

# Charges mount against former area coach

BY DANIEL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A 16-year-old John Glenn High School athlete asked her basketball coach what she should do if she found out she was pregnant with his child, and he told her that "we would get that taken care of," according to transcripts of a tape-recorded conversation between the two.

The girl apparently isn't pregnant, prosecuting attorney Margaret Rylier said in court Friday, but the girl raised the issue during a phone call from the Wayne Police Department to fired John Glenn girls basketball coach Patrick Bennett, 33.

The issue of pregnancy aside, the girl and Bennett also talked about how she could explain losing her virginity, and Bennett told her to say she used a vibrator, Rylier said.

Graphic statements emerged Friday afternoon as Rylier and defense attorney Irving Tukul argued during a hearing on whether a \$50,000 cash bond — one that

has kept Bennett in jail — should be reduced. In the end, Wayne District Judge Carolyn Archbold didn't budge on the bond.

Tukul labeled as "a set-up" the March 6 phone conversation that was tape-recorded 12 days before Bennett was arraigned on charges of third-degree criminal sexual conduct and obstruction of justice.

Bennett, a 16-year coach and Kroger employee, faces a preliminary hearing set to begin today (Monday) in Wayne. His relationship with the girl began in October and occurred at a motel, police have said.

Bennett also faces an April 13 hearing in Westland District Court on identical charges, stemming from allegations he had sex with the girl in November while he was house-sitting for a Westland friend.

The girl told Bennett during the taped conversation that she didn't want him to go to jail, and authorities said Bennett urged the girl to lie and to refuse to cooperate with investigators.

"Do what you have to do," Bennett was quoted as telling the girl. When Bennett learned that he was being investigated, Rylier said, "it's clear that he had met with her and that he had coached her on what to do."

Those allegations eventually resulted in Bennett being charged with obstructing justice.

According to statements from the 35-page transcript, Bennett told the girl to tell authorities that she didn't want to go to court. He also urged her to get rid of love notes he sent to her, Rylier said.

Bennett's parents and other family members and supporters

sat in the courtroom Friday as Rylier and Tukul argued about the \$50,000 cash bond.

Tukul emphasized that Bennett is a lifelong Wayne resident who has no criminal history. If Bennett had intended to flee, Tukul said, he could have done so before his arrest.

Moreover, Tukul said the girl wouldn't be harassed by Bennett or his family.

"I have strictly informed Mr. Bennett and his parents . . . that I will not tolerate any approach to the complainant or a prosecution witness," he told Archbold.

But Rylier noted that Bennett's sister approached the girl outside of Westland District Court on Thursday, when Bennett appeared for a hearing that was postponed until April 13.

Rylier said the sister "screamed and yelled" at the girl

and told her, "See what you've done. . . It's all your fault."

Crying, the girl had to be escorted away by a Westland police sergeant, Rylier said.

Tukul conceded that the sister's actions were "improper."

Rylier also raised allegations that Bennett's parents had talked of giving the girl a newspaper article about a man who served 10 years in prison for a statutory rape he didn't commit.

Archbold, in refusing to change Bennett's bond, noted that an earlier warning to stay away from the girl "doesn't mean too much to these people."

Not-guilty pleas have been placed on record for Bennett, who could face a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison if convicted of third-degree criminal sexual conduct. He could face a five-year term if convicted of obstructing justice.

## Health counsel available

Sharon Tomaszewski of the Oakland County Health Division is available to counsel older adults regarding any health concerns or community services and family involvement.

This free service is offered at the Farmington Senior Center, 11 Mile Road east of Middlebelt, the first Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. until noon. For information, call 478-1830.

## INKWELL

Inkwell provides information about educational issues and on people in the Farmington area. Mail information to: Inkwell, Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335, or fax information to 477-9722. Please include a daytime phone number on your news release. Items will not be taken over the phone.

## ODYSSEY ROUNDUP

Four teams from Farmington will be going to the state Odyssey of the Mind competition April 6 at Central Michigan University. Four teams were honored with first- and second-place medals, and two teams were honored with third-place medals. One team received a special award for outstanding team spirit. Five teams received honorable mention for placing in the top six.

A combination team from Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Fabian, and Power middle schools is going to the state competition. Team members include Katie Matous, Nicole Bober, Arthur Panzer, Fawn O'Leary, and Kim D'Anna. The "Vaudeville" Division II team is coached by Pat and Dan Bober.

North Farmington's "Vaudeville" team, coached by Elizabeth Shubow includes Lauren Shubow, Jamie Miles, Katie Kwapis, Megan McConnell, Odele Ahmad, and Shafat Abilleah.

St. Fabian Elementary's "Scientific Safari" team coached by Jill and Bob Kozol includes Robert Kozol, Alan Allmen, Chrissy Baker, Becky DeBello, Greg Kozol, John DiGiovanni, and Catherine Audette.

Larkshire's "Time Traveler" team coached by Darlene and Kevin Sherry includes Samantha Sherry, Brendan Sherry, Jennifer Musick, Sara Kisten, and Chelsea Kesaling.

## NUMBERS CRUNCH

A team from Eagle Elementary scored 653 points out of 1,000 possible and answered 86 of 100 questions correctly to earn third place in the state at the 13th Elementary Knowledge Master Open academic contest March 21. Some 24,000 fifth- and sixth-graders from more than 1,600 schools participated. Members of the school's Great Auk team are Gull Barkay, Carrie Kiersten Cummings, Tom Eason, David Geiger, Chris Hammarford, Laura Naughton, Chris Rizard, Jeff Shumer, and Gabe Silvan. Kay Carlson is the teacher sponsor and Barbara Shumer is parent coach.

## RECENT SCHOLAR

Claire Walgend, a senior at Mercy High School, has been awarded a Regents Scholarship to the University of Michigan. Walgend was also one of 18 science students selected by Duke University to take part in a scientific field study program in Tropical Ecology. The group will do research with graduate level students in the tropical and cloud forests of Costa Rica for 10 days during Easter vacation. They are to study the animal and plant life in three different ecological zones — a mountain cloud forest, a dry tropical forest, and a wet tropical forest — to contrast the variety of life in each wilderness area. The research team is headed by Kathy Steiner, co-director of the Organization for Tropical Studies in Costa Rica, and Mark Towne, assistant director of the School for Field Studies.

## Hills man has 'heart of gold'

Botsford Continuing Health Center honored employee and Farmington Hills resident Grant Graham for 21 years of service with retirement luncheon.

Grant, an employee of the facility's housekeeping department, was praised by co-workers and management as a man with a "heart of gold" who was a great asset to the long-term care facility.

Botsford Continuing Health Center is a 179-bed nursing facility. In addition to providing long-term care, the facility provides hospice care, short-term respite care for families that need relief from daily caregiving activities, and a variety of support groups as part of its community outreach program.

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"At Botsford Commons, I own my home and have access to health care services."

Although a lot of my friends live down south, I wanted to be here, close to my family. One day, my son told me about the independent life-style at Botsford Commons in Farmington Hills. When he showed me the new homes in the beautiful, wooded setting, I had no problem deciding.

Because I grew up in a small town, the private, full-service community atmosphere really appealed to me. Everyone is so nice here—my neighbor can't wait until the coffee shop opens.

Being able to own my home, without paying an entrance fee, was very attractive to me. All of the condominiums and apartments are designed with special features, such as an emergency call service, for continued independence. At Botsford Commons, my lawn maintenance and snow removal are taken care of. And I can choose to purchase additional amenities, including health care services, when needed.

I don't think I could have found a nicer place. My grandchildren love to visit too.

Reaching out to the people of our community.

If you would like to take a tour of Botsford Commons, just call Mary at (810) 477-1646. Botsford Commons is located at 21350 Archwood Circle (Orchard Lake Rd. off of Folsom), Farmington Hills, MI 48336-4702. Botsford Commons is affiliated with Botsford General Hospital.



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