

Owen leaves job after 39 years

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Ralph Owen — the man who created the three-ball, two-strike rule in high school baseball — is retiring as athletic director of Redford Bishop Borgess High School, effective June 15.

The 63-year-old Owen informed Borgess principal Dr. Donald Bradley of his decision last week.

"Thirty-nine years is a long time, and I decided it's about time," said Owen, who has spent the past 14 years at Borgess. "I was losing my enthusiasm, but I guess that comes with age."

"I thought about coming back one more year and go for 40 years because that sounded good. But now he has become work for me, and for Bishop Borgess' sake, I thought a change is needed. They need a younger man."

Owen's retirement leaves two key positions open at Borgess. Bradley is also searching for a head football coach. Gary Cook, the Spartans' mentor for the past seven years, resigned in December.

"WE WANT to get the best quality man that comes across the door in both respects," Bradley said. "It may put us back in hiring a coach. Both positions are an integral and important part of the school."

Bradley also said there is a possibility that the next athletic director may also be the head football coach.

Owen started his athletic career in his native French Lick, Ind.

"I got interested in the fourth grade when our fourth-grade basketball team was playing the fifth-graders," Owen recalls. "Although we lost the game 4-2, somebody came up to me and said, 'Good game, Ralph.' I was hooked from that point on."

Owen went from French Lick to Indiana Central College where he played on a basketball team in 1940-41 that won 39 straight games and was ranked ninth in the nation.

His college career was interrupted by a three-year stint in the Navy before coming back to Indiana Central in 1946 where he captained the basketball squad.

Owen returned to French Lick, the town that Boston's Celtic great Larry Bird made famous, where he coached for seven years.

In 1953-54, he came to Detroit to teach and coach at University of Detroit High School.

"If I had known Larry Bird was coming through, I would have stayed in French Lick," Owen cracked.

In 1960, Owen became assistant di-



Ralph Owen
39-year career

rector of the Catholic League and then succeeded Sam Madden as league director, a position he held from 1961-68.

During his stint as Catholic League director, Owen came up with the idea of the three-two rule — two strikes and the batter is out, three balls and he walks.

"I tried to get them to use it in 1965, but the Catholic League coaches turned it down," Owen said. "In 1969 we tried it for one year and it worked."

The three-two rule not only speeded up games, but also enabled schools to schedule more double-headers and play on fewer dates.

FROM 1968-72, Owen served as Michigan Amateur Athletic Union's (AAU) executive director, but his love for kids brought him back to Borgess in 1972, where he became athletic director for the largest Catholic high school in the state.

"From the very beginning Ralph always had the best interest of the student," Bradley said. "I first knew him when I was a junior at U-D High back in 1954."

"Ralph always had the intense desire to be with and help kids. He just loves sports."

Owen coached several sports during his career. He also served on various committees for the Michigan High School Athletic Association and was a member of the representative council.

"I feel fortunate because I did something that's been so much fun all my life," Owen said. "I've been able to raise five kids by doing this."

"THERE HAVE BEEN so many people good to me. We've had to get fields, and there have been so many fine athletic directors I've made friends with."

Owen, who lives in Westland, said he has no specific retirement plans.

Academic woes haunt S'craft

By C.J. Alask
staff writer

Another wave of academic woes leveled Schoolcraft College's men's basketball team, costing the already-shorthanded Ocelots a shot at an upset Wednesday at Henry Ford Community College.

SC lost 60-59 as HFCC hit three free throws in the waning seconds to build a three-point lead, then hung on. The Ocelots, who dipped to 13-18 overall and 1-7 in the Eastern Conference, played HFCC evenly throughout the game, never trailing by more than three points.

But SC failed to score on three consecutive possessions in the final minute, with Dave Carraviah, Don Edwards and Harold Martin missing shots that allowed HFCC (11-4 overall, 5-3 in the Eastern Conference) to escape.

Two hours before the opening tip, SC athletic director Marv Gans suspended three players for failing to file their academic plans with the Learning Assistance Center. The plans were required by Jan. 21.

SUSPENDED were starting guard Desmond Steele and reserves Zolte Stephens and Jeff Vak-

Schoolcraft sports

rats. They will be reinstated, according to Ocelot coach Rocky Watkins, when they have fulfilled their academic requirements.

The Ocelots could have used their help against HFCC. With three starters and a top substitute lost because of poor grades earlier this month, they were already lacking depth. Then starters Derrick Kearney and Ron Leach were hit by ailments. Kearney had the flu and Leach underwent minor car surgery.

Both played against HFCC, but neither was 100 percent. Kearney was held to eight points, although he also had five rebounds, four assists and four steals. Leach got nine points, hitting four of five from the field.

"It's like a fox has fallen on this team," said Watkins. "But I will say one thing — these guys are not quitters. They saw all these things happening to

them and they still came out and played hard."

A SHORT talk delivered to the Ocelots by SC dean of instruction Louis Reibling prior to the HFCC game may have had much to do with the inspired play, Watkins felt.

"He's serious. He means business," said Watkins of Reibling. "I think that lit a fire under them."

SC led at the half, 30-29. The Ocelots had the biggest lead of the game, pulling in front by six midway through the opening half, but HFCC quickly caught up and the lead was never greater than three the rest of the way.

Edwards excelled for SC, bagging 18 points, 11 rebounds, five blocked shots, two assists and a steal. But he was the only Ocelot to reach double figures in scoring.

Carl Strong paced HFCC with 20 points. Mustafa Hamid had 16 points and 10 rebounds.

On Jan. 25, SC connected for three more baskets than Delta CC and still lost by 20. DCC posted the visiting Ocelots 96-76 with some deadly shooting from the free throw line.

DCC hit 39 of 42 foul shots. SC was 13 of 20 from the stripe. Kearney put together a rare triple-double, with 25 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists.

Lady Ocelots stay unbeaten in league

Schoolcraft College's women's basketball team continues to make the most of the tools it possesses: quickness, depth, speed and sharp perimeter shooting.

Which is why the Lady Ocelots continue to win. Their latest victim was Henry Ford Community College, which SC disposed of quickly and efficiently Wednesday by a final score of 98-65.

Visiting HFCC never had much of a chance, falling behind 18-4 before the game was five minutes old. The Lady Ocelots built a 20-point blow and never allowed HFCC to intrude upon it, leading 55-31 at the half.

Four SC players reached double figures in scor-

ing and six scored eight or more points. Kim Chandler's 24 points and 12 rebounds topped the list. Almee Frye scored a career-high 20 points, including 14 in the first half. Lori Abbas had 13, Tracey Ladouceur 10 (and seven rebounds), Sheri Wolfe nine and Sue Lubbe eight.

Kelly Berniss, a Plymouth Salem grad, paced HFCC with 20 points. Debbie Dieringer had 17.

AT DELTA CC Jan. 25, SC didn't have quite as easy a road to travel, but the destination was the same: a 73-68 victory.

The Lady Ocelots led 43-37 at the half and led by at least eight after the intermission. Lubbe's 23

Bench propels OU victory

A non-league basketball game scheduled smack in the middle of a tough league season can leave a coach wondering why he wanted to play it in the first place.

It can be hard enough to get a team mentally ready for a 16-game conference slate. Imagine trying to do the same for a meaningless non-league game.

At least Oakland University's men's basketball coach Greg Kampe didn't have as much of a problem in mentally preparing his players to meet Indiana Institute of Technology Thursday — but only because OU didn't have that many players to prepare.

With starting forward Chris Howze and reserve guards Craig Tonti and Gary Plourde all battling the flu, the Pioneers traveled to IIT with just nine able bodies. But a winning team needs a strong bench, and OU proved it had one by wearing down IIT 66-67.

KAMPE IIAD to juggle his lineup to fill Howze's small forward spot. He moved off guard Rob Skinner into that position, put point guard Scott Blittinger at off guard and inserted freshman Johnny Johnson at the point.

The moves worked well. OU led 41-36 at the half and still clung to that five-point advantage (48-43

with 9:30 remaining. That's when Johnson ignited the Pioneers, pumping in 10 points in a 24-11 run over the next five minutes to put OU on top 72-54 with less than five minutes left.

Johnson finished with 16 points and 10 assists. But he wasn't the only contributor off the bench. Fellow freshman Dave Hintz had his best game yet, collecting 18 points on eight-of-10 floor shooting and nine rebounds.

Blittinger paced the OU attack with a career-high 23 points and five assists. Pete Schill, another new addition to the starting lineup, had eight points and eight rebounds.

Scott Elzier led IIT with 19 points, with Dave Criss adding 14.

The win boosted OU to 11-9. IIT is 6-14.

OU'S WOMEN beat Aquinas College back in November with relative ease. But last Wednesday, it was apparent the opposite directions these two teams are traveling as Aquinas posted a 67-55 triumph.

The Rockets (11-5 overall) had a 31-26 lead at the half and scored the first two baskets after the intermission to up their advantage to nine. OU never recovered.

The loss evened OU's record at 10-10.

SALEM LUMBER

folding banquet
table legs
for
many occasions



Strong steel, attractive
enamel finish. Easily
mounted to top.

\$12⁸⁸ pr.

a plywood or flush door
makes a strong
extra table

30650 plymouth road
Livonia
422-1000



THEY WANT TO WORK.

YOU TRAIN THEM.
WE'LL HELP PAY FOR IT.

Now there's a program that shares training costs when a business hires and trains the jobless. It is called The Job Training Partnership Act.

This program establishes a partnership between business and government. It provides up to 50% of on-the-job training costs. And you may qualify for tax credits of up to 50% of the first year's salary.

The program is administered by local Private Industry Councils — organizations made up in the majority by local business leaders who tailor it to meet specific local needs.

Put the Job Training Partnership Act to work now. Write:

National Alliance
of Business

P.O. Box 7207
Washington, D.C. 20044.

