

Talent marks O&E dream team

By JOHN BOZZO

Three very successful teams make the Observer & Eccentric's first all-area girls' basketball squad one of the most talented all-star groups in the land.

Farmington Our Lady of Mercy is top among these teams. The Marlins were runners-up in the state Class A tournament for the third consecutive year. They posted a 23-1 season record, losing to Marquette, a 25-0 team, in the state finals.

Southfield-Lathrup also advanced far into the state tournament, winning district and regional crowns, before falling to Mercy in the semifinal game. The Chargers had a 19-4 record.

Lathrup, as co-champion of the Metro Suburban Activities Association, shared league honors with Bloomfield Hills Lahser. The Knights from Lahser had only two losses during the fall campaign. Lathrup stopped the Knights during the regular season and Mercy downed Lahser in the regional finals.

Players from these teams dominated the Observer & Eccentric all-area team.

Instead of going position by position, the panel of nine local coaches who picked the all-area team chose to vote for the five best players regardless of position. Consequently, three of the five first team selections played at the forward position during the season.

Katie McNamara played center for the Mercy Marlins. A 5-10 junior, she jumped like a 6-3 player. McNamara scored an average of 14.8 points for a total of 348. She averaged 10 rebounds per game and stole the basketball 45 times. Her shooting average was a consistent 50 per cent from both the free-throw line and the field.

DIANE DIETZ is a classmate and teammate of McNamara. Dietz averaged 12.3 points per game for a total of 224 from her forward position. At 5-8, she grabbed an average of 8.5 rebounds per game, had 36 assists and 54 steals. She shot 71 per cent

from the free-throw line and 66 per cent from the field.

Adding backcourt strength to the O & E team is Southfield-Lathrup's flashy senior guard Patti Rendine. A 5-6 senior, Rendine averaged 18.3 points per game for a 235 total, a school record. She also set a school record with 184 assists. She shot 69 per cent from the free-throw line and 37 per cent from the field. Although playing guard, she grabbed 42 offensive rebounds and 31 defensive rebounds.

Ruth Fraser, a 5-8 senior forward from Southfield-Lathrup, was also a selection. She scored 15.3 points per game for a 352 total. An all-around player, Fraser blocked 18 shots, stole the ball 25 times and had 40 assists. She grabbed 82 offensive rebounds and 98 defensive rebounds. Fraser shot 65 per cent from the free-throw line and 21 per cent from the field.

Rounding off our dream team is senior forward Diane Chelklich of Lahser. A 5-10 senior, Chelklich was the best rebounder during the season. She grabbed 120 offensive rebounds and 105 defensive rebounds. Chelklich was alert defensively, blocking 46 shots and stealing the ball 43 times. She also contributed her share of points, scoring 16.8 points per game and shooting an average of 53 per cent from the free-throw line and 50 per cent from the floor.

KATIE VANDEUSEN of Farmington leads off the second team. A 5-4 senior guard, VanDeusen averaged 18.2 points, had 31 assists and 39 steals.

Hot-shooting K.D. Harte of Mercy was also selected to the second team. A 5-4 senior guard, Harte scored an average of 12.3 points per game. She shot for a better free-throw percentage than any other player, 85 per cent, and was 69 per cent from the field.

Claudia Murray of Lahser is the tallest player on the O & E squad at 6-2. A senior forward, she scored 10.3 points per game and had a total of 270 rebounds. In her three-year career at Lahser she has grabbed 49 rebounds.

Jan Barcewicz, a 5-4 senior guard from West Bloomfield, led the Lady Lakers to the Greater Oakland Activities League championship. She scored an average of 15.5 points per game, second-highest on the team, and was her squad's top rebounder with 10.1 per game.

Lauren Abramson, another sharp shooter, rounds off the second team. Abramson, a 5-7 senior forward from Bloomfield Hills Andover, averaged 10.5 points per game and was known for her hot streaks of outside shooting. She finished the season with a 20 per cent average from the field and 48 per cent from the free-throw line. Abramson also had 54 assists.

THE FOLLOWING players were selected as honorable mention choices:

Izzy Forester, Seaholm; Stephanie Stone, Southfield; Ingvald Berge, Rochester; Marlene Jones, Rochester Adams; Michele Gerber, West Bloomfield; Bea Bunting, Troy; Marianne McMullen, Southfield-Lathrup; Sue Cowan, Groves; Lynn Yachek, Mercy; Mary McLean, Lahser; Jan Bonan, Andover; Joanne Yockey, Troy; Donna Piccirilli, West Bloomfield; Sandy McElreath, Troy; Athens; Mary Fryggisch, Southfield-Lathrup; Mary Pat Hammett, Mercy; Mary Castiglione, Lahser; Merry Bala, North Farmington; Liz Merrell, Farmington; and Chris Kirkpatrick, Andover.

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SPORTS



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Mercy's Katie McNamara averaged 14.8 points and 10 rebounds per game to help the Marlins reach the state Class A finals.

Two All-Area selections: Mercy's Diane Dietz (left) and Southfield-Lathrup's Ruth Fraser.



Diane Chelklich (kneeling with ball) averaged 14.6 points per game for Bloomfield Hills Lahser.

First Team		
NAME	SCHOOL	HEIGHT
Katie McNamara	Mercy	5-10
Diane Dietz	Mercy	5-8
Patti Rendine	Lathrup	5-6
Ruth Fraser	Lathrup	5-8
Diane Chelklich	Lahser	6-0

Second Team		
NAME	SCHOOL	HEIGHT
Kathy VanDeusen	Farmington	5-5
K.D. Harte	Mercy	5-4
Claudia Murray	Lahser	6-2
Jan Barcewicz	West Bloomfield	5-6
Lauren Abramson	Andover	5-7

Southfield-Lathrup's Patti Rendine

Larry Baker: Coach of the Year

By TOM BAER

Larry Baker was fresh out of the University of Michigan when he came to Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy High School in the fall of 1975. He had planned to fill a vacancy in the school's English Department, but he soon found that his duties at Mercy would include more than just teaching classes.

Baker also landed the job of head basketball coach at the all-girls Catholic high school, which was fast becoming known for its excellent teams. Under his guidance, Mercy compiled a 28-3 overall record in 1975, and then put together a 25-1 season in 1976. Both years Mercy advanced all the way to the finals of the state Class A girls' basketball tournament, only to lose.

For his coaching achievements in girls' basketball, Baker has been selected The Observer & Eccentric's Coach of the Year

for 1976. He was voted Coach of the Year during a meeting of 18 area coaches, who also picked the 1976 Observer & Eccentric All-Area Team.

"I was very flattered at being picked; this is a real honor for me," said the 23-year-old Baker, who had plenty of familiar company in the O&E spotlight. Mercy was well represented on the All-Area Team. The first team included two Mercy juniors, 5-10 Katie McNamara and 5-8 Diane Dietz. The second unit included K.D. Harte, a 5-4 senior guard.

Baker was a basketball standout during his high school days at Midland Dow, but he never even saw a girls' basketball game until he came to Mercy to coach and teach.

"The first one I saw was the first one I coached," he said with a laugh. "But taking over a winning team and going all the way to the state finals wasn't as overwhelming as it may have seemed."

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