

Thrilled!

Area college hockey players grab gusto before crowd at Joe Louis

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

The Great Lakes Invitational college hockey tournament, which drew national records last week at Joe Louis Arena, was much more than a four-team holiday get-together.

For the better players, it was a chance to show their talents to the National Hockey League scouts in the pressbox — like Johnny Wilson, a former Red Wing coach, and Wayne Maxner, the Wings' next ex-coach. For other players, it was a rare chance to play before a boisterous crowd (19,225) five times larger than what they draw on campus.

For others — Steve Murphy of Redford, Craig Laktion and Mike Neff of West Bloomfield, Frank Finn, Todd Gardner and Paul Kobylarz of Livonia — it was a chance to play in their hometown in front of family and friends.

Those are the concrete things. But their were spiritual rewards as well.

FOR MOST of the players, the tournament was a near-epochal two-game, two-day event where dreams swirled with reality. The dreams are the dreams of all hockey players of this caliber — playing on teams like Michigan Tech, Michigan, Michigan State and Notre Dame — to play in the NHL. The reality, for most of them, is that they don't have nearly enough ability to play with the best pros in the world.

For the ones who will make it, the Joe Louis crowd, the atmosphere and the media attention are a taste of what's to come. For those who won't, the tournament is a sweet, maybe bittersweet, taste of what could have been.

"Yesterday, coming into the (first) game, I was nervous for the first time in four years," said Laktion, smiling, almost jubilant, even though his MSU team could do no better than a 4-4 tie with U-M in the consolation game and a tie for third in the tourney.

"I've been coming down to the Great Lakes Invitational since I was a tot," Laktion added. "Ten years ago, I used to dream of playing in this tournament. It's a dream come true."

HIS TEAM'S exciting tie and the huge crowd had him pumped. Almost

enough to revive his fantasies of pro hockey. But he is a senior with just one goal on the season and he knows that this is the pinnacle, and nearly the end, of his hockey career.

"I always thought about pro hockey, but it didn't come out as I expected," Laktion admitted. "If you would have asked me four years ago, I would have said that was a main goal. It was my main expectation. But it's been a great four years."

Murphy, on the other hand, has more reason than ever to think of the pros. A Redford Thurston grad, he sat out last season with a knee injury and wasn't drafted. End of career.

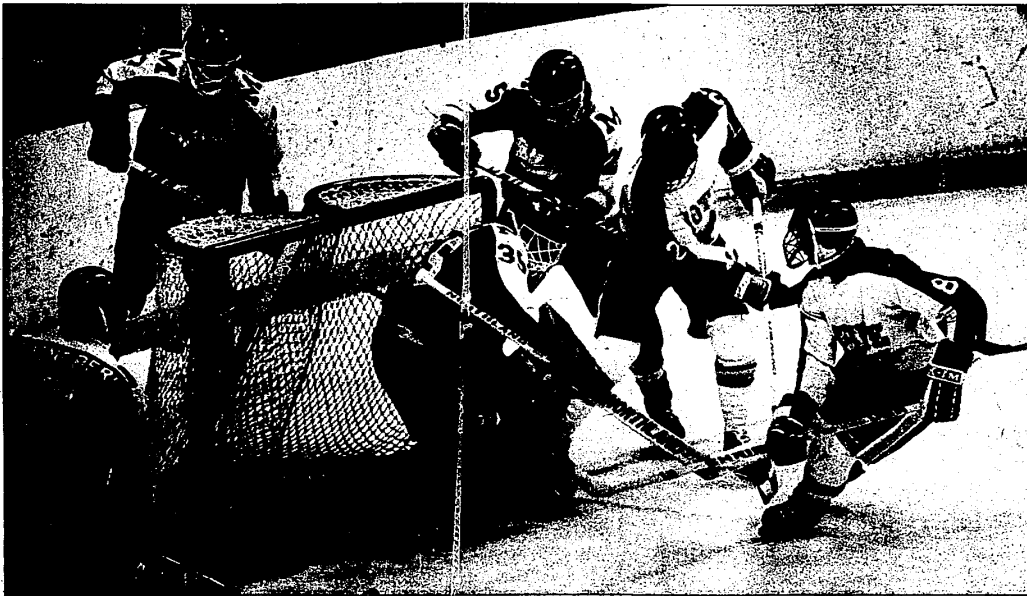
Except this year, though just a sophomore, he leads Michigan Tech in scoring with 11 goals and 14 assists. He scored Michigan Tech's winning goal Tuesday, and could have been the hero again in the finals Wednesday against Notre Dame. It gave his team a 3-2

lead, but the Irish rallied to win, 4-3. For his efforts, Murphy was named to the all-tournament team.

"I MISSED my draft," said Murphy, "but now I'm kind of looking at it like I can be a free agent. To tell you the truth, I never thought I'd be this far along (after his operation last year) halfway through the year. I thought I'd be just starting to play. I'm very satisfied."



Wolverine Ted Speers shoves Notre Dame's John Keating in early Great Lakes action.



Adam Parsons (8) of Notre Dame shoots the puck (upper left) past Michigan goalie Peter Mason (35). Notre Dame went on to win the game, 6-2.

photos by STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

DCD shoots for consistency

By Marty Budner
staff writer

If Detroit Country Day coach Kurt Keener could make one resolution for the new year, it would be that his basketball team play with more consistency.

The talented, but youthful Yellow Jackets, finished the 1981 portion of their winter schedule with a 4-3 record, thanks to a 37-46 overtime victory Wednesday over Royal Oak Dondero.

"The game was typical of DCD's roller-coaster season thus far.

Country Day enjoyed a 10-point first-half advantage over the defending Metro Suburban Activities Association champions. The Yellow Jackets increased their lead in the third quarter by playing fine defense, getting inside position under the boards and moving the ball well on offense.

Then, after amassing a 54-40 lead head-

ing into the fourth quarter, they folded like a card table.

Dondero pressed relentlessly and forced six turnovers. Oak Jerry Bolton got hot and scored 12 of his game-high 20 points — including the game-tying basket from 30 feet out — in the final eight minutes as Dondero forced Country Day into its second overtime game of the season.

RICH GOLDBERG, Country Day's starting sophomore guard, then hit six of his team's seven overtime points as the Yellow Jackets escaped with the victory.

"We had control of it, then they (Dondero) started pressing, and we lost our poise," said Keener. "Fortunately, we had enough left at the end to get back into the game."

"But, that's the way it's been for us this year. We seem to have problems late in our games. We had a lead in our overtime game against Sharpe, and lost it by doing the things we did tonight."

"At times we look great breaking the press, then at other times we can't get the ball down the floor," he said. "We're not patient enough yet to consistently do the things that we do well."

Country Day had 24 turnovers, including four late in the overtime period when the Yellow Jackets just barely held on. Dondero actually held the ball late in overtime, but a key steal by DCD led the game.

Goldberg finished with a team-high 24 points, while 6-foot-5 forward Chuck Adams scored 13. Damon Jones, DCD's 6-6 center, and forward Doug Howell each added 10 points.

Country Day's next game is Friday at Hamtramck in a key Metro Conference game.

"It's early in the season, but this is a big game for us," said Keener. "That could be the game that decides the league championship."

Lathrup cagers drop title game

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Southfield-Lathrup coach Jim Kourtkis paid quite a compliment to Renardo Brown, the latest in the long line of basketball standouts at Highland Park High School.

"Renardo is probably the best offensive player I've seen in the last six or seven years," said Kourtkis a few minutes after the 6-foot-5 Brown scored 25 points and grabbed nine rebounds to help unbeaten Highland Park win its own holiday tournament last Wednesday with a 55-39 showing against Lathrup.

Brown, playing tough under the basket, went nine for 12 for 18 points in the first half as the winners raced to a 12-point lead (30-18) at the intermission.

The Polar Bears, Brown included, cooled off considerably in the second half — "slopped around" were the words head-

coach Darrell Pursifull used — but not enough to allow Lathrup to make a comeback as it did in its opening round victory over Detroit Mumford.

Lathrup did score 10 third-quarter points to Highland Park's seven, but any comeback hopes the Chargers may have had were squashed when Paul Bobbitt fouled out with 3:52 left to play and HP leading, 41-34.

Bobbitt, a 6-3 senior, has been carrying the scoring load for Lathrup, which lost scoring threat Scott Shafer to a sprained ankle. Bobbitt scored 24 to help Lathrup beat Mumford. But, thanks in part of Brown's tough defense, he managed only six against Highland Park.

"We didn't get the super game from Paul," Kourtkis said, "but there's a lot of pressure on him right now. He had a big defensive assignment (guarding Brown). He has to do it all for us until we get that other

player (Shafer) back."

No Lathrup player scored in double figures. Will Montgomery, a 5-10 senior guard, led with nine points. Jim Ashel had eight, and Bobbitt and Eric Smith each provided six.

James Crawl, a 6-foot guard, followed Brown with 14 points. Lonnie Woodward and Karl Wilson each had six.

Highland Park made 24 of 44 first-goal attempts and dropped in seven of 11 free throws. Lathrup was cold from the field, making 16 of 45, while hitting on six of 14 free-throw attempts.

Highland Park, now 6-0, has a matchup with another area club — unbeaten Southfield High — on Jan. 25, and it could be interesting.

"Southfield has a great team," Pursifull said. "We'll have to play better than we did tonight (against Lathrup), but we will."

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