench for the Metro team will be such area stars as Rhonda Lancaster and Alyse Fortune from Farmington, Trish White from Ladywood, Margaret Flynn from Ferndale, Pam Baker from South Lyon and Karen McDonald from Melvindale.

THE MICHIGAN TEAM, coached by Nate Jones, may have more individual talent — if you can believe it. Leading the pack is Manistee's Michelle Krivy, last year's Miss Basketball in Michigan. Other standouts include: Marva Fuller from Holly, Tonya Edwards from Flint, Northwesters, LaTonya Thomas from Detroit, Western, Lisa Harvey from Detroit, Western and Kendra McDonald from Detroit Oak Tech.

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Brad
Emons

WLAA bosses OK expansion

WHO IS Clyde Jack?

For starters, he's director of secondary education for the Livonia Public Schools. For another, he's the reason why the Northwest Suburban League (NSL) is down to three schools — Redford Union, Garden City and Redford Thurston.

It was only a few months ago that RU, GC, Thurston, Livonia Franklin, North Farmington and Westland John Glenn all said they would remain as the NSL.

But this time the rumors are true. The 10-team, two-division Western Lakes Activities Association (WLAA) is expanding for the 1985-86 school year. The WLAA expansion comes as a result of needing a replacement for Livonia Bentley, which closes its doors next June.

Jack, the nimble and quick Livonia administrator, reasoned that "the board of education had expressed an interest a few years back and said that Livonia schools should all be in the same league." That meant that Franklin must join "sisters" Stevenson and Churchill in the WLAA.

IN FACT, Jack recommended to Franklin principal Albert Zuck that Franklin accept the WLAA's invitation to join. Zuck, who happened to be president of the NSL, was told "to affiliate with Livonia's other two high schools," by Jack.

According to Bentley principal Dr. Ken Watson, the WLAA voted unanimously (10-0) to invite North Farmington and Glenn in along with Franklin. That recommendation came from the WLAA search committee, chaired by Stevenson principal Dale Collier.

In two years, the WLAA will sport a pair of six-team alignments: the Western Division — Franklin, Churchill, Plymouth Canton, Farmington Harrison, Northville and Walled Lake Western; and Lakes Division — North Farmington, Glenn, Stevenson, Plymouth Salem, Farmington and Walled Lake Central.

According to Zuck, the NSL wanted to merge with the WLAA, minus Class B-size Thurston. That proposal, however, couldn't obtain the required unanimous vote of the Western Lakes members.

UNLIKE MOST school-district higher-ups, Jack did not jump over the candlestick. He's taking the heat on the issue.

"I will lay it on my doorstep," Jack said. "I recommended that Franklin seriously consider joining."

The whole thing doesn't sit too well with Redford Union or Garden City. Those two schools helped save the NSL 10 years ago, replacing defectors Birmingham Groves and Oak Park.

"I think it's devastating to RU," said athletic director Bob Atkins. "I don't understand how they could do that in good conscience."

"Before March, the principals and their athletic directors (of the NSL) said it was their wish to stay together."

Although Garden City school officials could not be contacted, you can bet they're as mad as Atkins.

SOME WLAA members were concerned that the 14-team, two-division proposal was unmanageable. "Too many schools," said one athletic director.

"There's a concern that it was an impermissible number," Watson said, "and it wasn't in the philosophy or in the original concept of the two divisions. Travel was also a concern."

That, however, could have been avoided by restructuring the divisions by geographics — North and South divisions.

The WLAA by-laws state that "sister schools" are given the first opportunity to join when an opening occurs. Franklin and North Farmington made it 11, while Glenn, highly competitive with modern sporting facilities, was the attractive 12th member.

Thurston, meanwhile, wasn't in anybody's plans from the start.

THE SCHOOL is paying dearly for the leasing of Marshall Junior High to Catholic Central. Thurston has lost many top student-athletes to parochial schools over the years.

Thurston's enrollment has dropped significantly, falling below the Class A cut-off level of 1,150.

Northwest Suburban schools were also flailing about competing in football with a Class B school, losing valuable points in the state's playoff system.

With CC in its backyard, a football program on the verge of extinction, and constant turnover in the coaching and AD ranks, Thurston will have to align with the Tri-River League or Metro Conference.

I REALIZE that every school district has to protect its own interests, but this latest coup by the WLAA has me scratching my head.

It's the same league that confuses the public, crowning three champions each in baseball, softball, track, cross country and tennis.

And finally, it's the same league where expansion takes place in a shroud of secrecy. I was surprised to learn so soon of what was going on. Usually, it would take until the summer of 1985 to learn what had happened.

But that's life in the public schools, where public relations are an afterthought. And schools such as CC, DC and RB are just hitting back, keeping the beat.

There are a lot of good things about the WLAA, but this was handled poorly from the start.

I feel for the people at Garden City and RU. They deserved better.

That's a fact, Jack.

Low average bowlers unite in tourney

By Rich Swenson
staff writer

Metropolitan Detroit has a unique new concept in amateur bowling and local bowlers will have a chance to join in on the fun this weekend at Livonia's Merrifield.

You've all heard of "Bowling for Dollars" and "Make that Spare." Well, now amateur bowling enthusiasts can take advantage of a professional-style tournament that is making the rounds in the nation's bowling capital.

Sponsored by the National Amateur Bowlers, Inc. (NABI), the largest tournament club organization in the U.S., bowlers can test their skills in some of Detroit's top bowling establishments and make money at the same time.

Because of its handicap system, the tournament is geared to the average bowler, whether you're a man or woman. And one out of every six bowlers is guaranteed to cash in.

HANDICAPS ARE based on a 199 average and under. If a bowler has an average of 200 or above, he has ever been a professional, he is not eligible.

The minimum first place prize is \$400 (depending on the number of tournament entries), and the second place guarantee is \$200. The lowest "in the money" payoff is \$30.

NABI has more than 400 members in the Detroit area alone, and the membership is growing rapidly. The membership cost is \$10 per year plus a \$50 entry for each tournament.

If a bowler fails to cash in, NABI has a Plus Plus system, enhancing the competitors' chances of finishing in the money for the next tournament. Three additional pins are added to the bowlers' handicap, giving him (or her) even a better chance the next time around.

Merrifield will hold qualifying rounds at 8 and 9:30 p.m. Friday, 11:30, 1, 2:30 and 4 p.m. on Saturday; and 10 and 11:50 a.m. and 1 p.m. Sunday.

THE SEMIFINALS are scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Sunday and the finals start at 4.

The finals format will be much the same as that of the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) tour. The first-place finisher meets the fourth-place bowler. The winner meets the third place and fifth place bowlers in a championship final round.

NABI has 11 tournaments scheduled between now and August. Winners of each tournament are eligible to bow in the Las Vegas Open National, with a top prize of \$50,000.

Polish up those bowling balls and get out to Merrifield this weekend.

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