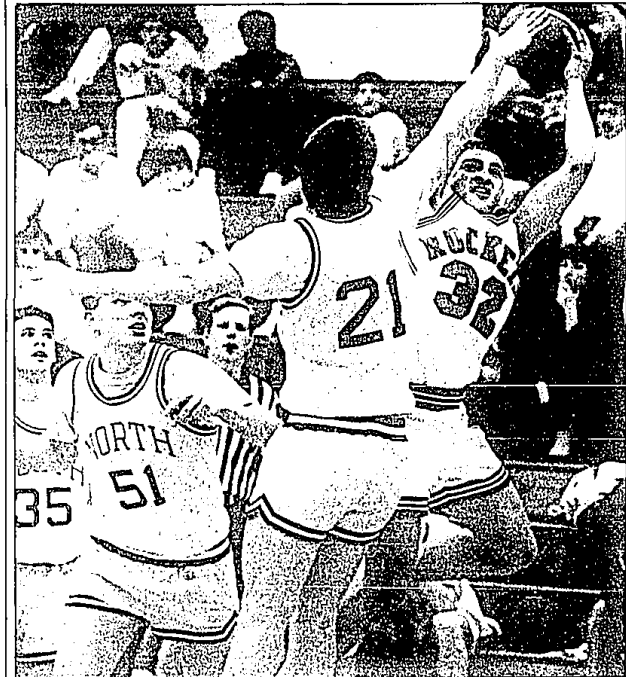


Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Defensive action

North Farmington's Chris White forces Bob Lawrence of Westland John Glenn to shoot an off-balance shot in a Lakes Division game Tuesday. The host Rockets scored a 63-55 victory over the Raiders. See story on Page 4D.

Hawks win share of Western crown

By Brad Emmons
Staff writer

Farmington Harrison's strong supporting cast won an Oscar on Tuesday.

Thanks to a deep bench, the Hawks gained a share of the Western Division title in the Western Lakes Activities Association with a 65-51 basketball victory at Livonia Churchill.

Both Harrison and Northville each finished 8-2 in the division. Northville also grabbed a piece of the crown with a 73-49 win Tuesday over Walled Lake Western.

"It was a 'team victory' for us, a lot of contributions," said Harrison coach Mike Teachman, whose team is 13-4 overall. "We accomplished the only worthwhile goal in our league because this is what we've been playing for so long the past two months. And I thought we overcame a lot of adversity doing it."

The Hawks, who have been without the services of starting point-guard Mill Coleman (fractured nose) the past two weeks, also lost No. 2 guard Todd Herremans late in the third quarter to what appeared to be a serious knee injury.

But the Hawks kept coming in droves, pulling away down the stretch for a 14-point win.

ANDY SMITH, the 6-foot-3 junior and team's leading scorer, paced the Hawks with a game-high 20 points.

"He's a tough, good player," said Churchill coach Fred Price. "He's a definite threat, either feeding or driving to the basket. You can't lay off him."

Reserve Paul Gilydis, a 6-6 sophomore, scored 10 of his 14 points in

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— Mike Teachman
Harrison basketball coach

the second quarter as Harrison jumped out to a 32-24 halftime lead. Senior center Ron Karbowski added nine points and eight rebounds on the night.

But Teachman said several others did their part. "Andy Fitzpatrick comes in and plays defense, gets us some defensive boards and caused some fouls on them," said the Harrison coach. "And (Roy) Granger comes in (for Herremans) and his five of seven free throws down the stretch after going two for eight on Saturday (against Western). Steve Singleton comes in and hits a 'three.' And Gilydis getting 10 in the second quarter was big."

The Harrison coach said the bench has to be ready at all times.

"We tell our people that they're all going to play in the first half," he said. "Tonight our bench made a huge contribution."

MEANWHILE, Churchill's downfall was shooting — 20 of 62 from

the field (32 percent) and turnovers (24).

"We never got the car started," said Price, whose team fell to 4-5 in the division and 9-6 overall. "We weren't in rhythm. There was not that fire, that spark. It's been a week since we played a game and maybe that's a reason. We were just not in synch, not into the flow of things and so we struggled. I think this is the first game this season where we were not into it. I think every game we've played this season we have had the lead at least somewhere along the line."

Churchill took a 3-0 advantage, but Herremans answered with a three-pointer and Karbowski added two more. The Hawks never trailed thereafter.

Meanwhile, the Chargers were turning the ball over with regularity. "They were not forced errors, they were more or less self-imposed," Price said. "We did not make as good of choices as we have in the past."

Mike Juodawikis scored 12 points in a losing cause, while Randy Calcuterra and Kevin Hanigan added 10 each.

BOTH TEAMS will now focus on Friday's first-round matchups in the WLA playoffs. Eight of the league's 12 teams have qualified.

But with the seedings and pairings still up in the air, Harrison can savor its second straight divisional title at least for one day.

"Our next goal is to get to the final game (the WLA championship), but we know that will be tough," Teachman said.

North's Thompson eyes state title next

By Dan O'Meara
Staff writer

Four more victories will give Plymouth Salem wrestler Brian Burlison an undefeated season and make him a state champion.

That ultimate individual honor will be the goal of Burlison and eight other Observers wrestlers in the Class A finals Friday and Saturday.

Burlison (42-0) was one of two area champions Saturday in the regional tournament at Salem, North Farmington's Matt Thompson (30-3) claimed the 140-pound title, while Burlison vaulted at 189.

The top four in each weight class advance to the finals, which take place at the Kellogg Center in Battle Creek for the second year in a row. The Class B championships also will be decided at that site.

Observers' other qualifiers included Julian Sell (120), Steve Burlison (160) and Pete Israel (171) of Salem, Soren Murphy (112), Walled Lake Central; Lucian Van Cleave (135), North; Todd Hoffmeyer (152), Walled Lake Western; Jay Wheeler (160), Livonia Franklin; and Craig Kuban (171), Westland John Glenn. All are seniors except for Hoffmeyer, a junior.

ONLY NINE of the 10 will compete, however. Sell saw his season end prematurely when he suffered a dislocated elbow in practice Monday. Sell (38-7) was fourth in the regional.

"It's really, really unfortunate," Salem coach Ron Krueger said. "We're going to take him to the state. He'll get to see it all, but he'll always wonder how he would've done."

The others must ponder their fate for another day, too, but the Burlisons represent legitimate contenders for state championships. Steve is making his third consecutive trip to the finals, Brian his second.

The latter, who was 2-2 at state last year in the 171 bracket, scored two technical falls and a decision over Belleville's Jeff Komarom in the final Saturday.

"He had beaten 'em all, but he took it all seriously like he should," Krueger said. "He didn't want anything silly happening. He didn't have

wrestling

to pin anybody, so he wrestled smart and won the matches."

Should he get to the third round this weekend, Burlison will likely face either Ralph Amino of Warren Lincoln or Ian Hearn of Clio, who was runner-up at 189 last year. Hearn was 42-0 when he was upset by Holly's Stan Boyd in the championship bout, 2-1.

NO. 1-RATED Derek Green of Portage Northern and No. 3 Alan Hail of Flint Kearsley are in the opposite bracket. Hearn is rated second, Burlison fourth and Amino fifth.

(Amino and Hearn) have lost to the Kearsley kid and Brian beat him," Krueger said. "So we're in the ballpark."

Thompson is unranked and somewhat unknown at 140, but he's won district and regional titles since dropping from 145 for the tournaments.

"That's no surprise; he's just that good," North coach Dick Cook said, adding Thompson has been a steady performer for two years and only an overtime loss kept him from going to state last year.

"He's got the potential to win the whole thing," Cook said. "If he wrestles (like he did in the regional) this weekend, he just might."

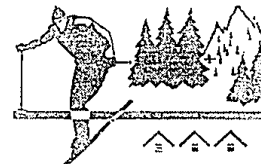
Thompson, however, will have to contend with defending champion and top-rated Jay Helm of Redford Catholic Central. But they're in opposite brackets and won't meet until the final.

"HE'S AN unranked kid, but we went through that with (heavyweight) Zalm Cummulai last year," Cook said. Cummulai finished third in the state.

"He hasn't had the recognition, but he's in that league (CC coach Mike) Rodriguez is real big on Helm — and he should be — but Thompson, on a good day, could give him a run for his money."

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