

Sports

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(F1D)

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Mercy comeback wasted in overtime

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Somebody played a cruel trick on the Farmington Hills Mercy basketball team Tuesday night. Imagine how Christopher Columbus might have felt if, after finally sailing across the ocean, he discovered the earth really was flat. Ouch.

Mercy may know the feeling. The Marlins, with great determination, climbed a tall mountain against arch rival Livonia Ladywood. But when they reached the top, the final step was missing. Down came the Marlins.

In front of more than 1,000 enthusiastic fans at Birmingham Brother Rice, Ladywood outlasted Mercy 62-54 in overtime. It was Ladywood's third consecutive victory against the Marlins and Mercy's third consecutive loss this season — both first-time occurrences in Mercy basketball history.

"Two good basketball teams, one great game," said Ladywood coach Ed Kavanaugh.

It was every bit that.

LADYWOOD LED from midway through the second quarter to the final 27 seconds of the game. The Blazers led 52-44 with 1:52 left in the game.

But Mercy, energized by the unrelenting hustle of Jan Herberholz, forced Ladywood to turn the ball over in its final five possessions. Herberholz, in the meantime, drained six consecutive free throws to pull the Marlins within a basket: 52-50 with 41 seconds left.

Jenny Slosar then picked up an errant Blazer pass and was fouled. With 27 seconds left, she calmly made both free throws to tie the game.

Mercy forced two more turnovers in regulation, but failed to win the game. Yvette Maison crashed into the lane and put up a running layup

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— Larry Baker
Mercy coach

as she was falling to the ground. No basket and no foul call. With one second left, Ladywood's Katie McNulty rejected Mercy's final shot.

At that point Mercy might have realized that final step to the top of the mountain was missing. Ladywood owned the three-minute overtime period, scoring 10 unanswered points before Herberholz scored in the final seconds.

"I THINK what happened was we went into a stall (with just under six minutes left in regulation) and we got too passive," Kavanaugh said. "When Mandy Chandler was in there, we went after it. But once she fouled out (with 2:45 left), we backed off. We lost our intensity."

Said Mercy coach Larry Baker: "Certainly, we feel no shame in losing this game tonight. In one sense, we had some bad breaks. We executed two good offensive possessions in the overtime and I'm pleased with that even though the shots didn't fall."

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It was McNulty, Ladywood's 6-2 junior center, who put Mercy in the hole in the first place. In a two-minute stretch of the second quarter she blocked five shots (in five consecutive possessions) and scored six points. Her effort transformed a one-point Mercy lead into 32-23 Ladywood advantage.

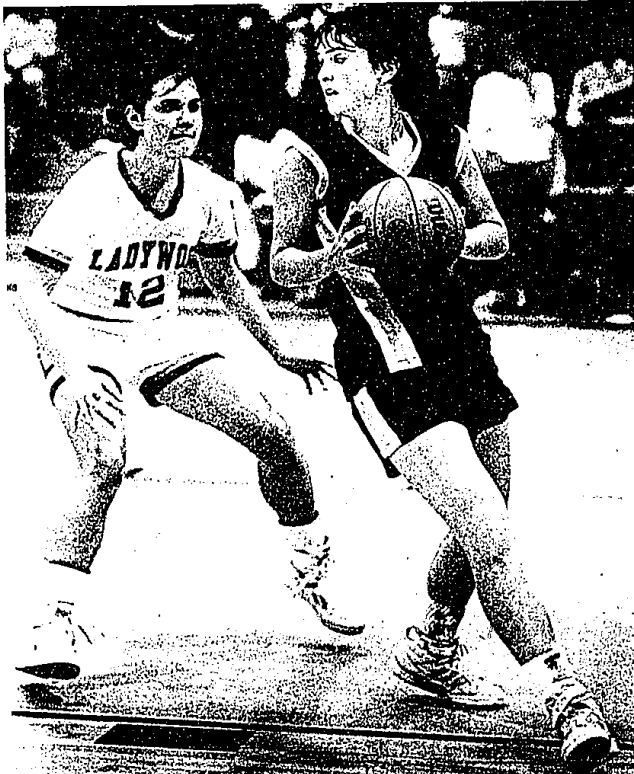
"The only thing that disappointed me was that we went through a spell in the middle of the second quarter where we just checked out mentally. We didn't set up our defense, we wasted a timeout, we made a couple of poor shot selections. We got into a position where the best we could hope for was to tie," Baker said.

LEADING THE Blazers (9-2) on offense was Chandler, who pumped in 20 points before leaving. McNulty scored 14 and Julie Oaks added 14. Oaks didn't miss a shot all night, hitting five field goals and four free throws. She scored four points in the overtime. Anne Marie Thomas, with a steal and a basket, and Monica Gall, with a pair of clutch free throws, also bolstered the Blazers in OT.

"I think the fact that we scored first helped us settle down in the overtime," Kavanaugh said. "About a minute had run down before we scored, then they turned the ball over a couple times and we got some easy baskets."

Herberholz scored 20 points to pace Mercy (4-3). Maison clipped in 10 points, seven assists and five steals. What Mercy lacked in field goal shooting proficiency (the Marlins made 15 of 57 shots) it made up for at the line. Mercy hit 20 of 25 free throws.

The game opened the Catholic League season for both teams.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Yvette Maison helped lead a valiant Farmington Hills Mercy comeback Tuesday night, but the Marlins fell short to Ladywood in overtime.

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Raiders' offense wakens; no relief for Hawks, FHS

The offense finally shifted into high gear for the North Farmington girls basketball team Tuesday night. As a result, the Raiders sped away to a 61-30 victory against Redford Union in front of the home crowd.

North opened an early lead and cruised to a 16-7 advantage after the first eight minutes of play. North increased that lead to 29-16 by half-time and broke the game open, outscoring the Panthers 14-4 in the third quarter.

"We played real well," said North coach Greg Capling. "We passed well and hit the open man. We were a little tentative in the first half but we smoothed them in the third."

"Now if we can play this good Tuesday against Plymouth Salem, we'll make the front page."

The Raiders used a balanced scoring attack with four girls in double figures.

Robyn Weatherford led the Raiders charge with 14 points. Sandy Spahn added 13 points and grabbed eight rebounds. Suzi Butcher and Jenny Basford combined for 20 points while Basford hauled down eight rebounds.

Caryn Shannon paced the Panthers with 18 points.

WATERFORD MOTT 82, FARM-

girls basketball

INGTON HARRISON 10: Harrison coach Jim Neve probably wonders what's up next for his struggling Hawks.

The first-year coach was forced to enter the '86 campaign with a young, inexperienced group of girls. More recently he has had to face opponents without a full roster as a flu epidemic seems to be sweeping the team.

Tuesday night the Hawks met the Corsairs with just nine players dressed for the game. Laura Bilorek, Harrison's main offensive weapon, was home sick. Another starter, Mary Ann Cundy, played but was slowed considerably by the flu.

"What happened is that between Friday and today (Tuesday) we've only had four to five people at practice," said Neve. "The flu has really hit us hard."

Heather Vandyke paced Mott with 17 points. Dawn Langyear added 12 and Debbie Ryan pumped in 13 for the winners.

Chris Walden led winless Harrison with four points.

SOUTH LYON 75, FARMINGTON 46: Things aren't getting any easier for the Farmington girls basketball team. Tuesday night the Falcons faced an undefeated South Lyon squad and found out why the Lions haven't lost.

After eight outings this season the Falcons have yet to taste the thrill of victory.

"There were a few bright spots but nothing consistently," said Farmington coach Diana Fair. "Slacy Swandorski kept driving the ball in offensively and going to the line. She was hitting her free throws real well."

The Falcons kept the game close during the first quarter as South Lyon took a 13-10 lead. Farmington was outscored 21-12 and 27-9 in the second and third quarters, respectively as the Lions took control of the game.

Swandorski led all scorers with 20 points. Becky Philip added 14 for Farmington.

South Lyon was paced by Natalie Peterlin and Julie Howell with 19 each.

The victory improved South Lyon's unblemished record to 9-0.

Falcon runners sweep Haslett

How about John Barrett for Observerland girls cross country coach of the year?

How about John Barrett for Observerland girls cross country coach of the '80s?

You could make a case for both. In four years, Barrett has taken a non-team at Farmington and developed it into the area's best.

Last Saturday, the Lady Falcons ran to their second major event title of the season. They won the 11-team Haslett Invitational. The Falcons scored 51 points, second-place Mason was 49 behind at 100. Defending champ Hillsdale was third at 109.

"It was the pits out there," Barrett said, not of his team but of the course conditions. "There was not only mud, but water everywhere. Kids were losing shoes. No kidding. One kid even did a Zola Budd and ran the race barefooted. It was dis-

cross country

gusting. It was like a steep leechase."

As always, the Falcons finished in a pack. But this time, some of the names are different. Bonnie Stecker placed fifth (21:03) to lead the pack, followed by freshman Jenny Kiel (21:08). Nicole Kelley placed 12th (21:49), freshman Margaret Martin 13th (21:50) and Jody McKeever 18th (21:53).

"We have nine super kids and sometimes they are their own best competition. The competition among themselves is terrific," Barrett said.

THE FALCONS boys team also

prevailed at Haslett, though their victory was dampened a bit (not by the weather). The Falcons routed second-place Redford Catholic Central 43-89. But state powers Swartz Creek and Okemos failed to show up for the meet.

"It was a letdown, definitely," said Farmington coach Jerry Young. "We were looking forward to running against those teams. But we had a one-minute split between our first and fifth runner, and that was our rest all year. And we had Al Stebbins sack. So it wasn't a total washout."

Chris Inch, still unbeaten this season, placed first in 18:21. Stebbins, returning after a stomach injury, ran fourth (18:49). Brandon London laced seventh (18:54). Matt Walter 2th (17:11), Rob Holloway 12th (21:21) and Ron Sordley 20th (17:22).

Farmington has won the Haslett title two consecutive years.

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