



Kneeling defensively, Leslie Simms continues guarding Marquette's Janet Hopkins as she dribbles in for two points. (Staff photos by Gary Friedman)

Mercy falls short in state finals

By TOM BARR

For many Farmington (Mer) fans, the state Class A girls basketball championship game at East Kentwood High School in suburban Grand Rapids is the season's highlight. And Mercy, which seemed to have another formidable team, once again was saddled with the runner-up consolation game.

For the past three seasons, Mercy has advanced all the way to the state finals to lose the big game. Mercy could rewrite the old saw about the bridesmaid. Always a runner-up, never a champion, the new season would go.

Last Saturday, Marquette High knocked off (previously unbeaten) Mercy, 68-41, in the Class A final at East Kentwood. After the game, the entire Mercy team stood behind a wooden sign board, which announced its status as the second best Class

A team in the state. Photographs were taken.

Last season, a group of sad-eyed Mercy cheerleaders held a runner-up banner at center court after Detroit Northeastern beat their team in the finals. The year before that, Detroit Dominican played the spoiler. And the year before that, Dominican defeated Mercy in the semifinals.

"It's just impossible to describe what it's like for these kids who have been here for the past three years," said Mercy coach Larry Baker, playing the losing role for the second straight season in the hall outside the East Kentwood gym last Saturday.

AND SOME of his players — seniors K.D. Harte, Mary Pat Hammell and Marge Larges, for example — have endured tournament disappointment for the past three seasons.

But a day later, Baker had put the tournament debate behind him, and already was thinking about next season.

"I tried to get their minds off the game

on the way back from Grand Rapids," he said. "Not much sense dwelling on it. But I woke up the next morning thinking about next year. What else could I do?"

Mercy will graduate five players from this year's team: Harte, Hammell, Larges, Leslie Sims and Mary Vicent. But some excellent players — Katie McNamara, Diane Diets and Sue Brown, for example — will return. And then there's Mercy's reserve team, also coached by Baker, which just completed its second-straight undefeated season.

"We'll be around next season," Baker said. "We'll be interesting to cover again."

Little was known about Marquette, which compiled a 25-0 record this season after dropping a 62-57 decision in last year's semifinal. But both Baker and Marquette coach Brad Grill were looking forward to the rematch.

"I knew Marquette was a powerhouse," Baker said. "Marquette just scored the daylight out of us last year. All year long people had been waiting for the next Mercy-Marquette game. That was the team I feared most."

But I thought it would sound pretty concerted of me to say that I was scared of Marquette, which is way up there in the Upper Peninsula and which we wouldn't play until the state tournament."

AND MARQUETTE proved worthy of Baker's fears. From the opening tip, the UP girls played an aggressive brand of ball and grabbed a 16-0 lead after the first quarter and a 35-23 lead at halftime. Four Marquette starters finished in double figures. Shelly Chapman fired in 23 points. Janet Hopkins followed with 19. Caron Krueger had 12 and Karen Levandoski 19. Mercy, which lacked a big scorer, got 10 points from Lynn Madson.

Marquette hit 24 field goals in 61 attempts for a 39.3 shooting percentage. Mercy was 19 of 58 for 32.7 percent. Personal fouls and the ensuing free throws were a factor in Marquette's victory. Mercy got into foul trouble early and was whittled for 28 fouls but the end of the game. Marquette starters McNamara, Diets and Sims fouled out of the game.

Marquette, by contrast, was called for only one foul. Marquette made 29 free throws in 28 attempts.

"It bugged me a little to see us get all the fouls when we were playing a much more aggressive team," Baker said. "I'm not saying that the officiating was poor, but it was very frustrating to watch."

"Marquette played rough, but their players were very discreet about their physical play. They weren't cutthroats, but that (Caron) Krueger was really cleaning people out from under the boards."

In the Class A semifinal games, Mercy defeated Flushing, 62-46, and Mercy stopped Southfield-Lathrup, 78-59. The Mercy-Lathrup game featured a first-half shooting streak by Harte, a 54-guard. She took game scoring honors with 28 points on 13 field goals. All but six of those points came on large, one-hand set shots.

Mercy finished with a 22-1 record.



Mercy's Lynn Yadach, on the floor, learned pain is part of the game, whether it's from physical contact with another player or a penalty from a referee.

RU Relays

Falcons 7th in meet

By placing first in three events during the weekend's 10th annual Redford Union Invitational Relays, the four Frankfort swimmer team managed to finish in a third place tie with Plymouth Salem, the highest of area contestants.

I think that was a pretty good result for us. I remember 1976 was a 1976 Team. We had to go and place finishers from every event except the Trenton.

The Falcons also managed to shatter the record in the crecendos with a time of 4:21.0 which broke the old mark of 4:27.5. I think we could have finished higher in the team standing, but a couple of our relay teams wound up in seventh place out of Trenton.

The four Frankfort swimmers who broke the record in the crecendos were Mike Bal-

navis, Tom Wright, Ken Sigelman and Steve Thrush.

The Suburban Four League played a dominant part in the meet, by having three teams finishing in the top five places of the final standings. Trenton finished in first place, Salem tied for third and Allen Park came in fifth.

RESULTS

Team Standings—1) Trenton, 85; 2) Northville, 62; 3) (tie) Plymouth Salem and Livonia Franklin, 54; 5) Allen Park, 47; 6) Redford-Thurston, 31; 7) (tie) Livonia Bentley and Farmington, 28; 9) Plymouth Canton, 20; 10) Redford Canton, 17; 11) (tie) Center Line and Livonia Churchill, 0.

Relay Results

400-yard medley relay—1) Northville 2) Salem 3) Trenton 4) Thurston, 3:51.0

600-yard freestyle relay—1) Franklin 2) Trenton 3) Northville 4) Farmington, 3:27.7

200-yard breaststroke relay—1) Northville 2) Allen Park 3) Thurston 4) Trenton, 2:06.6

200-yard backstroke relay—1) Allen Park 2) Bentley 3) Northville 4) Canton, 1:51.3

200-yard butterfly relay—1) Trenton 2) Farmington 3) Bentley 4) Salem, 1:47.4

400-yard individual medley relay—1) Franklin 2) Salem 3) Trenton 4) Bentley, 4:17.4

200-yard medley relay—1) Salem 2) Northville 3) Trenton 4) Allen Park, 1:46.5

300-yard freestyle relay—1) Trenton 2) Thurston 3) Allen Park 4) Canton, 1:39.2



Farmington's Brian Cross checks times with coach Jack Merritt.

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