

Sports

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Harrison eager to meet expectations

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

Farmington Hills Harrison had a "Meet The Team" night Thursday, and it's fair to say that even coach Mike Teachman benefitted by it.

Due to the extended football season (what's new?) at Harrison and various injuries and illnesses, Teachman hasn't had a full complement of basketball players show up daily at practice.

"I was just talking to the parents tonight," Teachman said Thursday. "I have 12 kids on the team, and only once since practice started have we had all 12 at practice."

Sull, Teachman likes what he sees, starting at the top with the return of All-Observer first-team selection Andy Smith. The 6-foot-3 senior swingman averaged 16.5 points, eight rebounds and three assists, and he made 52 percent of his shots from the field.

Smith, who transferred from Waterford Kettering after his sophomore year, made an immediate impression. This year might be even more fun because teams won't be able to ignore Harrison's improving 6-7 junior center Paul Gilvudis and burlly senior forward Blazo Sarcevic.

"SMITH IS TAKING the ball to the hole better and is just starting to feel comfortable (after the late start due to football)," Teachman said. "The only part he needs to work on is getting open better without the ball, because teams are sitting for him. He's not unknown like he was last year."

The Hawks are coming off a 15-4 season a year ago. Harrison, which won the Western Division of the Western Lakes Activities Association, finished the season with a disappointing loss to Redford Thurston

basketball

In the first round of the Class B playoffs.

Three starters graduated, including forward Rob Karbowksi, now playing at Albion College. Among other casualties were the Hawks' top three guards in terms of playing minutes — Todd Hermans, Mill Coleman and Brian Ellison.

Teachman remains optimistic. Tradition shows the Hawks will again contend, considering they have never finished below first or second place in the division.

"You're always worried about graduation losses, especially when they're spear carriers — the guards," Teachman said. "We've got the stuff to make it. We just have to have people blend together and accept their roles."

The whole key to our team is how much improvement we make throughout the season. By the middle of the year, I could put all 12 in the game and I'll pick the best eight of that."

Starting at point guard will be 5-7 junior Dan Hight, who played on the JV a year ago. Teachman said Hight would have played on the varsity, but a preseason collarbone injury a year ago slowed his progress.

THE SHOOTING guard position will be filled by 6-2 senior Steve Singleton, who was a varsity reserve a year ago.

Hight missed a week of practice with a torn hamstring injury sustained during football but is coming along fine, Teachman said. "Danny is an outstanding point guard. He had an outstanding sum-

mer and is about 85 percent healthy now."

A key in the backcourt could be 5-8 junior Roy Granger, who missed three days of practice last week with the flu. Granger and juniors Nick Budor, Duane Anderson and Ben Pinsky will provide depth at the guard positions.

"I like to play three guards at a time and I can go to four," Teachman said. "Roy stepped up his game in football, and I think he can do that in basketball. He played big in all the big football games this year."

The Hawks' front line will be imposing, with Smith, Gilvudis and Sarcevic holding down positions and 6-4 junior Andy Fitzpatrick coming off the bench. Teachman said the Hawks won each time the 6-3, 230-pound Sarcevic scored and rebounded in double figures a year ago.

GILVUDIS was an all-division choice, averaging 10 points and seven rebounds a game despite starting only one. As for Fitzpatrick:

"When he was on, he was a real good player," Teachman said. "For a month and a half, he really played well. He's hungry this year."

Reserves on the frontline include 6-1 senior forward Drew Rick, who is "much improved," according to Teachman, and 6-1 junior Mike Pesci.

Harrison opens Tuesday at West Bloomfield, one of Oakland County's best teams.

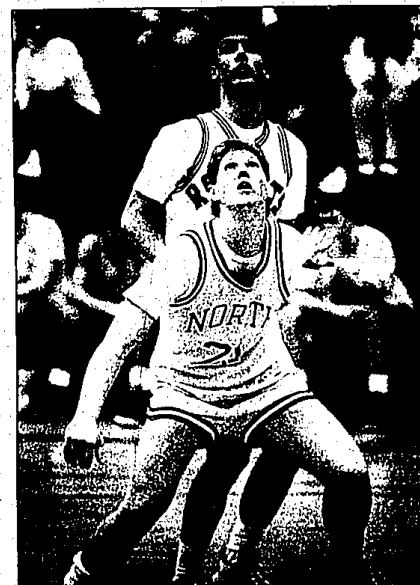
"They've got (Josh) Koby (who has signed with Eastern Michigan University), the Great China Wall with all their big people on the frontline, and (coach) Tim Donke's son is a great shooter," Teachman said. "Word is, they've been practicing 28-29 hours a day. They're working hard."



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Blazo Sarcevic battles former Farmington player Derek Mehraban for rebounding position last season. The 6-3 Sarcevic is one of

seven lettermen at Harrison and gives the Hawks size and muscle up front.



Chris White, blocking out against John Glenn's Jason Pizzuti, averaged nine points for the Raiders as a junior.

Raiders await early challenge

By Neal Zipser
staff writer

Most coaches with young, inexperienced teams fret about playing in a holiday tournament against teams expected to be playing in March, long after the regular season ends.

But not North Farmington boys basketball coach Tom Negoshian. He'll get an early indication of what to expect from his Raiders, who lost nine players to graduation last season.

North will play Dec. 27-28 in the Troy Christmas tournament, which includes Berkeley, Birmingham Seaholm, Detroit Southeastern, Troy and West Bloomfield.

"Troy is believed to have one of its best teams ever, and West Bloomfield is one of the best in the county," Negoshian said. "The other teams are very good, also."

"I FEEL fortunate that we are playing this level of competition as well as the level of competition in our league. There's no other way to look at it. But there's no doubt that it will be tough for us."

North was 13-11 overall and 6-4 in the Lakes Division of the Western Lakes Activities Association last season, and it won the district at Walled Lake Central before losing to the University of Detroit-Jesuit High School in the regional.

Come from last year's team is Matt Hoffman, who averaged 20 points per game and now plays at Lake Superior State College.

Six-foot-3 senior guard Chris

Ocelots finish 3rd

The Schoolcraft College women's basketball team settled for third place in its own Thanksgiving Invitational Tournament.

In the consolation game Saturday (Nov. 24), Schoolcraft defeated Jamestown, N.Y., 53-45.

The Lady Ocelots, who beat the New Yorkers 55-54 earlier this season, held on after opening up a 20-21 advantage at intermission.

Tricia Lucas, who made the All-tournament team, paced Schoolcraft with 13 points. Lee Anne Lightfoot and Julie Sawicki added 12 points apiece.

Lansing Community College won the championship on Saturday, routing Southwestern, 91-55.

Southwestern upended the Ocelots in the tourney opener (Nov. 23), 87-70.

After leading 45-38 at the halftime, Southwestern pulled away in the second period of play, connecting on six 3-pointers.

In other action last week, the Lady Ocelots used a 34-15 halftime lead to defeat Michigan College, 65-46.

Freshman center Nicole Dappich scored 12 points and sophomore guard Laurel Haener added 11 points for the winners.

Schoolcraft improved its record to 4-1 overall.

White and 6-foot-6 senior forward Bill Chwalik are the only starters returning. White averaged nine points per game as a junior.

North, which doesn't play with a true center, also has Mike Powers, a 6-4 senior, and Todd Pawlowski, a 6-4, 230-pound senior, at the forward positions.

Pawlowski, who just finished an

outstanding football season, is hobbled with turf-toe and an ankle injury. His status is day-to-day, but Negoshian believes he will be ready for the start of the season.

FIVE-FOOT-11 junior Jon Sluris returns at guard, joining him at that position are 5-10 junior Dean Penna and 6-1 junior Mark Temple. Tem-

ple's brother, Brian, now plays at Alma College.

"I'm looking at the returning players to make the impact," Negoshian said. "The job will be to mesh those players with the newcomers. It's hard to know if the returning players will carry the load or if they will let the new players get their feet wet."

"We don't have great size, but we have decent size — more size than we were used to having," the seventh-year coach added.

Negoshian is hoping all the players will get involved in the games because of the lack of a superstar.

"We don't have any one great player, so we'll have to show up and play hard every game," Negoshian said. "It will be important we get dispersed scoring."

"We have four seniors returning, so I think we are in good shape as far as leadership. Usually, someone will step to the forefront and, if no one does, then we will be in trouble."

NEGOSHIAN IS realistic about where his team will finish in the WLAA but doesn't rule out his team having an impact on the court and in the standings.

"I think there are two, three or four teams that stand out in the league, and the rest of us will be fighting to make the playoffs and trying to pull off an upset here and there," Negoshian said. "I would have to say that Plymouth Salem, Farmington Harrison and Livonia Churchill sit above us right now."

King crowns Salem with 60-38 defeat

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

A reporter asked Plymouth Salem basketball coach Fred Thomann to pinpoint the source of his team's trouble Friday night in a Class A girls semifinal game.

Thomann didn't have to ponder the question.

"Too much Markila," he said after watching Markita Robinson — the winner of this year's Miss Basketball award — lead Detroit Martin Luther King to a 60-38 victory at Battle Creek Central High School.

The 5-foot-10 senior scored 17 points and, perhaps more importantly, had 10 assists. Her pin-point passing was just as damaging, especially in the first half when the Crusaders (21-2) took control of the game.

Six-foot-3 center Gernette White was on the receiving end of Robinson's sharp passes

to the post, scoring 18 of her game-high 21 points before halftime.

"(ROBINSON) Did a great job splitting our defense and delivering the basketball at the basket for scores," Thomann said, "and their inside players did a great job catching and scoring."

"I think that's the best part of her game. Her ability to deliver the basketball with the move is the best I've seen in a long time in this state."

King's pressure defense was as much responsible for the one-sided outcome.

Trailing 13-10 in the first quarter, the Crusaders began to apply back-court pressure and threw Salem out of sync. The Rocks (22-4) had trouble getting the ball past half court and made 11 first-half turnovers after King turned up the heat.

The Crusaders began playing just a half-court game, falling back to their regular

girls basketball

zone defense. That was to Salem's liking as the Rocks showed an early flare and took a 13-10 lead behind the scoring of Yolanda Jackson, who led Salem with 13 points.

"That was the tempo and style we wanted to play at," Thomann said. "They entice you to play a little faster than you want and suddenly they come with the pressure."

ONCE THE Crusaders did, they scored the last eight points of the first quarter and the first 10 of the second for an 18-0 run that put King on top 28-13.

"He did the same against Regina and Murray Wright," said Thomann of King coach William Winfield. "He kind of lulls you

in. There's no pressure, no pressure, and all of a sudden there's pressure — and we got caught."

Winfield said he didn't use the press from the outset, because he had seen Salem use a good sideline play in those situations last summer and wanted to test the waters first.

"I decided to back off a little bit," he said. "If you've got a quick whistle, you have to back off, so we had to test the officials first anyway."

King got some transition baskets because of its press, but the Crusaders also were sound in the half-court game, once they got rolling.

White was a force in the first half, and Robinson hit an assortment of shots for 10 first-half points. Tiffany Mitchell and Tami-ka Rhodes, a pair of post-players, added eight and seven points, as well as rebounding strength.

"OFFENSIVELY, we took what they gave us," Winfield said. "I knew we could pack it inside. We wanted to take every shot in the paint."

"If we move the ball enough, somebody is going to get relaxed out there. The defense is going to break down and that's what happened."

The Crusaders were patient running their half-court offense, reversing the ball well and trying to pull Salem out of its zone. But abandoning the zone could have made the situation worse, according to Thomann.

"I didn't want to extend our defense any more, or it would be a 40-point game," he said. "I wanted to give our kids as much chance to be successful by compacting the defense. We had to hope they missed and we got the rebound."

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