

Semifinal loss sidelines Falcons

■ Plymouth Salem foiled a bid by Farmington High to reach the Western Lakes tournament final in boys basketball Tuesday, 67-41.

The first half was a struggle, for both Farmington and Plymouth Salem in a Western Lakes Activities Association basketball tournament semifinal Tuesday.

Salem, the host and WLAAs regular-season champion, led by seven as the third quarter started. And then well, it was over.

Just like that. If you looked away for a minute or two, if you let your mind wander through the day's events, or even if you stopped to concentrate on your popcorn for a short time, chances are you missed it.

The Rocks put it away that quickly. They scored the first 11 points of the second half to push their lead to 18, and the closest Farmington could come after that was a dozen.

The final was 67-41, which was an improvement for the Falcons over Salem's regular-season margin of victory — 35 points or 76-41.

The victory puts the Rocks (16-3) into the WLAAs tournament championship game Friday against Westland John Glenn, a 69-59 winner Tuesday over Walled Lake Central.

That game will be at 8 p.m. at Livonia Churchill, Farmington (12-7) plays Central in the consolation game 6 p.m. Friday at Churchill.

"In my opinion, Salem has a great team and we can't play with them," Farmington coach Denny Mikel said. "We tried some different things this time; we tried zone (defense), man-to-man; we tried to pressure the ball. They just had an answer for everything."

"When you're playing Salem, you can't afford many mistakes, because they'll take advantage of them."

Which, quite basically, is exactly what the Rocks did. The Falcons tried to keep Salem off balance by switching their defenses, and for a while it worked. The Rocks converted just 10 of 31 shots from the field in the first half (32 percent).

The problem was Farmington's shooting was even worse. The Falcons were a mere 7-of-28 from the floor in the first half (25 percent), which is why they trailed 24-17 at the break.

Trevor Gaines, Farmington's 6-foot-6 senior center, scored 15 of his team's 17 first-half points.

"Obviously, he's our go-to guy," Mikel said. "We don't have the balance Salem has. We need to have people step up. If they don't, we'll have trouble."

Which is where Farmington found itself to start the third quarter.

Salem's Matt Mair set the problems in motion for the Falcons; he converted a three-point play, then hit a three-pointer to score six straight points.

Blasin Patel followed with a basket; Andy Power nailed a triple and, with the half just 2 1/2 minutes old, Salem's lead had gone from seven to 18, 36-17.

"We're an explosive team," Salem coach Bob Brodie said. "It's just the way we are. Give Farmington credit; they did a lot of different things in the



League playoffs: Senior Ron Freeman handles the ball for Farmington in a Western Lakes tournament game Tuesday at Plymouth Salem. The Falcons stayed close for a half but lost, 67-41.

first half. But it's hard to run those trick defenses against teams that have a lot of weapons.

According to Brodie, Farmington tried to use a triangle-and-two combination defense, but the Rocks found the open man in the third quarter — first Mair, then Power.

They outscored the Falcons 22-10 in the stanza, hitting nine of 16 shots from the floor. Farmington, which did score six in a row to narrow the gap to 12, was 4-of-12 from the field.

Power, who totaled 20 points in the game, scored eight in the quarter and Patel had six. Patel and Mair finished

with 10 points apiece in the game. Gaines' 22 points led Farmington. Justin Milus added eight.

Friday's championship clash will provide Salem with a shot at revenge. John Glenn is the only WLAAs team to beat the Rocks this season, by a 56-50 margin Feb. 13.

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Under-10 boys No. 1

The under-10 Farmington boys soccer team won the second-season indoor championship at Total Soccer in Wixom with a convincing, 10-6 victory over the Michigan Wolves of Livonia.

The under-10 team utilized its technical skill to control the ball and finished the first half with a 7-2 lead. Jacob Gordon scored four goals for Farmington, which had scoring contributions from five other players. Alex Gentile accounted for two goals, Ben Bojic, Kevin Meil, Wilson Sarkis and Jeff Taxo one apiece.

Paul Shoemaker played a clutch game in goal for Farmington. The strong play on defense and the goals scored would not have occurred without the fine efforts of the remainder of the team, according to coach Andy Gordon.

The Farmington roster includes Chris Attallah, Gary Egan, Alessandro Chimento, Hiroki Ikeda, Roman Krivochenitor, Paul Shoemaker, Joey Vingelman and Tim Wasmer. Also coaching is Larry Vingelman.

OCC hoops update

Jessica Regentin, a freshman center on the women's basketball team, was named Oakland Community College Athlete of the Week for Feb. 22-23.

She scored 61 points and had 19 rebounds in two games last week as the Lady Raiders went 1-1 in the MCCAAs state tournament. She also had four assists, three blocks and two steals.

The 6-foot Regentin, who played high school basketball at Walled Lake Central, shot 60 percent from the field (21-of-42) and 82 percent from the free-throw line (9-of-11).

The Lady Raiders defeated Schoolcraft in the first round of the MCCAAs tournament but lost another close game to Macomb, 67-65.

OCC has lost three games to Macomb by a total of six points but could get another shot at the Lady Monarchs.

The Lady Raiders (15-13) played Lakeland in an NCAAs regional tournament game Wednesday, with the winner advancing to meet the Macomb-Alpena winner Thursday.

A victory would mark the first time since 1982 the OCC women advanced to the second round.

In the loss to Macomb Feb. 25, Regentin had 24 points and 10 rebounds. Jonakieta Sledge contributed 14 points, Karyn Kerr 13, Carrie May (seven rebounds) 12 and Mya Badger 10.

■ Three OCC men's basketball players received MCCAAs Eastern Conference honorable mentions: Glenn Gray (Detroit Henry Ford), Brad Burlingame (Walled Lake Central) and Willie Davis (Detroit Cooley) were so honored.

Learn To Check clinic

Suburban Hockey Schools will conduct its Learn To Check clinics throughout Michigan during the months of March and April.

The program is geared for squirt players moving up to pee wee in addition to current pee wee and bantam players who need instruction in the techniques of checking.

Clinics are scheduled for the Farmington Hills Ice Arena 7:30-9:30 p.m. Thursday, March 26; Lakeland Arena in Waterford 5:40-7:40 p.m. and 7:40-9:40 p.m. Tuesday, March 24; Adray Arena in Dearborn 6:30-8:30 p.m. Monday, March 23; and the Birmingham Ice Arena 8:30-10:30 p.m. Monday, March 16.

The cost for each clinic is \$40 per player. Call (248) 478-1600 for more information and to enroll.

League seeks teams

The Midwest Super League has team openings for the 1998 baseball season in the following divisions:

Mickey Mantle (15-16), one team opening; Sandy Koufax (13-14), two team openings; Pee Wee Reese (11-12), to be announced.

The MSL consists of eight teams in each division to ensure quality. While based in the Detroit area, teams originate from out-state Michigan and Canada as well.

Coaches interested in entering their teams should contact Dennis Patterson at (248) 848-9432 or via e-mail at MWSL1998@AOL.com

(Fax sports news to (734) 591-7279.)



Championship meet: Farmington Harrison senior Matt Walker was second in the breaststroke and sixth in the 50-yard freestyle.

Salem retains title; North 3rd in WLAAs

Transforming a league swim meet, from fast to super-speed, can be accomplished by a couple of individuals, really. They set a couple of new records while winning a few events and onlookers figure, "Wow, it must be a fast year."

At the Western Lakes Activities Association boys swim championships last Saturday at Plymouth Salem, some records were set. And it was considered a fast meet.

But the reasons go a bit deeper than a couple of rare individuals who happen to be tearing up the league.

"Our league always ranks as pretty fast," acknowledged Livonia Stevenson coach Doug Buckler. "But this was definitely a bit faster."

Getting such a proclamation from Buckler is no surprise. After all, his team is ranked among the state's top 10, a standing that's well-deserved. His Spartans swam extremely well Saturday, collecting four first-place finishes and setting one of the league's new records.

Getting such a proclamation from

Buckler after his team finished second by 74 points, however, does say a bit more.

"I think we swam fantastic," Buckler said without hesitation. "I'm proud of my whole team."

The Stevenson coach knew it would take a super-human effort, and a few slip-ups by Plymouth Salem, for the Spartans to unseat the defending WLAAs champs. And that didn't happen.

Stevenson swam extremely well. So did North Farmington, Plymouth Canton and Farmington Harrison, for that matter.

Problem was, Salem was equal to all challenges.

The Rocks racked up their sixth-straight league championship, scoring 504 points. Stevenson was next with 430, followed by North Farmington (360), Canton (351), Harrison (260), Northville (244), Farmington (200), Westland John Glenn (175), Livonia Franklin (158), Walled Lake (148) and Livonia Churchill (129).

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