

Sports

sports, amusements, classified inside

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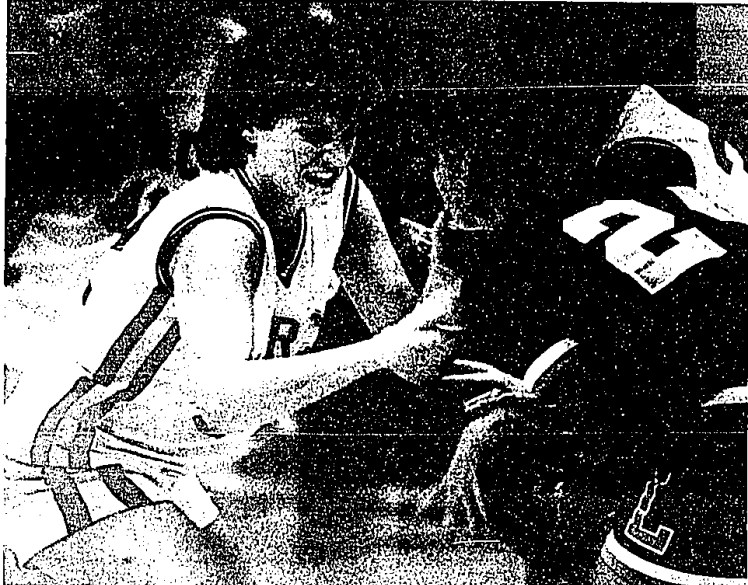


Thursday, October 17, 1985 O&E

(F1C)

Ladywood draws 1st blood

By Brad Emons staff writer



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Mercy's Missy Duczynski takes a swipe at the basketball being cradled by Ladywood's Jonny Nadeau Tuesday night. Mercy rallied but fell shy by a point to its Catholic League foe.



C.J. Risak

Wins mean little to a coach's fate

GEORGE SOMMERMAN resigned from his position as Westland John Glenn varsity girls basketball coach last week, proving once again that there is no success in success.

Pardon the redundancy, but if you scan the sports pages you'll find that winning is not everything, particularly for coaches. Take a losing team, turn it into a winner and what happens? The next season people expect that team to battle for a championship.

So go ahead and win a league title — and people expect a long run in the state playoffs. Guide a team to a state championship, and people expect you to do it again and again.

Sooner or later the chain will be broken. That's when the doubters take center stage: "What's wrong with these guys?" or "They don't want it as much," or even "He can't coach. He just got lucky one year."

It happens constantly, with members of the media bearing a major portion of responsibility.

SUCCESS, YOU must understand, is relative. A 6-6 season for Michigan State in football is a good year; at University of Michigan it's a disaster.

At Fracassa's Birmingham Brother Rice football squad is 1-5 and everyone is baffled. John Herrington's Farmington Harrison graders took to Livonia Franklin and people are astounded. Oakland University loses two straight soccer games and fans are scratching their heads.

Fans expect success, but in varying degrees. It depends on what the program has been like in the past.

Which brings us back to Sommerman. He resigned Oct. 7 following John Glenn's game with Northville.

His timing was puzzling. The Rockets had just beaten Northville in what Sommerman insisted was one of the team's better performances of the season. And Glenn had a 7-2 record at that point.

HAD THE ROCKETS been inconsistent — up one year, down the next — or were they consistently mediocre? Neither — the last time they had a losing record was 1978. They were 10-3 last year, and under Sommerman — the only man to coach Glenn's varsity (until last Thursday) — they won 120 of 201 games, about 60 percent.

In high school sports, with all its variables, seven straight winning seasons, a league title and a couple of second-place finishes is more than respectable. Sommerman should go out in glory, lauded for all he accomplished, with a testimonial dinner to boot.

Instead, he leaves in midseason because a handful of parents weren't happy with the way he did his job.

Maybe now you begin to understand. Winning and losing means little. A successful coach is not only someone who can establish goals and realize them, but who can deal with outside pressures and influences, as well as the multitude of frustrations inherent in the position.

All this, remember, for a paltry sum of money.

SOMMERMAN WAS a good coach. He drew criticism because of his team's poor post-season record (the Rockets won just one district title), his detractors questioning his ability to coach considering "all the talent he had to work with."

When players' parents confronted Sommerman after the Northville game, his will to coach was broken. "I was crushed, I was really crushed," Sommerman admitted.

Every coach experiences moments like these. They tell themselves to ignore it, that these parents don't know what they're talking about, that they don't understand.

Sommerman told himself the same things. But through the years the negatives kept mounting, like the ocean rising toward high tide. Soon it was so deep, the criticisms became so burdensome, even the victories could not buoy him.

As Sommerman said, "I tried to forgive and forget, but I kept remembering."

"I TOLD THEM after the game that they've worked too hard for this to let it get away," Kavanaugh said. "I thought at the end we could have been more aggressive and made five haynes."

"At the end we got too tentative. We got tentative because of the size of the lead, and we just wanted the clock to run out."

It was all Ladywood in the first half as Mercy converted 12 of 23 turnovers. The Blazers led 18-5 during one stage of the first quarter, but Mercy cut the gap to 37-26 at the half.

Ladywood, breaking Mercy's trapping defense, stretched its lead to 53-35 near the end of three quarters as center Sue Lalbertie converted two consecutive three-point plays.

But in the fourth quarter, Mercy, running substitutes in and out, began to chip away.

"At halftime they (the Mercy players) thought they were playing hard," said Mercy coach Larry Baker. "But they found out in the second half there is a harder level of intensity. We were playing tentatively in the first half against their traps. But Ladywood played confidently and they were physical."

"THE ONLY PLAYER that was aggressive for us in the first half was Margaret DeMatita. And I thought she was superb. But I was proud of the way all of them played in the second half."

Raiders advance in regional tournament

Karsten Fetton gave away the ball four times in North Farmington's win Tuesday.

But on all four occasions, Fetton's teammates were on the other end to slam in goals as the visiting Raiders pounded Milford, 4-2, Tuesday in pre-regional soccer action.

Fetton assisted on all four of North's goals as Rocky Najar scored twice. Jeff Juliano and Gordon Richel had the other Raider tallies.

Najar's goals were his sixth and seventh of the season. His first goal put North up 2-0 in the first half after Juliano scored in the second of the season.

North Farmington (7-7-1), which outshot Milford 17-9, led 3-1 at halftime.

"We were a bit little flat today," said Raiders coach Ode. "With a good practice (this week), we should have a good game on Friday."

The Raiders lost undefeated Livonia Stevenson Friday in a regional match.

LUTHERAN NORTHWEST 2, HARPER WOODS 1: Farmington Lutheran Northwest overcame a one-goal deficit at the half to take the win over host Harper Woods Tuesday in a pre-regional qualifying match.

Matt Mal and Mike Ruschak both scored in the second half as the Crusaders advanced to regional play. Matt Orlow assisted on Mal's goal and Jeff Young on Ruschak's.

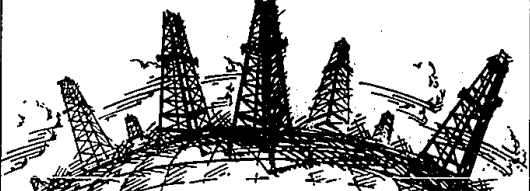
Jennifer Hughes scored 14 points for Harrison while Becky Philip had 10 for Farmington.

N. FARMINGTON 39, NORTHVILLE 28: The Raiders picked up their second straight win Tuesday as North Farmington edged Northville in a low-scoring Western Lakes contest.

soccer

McDonald Research Department Report:

Taking Stock of the Oil Industry



Oil investors will want to dig into our latest quarterly review of the worldwide oil industry. McDonald energy specialist Jack Aydin has updated his continuing examination of crude oil production and pricing, as well as the many other dynamics that impact the industry.

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Farmington's 1st win clouded with sorrow

Farmington won its first girls basketball game of the season Tuesday, but there was one empty seat and a lot of empty hearts on the court.

Senior guard Lisa Edwards' mother was killed in a fire which destroyed their home during the weekend. The Falcon players dedicated their 40-37 Western Lakes win over Farmington Hills Harrison to Mrs. Edwards, who was an avid supporter of Farmington.

"Everybody knew Mrs. Edwards," said Farmington coach Diana Schwartz, who also picked up her first win as coach. "It was a tough day for everybody emotionally, but they hung tough."

The Falcons (1-10) scored 18 points in the final eight minutes, handing the Hawks their first straight loss.

Farmington led 18-13 at the half, but were outscored 9-6 in the third quarter as the Hawks made a comeback bid.