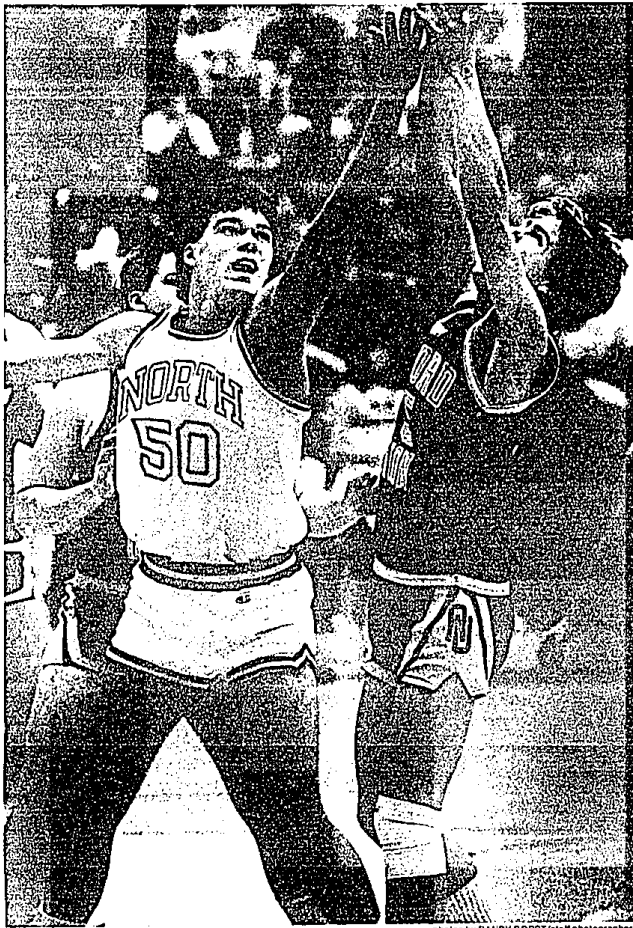
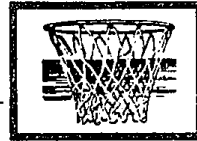


Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/644-1101

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North's Jim Ratajski battles RU's Joe Luzzotte for a loose ball Friday. Ratajski grabbed enough loose balls to lead the Raiders with eight rebounds.

Hot-shooting Raiders rock RU for 1st win

By C.J. Risk
staff writer

Last year, Tom Negoshian had the horses. He had the big men capable of scoring inside for North Farmington.

"This year it's just the opposite," said Negoshian, whose Raiders collected their first boys basketball win of the season Friday, burying Redford Union 65-53 under a barrage of three-point field goals.

"We're playing a lot of kids who are inexperienced," added Negoshian. "We have four non-conference games to start the season and we're hoping we can gain some experience, so that with our quickness and perimeter shooting we'll be able to compete in the (Western Lakes) conference."

If the Raiders continue to shoot like they did against RU, competing should be no problem. They jumped in front 19-16 after one quarter, then took complete control with a 20-10 scoring streak in the second.

THE SECOND quarter belonged to Jim Ratajski and John Shelton. Each one popped in nine points in the period as North bumped its lead into double figures, 39-26.

A key player in the Raiders' future is sophomore point guard Matt Hoffman. If they are to succeed, Hoffman will have to play with the savvy of an upperclassman.

Against RU, he did. Hoffman popped in three three-pointers, led North with 17 points and dished out seven assists, mostly on feeds inside to Ratajski.

"Hoffman did a great job getting the ball inside to him," said Negoshian. Ratajski finished with 15 points and eight boards, while Shelton scored 14 points, including two three-pointers in the second quarter.

North put five treys on the board in the first half and, although RU battled back with three threes from

basketball

both Joe Luzzotte (19 points) and Joe Dellgaw (11 points), it wasn't enough to catch the Raiders.

"We're giving certain kids the green light off the break," said Negoshian of his three-point shot strategy. "If you're going to have them, you've got to let kids take them in certain situations."

Against winless (0-for-three) RU, that plan worked well enough as North improved its record to 1-2. Now, Negoshian will have to wait and see if his young Raiders can make it work over the course of a season.

MOTT 61, FARMINGTON 50: After a horrendous third quarter, the Falcons regrouped in the fourth to get within striking distance of visiting Waterford Mott Friday.

But that was as close as Farmington got. The Falcons could envision a fantastic comeback, but could not execute it against the pressure defenses applied by the Corsairs.

Mott, trailing 15-11 after one quarter, battled back to take a 29-26 halftime lead. In the third quarter, the Corsairs extended their lead to 48-34 by outscoring Farmington 19-8 in the period.

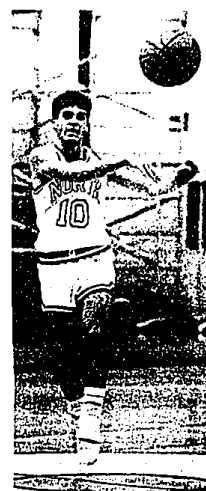
But the Falcons weren't through. Behind Chris Cahill's scoring — he scored all of his team-high 10 points in the fourth quarter, including two three-pointers — they closed to within four points with three minutes left.

Twice after that Farmington had an opportunity to slice that lead further. But the Falcons went four consecutive possessions without scoring, getting just one shot while turning the ball over three times against Mott's full-court pressure.

The scoring drought allowed the Corsairs to reassume control and pull away to victory. Adam Windler pitched in seven fourth-quarter points for Mott; he finished with 15. Jerry Priekorn paced the winners

with 16 points, including 10-of-13 free-throw shooting.

Cahill's late scoring heroics were the offensive highlight for Farmington. No other Falcon reached double figures. Mike Williams and Drew McDougall netted eight points apiece, as their team dipped to 1-2.



Sophomore point guard Matt Hoffman led North with 17 points and seven assists.

Cass foils Salem hopes

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The dream of a state championship remains an elusive goal for Plymouth Salem's girls basketball team.

For a second straight year, the Rocks saw a successful season and lengthy tournament run halted by a semifinal loss Friday.

The slow-starting Salem quintet suffered from a case of cold shooting, and a powerful inside game carried Cass Tech to a 63-48 victory at Grand Valley State University.

"We really had a tough time getting into a rhythm," Salem coach Fred Thomann said. "At times, I thought we'd get it going, but it was one of those games without much flow to it."

While the Rocks, who finished with a 25-2 record, were unable to maintain some consistency and control momentum, Cass Tech's play around the basket was very much in rhythm.

MARTHEA McCLLOUD, a husky 6-footer, scored 27 points and hauled down 19 rebounds to lead the Technicians, who improved to 24-1 and were to meet defending Class A champion Saginaw for the title Saturday afternoon.

In the finale to an outstanding prep career, Salem's Dena Head ended up with a game-high 29 points, but found it difficult to get on track early in the game. She missed her first nine shots and was 9-of-30 for the game.

"In four years, I don't think she's ever started that slowly," Thomann said. "Part of the game she was great, but it was hard for us early."

The Technicians knew they wouldn't be able to shut down Head, who still managed to exceed her scoring average, but simply wanted to contain her, according to coach Charles Frank.

"We felt if we could take off 10 of her points, we'd have a chance to win," he said.

"OUR DEFENSIVE plan was, every time she took a jump shot, to get a hand in her face and challenge her."

Cass started a front line that included 6-1 Sheronda Mayo and 6-2 Rena Kindred, and the Technicians immediately began packing it inside, getting the ball to McCloud, Mayo and 5-11 LaTonya Tate. Tate added 12 points. Kindred, who was more of a perimeter threat, 10 and Mayo seven.

"There's no question. Their inside game is the best in high school basketball in the state of Michigan," Thomann said. "They have very powerful offensive players around the block."

While the Rocks were 3-of-15 from the floor in the first quarter, Cass scored seven straight points for a 9-2 lead. With that the pattern of Salem fighting to catch up or get over the hump was set.

Stacy Sovine gave the Rocks the lift they desperately needed late in the first quarter, however.

LEFT OPEN at the top of the circle, she sank a pair of 20-foot-plus shots to get Salem within three points. She added four free throws early in the second quarter, and her eight points were very timely.

"I thought she played her finest basketball game as a high school player," Thomann said.

"They gave her an open shot, and she knocked them down. She made her free throws and did an outstanding (defensive) job on Tate (holding the Cass player to six points below her average)."

Head scored her first points at 6:34 in the second quarter, and the Rocks came on to take leads of 16-15 on a pair of Head free throws and 22-21 when she scored off the fast break with 0:39 remaining.

But, as was the case all night, Cass always had an answer. After the Technicians missed a shot and three ensuing rebound chances, Kindred's putback gave Cass a 23-22 halftime lead.

"WE WERE one point down at the half," Thomann said. "I thought that was a positive thing for us, and even as we went into the fourth quarter we were right there."

"Any time you play a game that has so much riding on it that's a part of it you have to work through. Overall, I thought (the Rocks) hung in there pretty well."

Salem's shooting improved in the third quarter, and Head scored 12 points to keep the Rocks within two, 37-35. Keri McBride's shot from the corner tied the score for the fourth time in the period, 37-37.

But Cass began to break away when it scored the last five points on Lynn McIntosh's three-point play and McCloud's steal/layup for a 45-39 margin entering the final quarter.

Six points by Head, including a coast-to-coast play, kept the Rocks within four, 49-45, but Salem was still fighting an uphill battle with only 3½ minutes to play.

McCLOUD MADE back-to-back baskets to put Cass on top by eight, 53-45, and trigger a decisive runs of points.

McCloud would get the ball in the post and make a sweeping pivot move, resulting in a turnaround jumper or layup. Salem center Barb Krug frustrated her several times, but Tech's combination of inside players was too much to overcome.

"McCloud had an awesome game," Thomann said. "She did things tonight I hadn't seen her do before."

"We stopped her several times, but she stepped right through and made the bucket."

With the Rocks shooting from three-point distance in an attempt to make up the difference quickly, the Technicians broke the game open and went to the free-throw line to turn a close contest into a 15-point difference.

Cass shot an astonishing 71 percent in the second half, making 15 of 21 field goals as its inside power game became the dominant factor. The Technicians shot 53 percent for the game compared to Salem's 30 percent on 16-of-53 shooting.



Dena Head tries to rein in a loose ball amid defensive pressure from Cass Tech's Danisha Kemp (22) and LaTonya Tate (32). Head en-

dured a frustrating first half but scored 21 points in the second and finished with 29.

DILL BRESLER/staff photographer