

Hawks bow to Salem

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Patience in shot selection is a virtue on the basketball court.

Plymouth Salem demonstrated that quality Tuesday night in the Western Lakes playoffs on Farmington Hills Harrison's court.

The Rocks evidently attempted the right shots and certainly made their count as Salem posted a mild upset, 62-53, over the Hawks, who had beaten the Rocks earlier in the year and finished second in the Western Division.

Harrison pulled within four points, 37-33, when Salem connected for all three of its three-point field goals during the last 1 1/2 minutes of the third quarter.

Jeff Elliott made two of the triples and Scott Hale the other. Those nine points, combined with Bill Anderson's dunks, gave the Rocks a 48-34 lead going into the last period.

"IT COULD HAVE gone either way right there, and the (Salem players) didn't rush their shots," Rocks coach Bob Brodie said.

"We waited for the second and third opportunity, which means we waited to shoot when we wanted to shoot and we didn't let Harrison dictate when."

"When you're ready to shoot, you're a lot more relaxed, and the shots go down a lot easier," he added.

Shooting also was on the collective mind of the Hawks, but for a different reason.

Harrison coach Mike Teachman agreed the Salem triples played a decisive role in the game itself, but he believed his team was repeatedly denied a fair shot at the basket by officials who wouldn't call fouls on the Rocks.

"I hate to say it, but the difference in the game was the black and white," he said. "We were getting hit on most of our shots and there was no foul."

"THEY WERE coming over our boards for rebounds and weren't getting called for it. It's tough when you're getting hit all the time."

"It was definitely not a game



Bryan Wauldron tries to block a shot by Salem's Keith Smith during Tuesday's Western Lakes playoff game at Harrison. The Hawks fell

played by the rules of basketball," Teachman added. "It was played by different rules."

The Rocks, who turned the ball over early against Harrison's pressure, got it together and set the tone for the second half by scoring the last eight points of the first half to break a 21-21 tie.

"As the game wore on, we gained confidence and a lot of players have a lot of experience now," said Brodie, pointing out injuries and illnesses enabled many to get playing time. "We kept a lot of fresh bodies in there, and it paid a dividend in the end."

The Hawks mounted their third-quarter comeback only to see Salem pull ahead again. But Harrison rallied again in the fourth, with Marcus

Mack, Jason Lichtman and Bryan Wauldron combining to score the first eight points for a six-point difference, 48-42.

Todd Marion, who scored a game-high 16 points, maintained Salem's lead until the Rocks could secure it in the final minute.

MACK PULLED the Hawks within 54-49, but Pat Rzepecki scored off a tip and Elliott and Hale hit the front end of two 1-and-1s to keep Salem safely in front. Plus, the Rocks got the rebound after each missed free throw to further frustrate Harrison.

"My guys really fought coming back," Teachman said. "We'd come back, shoot a layup, get belted and nothing would happen. It's hard to score when you're getting belted."

"We had the shots three different times, but it wasn't meant to be," said Niemi. "We had the shot selection, but they wouldn't drop. We worked the ball and we were patient, but we had breakdowns defensively that hurt us inside."

"I'm proud of the way we came back. We showed a lot of character. But it leaves an empty feeling because of how hard these kids worked. We're just going to have to pick up ourselves and work now for the district (state tourney)."

CANTON WILL PLAY Farmington Harrison at 4 p.m. Saturday in the consolation round at Salem. North will be the underdog again against Glenn, a team that has beaten the Raiders twice already this season.

"To Canton's credit they came back," Negoshian said, "but it shows character on our part not to quit either."

Yes, Negoshian and his team is starting to believe anything is possible.

Raiders shock unbeaten WLC

basketball

North Farmington's basketball fortunes did an abrupt 180-degree turn for the better last weekend.

The Raiders thought they were eliminated from the Western Lakes playoffs and Farmington figured it was in after the Falcons beat North Friday night.

After some confusion over the league's tiebreaking formula, the Raiders realized they'd get the playoff nod instead if they won a makeup contest Saturday night.

All coach Tom Negoshian's team had to do was beat Walled Lake Central, the Lakes Division champs and one of only two undefeated Class A teams.

It was no small task, but the Raiders managed to pull it off. They did what seemed to be the impossible, trippling the Vikings 67-53 and finding themselves in the playoffs 24 hours after thinking they had no chance.

FARMINGTON, which won its last three regular-season games, finished 4-6 in the division and had a half-game lead over North following Friday's game. But North's victory Saturday forced a tie, and the Raiders won the tiebreaker based on their win over the first-place team.

"That goes to show you how crazy this game can be," said Negoshian of the sudden turnaround.

He informed his players of their playoff chances before going on the floor Saturday, and that knowledge served to motivate his players, Negoshian said.

"We're not the type of team that can just go up and down the floor and beat people," he said. "We have to play hard and with emotion."

Negoshian said he thought the Raiders caught WLC, which defeated second-place John Glenn to lock up the division crown Friday, at the right time and, secondly, played an excellent game themselves.

"OUR KIDS made some really good decisions with the basketball," he said. "The way they reacted and played unselfishly was the key to the whole thing."

Sophomore guard Matt Hoffman, who had 26 points in an earlier game with the Vikings, scored 25 Saturday, 20 in the second half. He was 10-13 from three-point distance and 12-16 at the free-throw line.

Furthermore, Hoffman, who is averaging 16 points, had an all-around good game, passing for six assists and pulling down six rebounds.

"He's doing a nice job for us as a sophomore," Negoshian said, "being the point guard and having to make decisions and also score from that position."

The Raiders, who had a bad shooting night against Farmington, were 23-of-47 from the floor Saturday and 20-of-28 at the line.

"IT COULDN'T go any other way," said Negoshian of his team's improved shooting percentage.

Jim Ratajski scored 14 points and had 10 rebounds, John Shelton had 10 points and Vandy Hill and Bill Green added eight apiece. Ratajski and Green split time in the post, giving the Raiders 22 points and 14 rebounds out of that position, Negoshian pointed out.

Layne Herrington led the Vikings, 9-1 and 18-1 overall, with 19 points. Dave Nelson had 10 and Rob Wolak, averaging in the neighborhood of 20, was held to eight.

North led 37-28 at halftime and 53-37 after three quarters. Hoffman was 6-of-7 shooting free throws and had 10 points in the last period when WLC started to press and foul.

Falcon winning streak ends

Farmington's three-game winning streak was halted Tuesday night by a 52-47 loss to Northville in a Western Lakes over-the-weekend basketball game. The Falcons had won their last three regular-season games in an effort to make the league playoffs, only to lose a tiebreaker to North Farmington.

Farmington's late-season surge began Monday, Feb. 15, with a 65-59, overtime victory over Livonia Stevenson. It was the first of three wins in the course of five days for the Falcons.

Farmington's Drew McDougall had four free throws in the overtime and scored 17 points to lead all scorers.

Darin Magiera added 16 for the Falcons, and Chris Cahill's three-point jump shot with 18 seconds left sent the game into overtime.

North stages back-to-back surprises

Continued from Page 1

But the Raiders put on a late spur and took a seven-point lead, 54-47, on a three-point play by Vandy Hill with 3:38 left.

But Hill fouled out with nine seconds later and Canton came charging back on a pair of three-point bombs by Brian Paupore (15 points).

"Canton then sent the game into overtime when Matt Littlefield scored a hoop with 16 seconds remaining."

"North had two shots in the final seconds, but neither dropped as the two teams went into overtime dead-

locked at 60-60.

IN THE OVERTIME, North took a 64-60 lead on baskets by Shelton and Ratajski, but Canton answered with five straight points, including two free throws by Mitch Fyke (16 points) with 45 seconds left, to regain the lead at 65-64.

But Ratajski, taking a nice feed from Shelton, answered with a hoop at the 18-second mark.

Canton then called timeout, but failed to convert two shots in the final seconds.

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