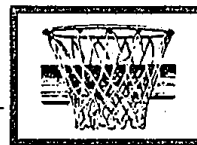


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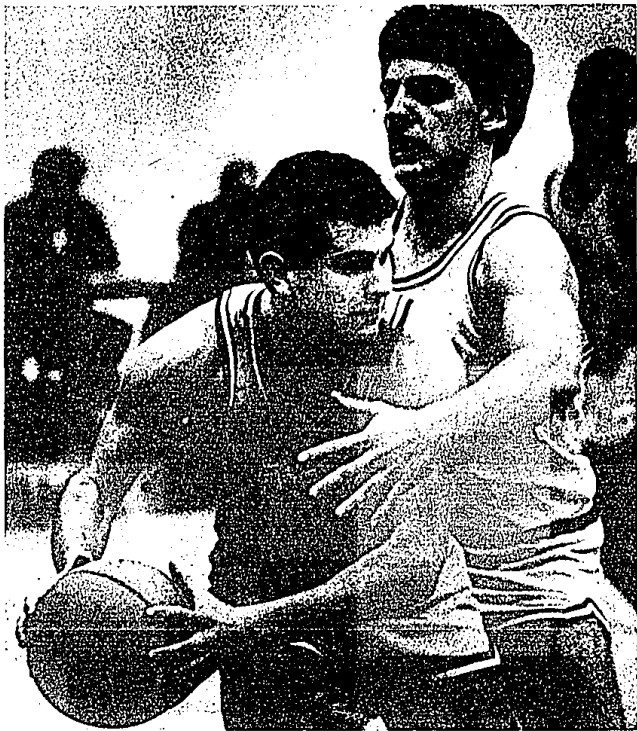
Dan O'Meara editors/591-2312

Monday, March 7, 1988 O&E

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North celebrates first WLAA crown



John Shelton, who protects the basketball from Salem's Todd Marion, was instrumental in North Farmington's championship victory Saturday over the host Rocks. Shelton scored a game-high 15 points to pace the Raiders to a 58-46 win.

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington is no longer the underdog, the Cinderella team, of the Western Lakes basketball tournament.

The Raiders are now the champions of it instead.

North wrote a storybook ending to its amazing post-season performance with a 58-46 victory over Plymouth Salem in the championship game Saturday night.

"Seasons like this make guys like me keep coming back to coach after 20 years," said North coach Tom Negoshian, whose team was the last to qualify for the eight-team playoffs and an underdog in all three tournament games.

"The kids' hard work and dedication reaffirms what high school athletics is all about."

AS WAS THE case throughout the tournament, the Raiders performed their individual roles for a cohesive team effort and used a balanced scoring attack.

Senior forward John Shelton, who is primarily a rebounder, was North's leading scorer with 15 points while making nine off 11 free throws.

Sophomore point guard Matt Hoffman, the team's leading scorer overall, had 13 points, and senior forward Kurt Dudek contributed 11, all in the first half to help the Raiders gain the upper hand early.

In addition, Jim Ratajski (eight in the first half) and Vanoy Hill (seven in the second half) added nine points apiece.

"Nobody tried to do too much, but they all played hard within their roles," Negoshian said.

He added the team's increased intensity during the tournament improved the rebounding which in turn raised the overall performance.

"COACH SAID all we needed to do was rebound from the forwards," Shelton said. "Everybody has been playing his role the last four games, and that's why we've been winning."

"We really felt, up until the last couple of weeks, we hadn't been playing hard with the intensity we

basketball

STATE TOURNAMENT
DISTRICT BASKETBALL PAIRINGS:

CLASS A
at WALLED LAKE CENTRAL

Tuesday, March 8: (A) Walled Lake Central vs. (B) North Farmington, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 10: Waterford Mott vs. Walled Lake Western, 6:15 p.m.; Farmington vs. A-B winner, 8 p.m.

Saturday, March 12: Championship final, 7:30 p.m. (winner advances to the West Bloomfield regional vs. Highland Park district champion).

CLASS B
at FARMINGTON HARRISON

Monday, March 7: (A) Farmington Harrison vs. (B) Livonia Clarenceville, 6 p.m.; (C) Detroit Renaissance vs. (D) Detroit Benedictine, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 9: Oak Park vs. A-B winner, 6 p.m.; Royal Oak Shive vs. C-D winner, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 11: Championship final, 7 p.m. (winner advances to the St. Clair Shores Southlake regional vs. Mount Clemens district champion).

like to play with," Negoshian said. "But we played as hard as we could throughout the tournament, leaving it all on the floor."

For all intents and purposes, the game was decided in the first quarter when the Raiders began to put some distance between themselves and the cold-shooting Rocks.

Salem was 1-of-10 from the floor in the first period and didn't score until Jeff Elliott, the only Salem player in double figures with 15 points, made a three-point goal at the 2:20 mark.

North hadn't been shooting well either, and it had only a 5-3 lead at that point. But the Raiders finished strong and scored the last eight points of the quarter.

With Ratajski, Hoffman and Shelton backing up Dudek's scoring, North, shooting 12-of-28 in the first half, extended its advantage to 23-6 and then 31-12 before settling into a 33-17 halftime lead.

"WE'VE BEEN an inconsistent team all year," said Salem coach

Bob Brodie, whose outfit didn't resemble the halcyon that had steamrolled Lakes Division champion Walled Lake Central the previous week.

"Some games we look like we can beat anybody; and some games we look like we can't beat anybody."

Hoffman hit a triple to start the second half, but Salem rallied to pull within eight, 43-35, on a pair of Keith Smith free throws early in the fourth quarter.

The Rocks improved their shooting percentage to the mid-30s, but they regressed to 4-of-23 shooting in the fourth quarter. Furthermore, when the Rocks missed, North, which had held them to one shot most of the game, usually got the rebound and was fouled.

Consequently, the Raiders nailed down the win at the free-throw line. They were only 1-of-6 from the floor in the final period, but sank 15 of 19 free throws. Shelton was 6-of-6 at the line in the last quarter and Hill 5-of-7.

"The key was the second half when we weren't shooting real well and they came at us," Negoshian said. "We fought it off by rebounding as hard as we possibly could."

"BY REBOUNDING, we got a couple putbacks and made them work to score at the offensive end."

Bill Anderson followed Elliott in the scoring totals with eight points, and Todd Marion and Smith added six apiece.

North, 9-11 overall, made 24 of 32 free throws and 16 of 45 field goals. The Rocks, also 9-11, were 12-of-34 at the line and 16-of-60 from the floor.

North came out ready to play like it has in the last few games, Brodie said. "For some reason, we didn't. There's no explanation."

"The players have had a hard time getting started, especially if the first couple shots don't go down. Then it seems the whole game becomes a struggle."

"The kids made a nice comeback, but you have to give North credit," he added. "They made their free throws and took care of the basketball."

District tourney offers challenge

North Farmington finished one chapter when it won the Western Lakes basketball championship Saturday night, but the story doesn't end there.

The amazing Raiders, who rose from underdog status to win their first league championship, face another challenge Tuesday night when they meet Walled Lake Central in a rematch.

The team expected to win the WLAA title based on regular-season performance (Central) and the team expected to be the first tournament casualty using the same criteria (North) meet at 7:30 p.m. in the first round of the district tournament at WLC.

The host Vikings were undefeated until North beat them 73-61 on Saturday, Feb. 20, in the last game of the regular season.

THAT VICTORY enabled the Raiders, 9-11, to win a fourth-place tie-breaker and get into the league playoffs. North went on to win its next three games and the title while Central, 18-2, lost in the semifinals to Plymouth Salem.

"With this playoff format, it was like a second season," North coach Tom Negoshian said. "Usually, the only second season you get is the district tournament."

"But now we have a third season coming up. We're going to show up as the underdog and play as hard as we can for as long as we can."

That was the attitude Negoshian and his team carried into the league tourney and it was successful. Now the Raiders will try to make it work for a fifth straight game.

Dan O'Meara

Shamrocks unstoppable in team tourney

By Bill Parker
staff writer

To say Mike Rodriguez was confident his team would win the inaugural MHSAA Team Dual Wrestling Championship, is like saying Rodney Dangerfield gets no respect. A fact, is a fact.

Rodriguez was so confident of his team's success he had new coaching shirts printed up. Along the bottom of the front pocket of these shirts was a list of the years in which the Shamrocks have captured state titles — 1969, '70, '71, '74, '78, '83 and '88.

Walt a minute. Why '88? The finals took place Friday and Saturday at Kellogg Center Arena in Battle Creek. The shirts were printed up three weeks ago.

"I was pretty confident we'd win it," said a grinning Rodriguez, after his top-ranked Shamrocks crushed eighth-ranked Hazel Park, 49-20, in the finals. "This team is a great team, a dream team, a once-in-a-lifetime team. This is the best balanced team I've ever had, by far. We haven't had a close match all year. These are dedicated people."

AND PRIOR to the finals, how did Rodriguez face the opposing coaches wearing a shirt proclaiming the Shamrocks as the '88 champs?

"I kept the '88 covered with a piece of tape," he said.

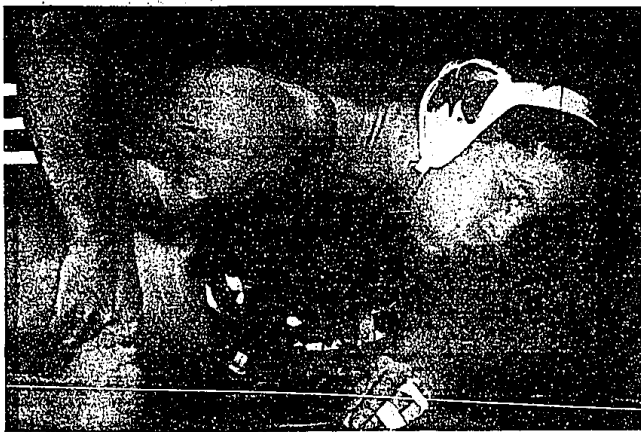
But Saturday night Rodriguez ripped the tape off as the Shamrocks ended a perfect 20-0 dual-meet season.

"They're a very fine team," admitted Hazel Park coach Frank Stagg, whose Vikings finished the season with a 24-4 record. "They deserve to be the state champs. They're the best team in the state."

Chris Lemanski of Catholic Central (top) pinned Hazel Park's Jason Guthrie in 3:48 to clinch the state championship for the Shamrocks in the first team wrestling tournament. Catholic Central, 20-0 in dual meets, whipped the Vikings 49-10 and Grandville 36-15 in the semifinals in which Lemanski won by decision.

In Saturday's final Hazel Park drew first blood when Terry Baughman (45-7-1) earned a 10-3 decision over CC's Kevin Rowe (30-17). The Vikings gained momentum during the 105-pound match as Dennis Parks (35-11) jumped out to a 6-2 lead over CC's Jim Raglow (25-14), late in the second period.

But Hazel Park's chance of an upset was dealt a severe blow when Parks jammed his head into the mat with 42 seconds remaining in the second period and was unable to con-



STEVE FECHT/staff photographer

sume the match. Raglow was awarded an injury default victory and the Shamrocks took a 6-3 lead. CC never trailed after that.

"THAT INJURY at 105 was a big disappointment," said Stagg. "We just hope it's nothing serious. We knew our lighter weights had to come through. When that happened it took the wind out of our sail. Not to say winning match would have changed the outcome, but it would have kept our momentum going."

Mike Gentile (45-6-3) gave CC a 9-3 lead with a 2-1 victory over Jamie Masby (46-3) in the 112-pound match. Trailing 1-0, Gentile scored the winning points on a take down with 0:54 remaining in the match.

CC's Jay Helm (40-7) stuck Mike Hoelt (35-11-2) in 3:01 of the 119-pound match and brother Matt Helm (48-3) followed with an 11-2 major decision at 126 pounds over Willie Duncan (30-14), giving the Shamrocks a 19-3 lead.

DAVE ROCHE (40-8) picked up Hazel Park's only other victory of the night when he earned a 17-5 superior decision over Scott Christian. CC's Brendan Rock (34-6) earned a 15-7 major decision over Mark Craddock (25-14-3) in the battle at 138 pounds and Chris Rodriguez (41-4) pitched a 4-0 shutout against Frank Stout (18-15) at 145 pounds.

Redford CC jumped ahead, 29-8, after Brian Tulley (22-19) surprised Neil Sell (35-15-3) with an 8-2 decision at 155 pounds.

Mathematically, the Vikings still had a chance with four bouts remaining and the possibility of scoring 24 points. But the chance of doing that against CC were about as good as Eddie (The Eagle) Edwards' chances of winning an Olympic ski jump medal.

Chris Lemanski (29-4-1) clinched the championship for the Shamrocks when he pinned Jason Guthrie (6-1) in 3:48 of their match at 167. CC's Ted Rieple (45-10) and Mike Thomas (39-9-1) wrestled to a 7-7 tie before the Shamrocks turned out the lights.

CC'S LEE KRUEGER (52-2-1), this year's individual state champion at 198 pounds, wasted little time in his match, disposing of Clayton Smith (15-22) in 1:07. Heavyweight Toby Heaton, two-time defending individual state champion, closed out his high school wrestling career in high style recording a 15-0 technical fall over Brian Walter.

"I had the nervousness all day," admitted Rodriguez. "After 31 years in this sport I still get the same nervousness and the same high. This was a little redemption after last year," he added in reference to the Shamrocks third-place finish in 1987 after being ranked first throughout most of the year.

CC also gained a little redemption in the semifinals, knocking off Grandville, 36-15.

"Grandville won the Lansing Eastern tournament by one point," said Rodriguez. "That match was a lot of payback. They have a really good team. We knew Grandville was the toughest of the three teams (Grandville, Hazel Park and Mount Pleasant). We felt like that match was the final."