

# Neighborhood watch

## Salem, Canton vie for WLAA title

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

Consider Plymouth Salem's plight as it prepares to host Plymouth Canton Friday night for the Western Lakes girls basketball championship. Salem is unbeaten in 16 league games and has lost only once all season. It is ranked No. 1 by the state's basketball coaches association. Obviously, the Rocks are expected to trounce the Chiefs.

But the Rocks' lofty position can be viewed as a bit of a curse. If they should happen to trash the Chiefs Friday people will say, "Big deal, you were supposed to do that. If they win by a narrow margin the same people will say, 'What's the problem, Salem? What went wrong?' The response, should Salem lose, would be, 'Man, that's disgusting.' People will be out for an investigation."

It's almost a no-win situation for the Rocks.

"I guess that's accurate," said Salem coach Fred Thomann. "We have been so successful this year that we are expected to win all the time. All we can do is play our schedule, make the necessary adjustments as we go along and, whatever happens happens. We are just happy we have the opportunity to play for the conference championship."

NOW LET'S consider Plymouth Canton's situation. You can look at it two ways. On the bright side, the Chiefs have absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain. Realistically, the Chiefs' task is quite similar to what Sugar Ray Leonard faces in his upcoming fight with Marvin Hagler — Leonard (Canton) could win, but there aren't many who think he will.

Canton coach Rob Neu acknowledges his team's underdog status but is far, far from crying, "No mas." "We feel real good about our situation," Neu said. "We feel like we are playing great basketball right now. We've improved game by game, and we think we are hitting our peak at the right time. It's always a lot of fun to prepare for a conference championship game. And our kids are going about this in a very businesslike fashion."

Yeah, but coach, what about Sa-

### FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** Western Lakes girls basketball championship.  
**WHERE:** Plymouth Canton (13-0).  
**WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Friday.  
**WHY:** WLAA title (16-0).  
**HOW:** Plymouth Canton's key players are:

**THE LINEUPS**  
**SALEM**  
Dana Head junior forward  
Kristen Hostynski junior forward  
Keri McBride junior forward  
Jessica Henderson senior guard  
Jill Estey sophomore guard

**CANTON**  
Karin Bolch junior forward  
Vicki Ferko senior forward  
Penny Piggott senior forward  
Tory Barger sophomore guard  
Michelle Fortier sophomore guard  
**The bench strength:** Heather Miller, junior forward; Jennifer Griffin, senior guard; and Jennifer Griffin, senior guard.  
**The coaches:** Head coach Fred Thomann, fourth season; assistant coaches: Don Wagoner and Tom Williams.

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**The bench strength:** Heather Miller, junior forward; Jennifer Griffin, senior guard; and Jennifer Griffin, senior guard.  
**The coaches:** Head coach Rob Neu, second year; assistant coaches: Bob Bolch and Mike Shy.

lem's record? What about Salem's lofty state ranking?

"That means nothing to us," said Neu. "I don't mean to take anything away from them, but Salem is Salem. We know them. Our kids are in the same classrooms as their kids. They live in the same community. There will be no intimidation factor at all."

NOW THAT you have a basic idea of the two teams' mental approach to Friday's game, let's get technical. The two teams met in the league championship last year. Salem won big 47-30. In the teams' only meeting this season, Canton managed to slow the tempo down but Salem prevailed 43-35.

More on Salem: Dana Head, all-state junior, is averaging 22 points and 15 rebounds per game. Jessica

Handley, senior sharpshooter, is averaging 14. The Rocks have gotten consistent if not outstanding play from senior Kristen Hostynski and sophomore Jill Estey. Keri McBride, Stacy Sovine and Barb Krug have played key roles for Salem. The Rocks' forte has always been defense and this season is certainly no different. Salem has allowed fewer than 40 points in its last eight games. Only one team (John Glenn) has scored more than 40 (45) against Salem in the last 15 games.

So, Rob Neu, how does Canton beat this Salem team?

"The key to the game for us is, we have to play at our tempo. We have to take care of the basketball and give ourselves good scoring opportunities. Defensively, we have to make it difficult for them to do the things they like to do. And the big thing is recognition. We have to be able to recognize what they are giving us and what they aren't. We cannot forget anything."

THE CANTON team that Salem will face Friday is much improved over the Canton team it played Oct. 14. Karin Bolch has become a consistent force for the Chiefs in all phases of the game. She scores, she rebounds, she plays excellent defense and she can handle the basketball. Sophomore guard Michelle Fortier has gained confidence over the course of the season. Tory Barger provides Canton with some scoring punch from the perimeter. Penny Piggott, at 6-foot, can be an intimidating force inside especially at the defensive end. Vicki Ferko, Heather Miller, Jennifer Griffin and Jennifer Griffin are vital role players for the Chiefs.

"The player personnel on both teams has developed tremendously over the course of the season and that has helped both be successful," Thomann said. "Canton is taking better shots now than they were earlier, their recognition is better, the defensive concepts that they are teaching are starting to take hold — you know, they've gotten a lot better and we feel we have too."

There you have it. The stage is set for the second Centennial Educational Park showdown for the Western Lakes girls basketball championship. So, do you really think Leonard can beat Hagler. . .

# Hawks just miss win

Close, but no cigar.  
That was the story Tuesday night as the Farmington Harrison girls basketball team came within a whisker of snapping its 79-game losing streak, falling to a startled Redford Union squad, 28-24.

"I thought there was an upset in the making," said RU coach Terri Anthony, whose team rallied from a 19-18 third quarter deficit. "I really thought they played better than our kids. Harrison played hard and hustled. My team had no intensity whatsoever. We were not mentally ready. I told their kids they deserved to win."

Sixty-four fouls were called in the game.

RU's leading scorer, Caryn Shannon, sat out the game with the flu. The Panthers' second leading scorer, Janine Sorel, finished with six points after fouling out early in the fourth quarter. Carol O'Connell led RU (4-14) with seven points.

Kris Waldman and Tracey Radke scored six and five, respectively, for the host Hawks, who fell

## girls basketball

to 0-19 on the year.  
Ironically, the last time the Hawks beat was RU.

**LUTHERAN EAST 48, CLARENSVILLE 35:** In a Metro Conference game on Tuesday, Harper Woods Lutheran East pulled away in the second half to beat host Livonia Clarensville.

The Pioneers led by only three at the half, 23-20, but outscored Clarensville 25-15 in the second half.

Foul problems, missed layups and turnovers in the final quarter led to the Trojans' undoing. Clarensville finished the game with only four players.

Clarensville's Diane Lindsey was the game's only scorer in double figures with 16.

**THURSTON 55, DEARBORN 51:** Despite sitting out most of the third

quarter because of foul trouble, senior forward Virginia Angela, recently named to the all-Tri-River League team, still managed to score a game-high 18 points in Redford Thurston's non-league victory Tuesday at Dearborn.

The Eagles, now 11-8 overall, also got eight points each from point-guard Julie Kangas and center Janet Smith.

Kangas made two clutch shots down the stretch and Smith hauled down 13 rebounds.

Michelle Graining paced Dearborn with 16.

**BISHOP BORGESS 44, THURSTON 38:** Pat Hines scored a game-high 20 points Friday as Redford Bishop Borgess turned back visiting Taylor Truman.

The win increases the Spartans' overall record to 4-13.

**ST. AGATHA 44, ST. FLORIAN 36:** Maryann Kick turned in an outstanding game Friday, leading host Redford St. Agatha (3-13) to a Catholic League win over Hamtramck St. Florian.

The Aggies return to action at 7 p.m. Tuesday at home against Detroit Service.

# Churchill shocks Garden City

By Bill Parker  
staff writer

The answer was plain and simple.

Livonia Churchill wanted it more than Garden City.

The question? How did unranked Livonia Churchill (9-8) upend Garden City (15-2) — previously ranked No. 5 in the Observerland girls basketball poll — 46-44, Tuesday night at Churchill?

"We just weren't intense," said Garden City coach Marshall Henry. "Maybe the girls took Churchill a little lightly. We knew they were tough but maybe we overlooked them. It's hard to say exactly why. They're a tough team. I think I could take it better if we got beat by 30 points. It's tough to lose by two."

Churchill played a great game. They were ready for us. We just lacked any intensity."

The Cougars ran into trouble early in the game. Churchill's Tracy Greenwald, Liz Monroe, Julie Scruggs and Gretchen Loyd took turns at the hoop as Churchill won on a 3-2 run near the end of the first quarter.

LED BY Greenwald's eight-point second quarter, the Chargers jumped ahead by eight, 26-18, with just over four minutes remaining in the half, and led 31-24 at the half.

As the second half began it appeared the Cougars wanted back into the game. Linda Lankford and Denise Kokowicz began to take charge for the Cougars. By the end of the quarter, GC had pulled even, 37-37.

But the Cougars seemed to lose their desire again in the final eight minutes of play. The Cougars didn't hit a shot from the floor the entire fourth quarter.

Loyd put her team ahead for good with 6:53 remaining on the clock. She added an insurance basket, after Scruggs connected from the corner, as Churchill surged ahead, 45-40, with 2:06 remaining.

Although a much taller team, Garden City held just a 37-34 advantage on the boards. They also committed 14 turnovers compared to nine for the Chargers.

"We were in control of ourselves the whole game," said Churchill coach Tom Lang. "We were very deliberate up and down the court. The key was that we only had nine turnovers. We knew we'd have to play an extremely fine game to even have a chance and that's what we did."

# Bad breaks in sports teach valuable lessons for a lifetime

Continued from Page 1

administrative oversight. SC used a technically ineligible player at its first game, a 14-1 win. Dimitriou wasn't notified until after the victory. The blunder tagged SC with a forfeit and resulted in a tie for first, and Saturday's playoff, with Macomb CC.

No administrative oversight, no playoff, no injury. And for John Gelmis, a chance to play.

IT'S NOT FAIR. How can anyone call what happened to Troy's football team just? Midway through last week the Colts should have been focusing on Port Huron

Northern, their first-round opponent in the Class A playoffs. Instead they were wondering if they would play at all.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association simply would not let Troy alone. The MHSAA was intent on getting an appeal to reverse a lower court's decision that Troy did not have to forfeit an opening-round game because it used an ineligible player.

The MHSAA finally got its hearing. On Friday, the court of appeals upheld the lower court's ruling. Troy was officially in the playoffs.

How much did the uncertainty weigh on the Colts? Consider that they won seven straight games before the controversy surfaced. Afterwards, they lost two of three.

Maybe it didn't make much of a difference. But if it made six points' worth, it was costly enough. Troy lost to Northern 13-7, even though it outgained the Huskies by nearly a 2-to-1 margin.

In years to come, people will remember Troy's make the playoffs with an ineligible player and losing. Troy's players will remember it differently. They'll recall the playoffs and all the uncertainty and negative publicity that engulfed them the past few weeks. The controversy had nothing to do with their on-field performance, and yet it seriously injured their chances.

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