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Char Govan

'Govan . . . worked and worked and then worked some more on her game until, in her junior year, she became recognized as one the state's premier players.'

Terri Ford

'She really grew as a ballplayer. There were times this year, like in the first Ladywood game, when she gave us a glimpse of her potential.'

Alyse Fortune

'She's probably, in terms of pure athletic ability, the finest player I've coached. She has speed, she can rebound, and when she's hot, she's an unbelievable shooter.'

Lisa Mummert

'Defense may be Mummert's specialty. In addition to her 81 steals this season, she forced 57 other turnovers with her menacing defensive play.'

Mary Rosowski

'The difference in Mary this year, I thought, was that in the close games, she wanted the ball. She was ready to take it to the basket for us.'

Emily Wagner

'Her ballhandling skills and her knowledge of the game enable her to control the tempo of play. Her slick moves and fancy dribbling allow her to move in, out, around and through defenses at will.'

Annette Ruggiero

'She's the personification of a money player.'

Talent glut hits Observerland

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

FRED THOMANN was perusing the list of the three Observerland All-Area girls basketball teams he and the other area coaches had selected.

"Durn," he said, shaking his head, "there may be more talent in this area this year than in any other year."

The Plymouth Salem coach wasn't exaggerating a bit. There was a talent overload in the area this year. But, with such state-ranked powers as Farmington Hills Mercy, Livonia Ladywood and Salem in the area, how could there not be?

In a way, though, this All-Area team represents the closing of an era in girls basketball. Three and four-year stand-

outs such as Mary Rosowski and Annette Ruggiero from Mercy, Char Govan and Emily Wagner from Ladywood, Lisa Mummert from North Farmington, and Alyse Fortune from Farmington have all closed out their brilliant careers.

That's not to say, however, that because those players are graduating, the area will be devoid of talent in future years. Players like Mercy's Terri Ford, Salem's Dena Head, Ladywood's Sue Laiberte, Redford Union's Julie Marchand, Livonia Franklin's Tracy Letcka and a slew of others will be back to carry on the tradition.

The level of play in girls basketball has increased dramatically the last five years and the seven players you are about to meet showcase the evolution of talent.

all-area girls' basketball

1984 ALL-AREA GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

Annette Ruggiero, Mercy, senior: On a team with this much talent, picking a captain or an MVP seems a bit superfluous — until you see Ruggiero play. For three years, Ruggiero played point guard and floor general for a Mercy team that captured every prize available to a high school team.

She was Mercy's coach on the floor, the one always under control in the pressure situations, the one who calmly

sank a 17-footer at the buzzer to beat Murray-Wright in the regional final, the one who drained 13 of 14 free throws, including 6 straight in overtime to beat Salem in the quarterfinals; and, she was the one who drove herself to the brink of exhaustion, darting and weaving through the Benton Harbor press, in an attempt to avoid defeat in the semifinals.

"I don't think, with the possible exception of (River Rouge's) Franthea Price, that another individual played better than Annette throughout the

state tournament," said Mercy coach Larry Baker. "This year, she was driven by her intense desire to succeed."

And, succeed she did. She averaged 9.8 points per game this year, but, more importantly for Mercy, she made 87 steals (2.7 per game) and 122 assists (5 per game). Her 299 career assists is a school record at Mercy.

She's the personification of a "money player."

Char Govan, Ladywood, senior: If John Houseman were to describe Govan, he might do it this way: "Miss Govan achieved her goal the old-fashioned way — she earned it."

Indeed, Govan, not blessed with an overabundance of natural ability,

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Salem's Paul Makara gets that hemmed-in feeling as Hawk defenders Ken Hixon (background) and Ken George (foreground) close in.

Harrison pops Rocks

Ken George unintentionally played pool shark against Plymouth Salem Tuesday night.

As a result, he led Farmington Harrison to its first-ever basketball triumph over the Rocks, 52-53 at Harrison.

Harrison took a 46-39 lead into the final quarter and Salem went to fouling. They fouled George and he missed his first two. The Rocks thought they had their man.

But, the junior transfer from Catholic Central crossed them up. He hit the next 12 in a row to bury the Rocks.

"This proves we can play with anybody," said a happy Harrison coach Mike Teachman. "People are going to have to prepare to play us now. They can't just take us for granted anymore."

Teachman played just five players and

all five made major contributions.

George led the Hawks with 24 points. John Miller scored 16, pulled down 7 rebounds, made 3 steals and dished out 5 assists. Vince Enright scored 10 points and made 4 steals.

MIKE DEMPSEY scored 8 points and grabbed 9 rebounds. Ken Hixon made 6 assists and 3 steals.

"We played real good defense," Teachman said. "We played our match-up zone and pressed for all but the last three minutes. They weren't able to get inside on us."

For Salem, it was a matter of falling into someone else's style of play.

"We wanted to push the ball up and then play control if the break wasn't there," said

Salem coach Bob Brode. "We weren't able to do either."

"We were not real careful with our shot selection," he added. "We didn't take care ball well at all."

Brode said the game, for all intents and purposes, was won at the free throw line. And his point is well taken. Harrison was 18 of 20 from the line, while Salem was 3 of 9.

"They have some fine athletes," Brode said of Harrison. "Miller really took charge of things for them."

Mike White led Salem with 15 points. Paul Makara added 14 and LeSean Haygood 12. Steve Potoczak scored 10.

Salem falls to 1-2, 1-1 in the Western Lakes. Harrison is 3-1, 2-0 in the conference.

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