

MSU's Kelsner shows class in area speech

By C. J. RISAK

"Excuse me for being late," the athlete said.

It was something that could be expected, I thought, considering that within the next six months this guy would be making in the neighborhood of \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year.

But the rest of his excuse proved that he was indeed different from some other college basketball players.

"Classes started last Wednesday and, after playing in the national championship game last Monday, I have to return to a class. So it was imperative that I attend my two classes this morning."

If this was just an average player talking, or even if he was just one marginal member of the Michigan State squad that now reigns as national champion, it might be understandable.

But was Greg Kelsner, the high-flying Spartan whose incredible dunks following passes from Earvin "Magic" Johnson thrilled the nation.

Kelsner, the 6-foot-7 forward who had played with such calm demeanor during MSU's easy tournament drive for the title, stood at the podium during a press conference at the West Bloomfield Jewish Community Center last Monday looking rather nervous.

"I really didn't expect this much of a crowd," he told the audience. He could have been in a state starving for a championship team of some sort, the Spartans had filled the void. And Kelsner and Johnson have become the heroes of the youth around the state.

AND NOW, AS an idol of thousands, one might think Kelsner wouldn't be so concerned with his grades. After all, come June 25, he'll be drafted by the pros and will sign a multi-year, million dollar contract. What he learns in college isn't going to help his outside jumper much.

So what's he doing standing up there and telling us that his future goals include getting his degree and then coming back and getting his masters in criminal justice? Who's going to believe that?

After all, first consider that, of the four major professional sports, basketball is the most mercenary.

The National Basketball Association has its "hardship clause," which allows any collegiate to quit school and go pro. It even has some players who have gone from the high school level directly to a multi-million dollar contract in the pros.

So how can we believe that these players are getting their education, when so many just use the colleges as a stepping stone to the pros?

With Kelsner, it's more than believable. Besides being an All-American for his playing ability, he was named to the scholastic All-American team. He has carried a 3.0 grade point average for most of his collegiate career.

He stood there, in front of a crowd of media and fans and youngsters, and told about his team's season, which he called "quite a thrill for all of us," but

then summarized it as "very long".

"Our season started on Sept. 9," he began, recounting the days from the early season tournament in South America and tracing the games through the Far West Classic during Christmas and the Big Ten season, which proved to be the toughest part of the year for the Spartans.

He seemed like a very ordinary fellow and, by his tone, he might have been explaining his slides from a recent vacation he spent in Hawaii.

"I don't really have any urge to coach," he responded to one question. His summer basketball camp, which he conducts at the Community Center, more than tires him out.

"I like working with kids," he said, as if he were coach of a Little League baseball team.

IT WAS INEVITABLE that, sooner or later, the questioning would turn to his well-known teammate, "Magic" Johnson. But even then, the level-headed senior had nothing but praise.

"He's a fine, unselfish basketball player," he said. "He has more natural ability than anyone I've ever played with." When asked about the publicity Johnson gets, despite the fact that Kelsner was the team's leading scorer, his answer was almost predictable.

"I'm more pleased with the publicity I get, rather than the publicity I don't get."

He answered all questions easily and deftly, even throwing in a few quips that one might expect from the team's comic, Johnson. Asked why he decided on MSU when he graduated from Detroit Henry Ford, he said:

"The man who recruited me, Vernon Payne, really made me feel wanted. My dad said he didn't care (where I went), but if I didn't go to MSU he'd never talk to me again."

It was obvious that all the questions had been asked before, but Kelsner answered them anyway, including those concerned with what Johnson will do, go pro or go back to school, and he did it patiently. When it was over, one was left with the impression that he was really a very ordinary guy who just happened to possess great playing ability.

It was strange, but Kelsner's attitude was directly opposite to that of the man who preceded him to the podium. The first speaker was the impostor who sneaked on to the court during the NBA All-Star game at the Pontiac Silverdome last January.

Since then, the impostor, whose name I don't recall nor do I want to, has made national appearances on the "Tonight Show" and the "Today Show," and several other national appearances. A guy who, in most cases, the public would disdain, was now a public hero.

A man who has no great ability or claim to fame other than, on a bet, he went out on the floor and shot some baskets during the All-Star game, was talking to a bunch of kids about his "accomplishment."



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6144 TELEGRAPH

OLSM scores at Huron Relays Laker trackmen shine

By TOM BAER

West Bloomfield's track team, showing good depth in the distance events, finished second in the Southwestern Michigan Invitational last Saturday at Western Michigan University's Reed Fieldhouse.

The only area school to participate in the meet, West Bloomfield completed 44 team points, 14 fewer than first-place Kalamazoo Loy Norrix.

Kalamazoo Central finished third with 39 1/2 points.

"I was pleased with our showing," said West Bloomfield coach Lee Averill. "I thought we'd do fairly well, but I had no idea we'd be second. The competition there was pretty good. The schools from Kalamazoo, Portage and Battle Creek are always well represented."

West Bloomfield won two events, the distance medley relay and the 1,600-meter relay.

The distance medley

crew (Greg Schroeder, Gerard Grabowski, Pete Resser and Rex Fitzekam) was clocked in 11:01.5. The 1,600-meter squad (Jeff Cox, Gary Schroeder, Jim Bitner and Greg Schroeder) won with a time of 3:27.2.

West Bloomfield captured second in the pole vault with Daryl Arnett going 12-foot-4, and runner up honors in the 800-meter run with Matt O'Mara recording a 2:05.0. O'Mara finished the 1,600-meter run in 4:30 for third place, and the Lakers' sprint medley relay (Cox, Gary Schroeder, Greg Schroeder and Bitner) took a third with a time of 2:35.5.

Chris Mayone gave

West Bloomfield a fourth place in the high jump with a 6-foot-1 showing, and then took a fifth in the 60-meter high hurdles with an :08.9 clocking.

Running in the Southwest Invitational meant that many West Bloomfield trackmen has to pass up Eastern Michigan University's Huron Relays, which traditionally open the prep track season.

"Usually there's no conflict between the two meets," Averill said. "The meet in Kalamazoo is usually a week later. But for some reason they couldn't get the fieldhouse at Western Michigan next week."

Orchard Lake St. Mary opened its season last Friday at the Class B relay of the Huron Relays at EMU's Bowen Fieldhouse.

OLSM scored just three points thanks to senior pole vaulter Jon Macctowski, who finished sixth with a vault of 12 feet. OLSM's shuttle hurdle relay (Jon Macctowski, Dean Thompson, Kelly Johnson and Peter Hyde) went :35.0, not good enough to score, but still a "respectable time" in the words of coach Stan Sulinski.

Next Saturday, the West Bloomfield teams will participate in the Spartan Relays at Michigan State University's Jensen Fieldhouse.

FHS vaulter provides points

Jim Brancheau, a senior pole-vaulter, saved Farmington High's track team from coming home pointless from the Huron Relays last Saturday at Eastern Michigan University's Bowen Fieldhouse.

Brancheau cleared 12-foot-9 in the vault to take fourth place and account for all of Farmington's six team points.

"The vaulters all had a hard time there," said Farmington coach Dave Catherman. "The conditions were a little strange. It's right next to the track and there was a lot of confusion."

Some other non-scoring performances for Farmington included the distance medley team (Paul Wallace, Chris Titus, Steve Medonis and John

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