

Sports

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Cinderella North gains league's basketball final

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington has firmly established itself as the Cinderella team of the Western Lakes basketball tournament.

The Raiders, the last team to qualify for the playoffs, advanced to the championship game with their third straight upset victory Saturday.

Matt Hoffman scored 16 points and North fought off a late rally to defeat Westland John Glenn 47-45 in the semifinals at Plymouth Salem High School.

North knocked off unbeaten Walled Lake Central to get into the tournament and toppled Western Division winner Plymouth Canton in the first round. Glenn was second to WLC in the Lakes Division and had beaten the Raiders twice during the regular season.

"We've been the underdog all through this," North coach Tom Negoshian said.

"WE WEREN'T supposed to be in the tournament, we weren't supposed to win the first game, we weren't supposed to win the second game. We're just happy to be in the championship game."

North played under control and executed well to hold the edge throughout the early going.

The Raiders stepped it up in the third quarter when Hoffman downed a pair of triples and had half his points as North spread the margin to 38-20.

After Rod Dixon pulled the Rockets to within five in the final period, the Raiders made another run and were close to icing the victory. Back-to-back layups by Kurt Dudek and Vanoy Hill and free throws by Hoffman made it 46-35 with 2:43 to play.

But Glenn was quick to rally and threatened to take

the victory from North's grasp.

DIXON, WHO had all but two of Glenn's 15 points in the fourth quarter and finished with 17, led a comeback that saw the Rockets close to 46-45 with 1 1/4 minutes left.

With Glenn pressuring in the backcourt, the Raiders turned the ball over several times and gave the Rockets chances to take the lead.

However, Glenn missed a layup and two three-point shots, the second with 14 remaining. North used its last timeouts to strategic advantage and hung on for the victory.

"We didn't play well the whole game except for the last three minutes," said Glenn coach Bob Killingbeck, whose team missed its first eight shots of the first and second quarters and was 15-of-59 for the game.

"In the first half, we missed way too many makable shots. If we had made half of them, we would have been ahead."

"It was nice to close the gap; we had a couple opportunities and just didn't convert," he added. "If we could have, we would have put one in the win column."

DUDEK ADDED nine points for North, John Shelton and Hill eight apiece. Jim Ratajski, Hill and Shelton rebounded well the Raiders, 8-11 overall. They held the Rockets to one shot most of the game.

"We're playing awful hard and with a lot of emotion," Negoshian said. "But the coaches get too much credit. It's a tribute to the kids, because they're the ones who know how good the team is they're playing and have to make all the adjustments."

Greg Anderson and Marcus Lowe scored 12 points apiece for Glenn, 12-7 overall.



JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer

Jim Vik catches his breath after completing a first place for Farmington, but the Raiders still race Thursday night against North Farmington. Vik, one of the area's top swimmers, had three

Salem thumps Vikings, will face Raiders for title

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Plymouth Salem wasn't given much of a chance to repeat as Western Lakes basketball champion back in November when the season began.

But the Rocks are one step away from winning it all again after upsetting once-beaten Walled Lake Central in the tournament semifinals Saturday night at Salem, 73-61.

Salem, 9-10 overall, will face another surprise playoff team in the final at 8 p.m. Saturday. North Farmington, which finished behind the third-place Rocks in the Lakes Division standings, is also on a late-season roll.

"Going in, a lot of people probably didn't pick us," Salem coach Bob Brodie said. "But we knew we had good players on this team. It was just a matter of getting some experience and cohesiveness."

"The kids deserve it. We went through a lot of adversity with injuries and sicknesses. At this point in time, we've overcome that and gained some experience and maturity in the process."

THE ROCKS looked every bit like a cohesive team Saturday as they de-

basketball

feated the Vikings, 17-2, in resounding fashion.

Salem started fast and was never behind, and senior guard Jeff Elliott was a big reason for the team's success.

He was out with a broken wrist when the Rocks lost two close games to WLC during the regular season, but he made a difference Saturday, leading the break and scoring a game-high 21 points.

Another factor was Salem's free-throw shooting. The Vikings outscored the Rocks from the line, but Salem hardly missed. The Rocks were 19-of-22 and WLC 20-of-31. Elliott was 9-of-10, including 6-of-6 in the second half when Salem sank 13 of 15 attempts to hold a safe lead.

"One of the biggest things about shooting free throws is confidence," Brodie said, "and we're playing with a lot of confidence."

Todd Marion and Scott Hale connected for triples, and Bill Anderson made a three-point play early in the

second quarter to help the Rocks build a 32-17 lead before WLC cut it to 40-33 at halftime. Elliott had 13 points in the first half.

THE VIKINGS got no closer than seven points after Rob Wolksi, who had 14, scored the opening basket of the second half for a 40-35 score.

He sat down with 2 1/4 minutes left in the third period with four fouls, and Layne Herrington, who led the Vikings with 19, picked up his fourth a minute later and fouled out with 4:14 remaining.

Salem shut the door with 2 1/4 minutes to play after the Vikings failed to capitalize on a turnover.

WLC had a chance to cut Salem's lead (55-57) to six, but the Vikings missed two attempts. The second rebound resulted in a fast-break layup by Elliott, who followed that with two free throws for a 12-point lead with only 1:59 on the clock.

"At halftime, I told the kids they were going to make run and, when they did, we had to weather it," Brodie said. "But they didn't want to let Central even make a run."

They refused to quit defensively. They played with a lot of poise out there."

North bests Falcons



JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer

Jordy Greenstein won the breaststroke and helped the Raiders win a relay as North defeated cross-town rival Farmington 96-73.

North Farmington had a little fun with Thursday's swimming contest, it being the last dual meet of the season.

Coach Sue Gendron arranged her lineup to allow her swimmers the opportunity to try different events, and the Raiders managed a 23-point victory despite the fact Farmington won seven of the 11 events.

North overcame the Falcon trio of Jim Vik, Adam Krause and Brad Moore with some solid individual efforts by its own swimmers and, of course, its usual depth to win 96-73.

Vik won the 50- and 100-yard freestyles with respective times of 22.36 and 49.44, and he swam the second leg of the freestyle relay, which the Falcons won in 3:27.41.

The Raiders got an outstanding effort from Jordy Greenstein in the breaststroke, in which he set a Farmington pool record of 1:03.87. The old mark was 1:04.0.

BRUCE GOINS was North's only other winner in an individual swimming event, capturing the butterfly in 57.94. He and Greenstein, along with teammates Steve Tunney and Chuck Chubb, helped the Raiders post a first-place time of 1:45.7 in the medley relay.

North, which finishes with a 9-5 record in dual meets, also won the maximum diving points with Leo Leiberman scoring 212.4.

Farmington's Krause won the 200 freestyle in 1:54.99 and Moore the individual medley in 2:11.66. Both were on the free relay team, which included Vik and Scott Hawkins.

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OCC dumped in final

By C. J. Risak
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History is a great educator. By now, anyway, Oakland Community College men's basketball team should have learned that lesson.

The Raiders turned in a repeat performance in the Michigan Community College Athletic Association's state final Saturday at Schoolcraft College. After a gutsy, come-from-behind 98-95 semifinal victory over Highland Park CC Friday, OCC came up flat in losing 91-71 to Lansing CC.

A year ago the Raiders did the same thing, upsetting HPOC — the regular-season Western Lakes Conference champion — in the semis, then losing to Kalamazoo Valley CC in the finals.

This year was a different challenge. Lansing CC is ranked No. 1 in the NJCAA Division II; Saturday's win pushed its record to 25-1. OCC is 22-7.

"I thought we did a pretty good job — in the first half," said OCC coach Lynn Reed. "I thought we outplayed them in the first half. We just missed some shots we normally make."

THE REASON for OCC's poor shooting was traceable to the previous night's work. Reed figured. "They had a soft one last night (Lansing defeated Grand Rapids JC 60-44 Friday), while we had Highland Park," he said.

The only consistently effective offensive player for the Raiders was Sam Smith, who had 14 first-half points and finished with 25. Leading-scorer Derrick Williams was limited to 12, while Carson Butler suffered through perhaps his worst shooting game of the season, scoring just eight points.

Lansing CC, meanwhile, hammered at OCC with five double-figure scorers: Kirk Baker (29), Carter Briggs (20), and Jeff Casler, Melvin Kelly and Marcell Cole (12 apiece).

Baker and Briggs proved particularly effective. Baker is 6-foot-8, Briggs 6-7. OCC, playing without starting center Greg Davis — out for the season after suffering a punctured lung in Wednesday's quarterfinal win over Macomb CC — had match-up problems defensively and had depth troubles, too.

Still, the Raiders trailed by just 40-33 at the half. But they could never get closer than 10 to 15 in the 15-minute

mark of the second half, as Butler, Smith and Williams all misfired from three-point range.

There is, of course, a good chance the two teams could meet again in the NJCAA Division II Region XII playoffs this weekend in Dayton. OCC avenged last year's loss in the state finals to Kalamazoo Valley CC in the NJCAA Division II regional, then went on to win the national title.

If history does repeat . . .

IN FRIDAY'S SEMIFINAL, Highland Park CC — winner of five of the last six regular-season meetings against OCC — lost for the third-straight time to the Raiders in the state tournament.

This time, the Raiders won in spite of themselves. They committed a whopping 38 turnovers to HPOC's 20. But what they didn't do was give up. Neither team led by more than six in the second half, and in a game with a pace like this one, that wasn't much.

James Gillespie nearly won the game single-handedly for HPOC. Gillespie poured in 48 points, 28 in the second half. His basket with 1:53 left, and another by teammate Tony Racka (from Farmington) with 1:13 to go, put the Panthers up 95-92.

OCC still trailed by a point, partly because Marc Hogan — snubbing for Davis — traveled after grabbing a defensive rebound at the 13 second mark. It was one of three turnovers in the final two minutes for the Raiders.

HOOGAN, A 6-FOOT-8 freshman, rebounded from his miscue, however. Butler missed the first shot in a one-and-one situation with 34 seconds left, but Hogan snared the ball and hit a short jumper that put OCC up 95-93.

HPOC had possession out of bounds at their end of the court with 30 seconds still on the clock, but threw the inbound pass away. Eric Butler ended up with the ball, and he flung it the length of the court to — who else? — Hogan for a jam with 12 seconds to go.

Gillespie's off-balance try for a triple in the final seconds was off-target, and OCC had its win.

Six of OCC's eight players reached double-figures in scoring: Derrick Williams (25), Eric Butler (20), Carson Butler (12), Sam Smith (16), and Hogan and Reggie Anderson (10 apiece).

Racka finished with 18 for HPOC, Hall had 11.

Hawks score big win

Farmington Hills Harrison turned in its most impressive swimming performance of the season Thursday to knock off Northville and take second place in the Western Division.

The Hawks finish 4-1 in the division and 7-5 in all dual meets after clipping the Mustangs 44-39 at Northville.

"I think we were helped by the fact the meet was in their pool," Harrison coach Pete Leonhardt said. "We're a much stronger team in a five-lane pool than we would be in a six-lane pool."

"We have strong front guys, but we're weaker after the first two. And we got a lot of first places in the meet."

Indeed, the Hawks won eight of the 11 events, including the free-

swimming

style relay in which Scott Farabee, Jeff Whitehead, Marc Froesch and Brian Fitzgerald set a pool record of 3:24.48.

THREE OF them dominated the other events, too, with Fitzgerald, Farabee and Whitehead winning two individual races apiece.

Fitzgerald was first in the 200-yard freestyle (1:56.34) and 500 free (8:01.38). Farabee's victories came in the 100 (2:05.99) and butterfly (58.38) and Whitehead topped the field in the 50 free (25.32) and 100 free (51.08).

David Hansen had Harrison's last victory, clocking out at 1:06.71 in the breaststroke.

"If we had swam against (Northville) at the start of the year, they'd have killed us," Leonhardt said, "but my guys have come on real strong in the last two weeks."

"We're really come on, and I'm hoping it continues through the league and state meet."

Farabee, Whitehead, Froesch and Fitzgerald are qualified for the state meet, and Leonhardt is optimistic the Hawks can finish among the top 10 since they compete in Class B.

Leonhardt hopes Carl Johnson, in diving, and Hansen, in the breast, also can qualify for state this week during league competition at Plymouth Salem.