

Yellowjackets capture Class B title

**BY CHRIS MAYER
STAFF WRITER**

It took six years, but Detroit Country Day is again the home of a girls basketball state champion.

Coach Frank Orlando's Yellowjackets had the pleasure of hoisting the Class B trophy late Saturday night after a hard-fought 44-32 victory over Grand Rapids West Catholic at Battle Creek's Kellogg Arena. It was their first girls hoop title since 1989, when Orlando coached DCD to the Class C crown.

BASKETBALL

"The girls worked really hard this season," said Orlando, who coached Country Day's baseball team to a state title last June. "I'm just happy they got an opportunity to play in a state final and win a championship."

Fourth-ranked Country Day (24-2) pulled away in the second half and snapped West Catholic's 10-game winning streak. The Yellowjackets turned up the defensive pressure and turned to 6-foot-1 freshman center Jennifer Thomas.

The win was significant in two additional ways: Country Day became only the second school to win football and girls basketball championships in the same school year.

DCD's football team stopped Muskegon Orchard View 29-14 in the November Class B final, and the Yellowjackets won boys and girls basketball titles in the same calendar year a second time.

Thomas (nine rebounds) scored eight of her team-high 12 points in the fourth quarter as Country Day pounded the ball inside for crucial baskets and outscored the Falcons (24-2) 15-3.

"We have all the confidence in the world in every player on our team," said senior guard Katie

Kerr, who has committed to the University of Washington. "And Jennifer is a great player. We don't think of her as a freshman but as a player. When we got her the ball, she seemed to create something positive."

Country Day held West Catholic without a field goal for an 11:20 span of the first half en route to a 21-19 halftime lead. But the Falcons, who recorded their season-low point total and shot just 9-of-39 (23 percent) for the game, clawed back within 23-21 on a Sue Lyon free throw with 4:19 left in third quarter.

But Thomas' 10 points highlighted a 16-4 run, and her layup gave DCD a 38-25 advantage with 4:55 to go.

"Our guards kept looking inside and Jennifer gets great position," Orlando said. "She knew what offensive move to make to try and get into a good spot for a shot, and she reacted as a champion."

Kerr finished with 11 points and five assists and senior forward Kerry Duggan, headed to St. John's (N.Y.) University, had seven points and eight rebounds.

COUNTRY DAY 68, PAW PAW 44: An effective half-court trap ignited a 12-0 second-quarter run Friday at Kellogg Arena, and the Yellowjackets held top-ranked Paw Paw to a season-low 44 points.

But it was Paw Paw coach Rick Mitchell's post-game remarks to the media that raised some eyebrows. Mitchell lashed out at Country Day, because it's a private school and is not restricted by a school district like public schools are.

"We came out on this floor and gave it the best shot we had," Mitchell said. "But every year you read the paper and it's Country Day this in football, basketball this, and that."

"Boy, it's hell to get here in the finals, and every year you reach a team that's a private school that recruits all over and they get all the horses. You not using this as an excuse because (Country Day's) girls worked their butts off, but I'm just saying there's a lot of schools in this area that deserve things and the MISAA should take a good look at that."

Orlando was disappointed to hear of Mitchell's comments. "I'm not using this as an excuse because (Country Day's) girls worked their butts off, but I'm just saying there's a lot of schools in this area that deserve things and the MISAA should take a good look at that."

Country Day received a game-high 21 points from Thomas. Kerr added 15 points and senior guard Pam Bierenski had 13 points.

Lansing CC upsets Borgess in Class C

**BY STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER**

Years ago, Paul Cook probably never thought his 700th career high school coaching victory would come against a girls basketball team.

Certainly no one expected it to take place in the Class C state championship game against No. 1-ranked Redford Bishop Borgess Saturday.

Cook reached another personal milestone as Lansing Catholic Central pulled off the shocker of the girls tournament, defeating two-time defending champion Borgess 51-46.

Cook had 636 victories as a boys coach, winning the 1980 Class A state title while at Lansing Eastern. He retired in 1991 but couldn't resist returning as a girls coach in 1993 at Lansing CC.

"I was out a year and didn't have a lot to do, the job opened up and I went for it," said Cook, 68. "These girls are so special, I can't even begin to describe the feeling. This ranks right up there with the '80 state championship, the '87 upset of East Lansing and Art Bradstreet. Games you are never supposed to win."

The Spartans (25-3) shot 39 percent from the field (18-of-46) but were 4-of-17 at the free throw line, including 1-of-12 in the second half.

They missed their last 11 attempts, including two one-and-one attempts in the last 1:10. CC (26-1) finished 18-of-26 at the line, making eight straight during one stretch in the

fourth quarter.

"I'd say that was a big part of the outcome," Borgess coach Dave Mann said. "We shoot about 62 percent at the line as a team, and that's pretty poor considering the caliber of players we have."

CC senior center Havilah Cunningham scored 11 of her game-high 23 points in the first quarter and played the middle of the zone defense.

Senior guard Mazann Reese, named Miss Basketball six days earlier, was held to nine points on 4-of-16 shooting, including 1-of-10 on three-point attempts.

Senior guard LeZandra White led the Spartans with 16 points, including four three-pointers in six attempts. Borgess held a 33-30 edge in rebounds.

"We are a better team than anyone realized because we are such an outstanding defensive team," Cook said. "I felt we could defend them; I hoped we could rebound with them."

Borgess led 31-30 at halftime and 37-34 after three quarters. The Spartans went ahead 46-43 following a baseline shot by White with 1:41 left.

But Borgess missed consecutive front ends of one-and-one attempts, and CC made six straight free throws to go ahead 49-46 with 55.8 seconds left.

Reese's desperation three-point shot with 10.3 seconds left went in to apparently tie the score, but the whistle blew before she released the ball after being fouled behind the three-point arc.

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