

Raiders foiled in upset bid

By Don O'Moore
Staff writer

Plymouth Salem clinched a share of the Lakes Division girls basketball title Thursday night, but not without a scare from upset-minded North Farmington.

The visiting Raiders put Salem to the test before the Rocks squeezed ahead in the final minute for a 56-54 victory.

Lydia White's rebound basket with 40 seconds remaining broke a 52-52 tie and tipped the outcome in Salem's favor, but it was a game that could have turned either way until then.

North, enjoying a successful season, had lost by 10 to the Rocks earlier but was ready to challenge the perennial Western Lakes Activities Association power this time.

"The kids played their hearts out," Raiders coach Greg Capling said. "They gotta believe they can beat anybody now."

"I TOLD THEM 'Be proud of your effort, but don't be happy with the fact we came close.'"

The Rocks overcame North's threat to take a three-game lead in the division with three games to play. Salem is 7-0 in the Lakes and 10-2 overall. The second-place Raiders are 4-3 and 8-4.

"To be challenged down to the wire was good for our team," Rocks coach Fred Thomann said.

"It's a good reminder that just because you're ahead doesn't mean you're going to win."

The Rocks stretched their lead to eight points — 45-37 and 51-43 — late in the third quarter and again early in the fourth, but North had enough in reserve to stage a late rally.

"The fact we couldn't put North away when he had them spread out in some of our team's best faced in a while," said Thomann, whose team now has won eight straight.

Sophomore Eve Clear, who scored 17 points to lead the Raiders, sank a layup and a jumper to bring North with four, 51-47, with more than three minutes left.

WENDY BAILEY's free throw gave Salem a five-point lead, but Kim Gurecki offset that with a 3-point basket that pulled North within two with 2:19 on the clock.

The Raiders added by the Rocks, Gurecki sank the tying layup at 1:04 in the finale, but White was well positioned to rebound Bailey's shot a few seconds later.

"We tried a back-door play and Debbie (Weintraub) was open, but the pass was a little bit off," said Capling of North's next opportunity. "Otherwise, it would still have been tied."

Senior guard Jill Estey, who scored a game-high 18 points, added two free throws to give Salem a four-point cushion before Gurecki put a final shot off the glass with a second left.

In addition to Estey, Sarah Ruete provided a lot of help, matching her career high with 16 points as the Rocks stretched their latest victory largely with their outside shooting. Salem had a 26-16 margin in field goals made.

"They were really collapsing down in their zone on our post players," Thomann said, "and it was really up to our perimeter players to carry the ball a little bit."

NORTH'S QUICKNESS gave the Rocks problems and helped keep the Raiders in the game, but Salem's perimeter shooting was the thing Capling feared.

"We came in here expecting to win the game," he said. "I told (the North players) if we could make Salem shoot poorly from the outside we could win the game. Estey shot a little better than I thought she would."

The Raiders added by the Rocks, Gurecki scored the game's next eight points and never again trailed, posting a 72-60.

"That's the first time I've ever seen that," said Farmington coach Diana Fair of the fight between two female players. "It was real bad for us. Kirsten had scored 12 points (Bell had four). It was the best game she's played all year. We really missed her."

Central was 4-2 in the Lakes Division of the Western Lakes Activities Association entering the game; Farmington was 1-6. But while the Vikings may have been heavy favorites, after the opening minutes the game was a tossup. Central scored the game's first nine points and led 21-10 after one quarter.

The Falcons trimmed that deficit to nine at the half (38-29), then outscored Central 11-2 in the first five minutes of the third quarter to tie it.

"I thought we played an outstanding game," said Fair, whose team is now 2-10 overall, 1-7 in the Lakes. "Points cost us the game, that and Kirsten getting thrown out. She was having an outstanding game."

Three other Falcon starters fouled out and two others had four personals by game's end. Central took 43 free throws to Farmington's 25, but made just 19 (the



BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Eve Clear scored 17 points for the Raiders in North Farmington's near upset of perennial basketball power Salem, 56-54.

Farmington girls near title

Farmington took a big leap forward in its quest for the Lakes Division girls cross country championship Thursday.

The Falcons defeated one of their main challengers, Livonia Stevenson, to all but lock up the title with one meet remaining, 24-35.

Farmington, 4-0 in the Lakes and 7-0 overall, concludes its dual-meet schedule Thursday when it entertains Plymouth Salem at Oakland Community College. The Spartans are 3-1 in the division.

"This was our big test," coach John Barrett said. "They had beaten us at Schoolcraft, so it felt good to be able to come back."

"This is what we thought we would have to do to get the division title."

Jennifer Kiel paced the Falcons once again with a 19:39 time at Cass Denison Park, taking top individual honors.

Stevenson got the next two places, but Farmington's depth made the difference.

"We didn't talk about times," Barrett said. "We staked out the opponent, and each one had a girl they had to beat. And we had good times, too."

Jenny Derwinski was fourth (21:17), Allison Davis fifth (21:19), Sheri Villalobos sixth (21:45) and Maureen O'Dell eighth (22:07). The Falcons also got some blocking help from Carrie Walter, who was ninth at 22:08, and Amy Trunk, who was 10th at 22:22.

Davis and Villalobos ran their best times in the Lakes Division dual meets Thursday, with a 24:37 victory over Walled Lake Central.

The Raiders, 1-3 in the division and 5-3 overall, put runners in six of the top eight places at Oakland Community College.

Central's Colleen Vohn was the race winner, running 19:11 and breaking the course record of 19:51 set a week earlier by North's Lisa Rives, who was second in 20:24.

Donna Shulte gave the Vikings third place (21:11), but the next five spots belonged to the Raiders. Angie Martin was fourth in 22:20 and followed by Lisa Al- sizer (23:15), Tracy Mitchell (23:28), Kara Higley (23:38) and Adrienne Mocello (24:05).

Sheri Howard of Central finished ninth (24:19), and the Vikings had to settle for 11th and 12th for their last two places. North's Sonia Singh was the No. 10 runner at 22:52.

"The girls have really been working hard, and they're starting to see some of their efforts pay off," Raiders coach Bill Pinnell said. "We've had some close meets with Salem, Farmington and Stevenson, and we're getting some of the victories now."

North was 11th out of 36 teams in the Oakland County meet on Saturday, Oct. 8, and Rives was fourth overall at 19:17.

"That was our best finish there in years," Pinnell said. "We had five girls, including Lisa, who were 43 seconds apart."

PLYMOUTH CANTON, minus one of its top runners, still had plenty of team strength to defeat Farmington Harrison 15-48 in girls cross country Thursday.

The Chiefs, 4-0 in the Western Division and 5-0 overall, didn't have Cindy Speas, who was sidelined with a sore ankle, in the lineup but still captured the top six places.

Lori Penland paced the Canton victory once again, winning the meet in 20:33 at Oakland Community College.

Lynda Schendel, recovered from a sprained ankle suffered in the dual meet with Northville on Thursday, Oct. 6, was second at 20:57.

Cathy McCabe was a close third at 21:05, and Kris Marquard and Missy Jankowski finished fourth and fifth, respectively, in 21:30 and 21:33.

Harrison's Jeannie Klotzer (22:40) and Tracy Delbuso (22:45) prevented a shut-out by taking seventh and eighth places. Alyssa Ismail was 10th (23:41), Joanne Hannawa 11th (25:13) and Maria Chalig- anis 12th (25:27).

Second-half surge carries Vikings to 72-60 victory

The turning point of Farmington's girls basketball game against visiting Walled Lake Central Thursday came after the whistle had blown to stop play.

The Vikings' Heather Bell was called for fouling Farmington's Kirsten Norman with 2:53 left in the third quarter and the score stood at 40. Bell followed her foul by swinging at Norman, who retaliated. The two girls were separated. Bell was assessed the personal foul, then both were ejected for fighting.

How much of a difference did it make? Central scored the game's next eight points and never again trailed, posting a 72-60.

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Falcons hit 16). Jennifer McGloach's 14 points paced Farmington. Karri Finlayson had 10. Tonia Smith collected 18 points and grabbed 22 rebounds for Central. Karyn Kosloski got 17 points, Dianna Mosley had 12 and Kelly O'Hanlon netted 11.

H.W. REGINA 39, MERCY 25: The chances were there for Farmington Hills Mercy. But the Marlins missed them.

What they missed was the basket. Mercy made just nine-of-47 floor shots (19 percent), including an 0-for-17 third quarter in which the Marlins were outscored 10-2.

"It was absolutely exasperating," said Marina coach Larry Baker, whose team dipped to 3-3 in the Catholic League's Central Division, 3-9 overall. "It was a frustration that snowballed. We had three or four shots on some possessions without making them."

The frustration didn't end there for Mercy. Regina sharpshooter Polly Williams was effectively silenced by Marlin defenders when the Saddletails were in their half-court offense. Yet she still scored 20 points, thanks to sloppy Mercy ballhandling that led to some easy buckets.

Williams, a 6-foot-1 center, also blocked eight shots, making Mercy's task that much more difficult. Pam Thompson accounted for more than half of Mercy's points, scoring 13. Joanne Stephens chimed in with eight.

Regina (3-3 in the division, 7-5 overall) led 11-6 after one quarter and 19-12 at the half before taking control with its 10-2 third period.

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