

Farmington breaks out of slump, rips Lakeland

By C.J. RISAK

Something different happened to Farmington's basketball team last Thursday, something the Falcons hadn't experienced all season.

For the first time this year, Farmington hung on to win a game, beating Milford Lakeland, 66-55.

But it wasn't a unique experience for the Falcons just because it was their first win. It was how they did it that made it special.

For four games, Farmington was involved in close games that weren't decided until the final minute. It lost all four, by a total of 10 points.

The situation again cropped up in the Lakeland contest. The Falcons hung on to a three-point lead (49-46) after three quarters.

They didn't fold in the fourth quarter. Instead, Farmington blew Lakeland off the court by firing in 23 points to 13 for Lakeland.

"Foul shooting was the difference," said Farmington coach Rich Roy. "Hopefully, it's coming around. They were fouling us in the last quarter and were making the three-point play to give us a lead."

Poor free throw shooting had plagued the Falcons in their first four games, but not this time. Farmington connected on 18 of 24 chances during the game (75 percent), including seven of nine in the final quarter.

THE FALCONS benefited from an outstanding performance by junior forward Jerry Liphardt. Liphardt poured in 27 points, as he hit on nine of 14 floor shots and nine of 10 free throws. Nine of his points came in the decisive fourth quarter.

Liphardt's teammates on the Falcon front line also played major roles in the victory. Ron Sarcovich, Farmington's senior pivotman, scored 11 points, including seven in the fourth quarter, and pulled down 12 rebounds.

Jeff McGrath, a senior forward, netted nine points and also had 12 rebounds for the Falcons. Gary Gleeson scored 21 for Lakeland.

Farmington held a two-point edge (14-12) after one quarter and maintained that advantage at the half (29-27). The Falcons managed to up their lead to three after three periods before

their fourth quarter rally.

Farmington connected on 24 of 55 floor shots in the game (44 percent).

The Falcons, now 4-1 on the season, are idle until Jan. 8 when they travel to Plymouth Canton for an 8 p.m. contest.

As the old saying goes, "You gotta learn to walk before you can run."

Sound simple enough. But it's not so easily learned a fact to which West Bloomfield's basketball team will attest.

The Lakers forgot one of the basic rules of the game last Friday — you have to dribble before you can walk. Their failure to abide by that standard cost them, as they dropped a 50-36 decision to Rochester at West Bloomfield.

"Turnovers really hurt us, especially the traveling calls," Laker coach John Cveagros said after the loss that left his team with a 2-3 season record. "We had no offensive aggressiveness."

Much of the Lakers' offense was taken away by their own mistakes and Rochester's stifling defense. The Falcons used several during the course of the game, including a man-to-man and a two-three zone.

Rochester led from the beginning, slowly building up its lead. The Falcons biggest advantage came early in the fourth quarter, as guard Scott Pooock hit a short basket and was fouled. He converted the three-point play to give Rochester a 38-21 lead.

West Bloomfield put together a short scoring spurt midway through the final period, as guard Brad Silverstein hit a short jumper and forward Andre Kingston converted two steals into Laker baskets. The rally closed the gap to 11 points, 42-31, with 4:29 remaining.

BUT WEST BLOOMFIELD could draw no closer. The final quarter was the only one that the Lakers managed to score more than 10 points.

Rochester benefited from a big advantage at the free throw line. West Bloomfield was whistled for 22 fouls, while the Falcons drew only 11.

Rochester took advantage of the situation by canning 18 of 24 free throws, including one stretch in which the Falcons hit 10 of 11. The Lakers attempted only eight free throws, making four.

West Bloomfield's Andre Kingston was high scorer in the contest with 12 points, including eight in the final quarter. Dana Brault and Chris Ribant each netted 11 for Rochester.

The Falcons, now 4-1 for the season, travel to Milford Jan. 4. West Bloomfield hosts Clarkston Jan. 4.

ROCHESTER 50-W. BLOOMFIELD 36

ROCHESTER (50) — Chris Ribant 5, 1-3, 11; Dana Brault 3, 5-7, 11; Toby Pope 2, 0-0, 4; Scott Pooock 2, 1-1, 5; Ron Jenkins 3, 0-1, 6; Steve Garcia 1, 2-2, 4; Todd Bonamingo 0, 2-2, 2; Bryan Miller 0, 2-2, 2; Mike Nealon 0, 4-4, 4; Dave Littleton 0, 1-2, 1. TOTALS — 16, 48-36.

WEST BLOOMFIELD (36) — Steve Swanson 1, 0-0, 2; Andre Kingston 6, 0-1, 12; Jeff Long 4, 0-1, 8; Bob Coxy 1, 0-0, 2; Bill Shimaki 1, 1-2, 3; Tom Hall 0, 1-2, 1; Dave Butler 1, 2-2, 4; Brad Silverstein 2, 0-0, 4. TOTALS — 16, 48, 36.

TOTAL FOULS — W. Bloomfield 22, Rochester 11. FOULED OUT: Hall (WB).

FARMINGTON 66 — LAKELAND 55

FARMINGTON (66) — Ron Sarcovich 6, 3-4, 11; Jeff McGrath 4, 1-3, 9; Jerry Liphardt 9, 9-10, 27; Bill Lehman 2, 4-4, 8; John Dunn 3, 1-3, 7; Steve Rutkowski 1, 0-0, 2; Doug Parker 1, 0-0, 2. TOTALS — 24, 18-24, 66.

MILFORD LAKELAND (55) — Dennis Campbell 1, 0-0, 2; Dave Hudspeth 2, 1-0, 5; Bob Ptasch 1, 3-5, 5; Gary Gleeson 6, 3-4, 21; Jim Vase 2, 0-0, 4; Bill St. John 1, 3-4, 5; Darren Reed 0, 1-2, 1; Deon Durek 3, 2-4, 12. TOTALS — 28, 16-26, 55.

TOTAL FOULS — Lakeland 23, Farmington 22. FOULED OUT: Reed (ML).



The Falcons' John Dunn (No. 44) battles for a rebound during Thursday's game with Lakeland.



Jerry Liphardt (with ball) scored 27 points to lead Farmington to its first win of the season. (Staff photos by Randy Borst)

C.J.'s Side

Learning the fight game — early

By C.J. RISAK

"Jab, Jab! Keep your left up! Now throw the right! That's it — keep your chin down! Move, dance — left to right, left to right! C'mon, C'mon!"

The instructions keep coming, non-stop, but the boxer can't hear them. Too much noise — everybody in the crowd is screaming. The two boxers parry punches as they dance in a tight circle. Lefts, lefts, then one throws a right, and both fighters start flailing away, standing toe-to-toe, swinging wildly.

The bell, and a return to sanity. The boxers gently tap gloves and head to their corners. The screaming subsides as people rush to the refreshment stand.

The bell rings and it starts all over again. Fight strategy bombards the boxer from every direction, but once

again the fighters tiptoe just out of reach of each other, exchanging harmless lefts. Then one shoots a right, and the punches start flying in every direction.

With the expiration of the third round, the fight ends. Neither boxer dominated, but the judges appoint a winner. Cheers erupt from the crowd, and the next pair enter the ring to do battle.

Five, six, seven bouts, all nearly the same. It's amateur boxing, but it's not at Detroit's Olympia or Cobo Hall. It's at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield.

LAST THURSDAY was the second time in two months the Community Center had sponsored an amateur boxing card. And it was obvious that they still don't have the wrinkles ironed out yet.

The main attraction was supposed to be undefeated welterweight Andre Williams, a Detroit and aspiring Olympian. Several other promising local fighters were to be part of the card.

But none were. Most of the attractions withdrew, leaving the Community Center with a bunch of small fighters.

And when I say "small" fighters, I don't mean small-time. I mean short in stature and young in years. They were, kids, some as young as 10 years old.

It lent an eerie, bizarre feeling to the evening, watching little kids come out of their corners with people screaming at them. Most exhibited a knowledge of the basic boxing skills, and all were good sports. They shook hands with each other before and after the bout.

The youngest had a hard time actually hurting each other with punches. The weight of the glove seemed to provide most of the power, not the arm behind it.

It got scary, though, in the older age groups, the 13- and 14-year-olds who are just beginning to develop physically and learn their own strength. In one such bout, Paul Meta caught his opponent, Philip Bonner, with a couple of hard punches and sent him reeling into the corner.

THE REFEREE called the fight immediately, giving Meta the win on a knockout. Bonner slumped dizzily into his corner, blood pouring from his nose.

No harm was done — Bonner was himself again in a few minutes. But it made me think, is it necessary to put kids in front of screaming crowds and watch them try to knock each other's block off?

So many people these days are adamantly opposed to such violent sports as football for young kids. They'd probably go bananas if they saw this.

Again, there is little physical harm that can come to these kids. In a bout between 12-year-olds, one got flattened by a punch. He jumped to his feet quickly and took the mandatory eight count, but afterward when his opponent backed him into the corner with a series of punches, the referee stopped the fight quickly.

At such an early age, the physical punishment is minimal, and the skills they learn and training they go through are beneficial. What bothers me is the mental part of it.

Boxing is probably the oldest form of sport, evolving from a very basic instinct to fight to survive.

Swimmers falter

North Farmington's swimmers once again found themselves outmatched, as the Raiders lost their second straight dual meet, 104-67, to Livonia Stevenson last Tuesday.

North was unable to keep pace with the faster Stevenson tankers. The Spartans finished first in eight of the 11 events, winning the first seven in the meet.

Brian Manderfield won the 500-yard freestyle (5:26.5) for North and anchored the winning 400-yard freestyle relay (3:41.7). Others on the winning Raider relay team were Phil Holcomb, Gerry Highley and Carl Gunderson.

Kirk Knock was North's other winner in the 100-yard backstroke (1:03.9).

Larry Hine and John Schoenle each won two individual events and swam on the first-place 200-yard medley relay team. Hine captured the 200-yard individual medley (2:08.8) and the 100-yard freestyle (1:11.1).

Schoenle was first in the 100-yard butterfly (1:37.8) and the 100-yard breaststroke (1:05.3). Jack Edelen and Mark Ankenbauer joined Hine and Schoenle on the winning medley relay (1:47.9).

Other Stevenson winners were Greg Boyle in the 200-yard freestyle (1:56.2), Rick Schwedt in the 50-yard freestyle (25.1) and Mark Helden in diving (289.30 points), the latter setting new pool and school records.

North, now 0-2 on the season, is idle until Jan. 10, when it hosts Farmington.

FARMINGTON FARED no better than North in its meet with Dearborn Edsel Ford, coming out on the short end of a 101-68 score.

It was the third straight setback for the Falcons. Farmington swims next on Jan. 8, when it travels to Walled Lake Central.

AAU tankers shine

Anita Nellands and Alex Afsari, swimming for the West Bloomfield Swim Club, each won a pair of events during the Yugoslian AAU B-C meet Dec. 15 and 16.

Afsari also placed in four other events and Nellands in two. Nellands, swimming in the 13-14 age group, won the girls' 50-yard freestyle (28.6) and the girls' open 200-yard individual medley (2:36.4).

She placed second in the girls' open 100-yard butterfly (1:13.1) and was fourth in the girls' open 100-yard backstroke (1:15.7).

Afsari captured the 10-and-under boys' 50-yard butterfly (37.9) and the

10-and-under 200-yard individual medley (3:04.1). He was second in the 100-yard freestyle (1:14.6), third in the 50-yard freestyle (34.2), fourth in the 50-yard breast stroke (46.5) and sixth in the 100-yard backstroke (1:33.0).

Lynne Zielinski also turned a good performance for West Bloomfield, taking a pair of seconds and a fifth. Zielinski, swimming in the 10-and-under age division, was second in the girls' 50-yard butterfly (1:05.4) and the 200-yard individual medley (3:11.5). She was fifth in the 100-yard freestyle (1:19.8).

There were 1,970 entries in the 30-team meet, but no team standings were kept.

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