Chargers end regular season at 19-1

Lathrup dominates West Bloomfield, 76-68

By PAUL NATKE

West Bloomfield had dreams of an upset on Tuesday night but the dreams didn't last past the first quarter as Southfield-Lathrup used balanced scoring to secure a 76-68 victory.

The Lakers started the game as if they were going to stop the Chargers and Oakland County's leading scorer, Bill Phillips, cold. West Bloomfield used a sagging zone defense to keep the ball away from Phillips as they raced out to 12-2 lead.

The Lakers' offense was forcing Southfield-Lathrup fouls and their defense pressured the Chargers into ball handling errors. West Bloomfield was in the bonus situation at the 3:44 mark of the first period and the Lakers built a 14-4 lead by hitting eight of eight free throws with all the charity shots coming on shooting fouls.

But the Chargers put themselves back into the game as they intercepted four straight Laker passes and ran off 10 unanswered points in a little over two minutes to knot the score at 14-14.

THE CHARGERS took control of the game in the second period as Gary Hawthorne and Tom O'Rourke began to hit from outside the Laker zone. Southfield-Lathrup ran off 11 points in three minutes, with O'Rourke netting seven of them, while holding West Bloomfield scoreless to grab a 30-29 lead.

The Lakers' Brian Clifford got into foul trouble early as he picked up his third personal with 1:23 left in the half.

Southfield-Lathrup led at te half, 49-33, on the strength of O'Rourke's 13 points and Hawthorne's 14.

Charger Coach Jim Kourtakis said he wasn't surprised with the defense designed to stop Phillips because he's seen that type of thing throughout the season.

"When you're winning," he said, "every one's out to get you."

"We have enough players on the team outside of Phillips who can put the ball in the hole," he continued. "Hawthorne and O'Rourke hit from the outside for us and once the defense lets up or the double team stops, Phillips will score from inside."

Phillips was held to only three points in the first half but he led the Chargers' scoring as he poured in 17 in the second half to finish with 20 points. Hawthorne followed with 18. O'Rourke added 17 and Mark Johnson chipped in with 15.

DON SASSE led the Lakers with 20, most of them coming on shots from under the basket as sharp West Bloomfield passing cut through the Chargers' full court press.

James Rusk and Tom Doyle each had 12 points for the Lakers and Kevin Kowalski finished the night with 10.

Southfield-Lathrup began controling the boards at both ends of the court and the ball game in the third period as they built a 64-45 lead at the quarter's end.

MARK JOHNSON and Phillips picked up the scoring punch from Hawthorne and O'Rourke in the third period as they combined for 16 points.

But West Bloomfield wasn't going to give in. Rusk scored his team's first eight points, including a three-point play in the fourth period to help cut the Charger lead.

The Lakers' comeback received a serious blow, however, when Brian Clifford fouled out with 7:13 left in the game. His absence left the Lakers outmanned on the boards against the taller Chargers.

Southfield-Lathrup's Hawthorne also fouled out with 2:36 remaining, and West Bloomfield mounted their last threat. The full court press the Lakers had been using periodically throughout the game began to rattle the Chargers and West Bloomfield ran off 10 straight points. Sasse netted six of them.

The Lakers were forced to foul to get the ball back and Southfield-Lathrup sank three free throws in the last 20 seconds to end the scoring.

Kourtakis wasn't surprised that Phillips began scoring in the second half. "They can't pay that much attention to Phillips when our other players are hitting, and once we get the ball into him inside he'll put it in the hole."

KOURTAKIS PRAISED the defensive work of Hawthorne, who held Clifford, a top Lakers' scorer, to eight points.

"We didn't play well near the end and the beginning of the game," Kourtakis said. "Maybe the team was looking forward to the districts."

Southfield-Lathrup is hosting a district tournament and will face Thurston in the opening game. West Bloomfield finishes the regular season on Friday when they travel to North Farmington.

The Chargers finished the season with a 19-1 record while West Bloomfield is now 13-8.

Southfield-Lathrup—West Bloomfield

Southfield Lathrup (76): Tom O'Rourke 6, 5-5, 17; Gary Hawthorne 7, 4-4, 18; Bill Phillips 7, 6-11, 20; Mark Johnson 6, 3-4, 15; Clancy quenard 2, 0-0, 4; Roger Auwers 0, 2-2, 2. Totals: 28, 20-29, 76.

West Bloomfield (68): Don Sasse 9, 2-2, 20; James Rusk 5, 6-7, 12; Tom Doyle 5, 2-2, 12; Brian Clifford 2, 4-4, 8; Kevin Kowalski 4, 2-2, 10; Don Wilson 0, 4-6, 4; Mark Schroeder 1, 0-0, 2. Totals: 24, 20-23, 68.

Total Fouls: WestBloomfield 18, South field Lathrup 17.

Fouled Out: Gary Hawthorne (SL), Brian Clifford (WB), Kowalski (WB).

Southfield Lathrup	17	22	24	17	—76
West Bloomfield	17	16	12	23	—68

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Printz and Sulinski

2 Lathrup matmen make state

By TOM BAKER

Southfield-Lathrup's wrestling team had a pleasant surprise and a mild disappointment to think about after participating in the Class A regional tournament at Romeville High last Saturday.

Two Lathrup wrestlers, heavyweight Tim Printz and 156-pounder Bill Sulinski, made it through the regional and qualified for the state meet, which will be held Feb. 27-28 at Michigan State University's Jenison Fieldhouse.

Lathrup, coached by Ray Toohey and Jeff Crawford, scored 32 team points and finished sixth in the 28-team regional. Mt. Clemens won with 90½ points, and Warren Mott took second with 48.

Sulinski, a senior, won the 156-pound regional title by taking three-straight decisions. He'll be seeded in the top four at the state meet. Printz, also a senior, pinned his first two opponents, but then dropped a 4-2 decision to Hazel Park's Dave Evans in the heavyweight final.

Printz and Evans have developed an intense rivalry over the past two seasons. The two heavyweights fought to a draw in a dual meet earlier this season.

"Evans just sat back and waited for Tim to make a mistake," Toohey said. "Tim had been practicing some new takedown moves. He tried one, slipped and blew it. Usually, those two will battle into overtime because they're so evenly matched. But this time, Tim wanted it, went after it and lost it."

PRINTZ LIFTED his season record to 27-1-1, with the regional matches. He pinned East Detroit's Brian Bass in 1:04. Then he pinned previously-unbeaten Dave Ulmer of Warren Mott in 5:48.

Sulinski decisioned Warren Fitzgerald's Mike Perraino, 10-1, and then took a 4-1 decision from Chippewa Valley's Damian Belvedere. In the 156 final, Sulinski outpointed Warren Lincoln's Pat McKay, 9-3. The loss was McKay's first this season.

"Sulinski is a smart wrestler," Toohey said. "He doesn't do many moves. He has only a few, but he does them very well. He's tall and lanky and has good balance. He has long legs and uses them well. He's not much of a takedown man, but he's really good at defending the takedown.

"Printz is fast and aggressive. He's learned a lot this year. He's always had the potential, but he just never went for it like he has this season. He does more than most heavyweights, which in my eyes isn't a lot, but it's more than most and gets him through."

Lathrup had qualified five wrestlers for the regional. Scott Gooding (119 pounds), Gary Soberk (167) and Bill Goforth (188) were eliminated.

Gooding was pinned by Mt. Clemens' Vince Cribbs, but then came back to pin Warren Lincoln's Larry Fourtney in 4:12. He finally lost, 4-2, to Royal Oak Dondero's Bernie Hyatt.

Mt. Clemens' Joe Hadley, the eventual winner at 167, pinned Soberk in 3:59. Soberk then won a 13-3 decision over St. Clair Shores South Lake's Joe Valenti. Madison Heights Lamphere's Scott Ford pinned Soberk at 1:45.

GOFORTH LOST two matches. Warren Mott's Gary Anderson decisioned him, 4-0. Center Line's Jeff Martin then ended Goforth's season by a pin in 4:44.

Other area matmen to qualify for state include Birmingham Groves' Doug Harberg (126), Farmington High's Jim Simmons (138), and Farmington Harrison's Brian Kiger (155).

The state meet preliminaries will be held on Friday at noon and 7 p.m. The semifinals begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday with the consolations set for 4 p.m. and the title matches slated for 7:30 p.m.

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Sports coming up

Basketball

Friday (Feb. 27): Lutheran North at Southfield Christian, 20000 Lahser, 8 p.m.

Friday (Feb. 27): West Bloomfield at North Farmington, 32900 13 Mile, 8 p.m.

Friday (Feb. 27): Waterford Mott at Farmington Harrison, 29886 12 Mile, 8 p.m.

Friday (Feb. 27): Waterford Township at Farmington High, 32000 Shiawassee, 8 p.m.

Friday (Feb. 27): Southfield High at Royal Oak Kimball, 1500 Lexington Blvd., 8 p.m.

Wrestling

Friday and Saturday (Feb. 27-28): Qualified wrestlers from Southfield-Lathrup, Farmington Harrison and Farmington High will participate in the Class A state meet, Jenison Fieldhouse, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Events begin at 10 a.m. both days.

Swimming

Thursday (Feb. 26): Westland John Glenn at North Farmington, 32900 13 Mile, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday (Feb. 26): Birmingham Seaholm at Farmington Harrison, 29886 12 Mile, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday (Feb. 26): Detroit Country Day School at Farmington High, 32000 Shiawassee, 7:30 p.m.

Hockey

Thursday (Feb. 26): Southfield High at Southfield-Lathrup, Beechwoods Arena, Beech south of Nine Mile, 7:30 p.m.

Friday (Feb. 27): Southfield High at Livonia Stevenson, Ford Ice Arena, Farmington and Lyndon roads, 7 p.m.

Volleyball

Saturday (Feb. 28): Farmington Our Lady of Mercy in Catholic League playoffs, site and times to be determined.

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