

Mercy opponent top-rated Pilots

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The last time Farmington Hills Mercy played Detroit Murray-Wright in girls basketball, the Marlins won by a point when Annette Ruggiero hit a buzzer shot in a 1994 regional final.

Mercy will gladly take another one-point victory Wednesday when it plays the top-ranked Pilots in a Class A quarterfinal game at Southfield High. Tipoff is at 7:30 p.m. The winner advances to the semifinals Friday in Battle Creek.

But the Marlins (16-8), who won their first regional championship since 1986, face a Murray-Wright team as formidable as the one they beat seven years ago.

The Pilots (18-1) won the Public School League title over defending state champ Martin Luther King, and playing Murray-Wright it was preparing for an all-star team, Mercy coach Larry Baker said.

Murray-Wright, which lost to King in the Class A final last year, has been helped by three transfer players.

CENTER KISA Bradley (6-4) and point guard Ayanna Winston (5-4) previously played at other FSL schools, and forward Eugenia Warren (5-8), who scored 35 points against Dearborn Fordson last week, is an import from Flint. Guard Tia Kemp (5-8) and forward Keisha Taylor (5-8) are the other starters.

"They're a real run-and-gun outfit," Baker said. "They apply tenacious full-court pressure and thrive on turnovers. With the exception of Bradley, they are small but extremely quick, and they have sudden moves to the basket."

Baker said he was encouraged by

girls basketball

the fact Livonia Franklin stayed in the game with the Pilots last week as all-star Dawn Warner scored a career-high 47 points.

"Murray-Wright doesn't put quite the premium on defense that we do," Baker said, "but those kind of athletes are interested in getting as many possessions as they can."

Baker believes the difficult schedule Mercy played has prepared it for such a challenge and the Marlins won't be intimidated because of those experiences.

"I've got a confident crew," Baker said. "They believe in the team concept, and it's been a joy to watch them jell together."

MERCY has been a rejuvenated team in post-season play, and the performance of senior point guard Kathleen Berrigan and a restructured lineup have figured prominently.

Berrigan, who averaged 8 1/2 points and 7 1/2 assists in the regular season, has taken her game up a level in four tournament games, scoring an average of 13 1/2 points and still increasing her assists to 8 1/2 per game.

"I think I finally realized I'm a senior," Berrigan said after scoring 20 points to help the Marlins beat rival Birmingham Marian 57-45 in a regional final last week. "(Baker) tells me to take charge, and part of taking charge is scoring."

After the team struggled in the Catholic League playoffs, Baker decided something had to be done to generate more scoring. His first

move was to coax Berrigan to be more assertive offensively. Her dribbling layups did big damage to to Marian.

"She has been a very dominant floor leader for us and has prevented us from entering any of the offensive slumps that were affecting us earlier in the season," Baker said. "It seems when the other team makes a run at us, Kathleen has been able to come up with a big play or find another hot player on the court."

Baker also put together a new starting five, partly by design but also out of necessity. In addition to senior regulars Laura DeMatia, Mary Bieniewicz and Berrigan, senior wing Natalie Cichonaki and freshman post Julie Angell have helped Mercy to start faster offensively.

WHEN DANA Wade and Valire Jones went down with sprained ankles, Baker was forced to use the 6-foot Angell sooner than he planned. When senior Katie Heffernan got the flu late in the season, Cichonaki stepped forward. Wade, Jones and Heffernan have recovered, and all contributed to Mercy winning the regional.

"Injury and illness were as much a factor in juggling people around," Baker said. "It was not initially a matter of strategy only. Fate and circumstances had a hand to play in that, too."

After Angell scored 19 points and had six rebounds against Marian,

Baker said he was "awful glad I went with a freshman. I knew we would need scoring and she certainly gave us that."

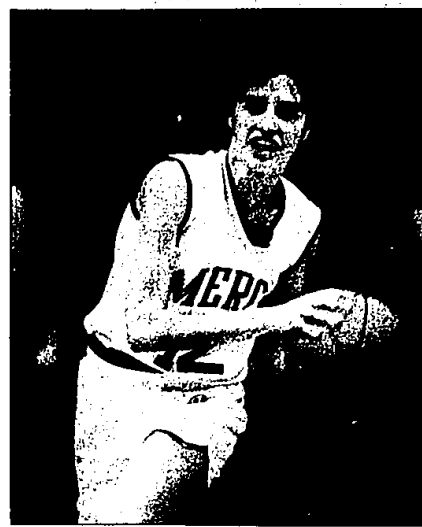
She has started the last six games, averages six points and relieves the double-team pressure on DeMatia in the post. DeMatia has been a consistent player, scoring in double figures in all but two games. She averages 15 points and almost nine rebounds.

Bieniewicz scores 9 1/2 points and gets seven rebounds per game, and Cichonaki, who has started the last six games, "plays error-free basketball and gives us a three-point shooting threat," Baker said.

The Marlins will count on the experience and savvy provided by the four senior starters to help Mercy weather some tough game situations Wednesday, according to Baker.

"OUR STRATEGY points to defense, rebounding and maintaining a tempo we can play at," he said. Baker wants the Marlins to have the same play-to-win attitude they showed in the regional final. Mercy was down 30-28 in the third quarter but scored the last 10 points and won going away in the fourth.

"I told them afterward that in the third quarter I felt as proud of them as any team I've coached," Baker said, "because they made up their minds to go and win it. It was in their eyes, in their demeanor, and they responded to a lot of pressure."



JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer

Natalie Cichonaki became a starter for the Marlins six games ago.

The gift list for bowlers

HERE IT IS, the annual "Yuletide" wish list for the bowlers on Christmas gift lists.

Lots of nice new goodies to pick from this year, with a few hot new bowling balls on the market.

Columbia has just introduced the "Bud II" which is a two-piece urethane ball. A-1-F is showing the "Sumo," another rather expensive hunk of urethane. Faball Industries is showing the new "Purple Hammer," and "Patriot" is now available in this area from ASU.

I have tried the Bud II by Columbia, and this ball has a very strong finishing kick as it hits. All of these balls are priced in the \$135 range, so you can expect to pay about that in the local pro shops.

There are all kinds of accessory items available which can be anywhere from \$5 to \$50. Among these are wrist braces and supports, with a wide variety to select from.

A favorite among many top bowlers is the "Pro Release" by Moro Design. It is the most versatile, with a wide range of adjustments to meet the various lane conditions.

It is very well designed and comfortable to wear. I have tried it, it works!

There are many other wrist devices, such as the "Robby" a popular unit, less costly and quite effective in keeping the hand in proper position. These are available in pro shops and sporting goods stores.

A new pair of bowling shoes could be just the right gift, or how about a few stocking stuffers: towel, resin bag, a small wire brush to scuff the soles of the shoes.

Another idea - videotapes. There are quite a few good instructional tapes available now and are a worthwhile gift idea.

The pro shop can also sell you a gift certificate if you are still not sure of what to buy for your favorite bowler.

HONOR ROLL

Bel-Aire Lanes (Farmington): Tuesday Senior House League - Jeff Erard, 205-254/754, Mike Cimino, 255/735, Mark Able, 269/718, Steve Dunning, 284/497, Tony Camerella, 678, Fred Vitale, 688, Paul Koenig, 278/559, Willie Smith, 653, Glenn Libow, 256.
Reglers - Bill Ringrose, 226, Fred Ringrose, 246/649, Greg Hildinger, 221, Glenn Libow, 225/668, Gary Reguluski, 240-268-758/776, Greg Lepak, 209, Bruce Snyder, 244/644, Don Taylor, 215, Mark Hoggensbeck, 222/621, Tim Hettlinger, 267/652.
Early Birds - Nancy Krues, 224.

10-pin alley

AI Harrison

St. Francis K of C - Carl Zortman, 238/843.

Salad Bowlers - Jackie Terski, 214/153, Kathy Moody, 209, Debbie Mathes, 225.

B'Nai B'rith Ben Lusk Traveling League - Phil Horowitz, 248, Allan Salomon, 239, Howie Gensbach, 228, Cy Hott, 233, Wayne Lusk, 233, Allan Oleinick, 230, Clem Baglierman, 229, Larry Schussel, 245, Mickey Arooff, 221.

Drakeshire Lanes (Farmington Hills): Tuesday Men's Junior House - Jeff Emert, 265/722, John Bryngelson, 685, Brian Heany, 689, Jerry Quinn, 279/687.

Cowboy Lanes (Farmington Hills): Ladies Classic - Jan Vanderwill, 345/722, Sherry Peithe, 217/695, Debbie Van Meter, 221/604.

Greenfield Mixed - Billy Franklin, 224/618, Phil Sonney, 222/650, Bill Funke, 256/682, Bob Merits, 225/616, Bobbie Gooding, 207/568, Tom Koebel, 254/692, Ryan Wilson, 279/681.

B'Nai B'rith Brotherhood Eddie Jacobson - Lyle Schaeffer, 267/647, Barry Fishman, 246/644, Ira Sapperstein, 233, Mark Rosen, 234, Dennis Horowitz, 234, Steve Anstading, 224/416, Alan Troutsky, 231, Dale Tash, 236, Bruce Webberman, 223/628.

Hedford Lanes: West Side Lutheran League - Pat Libka, 248/625, Scott Wiener, 611, Bill Bryant, 215/609.

Woodland Lanes (Livonia): Senior House - Jeff Morris, 289/760, Berry Van Dyke, 690, Gary Krause, 658.

Ford Paris - Tom Cyril, 689.

Wooderlaid Lanes (Livonia): Family Affair - Tony Trump, 206, Judy Griffith, 282/129.

Motor City Eagles - Jim Molnar, 268/699, Tim Santileu, 255/841, Steve Womack, 234, Gino Peregine, 236, Bob Harris, 224.

Night Owls - Mark Call, 267/643, Carl Shinabarger, 266/638, Brian Smith, 233, Ed Sheldon, 236, Rod Florke, 237.

Lady & Ladies - Brian Heany, 267-268/736, Mike Wrubel, 267/687, Al Wilson, 235, Bill Bright, 257, Jim East, 234/631, Bob Battle, 235, Peggy Battle, 215/552.

No Names Mixed - Mike Doal, 248, Ken Gignac, 267/652, Debi Gignac, 212.

Youth Leagues - Mark Jaroh, 238/510.

Preps - Cindy Foreman, 188, Jeff Addington, 148.

Bananas - Jamie Goodell, 168.

Bumpers - Rebekah Frust, 117.

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