

Basketball

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earlier game but was held to six Saturday.

"Warren Woodruff shut him down," Moore said. "He gets the tough defensive assignments."

"We know exactly what they had (this time). We knew what to expect, and we were ready."

West Bloomfield controlled the tempo and offensive flow, starting with Danny Wohl's drive to the basket off the opening tip.

Wohl sparked the Lakers to a 42-27 halftime lead, scoring 18 of his game-high 22 points in the first half.

"Danny Wohl had a tremendous game; he was great," Moore said, adding Wohl excelled on defense, too. "I looked in his eyes before the game, and I said, 'You're ready.'"

"It all starts on defense, and that kicked his offense into gear. He played a great floor game and an almost-perfect game on defense."

The Lakers also had 16 points from Kyle Brown, who came off the bench late in the first quarter to put his team back on a roll. He and Wohl had 31 of their team's 42 first-half points.

Farmington had climbed within two, 14-12, with seven straight points when Brown sank consecutive three-pointers in the final minute to put West Bloomfield's lead back at eight.

"That seemed to take some wind out of our sails," Falcons coach Denny Mikel said. "We were making a run and 'boom boom' the kid hits two threes, and we're right back where we were."

"I think, psychologically, that had a little effect on us."

The Lakers also controlled the middle with 6-foot-7 Jonathan Merritt, who had 11 of his 14 points in the second half, and 6-5 Jason Mercer.

Consequently, the smaller Falcons were ineffective in the paint and were forced to rely on their perimeter shooters. "Woodruff shut down Tillman, and they might have been a little intimidated with Merritt," Moore said. "I didn't see them trying to do anything inside."

The 18-6 Falcons, who tradi-

Coach-player era concludes for Mikel duo

By DAN O'MEARA
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Farmington High varsity basketball coach Denny Mikel described his emotions as bitter-sweet Saturday night when the season ended for the Falcons.

"A 72-54 loss to West Bloomfield in a district championship game also ended a four-year coaching relationship with his son, senior Matt Mikel."

"The younger Mikel was a starting guard on the varsity since he was a freshman. He was a two-time All-Western Lakes Activities Association player and one of the leading scorers in school history."

BASKETBALL

"It's been a real pleasure to be able to coach him the last four years," Denny Mikel said. "A lot of people weren't sure that would be a positive situation — son and dad together."

"I think he handled it well. He's just a team player. It was nice to be here but also bitter-sweet, losing the district and coaching your son for the last time."

"On the other hand, I'm glad I had the opportunity to coach my son. It will probably be the highlight of my coaching career."

"The season overall was a bit of a bittersweet experience for the Falcons, too. They won 16 of 22 games, which was second only to last year's 17 victories."

However, the only title Farmington won was the city championship, for the second year in a row.

The Falcons were runners-up in the WLA regular season, the district and a holiday tournament at Riverview Gabriel Richard. Furthermore, they were eliminated from the WLA tournament in the first round.

"We were city champs but didn't have anything else to show for the season," coach Mikel said. "I kinda feel like the kids didn't get their due, even though we had a good season."

Mikel said he hasn't yet decided if he will return to coach next season.

tionally play man-to-man defense, opted for a zone this time but eventually were forced to abandon it.

"We wanted to zone them and let Jon Merritt touch the ball, but they had pretty good outside shooting," Mikel said.

"The score got to a point we couldn't sit in the zone, and we went man-to-man. When we did that, they isolated Jon Merritt on us, and we had no answer for that."

Conversely, the Lakers, who played a zone in the January game, went man-to-man from the start Saturday.

"What happened the first time we went back into a zone, and they were holding the ball," Moore said. "We had to come out and control the boards. Jon Merritt was a force inside."

"One of our strong points has been rebounding, and they just dominated the boards," Mikel said. "We've been able to rebound and run our offense, and tonight we weren't able to do either one."

Matt Mikel scored all 16 of his team-high points, which included three triples, in the first half. Brad Baroni also made three triples in an 11-point effort. Farmington had just 16 points from its post players, and only six came in the first half.

"I never felt we got into an offensive sequence," coach Mikel said. "We were rushing shots; we weren't making the extra pass

and making them play defense. It was one shot, and that was the end of our offense."

"I'm sure (Tillman) was one guy they were keying on, and their game plan was to put pressure on Matt bringing the ball up the floor."

Farmington was within six, 28-20, midway in the second quarter when Wohl hit a three and two free throws and Brown a three to make West Bloomfield's lead 34-22.

The Lakers' lead quickly went from 15 points at halftime to 22 early in the third when Brown sank another three and Merritt scored twice on transition baskets following turnovers for a 49-27 score.

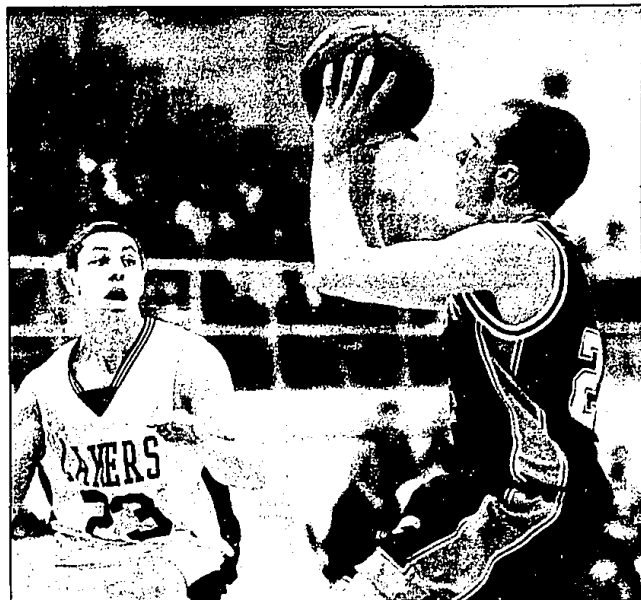
It was never close to being a ballgame after that.

"The first game was so early in the year," Mikel said. "I think it was the fifth game. A lot of things happened between now and then."

"We knew they were going to give us problems, and we were hoping somehow we could do some things we wanted to do. It didn't work out."

The Lakers shot nearly 60 percent for the game, hitting 26 of 42 shots. They made five of 11 three-point attempts and 17 of 26 free throws.

The Falcons made 34 percent (17-of-50) of their field goals, including seven of 14 threes. They were 13-of-21 at the line.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BUCKLEY

Taking aim at the hoop: Farmington's Layne Bodily prepares to attempt a three-point shot Saturday night while Danny Wohl of West Bloomfield looks on.

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