

Tarnished dream

Coach realizes goal in nightmare situation

LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE. That's what coaches are paid to do, isn't it? The worse the situation gets, the more optimistic they become. A team could be in the midst of a record-setting losing streak and a coach would say, "Well, at least we're in Guinness' book."

Which is pretty much how John Mulroy approaches his job at the University of Detroit. Mulroy started the year as Don Sisko's assistant. Five games into the season, Sisko got sick of his own program and — complaining of burnout — resigned.

Which left Mulroy in command. And in a position he always dreamed of: "I'm coaching at my alma mater, in the city I grew up in and played basketball in, the city I recruited in."

SEVEN GAMES and seven losses later, Mulroy's dream-come-true has all the makings of a nightmare. Like the old Three Stooges comedy in which the masters of buffoonery, in a medieval setting, are about to be executed by bowmen. Now asks, "Am I there another way we can die?"

The reply: "You can have your heads chopped off or be burned at the stake."

Larry opts for beheading. But not Curry; he wants to be burned at the stake. Why, questions Larry? "Because a hot stake is better than a cold chop," Curry answers.

Mulroy could identify with that. Either way, it's a no-win situation.

That's exactly where he finds himself. He isn't responsible for U-D's pitiful state. He was only in his second year as Sisko's top aide when he was thrust into command. But Mulroy couldn't refuse the opportunity when presented. Who could?

"This is why I worked as an assistant coach for ridiculous pay for all those years," he said.

STILL, IT WOULD take a miracle for this to work favorably for Mulroy. His official title is "interim coach." Which means next year at this time, in all probability, he'll either be working as an assistant coach at another college or working in another profession.

Mulroy is only 28. Just three years ago, he was a head coach — at Plymouth Canton. And in girls basketball.

Now he's in charge of an NCAA Division I



men's program. That's a gigantic step, one coaches all over the country fantasize about but never take.

Ask Tom Villeneuve. He thought he was going to be U-D's coach nine years ago. Instead, Willie McCarter was chosen. Villeneuve, who coached Birmingham School in the early 1970s, has been at Grand Valley State — a Division II school — ever since.

Villeneuve's Grand Valley State team handed U-D its greatest embarrassment in an embarrassing season Monday, beating the Titans on their homecourt 77-68. This U-D team highly resembled the squads of the Dick Vitale era, which whipped powerhouses like Marquette and Georgetown in front of capacity crowds at Calihan Hall.

THE STREAK stands at 13 straight defeats (counting last year's final game). With each loss, numbers fluctuate. Crowds shrink further — there were only 1,237 in attendance Monday (a coach in Mulroy's position might call that fortunate). Yet, the losses attract others.

Coaching candidates encircle Calihan's floor, like sharks sensing a floundering fish. Mulroy needed only to turn around from his position on the bench and look into the crowd to spot a host of people succeeding.

Oakland University coach Greg Kampe was there Monday in a dual role. His team hosts Grand Valley tonight, so he was scouting. But he didn't dodge his other intention.

"I have not applied for the job," Kampe said, "but I have expressed an interest."

Charlie Parker, Wayne State's coach and another candidate, was also in the stands. Even the guy on the visitor's bench — Villeneuve, a U-D grad — could be considered a possibility (al-

though, according to sources, he has not applied).

GLEN DONAHUE, first-year coach at St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake, wasn't there because of a late practice. But the former U-D assistant and 1958 graduate admitted he had applied for the job.

But for that matter, who hasn't? Gary Hart will probably throw his hat into the ring next.

Which makes Mulroy's task that much harder. As the losses mount, confidence drains. The Titans are short on talent, experience and hope. Mulroy, mind you, doesn't agree. "We're not lacking talent, we're not lacking effort," he insisted Monday.

The problems plaguing U-D aren't his making. Poor recruiting before he joined the staff (this year's class, orchestrated by Mulroy, was called the best in the Midwestern Collegiate Conference by scouting services) have devastated the program.

DETROIT PUBLIC School League players stay away from U-D. High academic standards, coaches who would rather send their stars to more prominent schools, and, in previous years, a slow-down style that wasn't attractive to most city players have hurt U-D.

It's a challenge, Mulroy admitted. Mulroy of the task confronting him. "How a person deals with the curveballs that life throws makes a statement on what kind of person he is. Right now, we're getting some real snapping curves."

And yet, even after a humiliating loss like Monday's, Mulroy remained stubbornly optimistic. "Something positive will come out of this," he predicted. "We had a lot of kids we're recruiting out in that crowd tonight. At least they'll know the coach isn't lying to them."

There's an opportunity to play here. There's also an opportunity to coach. But for Mulroy to get that chance, U-D will have to make an abrupt about-face. He has one goal for the Titans: "Play to their potential. We haven't yet; that's the frustrating thing."

If U-D doesn't soon translate that potential into wins, Mulroy may end up paying for someone else's mistakes. He'll be associated with the worst season in school history. And with a reputation like that, it's hard to find — or keep — a coaching job.

North takes win after team talks

North Farmington gathered for a team meeting after last Friday's 59-49 loss to Walled Lake Western, and the Raiders responded Tuesday with a convincing, 64-52 win over Livonia Stevenson.

Senior forward Kurt Dudek led three North Farmington players in double figures with 17 points, followed by Matt Hoffman and John Shelton with 15 and 13, respectively. The kids themselves had a meeting and decided they were going to do things differently. Raiders coach Tom Negoshian said. "They played harder as a team tonight."

The game marked the opening of play in the Lakes Division of the Western Lakes Athletic Association. The Raiders are 2-4 overall, while the Spartans fell to 2-3.

North, which led 40-30 at halftime, outscored Stevenson 16-8 in the third quarter to take a commanding 58-38 lead after three quarters. Shelton and Hoffman combined for 16 of those 18 third-quarter points. Hoffman, a sophomore guard, converted three 3-point field goals for the game and contributed 10 assists.

Stevenson also had three players score in double figures, led by junior forward Chris Nazelli with 15 points. Senior guard Scott Kaskowski added 11 points, followed by forward Kevin Tappan with 10.

JOHN GLENN 75, FARMINGTON 51: On Tuesday, the third quarter told the story in this WLAA Lakes Division opener for both teams.

Westland Glenn outscored the visiting Falcons 27-5 in the third quarter, turning a 39-29 halftime lead into a rout.

Junior guard Casey Killingbeck, who was 6-of-6 from the floor, led four Rockets in double figures with 17 points. Senior guard Marcus Lowe added 14 points, followed by Dave Schnapel and Greg Anderson with 11 and 10, respectively.

Lowe and Killingbeck spearheaded the third quarter run, combining for 13 of the 27 points.

basketball

"Our full court press gave them a few difficulties," Glenn coach Bob Killingbeck said. "That was the turning point. Everyone that played scored tonight and we had a balanced attack. I also was happy because we were able to score against their zone tonight. We weren't able to do that last Friday against Farmington Harrison (a win)."

Junior forward Jason Brown paced Farmington with 18 points.

REDFORD CC 83, **BISHOP GALLAGHER** 66: CC rolled to its first victory in the Central Division of the Catholic League as Brian Dugas led four Shamrocks players in double figures with 20 points.

CC (6-1 overall, 1-1 in the Central Division) led 26-15 over Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher (2-5, 0-2) after one quarter and 50-24 at halftime.

Coach Bernie Holowicki, whose team is idle until Tuesday at Birmingham Brother Rice, was fearful of a letdown against Gallagher. The Shamrocks lost a heartbreaker last Friday at Redford Bishop Borgess, 67-62.

"Our kids were still down Tuesday night after that loss and you never know how they're going to respond," Holowicki said. "Gallagher had a couple of good players. Dugas played very well for us and so did (Anthony) Arrington and (Bill) Vittl. Scott Haunicher was much improved for us off the bench."

Haunicher scored CC, scoring 12 points in a reserve role. Also scoring in double figures for the Shamrocks were Arrington with 15 points and Vittl, who added 10.

Gallagher had three players in double figures, led by junior center Marc Klatt with 16 points and Daryl Jackson Brian Smith with 14 and 13, respectively.

Raiders defeat rival swimmers

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the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 1:02.4 and Geoff Taylor won the 100-yard breaststroke, recording a time of 1:08.80.

Salem's relay team of Miller, Taylor, Fred Seidelman and Mike Hill won the 200-yard medley in a time of 1:46.7.

CANTON 43, BELLEVILLE 49:

The Chiefs trailed the entire meet, until their two 400-yard freestyle relay teams bailed them out for the victory.

Canton placed first and second in the 400-yard relay (the last event of the night).

Finishing first in a time of 3:35.6 was the team of Tome Hone, Jim Riemenschneider, Andy Lang and Mike Helmstadter. Placing second in the same event in a time of 3:38.16

was the team of Mike Lustig, Jay Schwimm, Tim Edwards and Mitch Timberlake.

Helmstadter won two individual events for the Rocks, the first coming in the 200-yard freestyle in a time of 1:56.25. He also won the 500-yard freestyle in 5:19.21.

Mike Lustig placed first in the 100-yard fly at 59.45. Bryce Anderson won the 100-yard back stroke in a time of 1:01.25.

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