Farmington harness driver starts fast at Northville

John Moody, 19, of Farmington, this year's outstate harness driving champion, started his first week of "major league" harness driving with a win, a second and two thirds in Jackson's Action at Northville Downs.

Anticipating the stiffer competition of racing at a metropolitan Detroit track, Moody has been pleasantly surprised.

"It's not as tough as I thought," admits Moody. "The track here in Northville is wider and safer than the one in Jackson. I anticipated the drivers would be tougher but they've been decent to me."

Having worked as a groom and assistant trainer for several Michigan horsemen, Moody gives credit for his rapid rise in the driving ranks to ace harness teamster Lee Sattleberg.

"I worked for Sattleberg for 18 months, and I always watched him drive, paying attention to how he did things," adds Moody. "I also owe a lot to Fred Cottongim for having faith in me and giving me good horses to drive."

Moody is one of the rare young drivers with no family roots in harness racing. Always interested in horses, he spent every minute he could around the Northville track watching the horses during morning workouts, talking to trainers and grooms.

Dropping out of high school (a disappointment to his family), he started grooming when he was 15. Older horsemen, impressed with his conscientiousness, call Moody "a hard worker and a good horseman." Next to youngest in a closely-knit family of eight, Moody is an engaging blond with poise beyond his years. At Jackson, he was extremely popular with the race fans.

"I won five times betting on you last week," exclaimed one woman during Meet the Drivers Week as she threw her arms around Moody and gave him a kiss.

Many horse owners prefer light drivers and Moody is the lightest at Northville this meet.

"At 5-foot-9 and 135 lbs., you might say I am the puny one of my family," Moody says somewhat ruefully.

Although he was born and raised in the Farmington area, Moody feels his roots are in Tennessee and Arkansas, where about one-third of his relatives still live.

"Everyone calls me 'the hillbilly'," he continues, "and I love it," claiming also that he likes to hunt coon as well as deer and enjoys "messing around" with a banjo.

He owns a Bluetick and a Walker coonhound with a friend in Fowlerville. His favorite foods are the down-home soul food like onions, cornbread, black-eyed peas, ham and dumplings and pumpkin pie.

Moody has been married since he was 16 and has three children, two boys and a girl. His wife Brenda "loves to cook" as much as Moody likes to eat. She enjoys watching him drive horses and can follow his progress around the track by identifying his race colors.

Moody put a lot of thought into selecting the red, gold and white which he wears.

"I wanted something casual and sharp without being gaudy," he says. "These colors have worked out well. They're easy to follow in a race and an owner can always pick out his horse from afar."

In Jackson's fall races which ended Oct. 21, Moody earned the Leading Driver title with a UDRS (Universal Driver Rating System) percentage of .390. He drove 72 races, tallied 20 wins, 11 seconds and six thirds to finish 44 percentage points ahead of the number two driver, Ray Fuller.

Mercy shocked by Marian, 55-48

By JOHN BOZZO

Birmingham Marian handed defending Class A state champion Farmington Our Lady of Mercy its second basketball defeat this season, 55-48, Saturday in Birmingham.

Although Mercy had won by a 29-point margin in their first meeting, Marian coach Karen Lafata was convinced her squad could beat the state champs.

"The only reason we lost the first game is because we couldn't break their press," Lafata said. "No matter what the score is, you have to be able to bring the ball down the court. This time we broke their press.

"Defensively we forced them to take 17- and 20-footers," Lafata said. "They couldn't establish an inside game.

"The other thing was we decided that we would run with them," Lafata said. "We didn't think we could set up our offense against their defense, so we got the rebounds, hit the outlet pass, raced down court and created a lot of two on one and three on one situations. As a result we got a lot of good shots."

Forced to shoot from the outside, Mercy players made only 28 per cent of their field goal attempts, 20 of 77 shots.

Meanwhile, Marian tossed in 33 per cent of their field goals, making 17 of 52 shots. Marian shot 48 per cent from the field in the first half, 10 of 21 shots.

Another big difference came at the free throw line where Marian burned the nets for 65 per cent of their free throws, 21 of 32 attempts. Mercy made only eight of 18 attempts from the charity stripe.

Mercy was also in foul trouble. Mercy players were called for 27 fouls compared to 18 for Marian. Two Mercy players fouled out.

Marian escaped some possible foul problems in the second quarter. Two first string players each received their third foul, forcing coach Lafata to take them from the game.

Two replacements came in from the bench to more than take up the slack. Katie Berg scored nine points and Kris Dill grabbed 10 rebounds, five steals and scored four points.

Their efforts gave Marian a 30-27 halftime advantage after both clubs had battled to a 13-13 standoff in the opening quarter.

"That was a crucial quarter," Lafata said. "We took the lead into the locker room and only then did my kids believe that they could beat that team. We got stronger from then on and Mercy got weaker. I think Mercy began to realize that we could beat them. After winning by 29 points last time they came to our gym a little cocky."

Julie Nagle led Marian with 13 points. Patti McDonald scored 10 points for Marian.

Gretchen Larges was the only Mercy player to reach double figures, scoring 15 points. Deanne Banfield and Lisa Morris each scored nine.

The victory put Marian at 5-6 overall and Mercy at 11-2 on the season.

MARIAN 55—MERCY 48

Marian (55): Julie Nagle 5, 3-4, 13; Patti McDonald 3, 4-4, 10; Patty Bethune 2, 1-3, 5; Sue McDonnell 2, 3-7, 7; Beth Carson 1, 0-0, 2; Katie Berg 2, 5-6, 9; Jean Osbefsky 1, 3-4, 5; Kris Dill 1, 2-3, 4. Totals: 17, 21-32, 55.

Mercy (48): Deanne Banfield 3, 3-4, 9; Denise Basford 0, 0-0, 0; Caroline Chapman 3, 0-2, 6; Gretchen Larges 6, 3-5, 15; Lisa Lisa Morris 4, 1-3, 9; Patty Schnieder 1, 0-0, 2; Kelley Walsh 1, 1-2, 3; Laura Zwiller 2, 0-1, 4; Aggie Conti 0, 0-1, 0. Totals: 20, 8-18, 48.

Total Fouls: Marian 18, Mercy 27.
Fouled Out: Caroline Chapman (Mercy), Laura Zwiller (Mercy).

MARIAN	13	17	12	13	—55
MERCY	13	14	12	9	—48

State meet next for Mercy runners

Farmington Our Lady of Mercy has qualified its entire cross country team for the state finals next Saturday (Nov. 4) at Haslett High School, east of Lansing.

Mercy, the Catholic League girls' cross country champion, earned a trip to the finals by finishing third with 116 points at the regional meet last Saturday at Royal Oak Kimball.

The top three teams from each regional, plus the 10 fastest runners who are not already part of the top three teams, qualify for the state finals. Rochester High won the regional with 75 points, and Brighton took second with 90.

Sue Heinlen recorded Mercy's best finish, fifth place with a time of 18:17. Other Mercy runners: Michele Collins (19th in 18:30), Curran Sullivan (24th, 19:44), Rocky Brown (31st, 20:09) and Stephanie Williams (35th, 20:40).

Brighton's Susan Brown set a course record of 17:50 in winning the regional. Pat Hamparian of Brighton was second in 17:59, and Rochester's Aimee Landry took third in 18:41.

The three boys' cross country teams from Farmington ran in the Class A regional Marshbank Metropark last Saturday.

None of the three—Farmington High, Farmington Harrison and North Farmington—qualified for the team race next Saturday at Faulkwood Shores Golf Course near Brighton, but several area runners qualified for the individual race at the same site.

North's Paul Welch, who hasn't been beaten all season in a dual meet, finished third in the regional with a 15:35 clocking. North finished 11th in the team standings with 250 points.

Harrison, which finished seventh in the regional with 223 points, had two qualifiers in Johan Engholm (fifth in 15:40) and John Anderson (17th in 16:16). Farmington High, fifth in the regional with 147 points, had qualifers in John Murphy (eighth, 15:58) and Mike Jermu (19th, 16:22).

The same format—the top three teams plus the top 10 individuals who are not on those teams—was used to determine the runners in the boys' state meet.

Churchill crushes Franklin, moves closer to state playoffs

Livonia Churchill demolished intra-city rival Livonia Franklin last weekend, 20-0, in a non-league football contest. The victory gave the Chargers a perfect 8-0 season and prepared them for Friday's contest with Livonia Stevenson.

"Stevenson is a very good football team. Even though they were beaten 28-0 by Glenn, I expect an outstanding game," said Churchill coach Ken Kaestner.

Against Franklin, the Chargers tallied 300 yards on offense. Doran Mason led the rushing attack with 59 yards, enough to give him 1,001 yards for the season.

Churchill quarterback Rick Coppola added 52 yards on the ground and passed for 181 yards. So far this season, Coppola has passed for 742 yards and rushed for 373.

During the Franklin game, the passing combination of Coppola and Mark Lieholdt worked superbly setting up two touchdowns and producing another.

Mason scored the first Churchill touchdown in the third quarter when he plunged into the endzone from five yards out. The play was set up by a 29-yard pass from Coppola to Lieholdt. The extra point kick by Coppola was good.

Still in the same quarter, Jon Burke forced a Franklin fumble and Rick Groak scooped the ball in for the Chargers.

The turnover started a 60-yard Churchill drive. During the march down the field, Coppola and Lieholdt connected on two key passes. Mason finally iced the drive with a one-yard touchdown run. The extra-point kick missed and Churchill led 13-0.

Lieholdt scored the final Churchill touchdown with eight minutes left in the fourth period when he caught a screen pass from Coppola and scampered 30 yards into the endzone. Again, Coppola kicked the point-after.

Jerry Cifor led the Patriots' offensive attack with 120 yards in 13 carries.

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