

Local girls find international basketball to be tough

By DOUG FUNKE

International basketball is a much faster and more aggressive game than the brand played at the high school and college level in the United States found two area women during a five-day trip to Mexico City earlier this summer.

Jeanette Fisher, a junior, and Lynn Yachach, a freshman, made the trip with their Oakland University teammates to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Mexican Basketball Federation.

Fisher, an alumna of Garden City East, and Yachach, a Livonia resident who graduated from Farmington Hills Mercy, both agreed that even though their team was badly beaten in three games in Mexico, basketball in the United States can only improve with the experience.

Team USA lost to the Soviet Union Olympic Team, 109-42, to the Mexican Olympic Team, 85-46, and to the Mexican World Games Team, 72-51.

Each of the women started two of the three games. Fisher, a 5-9 1/2 forward, had the difficult task of having to defend against the Soviets 7-3 center.

Yachach, a guard-forward, netted 10 points against the Mexican Olympic team.

"The Russian center would move into the low-post position," said

Fisher. "She was quite big—mammoth in fact. It was quite difficult to guard her. She's the biggest human I've ever seen."

Team USA used a zone defense without much success against the much taller Soviet women.

"The Soviet Union team is a lot more organized," said Fisher. "They're a lot older. We took a lot of big steps by just taking the trip."

"To actually play the Russian team was really an experience," she continued. "You see them on TV during the Olympics, but to actually play them is something else."

"Once we get more exposure," we'll do better," said Yachach, who helped lead Mercy to the Class A state championship last year.

"Girls are getting started in the sixth and seventh grade now," she said. "They're better players than we were at that age."

"International rules are different," said Fisher. "It's a speed game. Americans have a tendency to dribble the ball. The Soviets moved it by passing."

"We didn't move down court as fast. We kind of got caught a little in transition."

"It was almost a completely different game for me," said Yachach. "It's quicker, there's more passing, it's

tougher and more aggressive. There's more contact than in the American game."

Some of the more basic differences under international rules are a 30-second shot clock, putting the ball in play without an official touching it after a whistle and a pyramid-shaped three second lane.

Both Fisher and Yachach said they prefer the more rugged international game to the American style of play.

"I love it contact," said Yachach. "It's a funner game. In Michigan, they seem to want to play touch-me-not. It (international game) is more of a sport."



Lynn Yachach, a graduate from Mercy High School in Farmington, wars up before a game during the International Basketball Tournament in Mexico City. (Staff photo)

NFWB team wins tourney for national championship

The North Farmington-West Bloomfield entry in the sophomore division (13-14 year-olds) of the National Amateur Baseball Federation came from behind Sunday to defeat the Long Island, N.Y., team, 7-4, and clinch the national championship.

The NFWB team pounded out 15 hits in the championship game of the tournament, which was held in Birmingham, Alabama. Dale Sklar, Kevin Shaw, Keith Knight, Kirk White, and Jeff Long all contributed two hits to the victory.

Shaw was the winning pitcher in relief. Knight started the game and was relieved by Sklar in the second.

Shaw came on in the fourth after Sklar was hurt stealing a base, allowed just one hit in the fourth innings he pitched.

"The boy's excelled in every department," Joe Boda, the NFWB manager, said. "Our pitchers had a combined ERA of 1.66 for the tournament."

the team batting average was .373, and they were successful on 16 of 17 base stealing attempts.

Enroute to its championship, NFWB team defeated baseball squads from Columbus, Ohio; Dayton, Ohio; another team from the Long Island, N.Y., area; and twice beat the Detroit Police Athletic League champions.

Fourteen teams competed in the tournament, all of them having won NABF league championships in their regions. The NFWB team qualified by winning the Detroit Suburban Amateur Baseball Federal playoffs, held at West Bloomfield High School.

Six of the NFWB starters were named to the All Tournament team, led by shortstop Sklar, who was the tourney's Most Valuable Player. Sklar was also the winning pitcher in two of NFWB's six playoff victories and led all players with a .577 batting average.

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