

DCDS quest for dual titles falls short

By Marty Budner
staff writer

It has happened before. Detroit St. Martin de Porres did it as recently as two years ago. Orchard Lake St. Mary's did it during the 1977-78 school year.

Prep sports squads have captured state football and basketball championships in the same school year. But it certainly doesn't happen very often.

Detroit Country Day had a chance to conquer that unique plateau this year.

The Yellow Jackets completed phase one by winning the state Class C football championship in a memorable game last fall. The basketball team fell just short of its state championship goal.

Country Day advanced to the state semifinals last Friday where it was eliminated from the annual state basketball tournament often referred to as "March Madness" by Saginaw Nouvel Catholic, 63-51. The Panthers went on to win the state

Class C title rather easily the following day over Bendie Central.

"There were times when people mentioned (winning both the football and basketball state titles)," said Country Day coach Kurt Keener. "And you look back and say it would have been nice to win both. But it wasn't anything we talked a lot about . . . just maybe in a passing situation."

"It's an accomplishment that just wasn't meant to be for us," he said.

WHILE COUNTRY Day's dreams of double state championships in the premier schoolboy sports disappeared in defeat, the memory of a brilliant basketball season will linger in posterity.

Country Day registered a tremendous 17-3 regular-season ledger — its only losses to Romulus, Ypsilanti and Cleveland University School. The Yellow Jackets followed that with a 5-1 state-tournament record.

The Yellow Jackets opened their journey run by winning their fifth straight district championship

thanks to victories over Orchard Lake St. Mary's and Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes. Keener's kids followed with a regional title by defeating Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard and Blissfield.

Country Day then defeated Flint Academy in the state quarter-finals, 63-52, to earn its shot against Saginaw Nouvel — a team it defeated by one point during the regular season.

Even though the Yellow Jackets at times appeared sluggish and played sloppy against the Panthers, they found enough third-quarter energy to assume a 38-34 lead. That's the last advantage they would ever have.

Nouvel reeled off 10 straight points and took a 44-38 margin into the final quarter. Nouvel continued its pressure defense throughout the final eight minutes and gained revenge for its late-season loss with the 12-point triumph.

COUNTRY DAY committed 23 turnovers in the game in perhaps its

poorest outing of the tournament in front of more than 7,000 fans at Ann Arbor's Crisler Arena.

"I was a little down at first because I didn't think that we looked that good (against Nouvel)," said Keener. "To finally get into the forum where a lot of people see you . . . we just didn't perform the way we were capable of. With us it was a lot of mistakes — some that weren't even forced."

"I sensed that last week (of the state tournament) that we looked a little physically tired. The game against Flint Academy was a lot closer than I thought it should have been. We just didn't seem to have that energy, that zip and that spring in the legs. Physically, I think we just gassed out a little."

"I thought we probably peaked down at the regionals. I thought we played very good basketball there this year. There were some good teams down there," he said. "But to win a state championship you have

to have the right breaks, be healthy, get the right calls and there's always just a little bit of luck involved."

There was plenty of talent, which led the Yellow Jackets to an overall 22-4 record, its first regional championship in 20 years and its first jump past the state quarterfinals since 1946 when they lost a Class D state championship game that year to Bridgeman.

VETERAN PLAYERS like point guard Charles Johnson — the quarterback on the school's football team — and forward Todd Holliday were the stabilizing forces for underclassmen Jimmy Bolden and Kirk Van Deusen.

Bolden finished as DCD's leading scorer this year and Van Deusen, a 6-foot-9 center who became eligible halfway through the season, proved to be an intimidating figure in the middle. Johnson provided steady leadership and Holliday was the team's second-leading scorer.

Senior Troy Johnson, sophomore Andy Slovia, junior David Ivanko and junior Chris Wilson were other key performers for Country Day.

"The kids cried a lot (after the loss to Nouvel), but the sun came up the next day," said Keener. "We accomplished a lot that no other team had done in a while at Detroit Country Day."

"I'm not disappointed in our season at all. I told the kids we accomplished all of our goals except one — the one we set in terms of winning the state title. I figure we lost to the best team in Class C and that was like playing in the championship game."

"Plus, the other thing is we treaded those waters of having made it to the state semifinals," he said. "We won't be hurting too much next year with a 6-9 player and a player like Bolden coming back. We will have some talent and what we learned this year will help us next year."

Fleet Falcons shatter Huron Relays' record

Behind a record-setting performance by their distance medley relay team, the Farmington Falcons opened their boys track season with an impressive fourth-place finish in the Huron Relays at Eastern Michigan Saturday.

With 71 teams competing, Farmington finished tied for fourth with Detroit Pershing, each scoring 25 points. Lansing Sexton was the winner with 47, followed by Southfield (30) and Elyria, Ohio (27).

The Falcon foursome of Brandon London (800 meters), Dave Barringer (400 meters), Allen Stebbins

track

(1,200 meters) and Chris Inch (1,600 meters) finished first in the distance medley relay in a meet and school record 10:35.8. The former Huron Relay record was 10:35.3.

London also placed second in the high jump with a leap of 6-foot-6, while Andrew Holliday closed 12-0 in the pole vault to place third.

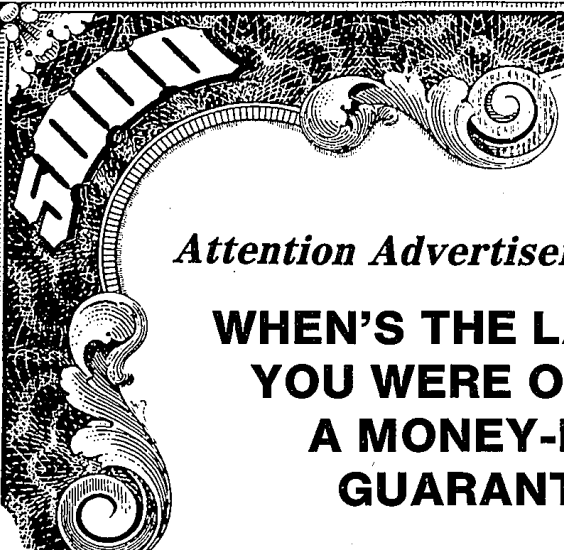
the week ahead

BASEBALL
Friday, April 3
Redford Union at Liv. Stevenson, 4 p.m.
Wayne at Southgate Anderson, 4 p.m.
O.H. Annapolis at Clarencville, 4 p.m.
Bishop Borgoes vs. Bishop Foley at Redford's Capitol Pk., (2), 4 p.m.
Saturday, April 4
Liv. Franklin at Ypsilanti (2), 11 a.m.
St. Agatha at Del. Henry Ford, 1 p.m.

BOYS TRACK
Thursday, April 2
Liv. Stevenson at Novi, 4 p.m.
GIRLS TRACK
Thursday, April 2
Garden City at Elm. Martin, 4 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER
Thursday, April 2
Garden City at Redford Union, 4 p.m.
Friday, April 3
Liv. Church at W.L. Western, 4 p.m.
Northville at Liv. Franklin, 4:30 p.m.
Liv. Stevenson at N. Farmington, 5 p.m.
Ply. Canton at Farm. Harrison, 5 p.m.
Farmington at Ply. Salem, 7 p.m.
Saturday, April 4
Garden City at Trenton, 11 a.m.

SOFTBALL
Friday, April 3
Southgate Anderson at Wayne, 4 p.m.
Liv. Stevenson at Redford Union, 4 p.m.
Clarencville at D.H. Annapolis, 4 p.m.
Saturday, April 4
St. Agatha at Divine Child (2), 4 p.m.



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