

## SPORTS ROUNDUP

## WHALES MAKE DEAL

The Plymouth Whalers completed another deal with the Saginaw Spirit, getting right wing Nick Vernelli for Plymouth's seventh-round draft choice this June.

"Nick brings a lot to our team," said Whalers' coach Mike Vellucci. "He is a very good penalty killer and has good speed. He will be a great role player for us."

The 6-foot-1, 198-pound Vernelli is in his third season in the OHL. He has two goals and three assists in 37 games this season; in his OHL career, he has 12 goals and 18 assists.

To make room for Vernelli, forward Gary Klapkowski was claimed off waivers by the Sudbury Wolves. Klapkowski, picked up in a trade with Kitchener last summer with Ryan Ramsay, had two goals and two assists this season.

## MERCY SOFTBALL CAMP

The Annual Mercy High School Softball Camp will take place 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, Jan. 18 and 25, Feb. 1 and 15 and March 1.

The camp is for girls in grades 5-12. The cost is \$50 for six sessions. For more information or to register call Sue Graves at (734) 981-5455.

## SPORT SHOW AT FORD FIELD

The 20th Annual Michigan Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will take place Jan. 29 to Feb. 2 at Ford Field in downtown Detroit. More than 300 trailerable boats from 60 manufacturers will blanket the playing field. The extra-wide concourse will house the largest exhibition of fishing tackle and boating accessories of any show in Michigan.

Kevin Van Dam, 2001 BassMaster Classic Champion and three-time B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year, will make a special appearance on Thursday, Jan. 29. New features include a live river otter show, an MSU Museum exhibition of ancient hunting and fishing boats, The "Reel Deal Fishing Tackle Giveaway Gameshow" with \$5,000 in prizes and a special Shipwreck Museum display from Whitefish Point.

## YOUTH LACROSSE SIGN-UP

Farmington Hills Recreation invites all interested seventh and eighth graders to join its new Middle School Lacrosse Travel League, which has separate leagues for boys and girls.

The emphasis is on learning the fundamentals of the game and promoting sportsmanship. Practices will take place two to four times a week starting in March. Games will be played in April and May.

Parents must provide transportation. The fee is \$100 per player for residents and \$105 for non-residents. The fee includes the cost of a team jersey, balls, field time and goals.

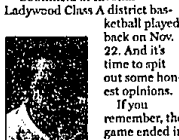
Registration continues through Jan. 27. Coaches are needed, too. For more information call the City of Farmington Hills Special Services Division at (248) 473-1600 or stop by the Costick Community Center on 11 Mile Road between Middlebelt and Inkster.

## MERCY NEEDS COACH

Mercy High School is looking for a varsity lacrosse coach. Anyone interested in the position should contact the athletic department at (248) 476-2836.

## Tape shows officials at fault in girls' tourney game

I've digested the tape of the final seconds of the Southfield at Livonia Ladywood Class A district basketball game played back on Nov. 22. And it's time to spit out some honest opinions.



Brad Emmons

the buzzer to give the host Blazers a 42-41 victory.

The headline in the Observer read: "Ladywood 'clocks' Southfield on buzzer-beater."

Ladywood coach Andrea Gorski was gracious enough to send me a copy of the tape, which included the entire final quarter of play. My account of the game's finish drew the ire of several readers. That's the reason I asked to see the tape. And, for accuracy's sake on my end, the tape reveals some interesting evidence. So let's set the scene once again to refresh your memory. With the score tied at 40-40, Southfield's Jammin Williams stepped to the free-throw line with 6.7 seconds left to shoot a pair of free throws. Williams made the first, giving the Blue Jays a 41-40 lead but missed the second. A scramble on the floor by players on both teams for the rebound ensued — resulting in a jump ball situation with 2.9 seconds left. The possession arrow pointed Ladywood's way, giving the Blazers possession of the ball on

a throw-in from the sideline — free-throw line extended — and three-quarters of the court from the Blazers' basket.

Ladywood's Ruth Sventickas, who inbounded the ball, hurled a pass down the sideline near the mid-court stripe where Southfield's Candace Evans, touched the ball not only once but twice before it hit the floor and squirted out of bounds.

Ironically, the clock never moved, raising the ire of Southfield coach Raphael Peterson, who furiously tried to get the attention — but to no avail — of game officials T.J. Lieckelt and Bill Baumgart.

The ball was then inbounded at mid-court as Lauren Hesano took a pass. The senior guard took one dribble, fired up a 21-foot shot at the basket, which caromed perfectly off the glass to Jacovetti, who grabbed the errant shot and put it back in before the buzzer to give Ladywood a 42-41 victory.

The clock operator, who will remain nameless this time around to protect his identity, reportedly told Peterson afterwards that game officials never gave the hand signal to initiate the start of the clock.

Second, officials, who politely turned down a request from this reporter for an interview after the mad finish, told the Ladywoods coaching staff afterwards that Sventickas' pass never crossed the plane and remained out of bounds. Their rationale was that the ball never got inbounded so the clock operator never had the chance to start the clock with 2.9 left.

After suffering the heartbreaking setback, I reported that

an irate Peterson asked for the names of the officials and the clock operator afterwards.

He was quoted in my story (Nov. 24) as saying: "It's unbelievable, it's ridiculous to work that hard and have the game taken away. The clock operator told me the official didn't put his hand up (to start the clock on the first inbound pass)."

He was also quoted later in the same story as saying: "It was not right for them to hold the clock." Some readers believe that my story "inferred" that Ladywood cheated to get the victory on its home floor. After reviewing this tape, I'll absolve the clock operator, but not the two officials. Peterson still has a legitimate beef as far as I'm concerned. Here are some final thoughts to ponder:

A. If the clock did not start on the first inbound pass by Sventickas, then why was the ball inbounded at mid-court? It should have returned to the original spot where it was inbounded, which meant Ladywood would have had to score the game-winning basket — inbounding from three-quarters court, not from mid-court.

B. If the ball was inbounded at mid-court, then a small fraction of time should have been taken off the clock. I let my brother-in-law, a high school and collegiate official, view the tape, and he said he would have taken .5 seconds off the clock, dropping the final inbound pass, which led to the game-winning basket, from 2.9 seconds to 2.4 seconds.

C. Because you cannot see the near sideline because angle of the Ladywood tape (several fans blocked much of the sideline

view), it's assumed Evans (the Southfield defender who deflected the ball twice before it hit the floor) was standing out of bounds. I believe Evans was inbounded simply because if I can see Evans tip the ball, and can't see the sideline, I have to assume she's on the playing floor. Just my personal opinion. I don't buy the theory the ball never crossed the plane.

D. Although clock operators are hired by the home team and are often good-hearted volunteers, I believe it's wrong to put a parent (or relative) of a player involved in the game in such a precarious spot. Once again, this clock operator could be honest as Abe Lincoln, but what if he had not initiated the clock too soon and the game-winning basket nullified for the same home team? Either way, he's in a no-win situation.

E. Officials should be encouraged by the Michigan High School Athletic Association to have an open-door policy with reporters. I thought it was great that the official who made the controversial call in Ohio State-Miami football game gave his side of the story to the Associated Press after the BCS national championship game.

F. And finally, I'm still trying to figure out, after reviewing the tape, why the scoreboard read: Ladywood 43, Visitor 42, when the final score was actually 42-41 (and reported to the Detroit Free Press that way). Did the clock operator know something I didn't know?

G. Brad Emmons is the sports editor for the Livonia-Westland Observer. He can be reached at (734) 953-2123 or via e-mail at bemons@wehome.com.net

## Dorsey leads No. 10 Ocelots to win in hoops

Schoolcraft College, ranked 10th in the country, got a game-high 25 points from Ronni Dorsey in a 107-63 men's basketball victory Wednesday over visiting Henry Ford Community College.

Schoolcraft, 15-1 overall, is 2-0 in the Eastern Conference of the Michigan Community College Athletic Association.

Dorsey, a 6-foot-5 sophomore forward from Detroit Pershing, had plenty of offensive support as five other Ocelots scored in double figures including Marcus Bennett (17), Tyrone Baker (14), Andre Scott (11), Marcus Johnson (10) and Wayne Memorial's Gary Johnson (10).

"We're starting to play better as a team," Schoolcraft coach Carlos Briggs said. "With Dion (Sherrill) out (with a broken foot) we have to be more aggressive. Ron Dorsey stepped up and really played well with

the exception of a couple passes he threw. And I thought Andre (Scott) had a good first half and got us off to a good start."

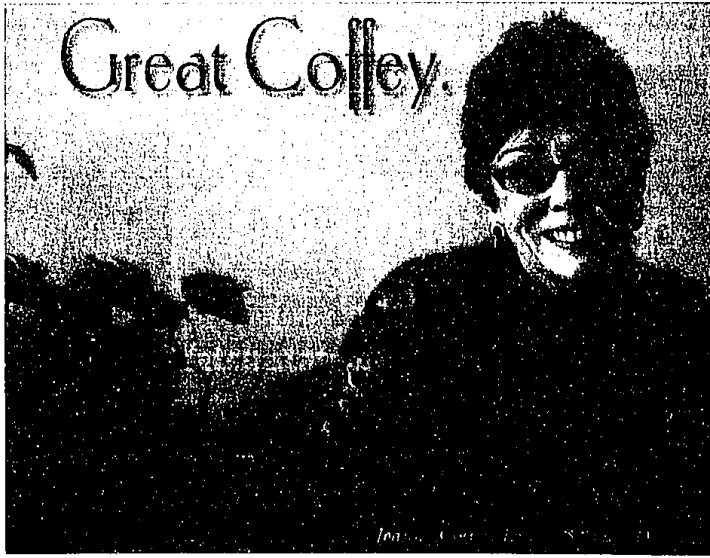
Byron Cole, a 6-foot-3 guard out of Romulus, led the Hawks (10-5, 1-1) with 16 points. Kenny Nether (Canton) added 10.

Schoolcraft led 56-30 at the half. The Ocelots made 24-of-33 free throws (73 percent) compared to Henry Ford's 10-of-15 (67 percent).

"Schoolcraft has good size and definitely they're talented," Henry Ford coach Abe Mashhour said. "They have good scoring inside and they're balanced. Their big men may not be as dominant inside than last year, but they're athletic and they killed us on offensive rebounds."

"They played well as a team and you can see they're starting to get some chemistry."

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## COME VISIT US AT OUR OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, January 22 from 1-4pm and Thursday, January 23 from 4-7pm

In the Westmarket Square 47670 Grand River Ave., Novi (248) 344-0234

## Share The Road Michigan

### Did you know trucks have large blind spots?

Avoid driving behind or beside a truck for long periods of time, because the driver may not be able to see you. Remember, if you can't see the driver's face in the truck's side mirrors, chances are he or she can't see you.

Be courteous.  
Be smart.  
Be safe.

This material was developed through a project funded by the Michigan Truck Safety Commission.