

# St. Mary's takes OT victory

By C.J. Riskak  
staff writer

When you're on top, you've got to expect the bulls-eye. Every one of your opponents will take dead aim at you, with just one thought — victory, whatever the cost.

St. Mary's College men's basketball team should recognize such a simple reality. On Monday, the Eagles hosted Grand Rapids Baptist at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus (St. Mary's' Dem-browski Fieldhouse floor is under re-pair) in a game that, two weeks ago, loomed as a battle for first place in the NAIA District 23.

However, a lot has transpired since. The Comets were languishing in a three-game losing streak coming in Monday's match and, instead of a fight for first, were struggling for a playoff berth. So against the district leaders, they were willing to try anything — even resort to a slow-down strategy, trying to confuse St. Mary's high-scoring (102.83 points a game) offense.

"We knew what it almost worked. Almost. The Eagles, trailing by four with less than two minutes to play, stepped up their defensive intensity to tie it and force overtime, then posted the first nine points of the extra session to escape with a 76-69 victory.

"I REALLY didn't think they could beat us with that," marveled St. Mary's coach Glen Donahue of Baptist's slow-down offense. "But they almost did. I don't think they could have played it any better."

The difference, as Donahue noted, was St. Mary's defense. With points at a premium — the Eagles had managed just 23 in the first 18:40 of the second half — the Comets' four-point advantage seemed mighty big. But St. Mary's pressure forced five turnovers in the final two minutes of regulation and did not allow Baptist to score a point from the 2:23 mark until less than a minute remained in OT — a stretch of 6:24.

**FINAL WESTERN LAKES BASKETBALL SEEDINGS**  
(based on tiebreaker formats)

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| 1. Plymouth Salem      | 11-1 |
| 2. Plymouth Canton     | 8-3  |
| 3. Lyndon Stevenson    | 7-4  |
| 4. Farmington Harrison | 7-4  |
| 5. Northville          | 7-4  |
| 6. Livonia Churchill   | 6-5  |
| 7. Livonia Franklin    | 6-5  |
| 8. North Farmington    | 5-6  |

**FAILED TO QUALIFY**

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| 9. Walled Lake Western  | 4-7  |
| 10. Walled Lake Central | 2-9  |
| 11. Westland John Glenn | 2-9  |
| 12. Farmington          | 1-11 |

**FIRST-ROUND PAIRINGS**  
(Friday, Feb. 22)

|   |
|---|
| North Farmington at Ply. Salem, 7:30 p.m.   |
| Northville at Farmington, 7:30 p.m.         |
| Liv. Churchill at Liv. Stevenson, 7:30 p.m. |
| Liv. Franklin at Ply. Canton, 7:30 p.m.     |

**CONSOLATION BRACKET**  
(Friday, Feb. 22)

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|---|
| W. Western at Farmington, 7:30 p.m.       |
| Westland Green at W.L. Central, 7:30 p.m. |

**SECOND ROUND GAMES**  
(Tuesday, Feb. 26)

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| Sites to be determined |
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**CHAMPIONSHIP BRACKET**  
(Saturday, March 2 at Ply. Salem)

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**CONSOLATION ROUND-ROBIN**  
(Friday, March 1)

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## OCC tops Henry Ford

Oakland Community College is getting back to the form it displayed at the beginning of this basketball season.

The Raiders collected their 10th win in 14 Eastern Conference games Saturday with an 87-72 triumph over Henry Ford Community College at OCC.

OCC, which was without starters Rashe Reviere and Starlin Stevens for part of the season, was back at full strength against the Hawks. It showed — five Raiders reached double-figures in scoring, led by James Escoe's 20 points. Escoe got 12 of those in the second half, as OCC pulled away from a 42-37 halftime lead.

Reviere also netted 12 second-half points en route to a 16-point performance. Jerry Priekorn and Devin Bell each collected 13 points and 14 rebounds, and Ed Whitaker had 11 points and nine assists. Stevens also dished out nine assists, as OCC improved to 21-4 overall.

For Henry Ford (13-13 overall), 5-9 in the conference, Eric Volbert scored 16 and Jake Tuttle had 15. OCC had a commanding 42-28 rebounding edge.

The Raiders play at Macomb Community College Saturday.

"We came back and did enough defensive things to get us back in it," said Donahue. "I think we're capable of being a very good defensive team. We've talked about this before. For us to be a great team, we're going to have to play better defense."

The Comets certainly helped the Eagles down the stretch. They missed starting point guard Doug Muxlow, who suffered a broken wrist in the first St. Mary's-Baptist game Feb. 2.

"WE'RE JUST making turnovers in the late stages of the game," said Baptist coach Tom Martin. "We're getting there, but the kids getting us there can't hold onto (the ball) down the stretch."

Had the Comets been able to protect the ball, they could have celebrated all the way back to Grand Rapids. Then again, if the Eagles had been able to protect a lead — they were up 20-10 with 1:12 left in the first half, and had a 43-35 advantage with 15 minutes remaining in regulation — they would never have been in danger.

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James Gillespie pilfered Brad Richards' inbounds pass, giving St. Mary's possession once again. But Gillespie's three-pointer and Garth Hawkins' put-back both missed, necessitating overtime.

THE EXTRA session was never close. After a Bolden-basket, Howard and Suspek each hit a pair of free throws, Gillespie converted a fast-break layup and Suspek added another free throw before Baptist got its first point of OT — a Dunn free throw.

Gillespie paced the Eagles with 18 points. Bolden and Suspek added 10 apiece, and Howard had nine. Matt Miller and Marty Burgess led Baptist with 17 each; Dunn had 14 and Richards scored 11.

The win capped St. Mary's record at 10-1 in the district, 21-10 overall, with an important clash at Aquinas College (9-1 in the district) at 7:30 tonight. The winner will earn the homecourt advantage throughout the district playoffs.

Baptist, which had won eight straight before losing Muxlow to injury, has now lost four in a row and stands at 17-12 overall, 5-5 in the district.

LAST SATURDAY, St. Mary's rocketed to 71 first-half points and ended up blasting district foe Spring Arbor 131-92 at OCC's Highland Lakes campus.

Gillespie, who has already established a new school record for points in a season, put 32 in the books against Spring Arbor (4-24 overall, 1-9 in the district). He also had five assists. Howard added 24 points, Brian Koscielski collected 23 points and 11 rebounds, and Suspek netted 16 points.

The best news for the Eagles was the return of senior point guard Denny Butcher from a torn knee ligament suffered earlier this season. Butcher dashed out 11 assists. Fred Russell also made five steals.

Kris Graham scored 27 for Spring Arbor.

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## Hawks send 3 to state finals

The Western Lakes Activities Association will send 10 wrestlers to the Class A and B state championships this weekend in Battle Creek.

Final tournaments in both divisions will be conducted at the Kellogg Center starting Friday and concluding Saturday.

Farmington Hills Harrison has the most state qualifiers with three in Class B. David Prusinski, Gary Devine and Todd Lytwyniuk qualified at the Monroe Jefferson regional Saturday.

At the Class A regional at Plymouth Salem, Walled Lake Western and Northville qualified two apiece. Livonia Churchill, Westland John Glenn and Livonia Franklin will have one representative each at the state meet.

In the Jefferson finals, Devine lost another close decision (5-4) to Dellano Horne of Oak Park at 140 pounds. Devine was the regional runner-up.

PRUSINSKI defeated Robert Dych of Mount Clemens 7-2 to win the consolation title at 125, and Lytwyniuk was fourth at 189 after losing by pin (2:08) to Zack Kubit of Madison Heights.

Three state qualifiers is the most Harrison has had in quite a few years. Devine and Lytwyniuk are W.L.A.A. champions with 26-7 and 23-5 records, respectively. Prusinski is 18-10.

"Whoever wants it and peaks at the right time (will do well at the state finals)," Harrison coach Darrell Tharish said. "It's anybody's game from now on. Prior accomplishments or records don't mean anything. It's whoever has the best day."

"We've only had three all-stars in school history, and I feel we have a good chance to get a couple more this year."

Western's Andy Fritz was regional champion at 103 and Travis Ibraque was fourth at 145. North-

ville's Kevin Khashan was fourth at 130 and Brandon Mardosian second at 135.

Chris Brown of Churchill was third at 135, Mike Reeves of Glenn second at 152 and Bob Johnson of Franklin second at heavyweight. The top four in each weight class qualified for state.

SALEM HAD five regional qualifiers but none advanced to the state finals. John Moran (103), Scott Martin (112), Dan Bennett (119), Chad Wilson (125) and Jeff Shumate (135) competed. Each wrestler had to win at least two matches to qualify.

"It was as tough a regional as we've had in a long time," Salem coach Ron Krueger said. "I can't fault any of my kids. They did as well as they could. If anyone is to blame it's me. I guess I didn't teach them enough or work them hard enough."

"The only bright side is four of the five are coming back. I think I know the makeup of these boys, and I think they will be working harder next year."

Krueger will be more than a spectator at the state finals, however. His son, Jason, a sophomore at Redford Catholic Central, will compete at 160.

"I guess I'll just be a parent," Krueger said. "It doesn't make it any easier. I feel bad for the (Salem) kids. They wrestled well, they just didn't get out."

Canton's Liam Rentz (145) and George Young (171) won one match and lost two each at the regional. North Farmington's Marcus Brown (130) and Farmington's Brian Link (135), Chris Kresl (152) and Steve Walter (160) also competed Saturday.

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## Rockets edge Farmington cagers

Livonia Churchill clinched the sixth seed in the Friday's eight-team Western Lakes Activities Association basketball playoffs, capitalizing on a 23-16 second quarter run Tuesday en route to a 54-48 win over Farmington.

Churchill improved its overall record to 10-7. The Chargers finished 6-5 in the W.L.A.A. Farmington is 2-15 overall and 8-3 in the W.L.A.A.

The Chargers travel Friday to face No. 3 seed and city rival Stevenson. See Week Ahead on page 5D for playoff matchups.

Junior guard Brian D. Johnson spearheaded the Churchill victory with 15 points. Seniors Mike Thomas and Randy Calcaterra added nine points apiece. Calcaterra also grabbed 12 rebounds.

Junior forward Steve Gallagher led Farmington with 12 points and Jason Childress collected 10.

In a makeup game on Saturday, Churchill lost to host Plymouth Canton, 61-52.

Canton held a 35-16 halftime advantage, but the 6-foot-7 Calcaterra scored 12 of his game-high 24 points in a Churchill 22-8 third-quarter run to close the gap to 43-38.

The Chargers, however, couldn't get any closer down the stretch.

Scott Bowser added 10 points and Marcus Sarosky nine in a losing cause.

Derrik McDonald paced the winners with 18 points, won 10-7 overall and 8-3 in the W.L.A.A.

STEVENSON 66, FORDSON 65: In a non-leagueur on Tuesday, host Livonia Stevenson, thanks to a pair of three-pointers from Dave Amey, outscored Dearborn Fordson 19-11 in the final quarter to gain the victory.

Stevenson, which has won seven of its last eight games, improved to 12-5 overall and 8-3 in the W.L.A.A.

Stevenson took a lead in the final period and held on for the win, connecting on late free throws. Fordson never got a shot at the game-winner.

Matt Grotzki, Colin Stockton and Phil Woods scored 11 points each for Stevenson.

FORDSON was led by Wissam Darwish's 30 points. Amey Berni had 16 points and Hakim Abadi added 12.