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GC knocks North from league race

By Brad Emmons
staff writer

The Northwest Suburban League (NSL) basketball race is now down to two teams.

Garden City solidified its first place position Friday night with a hard-fought 57-55 overtime victory over visiting North Farmington.

The Cougars, who play their final three league games at home, appear to be in the driver's seat with a 6-1 record. But they still must play the second-place team, Westland John Glenn (5-2), on Feb. 22.

North (4-3) came very close to making it a three-way tie for first. But the Raiders squandered opportunities both at the end of regulation play and in the overtime.

Sophomore Skip Barnett sank 2 clutch free throws with 8 seconds to play to give Garden City the victory.

Barnett went to the line after being bumped inside by North's junior forward Rick Anderson, who fouled out as the game's high scorer with 24 points.

"THE PLAY (to Barnett) was supposed to be a double pick for (Steve) Dunning underneath," explained GC coach Bob Dropp, "but they (North) broke it up so Barnett went to the mid-

die — he was the second option on the play.

After the two free throws, North's Rick Pennala brought the ball up the floor and misfired on a jumper near the top of the key. The ball squirted up in the air and came down to Barnett, who squeezed the rebound as time expired.

Ironically, it was a travel call on the 6-foot-5 Barnett with 11 seconds to play in regulation that set up a final attempt by North. But the Raiders' Dean Temple couldn't get a long jumper to drop at the buzzer, sending the two teams into overtime tied at 51.

"Skip's a very dedicated player, but he's young," said Dropp. "I think he grew up tonight a little."

The Raiders also had their chances, but a turnover with 29 seconds left in regulation play and two errant passes in the overtime cost them a victory.

"THEY'RE YOUNG kids," said North coach Tom Negoshian, who couldn't fault his team. "We just had some mental breakdowns near the end. But they're high school kids."

Garden City's 8-6 senior center Dave Wegryn, who was instrumental in the victory, led the Cougars with 16 points.

"I thought David jumped well and handled the ball well at the high post," said the Garden City coach. "A lot of our passes weren't sharp, but he saved

some and turned them into baskets."

Guard Steve Freiler, who fouled out with 17 seconds left in the third quarter, and running mate Kevin Sheridan, added 13 and 11 points, respectively.

It was a rebound basket by Anderson at the outset of the fourth quarter, which gave North its largest lead of the night, 51-47. That advantage, however, was short-lived.

"WHEN WE GOT ahead by 4 it seemed we stopped going to the basket," Negoshian said. "Maybe we thought we had it won."

"But Garden City is a good team. They're as big a team as we play."

In addition to Anderson's sterling effort (he also had 12 rebounds), senior center Bob Chwalki scored 13 points and junior forward Paul Wahrman added 10.

The loss puts North two games behind the league leader and virtually out of the league race at 4-3.

"We needed this one because we needed to make up for our loss against Thurston," said Negoshian.

Dropp, meanwhile, knows the next big test is Glenn, but the Cougars can't look past either Franklin (on Friday) or Redford Union (in the league finale).

But the Garden City coach may look back and say this was the one which sewed up the league title.



Rick Anderson, North Farmington junior, scored 24 points in the Raiders' 57-55 overtime loss to Garden City Friday.

DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Hawks clinch division title

In a game that had a bit of everything, Farmington Harrison came away with the greatest treasure: the division title.

The Hawks' Ken George broke open a tight contest with 11 fourth-quarter points as Harrison clinched the Western Lakes Activities Association (WLAA) Western Division championship with a 69-58 victory at Livonia Churchill Friday.

The win boosted the Hawks' league mark to 8-2 with 3 games left. Churchill fell into a tie for second with Plymouth Canton at 4-6. Harrison is 10-4 overall; Churchill is 5-9.

The game was marred by an altercation midway through the third quarter that resulted in Churchill guard Andy Oliver's ejection. The incident started when Harrison's Ken Hixon was whistled for an offensive foul as he charged into Churchill's Dave Anders.

According to Churchill coach Don Al-

bertson, several players got involved in the pushing and shoving, but Oliver was the only one assessed a flagrant technical foul and ejected. George hit 2 free throws that gave the Hawks a 12-point lead.

Churchill battled back to within 6 going into the final period, but the Chargers were forced to foul. Harrison made 11 free throws in the last quarter to clinch it.

"The game got completely out of control because of the lack of whistles in the first half," said Albersen. "There were only 4 fouls called in the first quarter, and there was a lot more contact than that."

Churchill was called for 6 fouls in the opening half — 3 on starting guard Mickey Katschor — while Harrison was whistled for 5.

Vince Enright's 20 points was high for Harrison. George tallied 19 and John Miller had 17.

Scott Hillie poured in 27 points, 10 in the fourth quarter, for Churchill. Mike Hermanson had 16.

Each team hit 26 field goals but Har-

risson connected on 17 of 27 free throws to 6 of 12 for Churchill.

W.L. CENTRAL 65, FARMINGTON 48: The Falcons never got into the flow Friday at Walled Lake Central.

"We played well last Tuesday losing to Livonia Stevenson," said Farmington coach Rich Roy. "But we played just terribly tonight. There was no defense."

"We gave them some pretty easy shots."

And Walled Lake Central took advantage, going up by 8 points at the half (32-24) and pulling steadily away. The win boosted Central to 9-5 overall, 7-4 in the WLAA. Farmington dipped to 7-8 overall and 5-6 in the WLAA.

Four Vikings reached double figures in scoring: Tom Cummings (16), Chris Owens (15), and Daran Edmonds and Mike Kohler (12 apiece).

Bruce Kraft tossed in 14 for Farmington. Tony Racka and Greg Feenstra had 8 each.

State-ranked Troy gymnasts hand North 1st defeat

By Jim Hughes
staff writer

There's no question which is the best girls' gymnastics team in the Eccentric area. It's hard to remember when there was an argument about that. But the best in the Observer & Eccentric area? That's a dispute which annually is settled when Troy High and North Farmington meet.

Friday, that dispute was settled when Troy, the No. 1 team in the Eccentric area, knocked off North Farmington, the No. 1 team in the Observer

area, 137.10 to 131.80.

Troy's team score was its highest in the school's history, beating its 1983 regional mark of 137.6 which, at the time, set a state record.

"The girls were awesome, just awesome," said Troy assistant coach Diane Mancina. "It definitely was the best meet of the season. They were in control. They had everything under control."

"Our top four girls didn't have one fall on the beam. That's where North Farmington could have taken us, but we were looking sweet on the beam."

NORTH'S EILEEN Murtaugh was first on the balance beam with an 8.5 score, but Troy took the next three spots with Kim Cousins (8.35), Jodie Gleason (8.25) and Michelle Sima (8.25).

The Colts took the top three places on vault. Sima led the way with a 9.15, followed by Suzanne Enciso (9.05) and Cousins (8.6). Murtaugh led Cousins for third.

Sima placed first on the uneven parallel bars with an 8.95, followed by North's Lucine Toroyan (8.6) and Enciso (8.5). Enciso placed first in floor ex-

ercise with a 9.25. Toroyan was second (8.75) and Laura Slenkiewicz was third (8.55).

"You can't believe how excited we are," Mancina added. "This was the right time to score this high."

The win gave Troy an 8-0 record while North is 9-1.

PLYMOUTH SALEM defeated non-league rival Ypsilanti Tuesday night 121.7-116.15.

Like they have all season, Jackie Huff and Beth Raffall led the Rocks Raffall won three events: the vault (8.5)

balance beam (8.55) and floor exercise (8.35). She took second uneven parallel bars (7.75).

Huff, slowed somewhat by a bad ankle, took first in bars (7.85), second on vault (8.45), third on beam (8.05) and fourth on floor (8.0).

The Rocks, No. 2 in Observerland, are now 9-0 and host No. 1-ranked North Farmington tonight in a battle of unbeaten teams.

FARMINGTON not only lost its meet with Hartland Wednesday, but it lost a key gymnast, also.

Stacy Swanderski injured her ankle in Farmington's 117-106.6 loss. Farmington coach Mary Beth Schornholt said Swanderski could be lost for the season.

Katie MacIntosh led the Falcons effort with seconds on vault (7.9) and floor (8.1) and thirds on bars (7.9) and beam (7.5).

Swanderski, before the injury, placed fifth on vault (7.3) and fifth on beam (7.1). Debi DeWitt placed fifth on floor (7.7).

The Falcons are 2-6 on the season and travel to Clarenceville tonight.

Winter blazes invade Observerland sport scene

Airing it out . . .

WONDER IF I could survive February without Sports Illustrated's bathing suit edition. Probably not.

That's not entirely a sexist comment. SI's bathing suit edition, like getting the 1985 Tiger schedule in the mail and reading about baseball fantasy camps, signals the coming of spring.

And, Lord knows, I need spring to arrive as soon as possible. This, by far, has been the winter of my ultimate discontent. Excuse me while I bleed for a while:

First of all, my car has cost me nearly \$2,000 in repair bills, my pregnant wife has cost me (and my insurance company) a sum close to or exceeding that, and the winter sports scene around these parts, as glum as the winter weather, is costing me my sanity.

Boys basketball has been dismal. Let's face it, the latest level in Observerland has been on a steady decline. I felt this last year even though there were the Mark Bennetts, the Tom Domakos, the John McIntyres, the Joe Gregorays and a few others around.

DON'T GET ME wrong, there are still a handful of exciting players around. Mac and Gregory are still here. Mike "White" can do many things at Plymouth Salem; Bob Sluka is steady at Stevenson, and Pollis Robertson is wowing them at Wayne.

And, I have my own personal favorites: Bruce Kraut at Farmington, Ken George at Farmington Harrison, Rick Pennala, Bob Chwalki and Rick Anderson at North Farmington, Brent Sack at Canton, Eric Sovine at Salem.

But, be honest, how many bonafide Division I college talents do we have in this area? Not more than 2 or 3 players, from what I see.

Trying to pick the top 5 teams in the area is embarrassingly tough. Wayne, our No. 1 team, finally gets into the state rankings only to get slaughtered at Ann Arbor Huron. Livonia Stevenson is having one of its banner seasons, but the Spartans are a very, very beatable team.

No. 3-ranked Catholic Central is basically a one-man unit. No. 4-ranked Garden City has some talent but is getting by largely on the intelligent coaching of Bob Dropp.

Chris
McCosky

The No. 5 spot (actually No. 3 through No. 5) is always up for grabs. Farmington Harrison, North, Salem, even Livonia Bentley have either held the spot or were strongly considered for it.

PERHAPS the winter blazes have crept into my judgment, but I'm just not all that excited about Observerland boys basketball this season.

Taking its place, and so far rescuing my mental health, has been volleyball. What an exciting sport this is. I wish everyone of you out there cursing me right now could have witnessed the Stevenson-North championship match last night at the Schoolcraft tournament or the North-Harrison match earlier this year.

The thing I like about volleyball, along with the incredibly fast-paced action and the fearless attitude of the players, is the coaches' attitudes toward their game. North's Sandy Lubienicki epitomizes this. She is someone able to instill in her team a fierce competitiveness and a "have-a-good-time" attitude simultaneously.

Most of the coaches I deal with take this approach. Thus, the spirit of fun is never lost within the competitiveness of the sport. I don't think basketball in this area can make the same claim.

There is something that bothers me about volleyball, though. Some coaches don't seem to understand all the rules surrounding the win-loss record. Some coaches think that tournament games are not to be included on their win-loss record.

Not true.

IF YOU win two games or lose two games to the same team in a tournament — even though they may be two-game matches — it counts on your record. If you split the two games, then it does not count. This is the state rule, coaches. You should follow it.

Plymouth Salem has added a bit of sparkle to the gymnastics scene this season. It's always a good story when a team that has long been the doormat of a particular area or league suddenly becomes one of the area's best. (The Farmington Harrison basketball team is in this boat, too.)

Congratulations extended to Salem's coach Kathi Kinsella. She works hard with her kids, and now that her team is on top, she's wisely keeping everything in perspective. There are no overly inflated egos on Kinsella's team.

Of course, with a powerhouse like North Farmington in the league, it's very easy to keep things in perspective.

Here's a thought: I see where the fight to keep Livonia Bentley from closing is heating up. It may even go to court. So, what happens to the new Western? Does structure if Bentley does remain open? I hope the area ath-

letic directors are considering this, because it could happen.

YOU KNOW, I have always rooted for the University of Michigan ever since I got up to the third floor. With John Miller, Todd Krumm, Bob Wascenski and so many other guys that I've watched develop in high school wearing the green and white, I just can't let Michigan State anymore. Take 'em to Pasadena, guys.

Did you know that Jill Birsa will be the only female to earn 9 varsity letters at Farmington Harrison? She competes in tennis, gymnastics and track and has since her sophomore year.

Leave 'em laughing: Last summer I was going out at Whispering Willows. When I got up to the third floor, I noticed Farmington Hills Mercy basketball coach Larry Baker getting ready to hit off the women's tee.

"Hey, Larry," I said. "Don't you want to hit off the regulation tee?"

"Leave me alone," said he. "I'm on my third shot."

Not entirely a true story, but too good a joke to pass up.