

Bright moments spice up 7-0 route

By Chris McCoosky
staff writer

The final score of the match was Plymouth Canton, 7, Farmington High School, 0. But that doesn't come close to telling the story.

To be sure, it was a one-sided affair for the most part. Some of the Canton victors were so one-sided that the winners felt as bad as the losers — they felt guilty for beating them so badly.

Canton's third doubles team, seniors Renee Zens and Angela Kocik, didn't yield a game to their Farmington opponents, sophomores Colleen McKee and Lisa Schwab, in two sets.

Nor did Canton's fourth singles player, Julie Sparks, yield a game to Farmington's Sandy Goerke. Missy Lloyd, in number-three singles, overpowered her Farmington opponent, freshman Julie Neer, 6-1, 6-0.

IN NUMBER TWO doubles, Nancy Rinehart and Ping Chau defeated Farmington's Nancy Perry and Maria Teicher, 6-1, 6-1. And Canton's number one doubles duo, Kristen Smith and Kelly Craig had a relatively easy time with Kathy Korybalski and Jenny Ferry.

Amazingly, despite the obvious route, the match between Canton and Farmington last Monday had moments of pure drama that can only be produced by athletic competition.

The number one and two singles matches were both hard-fought and exciting contests. The players were battling, not only each other, but mother nature as well. A stiff autumnal breeze was blowing from the north, playing havoc with serves and volleys.

Linda Sarafian, Canton's number one singles player, playing with a nasty cold, whipped Farmington's Leslie Lawrence rather handily, 6-1, in the first set. Then Lawrence got tough.

She confused Sarafian with her aggressive net play. Sarafian would hit a deep volley, Lawrence would return it and charge the net. On several points, Sarafian would try to lob volleys over Lawrence's head, each time Lawrence would smash overheads for winners.

POINTS WHICH LASTED maybe 30 seconds in the first half, were now lasting several minutes. After long rallies or especially deft shots, the girls would congratulate each other. It was good tennis.

The score got to 4-4 in the second set. At that point, either Lawrence tired, or Sarafian grew stronger and Sarafian won, 6-4.

The last varsity match, still in progress, was in number-two singles. Canton's sophomore sensation Lisa Hays and Farmington junior Karen McWilliam were having at it. McWilliam normally plays number-three singles, but she was pushed up by the absence of Jill Anderson.

Like in number-one singles, the Canton player romped through the first set, this time 6-0, but the relentless Farmington player, this time it was McWilliam, came charging back.

With the rest of both teams watching, McWilliam forced Hays into a tie-breaker. It was a strange match. Until reaching the tie-breaker, both players were aggressive, charging the net and taking risks trying to score points.

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C.J. Risak

To the victors go the spoils

IT'S ALWAYS the same. A scene forever described but never really changing, only the characters are different.

Their looks aren't. Disappointed, angry, shellshocked faces in a locker room as quiet as a library. The only discernible conversation comes from players quietly asking a trainer for a towel as they emerge from steamy showers.

THE LOSERS. The losers. A different scene unfolds. The coach explains his game plan, his views on several players' performances, the key part of the contest to a flock of reporters crammed into a small, stuffily hot equipment room transformed into an interview area.

While the coach describes his images of the just completed gridiron battle, a TV crew hustles the star quarterback into a corner for a quick word on his performance, key parts of the game, etc. The quarterback grins broadly while recounting the plays, both the ones that worked and the ones that failed.

THE WINNERS. GARY HUMPHREY had finished his shower and dressed in sportcoat and tie. Sweat still dripped from his face as he stood in the uncomfortably muggy locker room.

He didn't look happy. The losers never are. The team he coached, Colorado, just lost to Michigan State, 23-17, in temperatures ranging in the upper 80s.

"It was a tough game," the former Garden City football coach said after stepping out of Colorado's quarters into the breezy tunnel. "I thought we looked pretty good."

They did — for awhile. A 35-yard field goal in the third quarter put the Buffaloes ahead of the home team, 10-8. It was a lead they couldn't hold through the fourth quarter.

That was why Humphrey, the team's running backs coach, didn't look happy.

GEORGE PERLES didn't look happy, either, standing in front of the blaring TV lights, wiping his brow with a towel. The heat played no favorites, plaguing the winners and losers alike. But for Perles and his team, the discomfort was easier to take.

"We could have come apart at the seams there, but we held together," Perles said of a stretch during the third quarter when it seemed the Spartans were destined for doom.

Quarterback Dave Yarema's bobble of a snap at the Colorado two could have cost MSU. After the mistake, neither coach nor quarterback panicked. "Man, that hurt, that really hurt," Perles said. "That's one thing about Dave. A lot of times, a player might blame it on someone else. He just said, 'Don't worry coach, we'll get it back.'"

YAREMA COULDN'T hear what his coach was saying about him. But he mimicked him closely when asked what Perles said after the fumble.

"He really didn't say anything," the Birmingham Brother Rice graduate said. "I just told him we'd get it back. Stuff like that, you can't let it get you down. You got to forget it. I just try to keep a smile on my face."

He earned high marks for smile execution. It never left his face, that boyish victory grin. If he felt pressure as a sophomore starting quarterback for a major college football team, he never showed it, on or off the field. A 15-for-23 passing performance on the field, and the way he handled questions off of it, confirmed that.

It wasn't an easy day, by any means. "Man, I was running for my life out there," he admitted, as Colorado's blizzing defense pressured. "You've got to be mentally prepared for everything."

"When they're after you, you got to make something happen."

Which he did, quite successfully. WHAT HAPPENED in that final quarter didn't please Humphrey. It was no way for him to start his collegiate coaching career, however long its duration.

Humphrey was recruited to coach Colorado's running backs by head coach Bill McCartney after Sam Sample resigned. McCartney, the former Michigan assistant, knew Humphrey from his coaching days at Dearborn Divine Child.

"It's a faster track," Humphrey said, comparing collegiate and prep coaching. "The kids are basically the same, just bigger and faster."

"It's really interesting — a lot of fun and a lot of hard work."

Humphrey took a one-year sabbatical after 23 years of teaching in Garden City because he "wanted a change. I was getting a lot of heat at Garden City."

"I just needed a change."

The switch was prompted by the combining of Garden City's East and West high schools a year ago. Trying to blend two formerly rival teams into one proved a difficult task. That is why Humphrey headed west.

He'll be back, he says. "It would be hard to afford to stay," he admitted. His wife and family are still in Michigan.

THE CHALLENGER for this year remains intact for Humphrey: help mold the Buffaloes, now 1-1 for the season, into a winner. No easy job, considering it will last just one season. But that's the task, nonetheless.

Yarema's position is much the same. Perles' PR has MSU backers expecting big things of the Spartans. But they'll go nowhere without a solid season from their quarterback.

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photo by BILL DREBLER/staff photographer

Canton's Lisa Hays (right) is congratulated by Farmington's Karen McWilliam. The two had just played a 14-point tie-breaker. Hays was the winner of the set and the match, 8-0, 7-6.

North's Austin steals the show

By Chris McCoosky
staff writer

Amy Austin didn't really play very well.

The North Farmington senior scored 10 points, made 10 shots, single-handedly forced at least six other turnovers, and pulled down six rebounds in North's lopsided 46-20 win over rival Farmington Harrison.

Believe it or not, for Austin, one of the area's top players, it wasn't a very memorable performance. She shot poorly, missing several layups and close-range jumpers. From the line, she was two for seven.

But, oh my, can she play defense. Austin hounded Harrison ball handlers all night long. Her quickness made it seem like she covered the entire floor simultaneously.

"I KEPT PULLING up short on my my shots," Austin said after the game. "It was really discouraging."

The difference in the game can be told in one statistic — turnovers. North's numerous presses and trapping defenses forced 39 Hawks turnovers.

"We tried out all our presses to-night," said North coach Greg Grodzicki. "We anticipated that they might have some problems at guard."

To say that Harrison has guard problems is an understatement.

"Our guards are just too slow," said Harrison coach Gary Sine. "Our point guard should really be playing at a wing. You could see our inexperience. I mean, we'd take the ball into the corners right into their traps."

Harrison's problems don't end there. Besides committing 39 turnovers, they shot a cool 30 percent from the floor and an icy 14 percent from the line.

TO BRING THE problems to a head, Sine started the game with a roster of eight. With three minutes left in the game, his two top scorers, Darla Payne and Karen Sklar had fouled out, and center Janice Willemtone left the game with an injury. Harrison finished the game with exactly five players.

Payne led Harrison scorers with 10 points, Sklar added five, all in the second half.

For North, Austin had 10, Susanne Howley, playing a strong game at center, had nine, and senior guard Mary Kocicki had eight points.

With the scored tied 2-2 early in the game, the Hawks committed seven consecutive turnovers, resulting in eight straight North hoops (three by Austin), and a 10-2 lead.

The Hawks ended the first half with a string of nine straight turnovers, two on Austin steals and two more forced by Austin, resulting in 11 straight points and a 28-9 halftime lead.

THE FRUSTRATION of Austin's game was evident at the start of the second half. The first two times Harrison got possession of the ball, Austin made clean steals and broke in for normally simple layups. On this night, however, nothing was easy for Austin. Both layups were missed and Austin was called for a foul scrambling for the rebound on the second miss. Grodzicki then decided to sit his star down for a spell.

"Amy is so quick, she just gets to everything," Grodzicki said. "She has just got to relax a bit on her shot. It will come. Normally, she won't come to me for advice about her game. Tonight, she asked me three or four times."

LIVONIA STEVENSON 45 FARMINGTON 43

The Falcons played mighty tall Tuesday night but fell just short of upsetting Stevenson.

Farmington junior forward Alyse Fortune led all scorers with a career-high 24 points. Rhonda Lancaster added nine points for the Falcons.

"Their size just wore us down," said Farmington coach Bruce Brown. "We couldn't jump with them. I'm very proud of our team. We worked hard and hung in there pretty well."

Farmington, who led 22-17 at half, lost their lead thanks to some strong Stevenson defense in the third quarter. Stevenson led by two after three quarters.

With less than a minute left, Lancaster sank two free throws to pull within two points. The Falcons got the ball back with one second left but couldn't get off a shot.

Juniors Lisa Bokovoy, Pam Griffin and Amy Rozman, all had 11 points for Stevenson. The Falcons are now 1-3 this season.



Leslie Lawrence, Farmington's number one singles player, played Canton's Linda Sarafian. Lawrence lost 1-6, 4-6, in two well-played sets.

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