

# OU coach casts glum outlook

By C.J. Rieck  
staff writer

One by one, the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) men's basketball coaches stepped to the podium to say glowing — or at least semi-positive — things about their teams.

"I think we're better right now than we were at any time last year," said Bob Eldridge of Lake Superior State.

"We have good quickness, senior experience and maturity," was how Bob Pratt of Saginaw Valley State described his squad, adding, "The quality of our guard play is the best we've had. And we have good depth."

Pat Miller of Northwood Institute was pleased that he had "everybody back that finished the season with the exception of Mike Hardin — four starters return."

Even Bill Gappy, whose Michigan Tech team was picked to finish in the GLIAC cellar in the coaches' poll, commented, "We have no hope to go but up."

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY first-year coach Greg Kampe heard all this at the GLIAC meeting. His remarks were a trifle more disparaging.

"Oakland University has never had a winning season in the GLIAC," he said. "Obviously we don't have the talent other teams possess. I'm not happy with what we've got. I'm not happy with what I've seen so far."

"We're not big and we're not quick. We've got two starters over 6-5. Is that what to expect from OU this season? Or is Kampe sandbagging, downgrading his team's chances so that no one expects too much from the Pioneers this season? After all, the fewer the expectations, the fewer the disappointments."

Both are true — partially. OU is small, as Kampe said, "Right now, my starters would be Rob Skinner, Craig Tonti and Chris Howze as the little guys, and Randy Strunk and Walt Dixon as the big guys."

SKINNER AND TONTI are 6-foot-2, Howze is 6-3. Strunk is 6-4 and Dixon is 6-5.

But, of those five, Skinner is a solid point guard and defensive player. Howze is quick and fast and a good scorer at small forward. Tonti has impressed Kampe with his outside shooting and Dixon, a transfer from University of Detroit, has the ability to be a strong rebounder.

It's been two weeks since that GLIAC coaches conference and Kampe has tempered his views — somewhat.

"We're very small and not very fast," he reiterated, then added, "but we're playing hard and we're much improved on defense. We're understanding our defensive concepts better."

"Our starting five have been picked because of their defensive abilities."

KAMPE WAS also quick to point out that those five may not be the starters on opening day (Sunday at Western Michigan). Three freshmen — 6-foot guard Scott Bittlinger, 6-8 forward Pete Schill and 6-3 swingman Tob Alvin, a Birmingham Groves grad — together with 6-4 sophomore forward Jenny Vrij will all get a long look during the non-league schedule.

"I strongly intend during the first seven games to look at those starting five and the next four," said Kampe.

Alvin and Bittlinger, both recruited by Kampe, look to be good shooters who need work on defense. Schill was one big player — Kampe divides his squad not by forward, center and guard, but by "big guys and little guys" — Kampe was hoping might deliver this season, despite his freshman status.

But Schill has been bothered by a series of injuries, from a hip bruise to an ankle sprain and a groin muscle pull. He was 100 percent for just five of OU's first 22 practices.

KAMPE STILL doesn't know what to expect from the competition (he's never seen a GLIAC game) and how his team will handle it. But he said he would make sacrifices this year if he thought it would benefit the team in the long run.

"I've got some experienced players, and they're going to get their shots," the Pioneer coach said. "But sometimes you have to take a step backwards. I'll accept 5-20 this year if it means we can be 20-5 next year."

"Right now," he added, "we're not even looking at what we have to do to win. We're just learning. They're in the process of learning how to play my way."

Kampe is not anticipating a 5-20 season. A 9-7 mark in GLIAC play would please him, considering that's more than OU has ever won.

"I think we'll surprise some people," Kampe predicted. "Then again, we may not."

"We need size and quickness — you can't coach that."

Monday, November 10, 1984 O&E

(F3B)

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## RU, GC combine to revive NSL

By Judith Dorn Berne  
staff writer

It looks like the Northwest Suburban League (NSL) will continue — but without Thurston High School, which has found a new athletic home.

Seven schools have reportedly indicated interest in joining the league, which will lose four of six schools next fall.

The most recent resignation came Thursday from Thurston — the league's only Class B school. Thurston will join the Tri-River league, principal Jack Harms said.

The other NSL schools, North Farmington, Westland, John Glenn and Livonia Franklin, will join the Western Lakes Activities Association next fall.

The two schools which are left — Redford Union and Garden City — will meet with officials from Dearborn, Edsel Ford, Dearborn and Woodhaven high schools as soon as possible, RU Principal Dr. Robert Schramke said recently.

All are currently non-league schools within a 30-minute drive of Middlebelt and Schoolcraft roads. Four other schools which have indicated interest will be told thank you, but no.

That's because all are from an existing league, Schramke said. "We don't want to be a party to breaking up a league," the principal said. "We've been there."

He declined to name the league, at least until the schools have been notified.

THURSTON RESIGNED from the NSL a day ahead of a meeting with Redford Union and Garden City principals to review applications.

"I needed to be excused from that decision because it doesn't affect me," said Harms. "We were accepted Thursday afternoon. We're in the league as of September. We're reluctantly withdrawing from Northwest Suburban."

Thurston, which dropped from Class A to Class B about a year ago when its enrollment dipped below 1,100, will

play against schools more its size.

The Tri-River league is composed of six Class B, one small Class A and a Class C school. They are: Allen Park, Annapolis, Cherry Hill, Crestwood, Taylor Kennedy, Melvindale, Riverside and Southgate Anderson.

Thurston will take the place of Riverside, the only Class C school, which has reportedly withdrawn so it can play against other schools with similar enrollments.

The next year, Cherry Hill will withdraw because it is merging with the Wayne-Westland school district. Then the league will have to hunt up a replacement, Harms said.

HARMS SEES the league as good for Thurston kids, who will travel about the same mileage as they now do in the NSL.

"I'm happy. It's an excellent move for Thurston kids. They'll be competing with schools on an even keel."

At the same time, Thurston plans to keep up its association with its traditional rivals, by maintaining non-athletic activities such as student exercises and leadership conferences.

Those non-athletic activities are also important to RU and Garden City.

## Ice show at Wayne

What is billed as the world's largest recreational ice skating competition will be held Aug. 11-17 in the Wayne Community Center.

The fifth annual Ice Skating Institute of America Recreational Team Championships of the U.S. will include events in figure, freestyle, hockey and speed skating. Skaters will range in age from 3 to 60. More than 40 recreation teams are expected to compete.

Last year's championships attracted skating teams from 69 U.S. and foreign clubs. August's competition is co-sponsored by the International Youth Year Commission, a group designated by the United Nations to focus on 1985 as the International Year of Youth with themes of peace, participation and development.

Competition will also be held at the Melvindale Arena and the Mike Adray Sports Arena in Dearborn. For more information, call Justine Townsend Smith, IAYC executive director, at 312-256-5080.

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