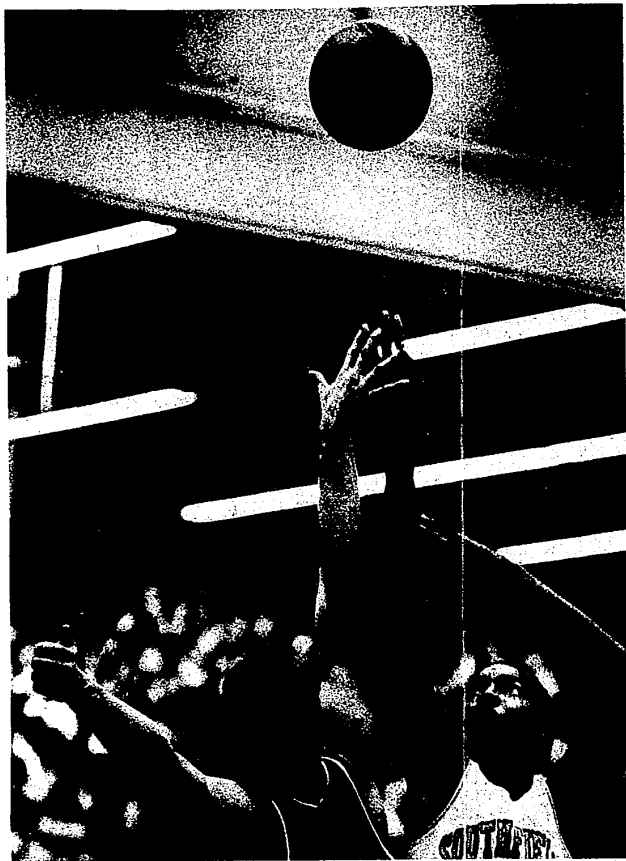


Monday, April 19, 1982



Ralph Walker (right) has a basketball future at Michigan State, according to Spartan head coach Jud Heathcote.

Jays' Ralph Walker picks Michigan State

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Southfield High School's Ralph Walker will be starting a new basketball career on the same court where he closed out the old one.

Walker, the 6-foot-8 center on Southfield's very successful basketball team, has signed a national letter of intent to attend Michigan State University.

Not quite one month ago — March 25, to be exact — the Walker-led Blue Jays lost a one-point heartbreaker to Flint Central on a desperation 40-foot jump shot by Mark Harris in the state Class A semifinals. The game was played before a full house in Michigan State's Jensen Fieldhouse.

MSU head coach Jud Heathcote said

that next season would probably be a "learning year" for Walker, who wasn't considered a Big Ten prospect at the beginning of the season.

"I think he has great future potential," Heathcote said. "I was impressed with his improvement during the year. And he had a great state tournament."

"Ralph has a couple of things going for him that you just can't coach — quickness to the ball and explosiveness in rebounding."

WALKER, WHO averaged 17 points and eight rebounds per game while shooting 55 percent from the floor and 69 percent from the free-throw line, was a dominating figure on the court for coach Greg Sliwka's Blue Jays.

"Ralph is a dominating force in the

middle," Sliwka has said. "He intimidates a lot of other teams. He is a great shot blocker and just a super young man. He's a 16-year-old senior, an excellent student with a great attitude."

"He has so many strengths. He has a great shot and does a lot of rebounding. His shooting and rebounding skills definitely are strengths, aside from the intangibles (leadership and intimidation factors)."

Walker was one of two Blue Jays to make the first team of the Observer & Eccentric's All-Area Basketball team. The other was junior Mike McCaskill. Sliwka was named Coach of the Year.

Southfield finished with a 25-2 record, the best in the school's 30-year history.

Suburban Softball being groomed for play

By Marty Budner
staff writer

The infields are still soggy and require grading, the outfield needs resodding, four diamonds lack light poles, and some areas have yet to be fenced in.

Other than that, the 1982 season is ready to get under way at Suburban Softball — Oakland County's answer to Softball City.

"The weather has been so miserable that we've been forced to postpone our season opening until the first weekend in May," said Dirk Dieters Sr., owner and proprietor, while treading through the facility Friday morning.

"We're anticipating a fine new season with a lot of teams," he said. "We had teams apply for the season before Christmas, and now we have almost twice as many teams as we did last year at this time."

Dieters hopes Suburban Softball's sophomore season goes smoother than last year when the 78-acre facility — a former landfill near M-59 and Crooks in Avon Township — made its debut.

The problems began when township officials reviewed Dieters' site plans and found some inconsistencies in draining and sewage. Halfway through the season, the township threatened to close the sprawling softball complex.

However, Dieters made some on-site alterations and was allowed to keep Suburban Softball in operation through September.

LAST YEAR, Dieters was denied a liquor license by Avon Township. Glaxue Corp., which will operate concession stands at Suburban Softball this summer, was denied in a similar request last week.

Dieters said that he will continue to

make site improvements in compliance with township orders.

"I have an agreement worked out with the township where we'll solve all of our problems over the next three years," said Dieters, who previously coached Oakland University's baseball team.

"We've agreed to hood the lights which they said were a distraction to people living in the area and motorists on M-59. And we're hoping to get in sewers for rest room facilities by the end of the summer. We want to make other improvements on the grounds as the summer goes along."

"This is something that we just enjoy doing regardless of what's been said about it," he said. "I can't think of a greater thing to do for a former landfill than to put some softball fields on it."

Suburban Softball presently includes

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Stars to shine in cage classic

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Thirty-six players, including several area standouts, have been chosen to play in the fifth annual Schoolcraft College International Basketball Classic.

First-round action pits the Detroit AAU and Metro AAU All-Stars at 5:30 p.m. Friday followed by the Michigan and Ontario Junior Men's teams at 8 p.m.

The consolation game begins at 4 p.m. Saturday followed by the championship at 6 p.m.

The Michigan squad, which consists of 12 players, reads like a blue chip list. It includes All-Eccentric performers Paul Jokisch of Birmingham Brother Rice, a 6-foot-8 forward bound for the University of Michigan, and Hiram Harris, a 6-6 guard who led Orchard Lake St. Mary's to the Class A state crown.

Southfield's Ralph Walker, a 6-foot-8 forward headed for Michigan State, leads the Metro team. His brother, Jerome, and point guard Mike Priest, members of the Southfield team which went to Class A semifinals, have also been selected.

Other area players gaining berths on the Metro team are: Tom Gomolak, 6-8 center from Livonia Churchill; Norm Haygood, 6-8 center, Plymouth Salem; Eric Sink, 6-6 center, Livonia Bentley; and Jim Sibel, 6-foot guard, Redford Thurston.

ROCKY WATKINS of Schoolcraft will coach the Michigan team. Danny Williams is his assistant.

Players were selected based on their performances in open tryouts held the past two weeks at Schoolcraft.

Ricky Buttrum, a 6-7 forward from Ecorse, has been the most impressive player in the workouts because of his relentless rebounding, sharp passing and quick interior jumping. He will play next year for coach Jim Boyce at Eastern Michigan University.

Brother Rice's Paul Jokisch and Orchard Lake St. Mary's Hiram Harris will play on the Michigan team, while Southfield's trio of Ralph Walker, Mike Priest and Jerome Walker will be on the Metro squad.

He is joined up front on the Michigan team by 6-8 Marty Embry, a West Un-sold-type player who helped Flint Central to the state Class A title. Embry has decided to attend DePaul. Roy Tarpley, a 6-9 center from Detroit Cooley, Patrick Ford, 6-5 forward, Detroit Cass Tech; Herb Robinson, 6-5 forward, Lansing Eastern; Ken Webb, 6-5 forward, Romeo; and Jokisch round out the forward and center spots.

The guards are Mark Harris, a 5-10 sharpshooter from Flint Central; Anthony Watson, Detroit Cooley; Ken Kozlowski, Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher; and Gordon Bonaparte, Detroit Central.

MIKE CASH, an assistant coach at Orchard Lake St. Mary's, will direct the Metro team and Jim Harkrader will be his assistant.

Randy Henry, former assistant coach at the University of Detroit, will lead the Detroit squad, assisted by Wellington Burrell of Oakland Community College.

Daily tickets for the Classic games can be purchased in advance at \$4 for adults and \$2 for students (18 and under). The cost is \$5 and \$3, respectively, at the door.

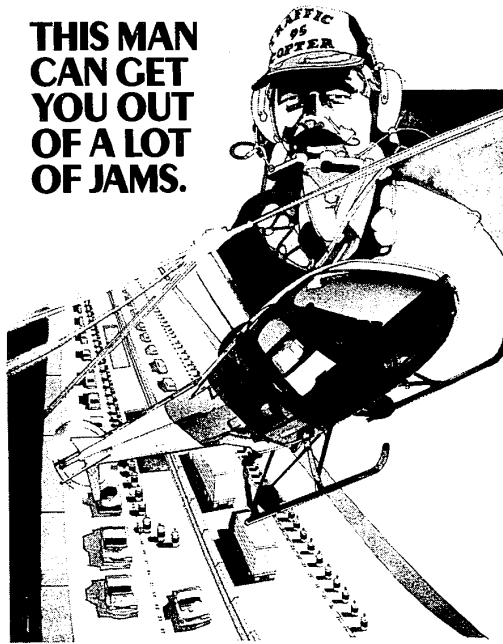
Tickets can be purchased in advance from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday at the Schoolcraft College Bookstore. Tickets are also available at the Physical Education Building from 5-9 p.m. Monday-Friday.



JOHN STANLEY/staff photographer

One of the players on the Michigan all-star team is Brother Rice forward Paul Jokisch, a consensus all-star who's bound for the University of Michigan on a basketball scholarship.

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