

Sports

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C.J. Risak

Dutch import is an Ocelot gem

THERE'S PROBABLY a lot of head scratching going on in the Region XII soccer coaches' ranks. Rightly so. After all, each and every one of them got their tails whipped by a powerful Schoolcraft College team. Not just once, either — twice each. The closest any of them came was a two-goal loss.

The Ocelots were that dominating in a region that rarely allows its champion to escape unscathed. Normally Macomb Community College or Schoolcraft rule the region, but it's a rare occurrence when either goes unbeaten. Schoolcraft not only went undefeated, it outscored its opponents 40-6 in eight games. That's domination.

WHAT MUST really puzzle those coaches is the sudden influx of talent the Ocelots possess. Every top-level high school soccer player from the area — and there's an abundance, with Livonia Stevenson leading the pack after five straight appearances in the state finals — this year opted to play at Schoolcraft.

But was that enough? No, the opposing coaches concluded, swallowing hard as their teams were dismantled by wave after wave of talented Ocelots. The school's athletic budget must have quadrupled.

How else could they attract such prizes from places like Kent County, England, and Leek, Netherlands?

"We didn't recruit them," smiling Schoolcraft assistant coach John Gelmiel said as the Ocelots went through their final practice Tuesday before embarking to Chicago and the NJCAA Inter-regional tournament at DuPage College.

No, they didn't. Englishman Matt Pace moved to Redford with his parents and is the team's second-leading scorer with nine goals and five assists.

BUT RICK HAMERS, the Dutchman, may be Schoolcraft's most valuable player.

"He's like a thoroughbred," Schoolcraft coach Van Dimitriou said. "He doesn't have to think about what he wants to do, he just does it. And he's one of the hardest working players in practice I've ever seen."

"He never says much, but when he steps onto the field he doesn't have to."

Hamers is one of those unique sports stories, a guy who walked into the Schoolcraft athletic offices one day and said he'd like to play soccer.

What brought Hamers to Livonia was his first, when he met when she was visiting relatives in Leek in the summer of 1984. The pair planned on marrying and living in the Netherlands, but the language barrier was more than she could handle.

"So I decided to come here," Hamers said in near-perfect English. "So far, so good."

LIKE MANY of his countrymen, Hamers grew up on a soccer field. In a population of 13 million, one million still play the sport.

"I wanted to find a soccer team because I had played all my life," said Hamers. "It was a hobby I didn't want to give up."

"She had been a student (at Schoolcraft), and she knew they had a soccer team. At the same time I was thinking I would need college to make a future here."

At first Hamers planned on just practicing with Schoolcraft's team. But once Dimitriou witnessed the talent the European transplant possessed, he wanted him as something more than just a practice player.

There were problems, notably with U.S. Immigration. Mary Gans, Schoolcraft's athletic director, intervened, pushing officials to process his papers quickly so Hamers could enroll in school.

Gans' work has paid dividends. Hamers described himself as one of the youngest (24) members of his amateur club team in Holland, possessing the least talent. At Schoolcraft, Hamers is the oldest team member — and probably the best.

HE PATROLS the midfield for the Ocelots, a position requiring both offensive and defensive skills — and a lot of leg. Hamers is swift enough to handle it. He scored nine goals and had four assists, the third-highest totals for the Ocelots.

"I played an offensive position in Holland," he said. "I do like the midfield better. I'm more involved in the game."

Which is the way Dimitriou likes it. "He freestyles more than most of our players," the coach said. "But he's equally good offensively and defensively. Most players can't do the job he does switching from one to the other. He can be marking a man, then when we get the ball take off."

So are there any problems for Hamers? Perhaps just one. Despite his wealth of experience, he doesn't offer much on-field advice — with good reason.

"I try to talk to them when something's happening on the field," he said. "But because I think in Dutch, it's hard for me to communicate quickly."

At least that gives the opposition a fighting chance, right?

Maybe yes and maybe no. If Hamers can't get his message across to his teammates, he often takes matters into his own hands. And that can be equally devastating to an opponent.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Tony Boles figures to carry a big load for Western Lakes champion John Glenn Friday night as the Rockets meet Ann Arbor Pioneer in the state tournament opener.

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John Glenn has 'huge' test with defending state champ

By Brad Emons
staff writer

It doesn't matter if they're playing on the defending state champs' home field. It doesn't matter that practices have been staged under chilly and damp conditions.

"We just keep going; the weather isn't a factor," said Westland John Glenn football coach Chuck

Gordon, whose team is in the state Class A playoffs for the first time in the school's history.

The Rockets travel Friday night to meet Ann Arbor Pioneer in a battle of unbeatens in Region II. Gordon says the school is excited about the playoffs.

"It's hard to tell how we compare to Pioneer,"

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Mercy tips Shrine; North wins thriller

Farmington Hills Mercy overwhelmed Royal Oak Shrine Tuesday night in the opening round of the Catholic League playoffs.

Misay Duczynski's 17-point, nine-rebound performance paced a 76-30 demolition of the Shriners.

Mercy will play Dearborn Divine Child at 8 p.m. Thursday at Harper Woods Notre Dame in the semifinal round.

In the other semifinal game Thursday, to start at 8 p.m. at Notre Dame, Ladywood (57-31 winners against Dominican) will play Bishop Gallagher.

Michelle Fryatt and Terri Ford also played big roles in the Marlies' win. Fryatt, senior point guard, scored 14 points and dished out seven assists. Ford, senior forward, scored 10 points and pulled down seven rebounds.

Danielle Smith led Shrine with 18 points. Mercy is 13-4 on the season.

N. FARMINGTON 43, W.L. WESTERN 42: Another wild one for the Raiders.

With under a minute left in the game Tuesday, North trailed Walled Lake Western by three points. Western called timeout.

Western was too slow coming back onto the floor and the official, who had warned the Western bench earlier in the game for a similar offense, slapped them with a technical foul.

Heather McPhillips, who led North with 20 points, hit both foul shots and North maintained possession of the ball.

With 26 seconds left, North worked a play to Ann Howard who buried a 18-footer to give North the ballgame. Western got the ball back with 10 seconds left, but North's Mo Paradis tied the win with a key steal.

North (8-7 in the Western Lakes

girls basketball

10-7 overall) trailed Western by five entering the final quarter. The Raiders' 15-12 edge in the last eight minutes was triggered by McPhillips (12 points in the quarter) and three steals by Jean Anisovarov.

Diane Hall led Western (4-9 in the conference) with 17. North will finish in fourth place in the Lakes Division.

NORTHVILLE 42, FARMINGTON 25: Northville's 15-5 outburst in the third quarter broke Farmington's back in this Western Lakes battle.

Tricia Ducker led Northville (8-7 in the league) with 15 points.

For Farmington (1-14), Stacy Swanderaki scored eight.

SALEM 44, FRANKLIN 25: The Plymouth Salem defense stymied Livonia Franklin in this Western Lakes matchup as the Rockets limited Franklin to less than three field goals per quarter.

"We played pretty good 'D' tonight," Salem coach Fred Thomann said. "And we moved the ball well on offense. It was a nice game for us."

As a result of the victory, Salem clinched the Lakes Division title in the Western Lakes conference.

Dena Head led all scorers with 16 points. The sophomore also controlled the glass, pulling down 14 rebounds.

Jessica Handley scored 11 points and dished out three assists. Julie Tortora dished out five assists on the night.

Tracy Locica led Franklin (5-9 in the league, 7-10) with 13 points.

Salem is 14-1 in the league and 15-3 overall.

CC-Fordson: no love lost

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Maybe it's just as well that Redford Catholic Central and Dearborn Fordson haven't met on gridiron for six years.

The last time the two teams met was 1979 in the first round of the state Class A playoffs.

That year CC, rated No. 2 in Class A, beat the No. 1 ranked and unbeaten Tractors, 24-9. The Shamrocks, with Aaron Roberts, Mike Lewis and company, went on to capture the state championship.

But the '79 CC-Fordson game may best be remembered as a slight between two super-heavyweights. One play in particular upset the CC side. It occurred in the third quarter when a frustrated Ed Guldo sent the Shamrocks' John Uiter to the hospital with a late hit, causing hard feelings between CC coach Tom Mach and Fordson coach Charlie Jestice.

Hopefully things have cooled off by now, but don't expect either side to play like shrinking violets when they meet again Saturday at Pontiac's Wm. Stadium in another first-round playoff battle. (Game time is 1:30 p.m.)

"WE'VE ONLY played Fordson once in my 10 years here, but I know they come to play every game," said Mach, still at the CC helm. "I suspect the hitting will be intense."

Fordson is 8-1 this season with its only loss coming against playoff qualifier Trenton, 27-0.

"Fordson was a different type of team in 1979," Mach said. "Back then they were more of a power-type football team."

Fordson's No. 1 weapon is 6-foot-4, 192-pound senior quarterback Mike Inquello, who has passed for 940 yards and six touchdowns. He also plays in the defensive secondary and may be the team's best tackler.

"He comes out of the pocket well," Mach said. "No. 1, we have to stop his passing and his running."

Inquello's favorite target is 5-10, 145-pound senior Andy Salagan, who has 27 catches for 521 yards and four TDs.

The Tractors also used as many as five different running backs, the leader being three-year starter Dan Herman, who has gained 632 yards and scored 10 TDs.

DEFENSIVELY, the Tractors will give the Shamrocks a number of different looks, according to Mach.

"They'll use a 6-1 (alignment), a 6-2

football

front sometimes and they'll do some blitzing," said the CC coach. "But we've seen just about everything this year so we won't be making any big changes."

"They seem intense on defense. They hit and pursue well."

Fordson can't quite match up with CC's imposing line, but the Tractors have adequate size.

The top offensive linemen include senior Gino Sessa (6-1, 208), senior Scott Lewis (6-2, 212) and sophomore Andy Zolkovich (6-3, 210).

All three play defense along with linemen Rob Slavin (5-10, 215) and Mike Kostovsky (5-10, 210). The Tractors also have a pair of good linebackers in Karan Salame and Mike Rydyk.

Bassem Karkaba joins Inquello to give Fordson a strong secondary.

Although Fordson has been to the playoffs six of the past seven years, CC is still the favorite.

THE SHAMROCKS, also 8-1 on the year, appear to have the momentum after beating a pair of No. 1 ranked teams on successive weekends — Warren De La Salle (9-0) and Dearborn Divine Child (13-0).

CC's defense, led by All-Catholic performers Jeff Schwartz, Kevin Tulley, Paul Llinenberg and Nick Varajan, has allowed only 57 points in nine games.

"The Shamrocks' offense, stymied during the middle portion of the season, appears to be getting stronger with the return of 6-2, 180-pound sophomore Perry Chaney at running back. CC's offensive line, led by blue chipper Dan Nash (6-3, 235) and Mark Lopez (6-1, 215), could make things miserable for Fordson's stalling defense."

Quarterback Mark Steve, who made his first start of the season in the win over De La Salle, is also playing with confidence.

Look for the run-oriented Shamrocks to put the ball in the air even more this week. Junior Greg Haeger, who started the year at quarterback before breaking his collarbone in the second game, has been converted to a wide receiver, forming a potent pass catching brigade which also includes 6-3, 210-pound senior Ron Wandell, who is finally getting healthy after an assortment of injuries.

"We had some guys banged up after the Divine Child game, but we had no serious injuries," Mach said. "Everybody should be ready to go."

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