

Southfield rips N. Farmington

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The following conversation was overheard in Southfield High School's gymnasium Friday a few minutes before the Blue Jays were to do battle in the state Class A district basketball championship game.

Fan to SHS teacher: "Have you got another winner?"

SHS teacher to fan: "By 25 points."

Not quite, teach. You were two points shy.

Southfield — McCaskill, Walton, Darden, Kelsor, Hart and company — did indeed win the contest and thus the district championship, overwhelming a game North Farmington squad, 67-64.

The victory, the Jays' 21st in 23 starts this season, means a trip to the Class A regional tomorrow night at Ferndale High School.

The loss means an end to a 10-12 season for first-year coach Tom Negoshian and his North Farmington Raiders.

But the old sports saw about the game being closer than the final score indicated, certainly applied to this outing as far as Southfield coach Greg Silwka was concerned.

"North Farmington came to play," said Silwka after the game. "North Farmington played their butts off, and it was good for our kids to see that. It was good for them to see what a 125 percent effort looks like."

ACTUALLY, THE JAYS owe their landslide to a very quick start. Southfield clicked off the first nine points before North's Ray Boyle finally hit a layup. Southfield had 25 points to North's 13 at quarter's end.

Southfield extended the margin to 17 points (47-30), but the second half was played on more even terms, 40 points for the Jays, 34 for the Raiders.



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Greg Silwka: "This is our home court. We do a lot of shooting here. We do have four or five good shooters."

And Southfield shot hot, especially early in the game. Most Jay shots were falling early on. Even when they didn't, there was Michael McCaskill going high for the tip in.

McCaskill, a 6-foot-4 senior, who could be headed for all-state status, finished with a team-high 20 points on a variety of tips, short jumpers and a couple of crowd-pleasing slam dunks. Joey Walton, a 5-11 sharpshooting guard, scored 18 points, and Ray Kelsor had 16.

The Jays shot 50 percent from the field, taking 74 shots, making 37. North had far fewer shots, 45, but made 23 of them for 51 percent.

"This is our home court and we do a lot of shooting here," said Silwka when asked to comment on his team's exceptional shooting.

"We do have four or five good shooters. You could mention Walton, Hart, Darden and Kelsor. And I think McCaskill's a pretty good shooter, too. It's just that he's so involved in doing some many other things for us."

SOME OF THOSE other things: blocking shots (six against North Farmington), rebounding (eight) and dealing out assists (eight).

Darden and Hart combined for 11 rebounds to help McCaskill on the boards. Southfield held a 34-15 rebounding advantage.

"We just couldn't stay with Southfield on the boards — the defensive boards," Negoshian said. "We don't have a whole lot of height, so it's hard to compete with a team like that."

North's Boyle, a 6-2 senior guard who likes crashing down the lane and along the base line, scored 20 points on eight field goals and four of five free throws.

He showed the district fans he could score by notching 28 in North's win over city-rival Farmington last Tuesday.

Mike Black, Boyle's backcourt mate, added 12 points, and John Nowak came off the bench to fire in 19. North was sharp from the free throw line, making 18 of 20.

Southfield meets the Southfield-Lathrup District winner, either Birmingham Groves or Lathrup, at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Ferndale. On Wednesday evening, Rochester plays Ferndale. The two winners meet for the regional crown Friday.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

North Farmington's Ray Boyle (22) couldn't stop Southfield's Michael McCaskill from getting off this shot during the district championship game Friday. Southfield won, 67-64.

By stopping Groves, 49-45

Lathrup wins district crown

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Shooting accuracy and rebounding strength were two factors in Southfield-Lathrup's 49-45 victory over Birmingham Groves Saturday night in the final of the state Class A basketball district at Lathrup.

Lathrup, now 17-6 on the season and 14-2 since the holiday break, will face city-rival Southfield at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the opening round of the Ferndale Regional.

Groves, coached by Gary Sharpe, closes out a 15-7 season.

Lathrup shot a tepid 34 percent (19 of 56) from the floor, but Morris Baxter and Ron Smith enjoyed hot streaks at crucial times to help the Chargers outdistance the stubborn Falcons.

Coach Jim Kourakis' Lathrup squad nursed a two-point halftime lead (26-24) into a seven-point spread (38-31) after three quarters.

Smith, a 5-foot-9 senior guard, led Lathrup with 15 points, 8 coming in the last quarter. Baxter, a 6-3 junior forward, contributed 10 points on five outside shots. Scott Shafer and substitute Vic Miller each added eight points.

Lathrup maintained a 34-28 rebounding edge as the 6-4 Shafer pulled down 12, many coming in the fourth quarter to stymie Groves' comeback efforts. Senior forward Curtis Campbell fired in 13 points for Groves. Teammate Mark McGrath, the tallest man on the court at 6-6, had 11, all but one coming in the first half.

"The key to the game was that we shut down McGrath in the second half," Kourakis said. "They were trying to get the ball to him, but we denied that time after time."

"Another key was that we were able to maintain a seven- or eight-point lead in the fourth quarter, so that when Groves made a run at it we still had that cushion."

FOUR LATHRUP starters scored in double figures Wednesday as the Chargers snuffed out Birmingham Seasholm's season, 56-43, in the district semifinals.

Smith led the winners with 14 points on six baskets and two of three free throws. Shafer and Baxter each had 11 points and Riley contributed 10.

Shafer, who fouled out of the game, snatched 11 rebounds to help the Chargers dominate the boards.

Brian Nefcy, who hit for a game-high 21 points, and Jeff Lindsey combined for 31 of Seasholm's 43 points. The next highest-scoring Maple was Dave Stucky, who had six.

Seasholm, which closed out a 4-16 record under first-year coach Dan Hickey, battled Lathrup to an eight-all tie at the quarter. The Chargers jumped to a 20-14 halftime lead and then pushed the advantage to nine points (27-28) after three quarters.

Groves advanced to the district final

by eliminating Bloomfield Hills Andover, 74-43, in the other semifinal, played Thursday at Lathrup.

Groves' two gunners, Campbell and McGrath, produced 23 and 12 points, respectively. Bryan Wirtlin scored 14 points for Andover, which trailed by seven (28-21) at halftime. Andover finished with a 2-18 record.

LATHRUP 49 — GROVES 45

SOUTHFIELD-LATHRUP (49) — Curtis Riley 9, 1-4; 1; Scott Shafer 8, 2-8; Ron Smith 5, 0-5; Mike Carithers 4, 0-8; Morris Baxter 5, 0-0; 19; Vic Miller 8, 2-4. TOTALS: 49-19, 45.

BIRMINGHAM GROVES (45) — Jim Hartley 4, 0-8; Tom Jordan 1, 0-1; 2; Curtis Campbell 5, 3-4; 12; Mark McGrath 5, 5-11; 11; Denis Pekar 2, 2-5; 2; Pat Walsh 1, 0-0; 4; Rob Fearneh 0, 0-1; 0. TOTALS: 45-17, 11-22, 49.

TOTAL FOULS — Lathrup 18, Groves 16.

FOULED OUT: McGrath (G); LATHRUP 13 13 12 11 — 49

GROVES 10 14 7 14 — 45



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Lathrup's Mike Carithers puts up a shot during a recent game.

St. Mary's grounds Christian

St. Patrick's Day isn't until Thursday, but a group of happy Irishmen from Royal Oak couldn't be blamed if they started celebrating a little early.

The Fighting Irish of St. Mary's High School earned a Class D district basketball title and their 16th victory this season with a 48-43 showing over host Southfield Christian in the district final Saturday afternoon.

Coach Dave Sells' Christian squad has a 17-0 record and a share of the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference title to show for the 1992-93 season.

St. Mary's led throughout most of the game, establishing a 22-17 halftime spread. But Christian, using three straight buckets by senior Dan Severy, rallied to take a 23-22 lead midway through the third quarter.

But the Eagles could manage just one more bucket in the next four minutes, and the Irish came back to lead by nine (34-25) at the three-quarter mark. Christian rallied again in the fourth

quarter, but couldn't quite catch up.

Only three Christian players scored. Severy finished with a game-high 19 points. Teammate Chris Seavey, who keyed SCS' late comeback with nine fourth-quarter points, had 16 for the game, and Doug Dietzman contributed another eight.

Mose Smith, a 5-8 guard, led St. Mary's with 15 points. Scott Nichols and Paul Tolbert each had 11.

CHRISTIAN NEEDED a big fourth quarter to overcome Detroit Bethesda, 49-45, in the district semifinals Thursday night.

Trailing throughout most of the game, the Southfield squad was down by eight (39-31) going into the final eight minutes, during which it erupted for 18 points and held the Detroiters to six.

Mike Routledge, a 6-foot-1 senior substitute, was the hero twice in the final quarter. With 3:04 left to play, he

sank two free throws to tie the game at 45. He then pulled SCS ahead to stay by hitting a short jump shot with 38 seconds left.

Christian mainstays Dietzman and Seavey were keys to the comeback. Dietzman notched six of his game-high 17 points in the last quarter, and Seavey legged seven of his 13 in that stanza.

The 6-1 Seavey hit two foul shots with 4:19 remaining to pulled the winners to within two, 43-41, and also pulled down seven rebounds.

Bethesda's Benjamin Hammeman, the tallest player on the court at 6-7, scored 13 points and had 11 rebounds. Teammates Matthew Romine and Patrick Caston, contributed 10 and nine points, respectively.

Bethesda, which bowed out with an 11-4 overall record, raced to a 21-20 lead after a run-and-gun first quarter and then raised the lead to six points (38-32) at the half.

Christian and Bethesda are members

of the same league — the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference. They split a pair of games during the regular season. In the other district semi Thursday, St. Mary's stopped Ann Arbor Greenhills, 55-41. Nichols tossed in 19 points for the winners.

ST. MARY'S 48 — CHRISTIAN 43

ST. MARY'S (48) — Mose Smith 5, 5-13; Scott Nichols 4, 3-4; 11; Seavey 7, 2-12; 3; Paul Tolbert 4, 2-5; 11; Robert Davies 2, 0-0; 6. TOTALS: 48-18, 12-17, 48.

S.F.D. CHRISTIAN (43) — Tom Wolf 0, 0-0; 0; Chris Seavey 4, 8-9; 16; Doug Dietzman 4, 0-0; 8; Dan Severy 2, 1-1; 16; Brian Packer 0, 0-0; Mike Routledge 0, 0-0; 0. TOTALS: 43-11, 9-11, 43.

TOTAL FOULS — Christian 12, St. Mary's 11.

FOULED OUT: None.

ST. MARY'S 9 13 12 14 — 48

S.F.D. CHRISTIAN 8 9 8 18 — 43