



Mike Gilmore
Farmington Hills

Local puck star in goal for MSU

Farmington Hills resident Mike Gilmore, a member of the Michigan State University hockey team, will participate in the 24th Annual Great Lakes Invitational Thursday and Friday, Dec. 29-30, at Joe Louis Arena.

Gilmore, a second-year goalie, went to MSU after playing for Detroit Compuware, champion of the North American Junior Hockey League and the 1987 national runner-up. He is a graduate of Redford Catholic Central High School.

On the first night of GLI action, Michigan Tech plays the U-M at 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 29, and MSU meets North Dakota at 8 p.m. The consolation game will be played at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30, following the championship at 8 p.m.

Individual game-day tickets are priced at \$11, \$9.50 and \$8 and are available at the JLA box office and Ticketmaster outlets, including Hudson's and AAA locations. To charge tickets by phone using Mastercard or Visa, call 423-6866.

Sports shorts

SOCCER TRYOUTS

Girls with birth years from 1975 through 1978 who would like to play spring soccer for the Livonia Hawks, should contact Tom Coyne at 427-8236 or Paul Dugan at 478-0848. The players will be playing in the Little Caesars Premier Soccer League.

In addition, adults interested in applying for coaching positions should contact Dugan.

COACHES NEEDED

Mercy High School is looking for coaches in the following capacities and sports: varsity cheerleading, track assistant and skiing.

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Coach takes Marian from bottom to top

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Mary Lillie-Cicerone took over the Birmingham Marian girls basketball program in the fall of 1985. At the time, Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy was the defending Class A state champion, Livonia Ladywood was on its way to the Class B state championship, and the Mustangs were rolling around as Catholic League leaders.

How times have changed. Marian is the state's No. 1 team now. Mercy and Ladywood, simply, are looking up. This season proved to be the culmination of six years of progress under Lillie-Cicerone.

The Mustangs left Grand Rapids over the weekend with the coveted Class A state championship trophy. Marian defeated Detroit Murray Wright in an emotional state semifinal game Friday, 60-50, then bounced back a few hours later to capture the state crown with a rather easy 71-49 dismantling of a decent Flint Powers Catholic Central squad.

The season — which, besides the state title, included a school record 26 wins plus Catholic League, district and regional championships — was extremely gratifying for coach Lillie-Cicerone and the Mustang players.

"SIX YEARS ago we were in the gutter and now we're on top. It says a lot for our basketball program," said Lillie-Cicerone.

"You look back and say all this hard work and time is not wasted. You feel pretty good about yourself, and you're proud for our kids. They found a little success the past few years, and they just wanted to win more and more. Their hard work during the summer really paid off."

"But I know these young ladies (in the program) aren't going to come in with the attitude that hey, we have

girls basketball

to do this again," she said. "I think they'll see the success in it and the enjoyment of winning, and they'll just work on it in the summer. And then the program just builds and builds."

Lillie-Cicerone knew the Mustangs were on an upbeat course right from the first tip-off this year.

Even without graduated stars Kathy Phillips and Mary Rogers, Marian got past three of the state's most formidable foes in non-league action. The Mustangs fought past nemesis Saginaw, Class C powerhouse Detroit St. Martin de Porres and Plymouth Canton.

"We figured we would start off on a very tough road... either we get out together fast or we could go 0-3 to start the season," said Lillie-Cicerone. "After those first three games we had an indication of what we could do. We knew we beat three pretty strong teams."

The victories snowballed after that. Marian controlled through the Catholic League schedule, capturing the Catholic League title over eventual Class B state semifinalist Dearborn Divine Child.

MARIAN ROARED undefeated through its first 19 games, teetering on the brink of a perfect regular season. Then Detroit Murray Wright intervened. The Pilots, led by All-Stater Laurie Aaron, defeated Marian in the Operation Friendship by 10 points.

In retrospect, the loss turned out to be the best thing to happen to Marian all season. Lillie-Cicerone ad-

mitted the pressure of a perfect season was beginning to have an adverse effect on the Mustangs.

"I told the kids I blamed myself for that loss. I was putting too much pressure on them, and they were putting too much pressure on themselves," she said. "We were getting to the point where we were getting down on ourselves. We were trying to be perfect and not make mistakes."

"We had to regroup after that loss, start having fun and not worry about being No. 1," she said. "It was like a whole new attitude for us."

The Mustangs took that new attitude all the way to the state title.

Marian won its district with a pair of easy wins by a combined 86 points over Birmingham Seaholm and Bloomfield Hills Lahser. In the regional, the Mustangs knocked off Walpole Lake Western and defending state champion Detroit Cass Tech.

Then it was on to the quarterfinals where the Mustangs seasons have ended the past two years with losses to Saginaw. This time it was different. Marian stopped Livonia Ladywood for the third time this fall and advanced for the first time ever into the prestigious Final Four.

And they made that first trip a memorable experience. The Mustangs avenged their only defeat of the season against Murray Wright in the season finale and backed in the ecstasy of triumph over Powers on Saturday.

"I told the kids that we came this far, and we were going to win it all," said Lillie-Cicerone. "I told them that, but deep inside I felt even if we didn't win it still was a tremendous season for us."

"I was a little more relaxed up there (at the finals), and I think maybe that helped the kids to be more relaxed and show that they could do it. We were real low-key about the whole thing. We felt positive about it, and we were confident."

- Govan gets the alley-oop and lay-up (16-2).
- Boyle drives right for the lay-up (18-2).

Mustang's start wrecked Powers

By Marty Budner
staff writer

There's no doubt the turning point of Saturday's Class A state championship girls basketball game at Grand Valley State University was the opening five minutes.

Flint Powers Catholic Central ran into a Mustang buzzsaw and never recovered. Powers, a team noted for its tough defensive style, still may be reeling from the onslaught.

The Chargers scored the game's first basket right after the opening tip-off. It was all Marian after that.

The Mustangs scored the next 18 points. Powers did not score its next basket until the 3:06 mark of the quarter. Marian had assumed a 24-10 lead by the end of the first quarter and eventually won by 22 points, 71-49.

Marian shot a stizzling 64 percent (11-17), and its aggressive 1-3-1 zone defense caused 10 Powers turnovers in that opening quarter. The 18-point Marian streak included six points by Patty Boyle and four points each by Jennifer Shasky, Hazel Olden and Trina Govan.

Press-box workers seemed to have fun with the streak. Following is their description of each basket in the official press notes given to every reporter covering the game.

- Shasky hits the long jumper from the side (2-2).
- Olden grabs the rebound and puts it back (4-2).
- Govan, (makes basket, fouled, misses free throw, 6-2).
- TIME OUT POWERS.
- Boyle finds a seam, drives, pulls up, swishes (8-2).
- Boyle swishes again, this time from 18 feet (10-2).
- Shasky shoots the smooth jumper from 18 feet (12-2).
- Olden keeps the outside game alive (14-2).
- TIME OUT POWERS.

WHAT THEY SAID: Patty Boyle, Marian's senior guard, about winning the state title and the near-perfect first quarter shooting performance: "It was great watching the whole team play and get into it. Just knowing we were No. 1, the best team in the state and we could beat anyone we want to, that was a great feeling. We went out there and could see it in everyone's face. Everytime they took a shot you could see it in their face. Everyone was so high and it was so intense."

Kathy McGee, Flint Powers coach, on Marian's stunning 18-0 streak: "It was an outstanding shooting performance by Marian. They were hot. They moved the ball around so well and they just did an excellent job. When you dig yourself a hole like that in this tournament it's hard to get out."

Lorraine Kasper, Marian athletic director, on what the state title means to the Marian program: "It's absolutely the greatest. I think everybody always wants a state championship team and its great for the team, the student body and everybody who's involved in our school. (Coach) Mary's (Lillie-Cicerone) built the program and she's done a good job, plus the support we got from the faculty, the staff and the parents is really nice."

Virginia Lawrence, Murray Wright coach, after her team started taking 3-point shots with three minutes left and the Pilots down by four points: "Our hands were tied to a point. The kids got a little tight and there was nothing working for us in the fourth quarter."

Past OCC coach builds Madonna

By C.J. Riskak
staff writer

No one told Bob Whitlow it would be easy. And so far, it hasn't been. Whitlow was hired in July to resurrect Madonna College's men's basketball team. The former Oakland Community College assistant coach got to work immediately — and it's a good thing he did.

"I was lucky to get anyone in here," said Whitlow. When he took the job, Whitlow thought he would have three returnees to build around. That list shrunk to one — 6-foot-2 senior forward Brian Daniel.

Had Whitlow been unable to sign four freshmen and bring in a pair of transfers, the Crusaders would probably have had to postpone the season. As it is, they are not only very young but extremely limited.

There are only six players currently eligible, the overriding reason Madonna was 2-8 entering Tuesday's game at University of Michigan-Dearborn.

"We don't have the depth," said Whitlow. "The guys just die in the second half. That's what happened to us at Alma Saturday. Eight minutes into the game, we were up seven. But Alma used 11 players and kept shutting them in and out, and they just wore us down."

THE CRUSADERS were within a dozen points with five minutes remaining before Alma's depth ruined them. The final score was 107-78.

Fortunately for Madonna, there are changes coming. Following Saturday's home game against Buflon College, the Crusaders will be idle until Jan. 10. When they return to action, they'll have two new players who should make a major impact.

Anthony Strickland, a 6-3 junior, will slide into the starter's role at point guard, allowing 6-1 freshman Marcus Lowe (from Westland John Glenn) to move to forward. Also joining the team will be 5-11 junior Eric Campbell, who is expected to provide key minutes off the bench at guard.

Those additions — both players had to sit out 14 weeks, in accordance with the NCAA's rule regarding transfers — should make Madonna more competitive. And next year, Whitlow will have 6-4 forward Sam Smith to call on. Smith started for OCC the past two seasons, but lacked the grades to play for Madonna. He is redshirting this season.

With Daniel, 6-7 freshman forward Terrance Bell, 6-3 freshman forward Ron Griffin, and Smith, the Crusaders should be more formidable in the frontcourt.

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