

Sports

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'Up, up and away'

Andrea Salyer of Farmington focuses on a rising rebound that eludes the reach of opponent Myrah Shea in girls basketball

Tuesday, Livonia Franklin won the game. See story on Page 2B.

SHARON LAMUEUX/staff photographer

Ex-basketball coach might seek lawsuit

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Bob Kaump has retained legal counsel and is contemplating a lawsuit against the Farmington Public School District over his dismissal as varsity boys basketball coach at Farmington High.

Kaump, who coached at Farmington for 12 years — five as the varsity coach and seven as the JV coach — was fired after last season by principal James Myers and athletic director Ron Holland for reasons of supposed incompetence.

He subsequently followed the appeal procedure provided for coaches who also are members of the Farmington Education Association in their contract and was denied at each level.

Kaump, a teacher at Power Middle School, believes the evidence he was able to produce in the form of support letters and documents effectively refuted every reason the administration gave for his dismissal.

Having exhausted his appeals, (Kaump) "is looking into the law rather than go back to the administration," said lawyer Charles Lowther, who is exploring the possibility of a wrongful firing suit on behalf of Kaump.

"HE HASN'T authorized me to file a suit, although we have been working on it. If we do, it will probably be in pretty short order."

After being told his contract would not be renewed when he met with Myers and Holland following a 2-19 season, Kaump first appealed to Susan Zurvalce, director of employee relations for the school district.

"Bob exhausted the appeal process under the contract provided for him," she said. "We believe he received the appropriate due-process procedure, which has been negotiated for him in his contract."

The next and last appeal was made to Superintendent Michael Flanagan, who supported the decision by Myers and Holland to dismiss Kaump.

"We had reams of evidence and data from both perspectives," he said. "Both are employees of the district. I don't have a stake in the outcome. I judged this matter fairly based on the evidence brought to me. This decision took me a long time. I mulled it over for a week and even went back to people and followed up to some degree."

In a prepared statement given to the Observer after he was contacted for his comment, Kaump said:

"I FEEL I have been treated unfairly by the school district. Through teaching and 23 years of coaching, I have devoted my life to working with young people and have tried to instill a system of values and priorities in young athletes which I fear the school district has lost sight of."

"This has been an unjust firing. It is a fact that our win-loss record has not been good. However, a low win column is not reflective of the effort put into a program and, except at the college and professional levels, certainly not grounds for dismissal."

"During the appeal, the charges brought against me under the umbrella of incompetency were each disproved until there was nothing left substantial enough to warrant a dismissal. Nevertheless, the appeal was denied. The precedent this sets is really alarming. It says that if a coach isn't liked, for whatever reason, and enough pressure is brought to bear, he's gone! At the high school level, that's a frightening prospect for all coaches and a terrible lesson for young people."

"I am upset and angry over this entire situation, which is taking a serious toll on me, my private life and my professional career. I am also concerned about the impact this dismissal has on my reputation and I intensely resent the connotations it carries with it."

"As things stand now, if a courtroom is the only place where this case can be heard by impartial parties then, unfortunately, I guess that's where we'll end up."

Kaump also expressed his support for his friend Denny Mikel, the former North Farmington JV basketball coach who has been hired to replace him as coach of the Farmington varsity.

"DENNY is a super person and I wish him the best," he said. "I hope he will receive the administrative and parental support and assistance which is necessary for a successful program."

Asked if he would seek to have Kaump re-instated as the purpose of a suit even though another has been hired, Lowther said:

"That might take the decision out of our hands. We might be reluctant to ask a judge to get rid of somebody that already has been hired."

Lowther was not specific about what he might seek as compensation for Kaump in terms of a damage

claim. He added the 54-year-old Kaump could possibly coach 10 more years, and that would affect his pension based on years of service.

"A real concern of his is to get his name cleared," Lowther said. "He felt there was a certain stigma in the action that was taken. This has been very difficult for him."

Jim Miner, president of the FEA and a psychologist in the special education department, accompanied Kaump to his meetings with Zurvalce and (Flanagan) during the appeal process.

"IT IS MY belief that Bob Kaump is at least a competent coach and could be a great deal more," he said. "He puts a lot of effort toward his job, and he deserved a lot better than he got."

Miner indicated disciplinary problems with some players and parental complaints caused tension in the program last season and pressured the administration to remove Kaump.

Kaump was not the first choice for the job five years ago. The administration had planned to hire from outside the district, but Kaump filed a grievance as a member of the bargaining unit and was given the position.

"Bob struggled a great deal this year, because he didn't feel he had the support of the administration or parents," Miner said.

"Farmington High has had an active parent group for a long time, and it's becoming more vocal," he added that can help and also hurt a program. "It seems the parents may have been the first to voice their opinion, and this may have increased the problem."

Flanagan said he resented the contention the appeal procedure was not impartial but weighted in favor of the administrators.

"I'm the superintendent for the community," he said. "I don't work for the administration. I work for the school board and the community. I have no bias toward one employee group or another."

Flanagan added he thinks highly of Kaump as a classroom educator.

"Let me say this: He's a good teacher," he said. "It doesn't take away from that one bit. He's a very capable teacher at Power. As serving as it sounds, I think I'm a capable superintendent, but put me in another arena and I may be out of my league."

Mercy swimmers share county title with Groves

In the last two years, Farmington Hills Mercy has won and lost in the Oakland County girls swim championships based on the outcome of the 400-yard freestyle relay.

The final event again decided the meet Saturday, but this time there was a different result involving the Marlins — a tie.

Mercy and Birmingham Groves were declared county co-champions after the Falcons won the last relay (3:41.78) and pulled even with Mercy at 218 points apiece.

It was the second title in three years for Mercy, which finished second in the final event (3:44.61). The tie was the first in the 15-year history of the meet.

The Marlins finished third in the 400 freestyle two years ago, and that was enough to clinch first place in the meet, edging North Farmington by one point.

IT WENT THE opposite way last year as North finished second and Mercy third in the 400 freestyle, and the Raiders won the team championship by 1½ points over the second-place Marlins.

Mercy and Groves have state-ranked teams this year and showed why as nine swimmers and divers from each school placed in all the individual swimming, diving and relay events at Oakland University. (See statistical summary on Page 6B).

"I was thrilled how our swimmers and divers performed," Mercy coach Teri Eudy-Teeters said. "In a

close meet, you can point to our kids who placed in the top six to the ones who scored only a point or two and say the tie was due to a total team effort."

The meet, in which two records were broken, started fast as the Marlins' 200 medley relay of Jenny McCombs, Katie Knipper, Mandy Speer and Erika Smith posted a first-place, season-best time of 1:53.77, which was just shy of the 1984 record (1:53.41) held by Lahser.

Andrea Hoeftlein, Michelle Welch and Katie Scallan placed in the 200 freestyle. For Hoeftlein, it was her first state cut (2:01.13), good enough for fourth place.

Mandy Speer and McCombs placed third and 12th in the 200 individual medley. Speer had a state cut of 2:17.14, while Smith made the cut in the 50 freestyle with a third-place swim of 25.47.

FOLLOWING THE diving won by Lahser's Jenny Dixon with a record 491.25 points, the Marlins were down 17 points to Groves, 89-72. The Groves lead widened after the butterfly to 25 points despite Katie Knipper's state cut of 1:02.21 and Welch's 1:03.74.

"We knew we would be outscored early," Eudy-Teeters said. "Our plan was to keep close because we had an advantage in the latter events, particularly the back and breast events."

Smith and Amy Machacek finished second and 12th in

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Marlins, Raiders qualify for state championships

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington Hills Mercy and North Farmington are headed for the Class A championships in girls tennis while Farmington Hills Harrison just missed a third straight trip to the Class B finals.

Mercy and North were runners-up in their respective regional tournaments Saturday and advanced to the state event this weekend in Midland. The top two teams in each regional qualify for the next round.

Harrison was third in the Bloomfield Hills Kingswood regional behind the host and defending state champion Aardvarks and Bloomfield Hills Andover, which is competing in Class B this year because of an enrollment decrease.

Mercy had a regional winner in doubles competition and a pair of second-place finishes.

tennis

Jeanene Losala and Peggy Mueller won the No. 3 doubles title with a straight-set win over Katie Hurbis and Patty Kufchock of Birmingham Groves.

"THIRD DOUBLES impressed me, not just because they won but because they played good tennis all the way through," Mercy coach Jim Kerwin said. Freshman Kristan Kluska, who is 16-4 overall, was second at No. 3 singles, and the second doubles team of Karuna Mantena and Jackie Rajkovich also got to the finals.

The Marlins reached the semifinals at every flight, scoring 18 points to edge Southfield-Lathrup by one.

Catholic League champ Birmingham Marian was first with 22 points.

Meghan Leadbetter played No. 1 singles for Mercy, Suz Sarafa No. 2 and Julie Schaner No. 4. Marsha McFentyre and Nadine Nemes played first doubles.


"That each won two matches showed we had depth," Kerwin said, "because some schools were stronger in singles and some were stronger in doubles."

The Marlins will make their fifth trip to the state finals since 1984. They won regional titles in 1984, 1986 and 1988 and also were runners-up in 1989. Mercy's best finish at state was sixth place in 1985.

Kerwin expects the Marlins to be in the middle of the approximately 25 teams that will compete.

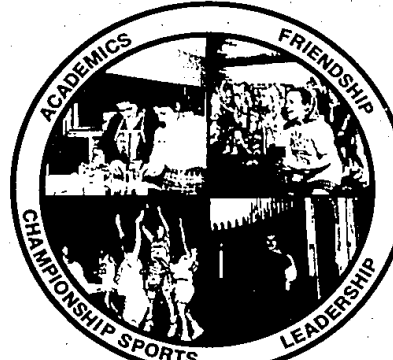
"IT SAY WE'RE about in that

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Marian High School

College Preparatory Catholic School
For Young Women



OPEN HOUSE

OCTOBER 27, 1991 1:00-3:00 p.m.

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