



C.J. Risak

New Agenda renews spirit for old battle

IT WAS LABELED the New Agenda. But, really, what was on the agenda wasn't all that new.

Women and sports was the topic. Boiling it down, the resolutions generated from the three-day conference included a reaffirmation of Title IX, which is being challenged in courts in several states (including Michigan), and a commitment to get to work at the grass roots level on problems facing women athletes.

That's it? That's all the 600 delegates from around the nation got out of their weekend stay at the Capitol Hillton in Washington, D.C.?

Not exactly. The look in Cathy Dritsas' eyes told a different story.

THE NEW AGENDA was more than a rallying cry for women athletes. It sought direction for so many diverse women's groups, a chance to "get rid of vested interests," as Billie Jean King said.

Yes, Billie Jean King, famous tennis player, was there. So were Carol Mann, Donna DeVerona, Dick Schaap, Janet Guthrie, Diana Nyad and lots of others, including Vice President George Bush and wife.

The conference was 20 months in the planning. And while direction may have been the No. 1 purpose, what was accomplished was something a bit different.

Perhaps something more.

DRTISAS SPOKE quickly, throwing out words like "dynamic" and "relate" and "competitive enrichment." The athletic director at Bloomfield Hills Academy of the Sacred Heart was the only representative from the state in attendance.

"Before this conference, I thought about phasing in other younger women to take over," she said. "But I got recommitment. I came back with the thought that 'Hey, these women are putting themselves on the line. I've got to keep working.'"

The women "putting themselves on the line" were former athletes who faced the problems females face in sports and shared their experiences at the conference. It proved to be pretty heavy stuff.

"I was inspired, personally," Dritsas admitted.

TRUE ENOUGH, women still face lots of problems in the world of sports. And true enough, it was much worse 10 years ago. "You've come a long way, baby" is correct enough, but "You've still got a ways to go" is equally accurate.

The reinvigorated Dritsas knows this. She's seen the problems girls face in sports and the struggles that lie ahead. And at the New Agenda she was able to share the problems she's encountered and find not a sympathetic ear but a lot of shared experiences.

"(It's unconsolable) was her reaction after relating a story of how University of Michigan uses its field hockey area for a parking lot during football games."

Although men receive the bigger piece of the athletic pie, Dritsas insists this isn't a man-vs.-woman conflict.

"Women don't want to take away from men," she said. "To me, a good athlete should be able to play no matter what the sex."

Once outside of educational institutions, the chance for women to compete is extremely limited, Dritsas said. And it isn't because men are in a conspiracy against them.

INDEED, THE BIGGEST problem women face in sports is other women.

"I find men very supportive because they know the value of competition," Dritsas explained. "I always felt the biggest problem was with other women."

The value of competition: If Dritsas has a goal, it would be making the rest of the female population understand how healthy competition is.

"If you believe in the concept of competition, then you should believe it's good for all children," she said in convincing style. "But nothing is going to be accomplished until parents say, 'My little girl is as good as my little boy.'"

"When parents get involved, school administrators will listen."

This "second-class" syndrome is another problem Dritsas sees confronting the woman athlete. People "think what girls do is less significant," she said.

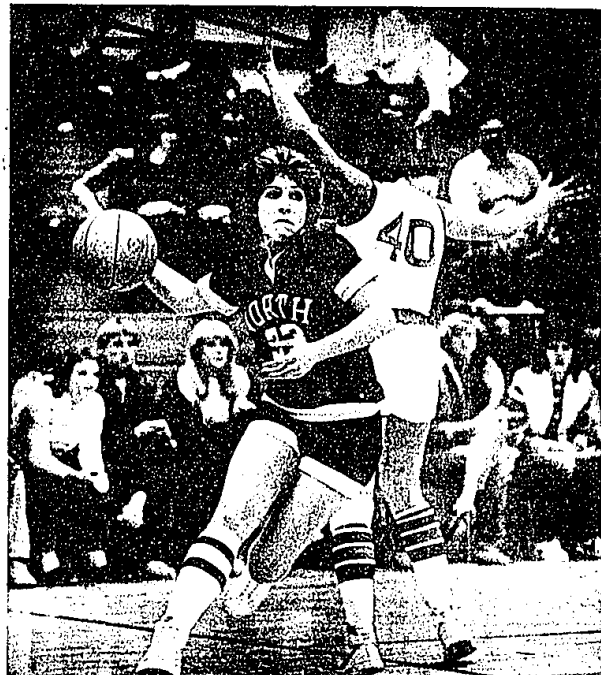
How to fight a concept is the query. And there are lots of ways and means to surround women's sports that need to be dispelled.

"You know," Dritsas related as we walked to the door, "one of the hardest things I have to teach the girls is how to win. That trying to win is important, instead of just playing."

That was the aim of the New Agenda. To provide new answers to old problems. And to reinvigorate people who care into carrying on the battle.

Because it isn't over yet.

Mercy—North to battle tonight



North's Amy Austin (33), as she did throughout the game, drives around Farmington defenders (this time Alyse Fortune) for two points. She scored 21 to lead the Raiders to an easy win, 64-38.

Austin, Shaw finish year for Farmington

By Chrie McCosky
staff writer

There is something about the North Farmington girls basketball team that brings out the worst in the Farmington Falcons.

Or maybe there's something about the Falcons that brings out the best in the Raiders.

For the second time this season, the Raiders lambasted the Falcons. This 64-38 defeat came Monday night in the state district girls basketball tournament at Our Lady of Mercy and it ended the Falcons' season.

The two teams first met Oct. 25 for the mythical Farmington city championship and North won 65-43. In that contest, North's Amy Austin and Laina Shaw combined for 42 points, 21 each.

ON MONDAY, the two Raiders combined for 43 points, Austin got 22 and Shaw 21.

"We just got beat by a better team," said Falcon coach Bruce Brown. He said the same thing after the first game.

Farmington was guilty of poor shooting. The Falcons made 19 of 61 shots from the floor. While North was not a lot better — 28 of 64 — the Raiders earned 16 of 20 free throws. Farmington missed all nine free throw attempts.

Austin and Shaw led on quite a score for the fast-start crowd inside the time Mercy gym. Shaw scoring on long-range bombers from the corner and

Austin, with her tremendous quickness, scoring on inside jumpers and layups. The two contributed 28 of North's 32 first half points, with Shaw getting 16. North led 32-16 at the half.

"We're playing very well now," said Raider coach Greg Grodzicki. "Our offensive game especially is there. We are working the ball well, making good passes and making good shot choices."

AUSTIN PUT North up by 20 with a three-point play to begin the third quarter. That seemed to take the last of the starch out of Falcons, although Rhonda Lancaster, playing in her final game for the Falcons, finished strong with eight second-half points and several spectacular assists.

Both Lancaster and Alyse Fortune, hampered by slight cases of the flu, led the Falcons with 14 points apiece.

The Falcons finished with 5-15 record and Brown, for the most part, was pleased with his team.

"It was a nice season," Brown said. "We finished strong and the girls worked very hard. I felt we were in an awful lot of ballgames. I thought we played with the teams we were capable of playing with."

North (15-3) will take on defending Class A state champs Mercy (20-2) Wednesday night at 7 p.m. in the district championship.

"We are going to have to break their press and use good shot selection," said Grodzicki. "We'll create the tempo. If they play man-to-man, that's good. We have some quickness."

Marlins rise atop Spartans

By Chrie McCosky
staff writer

Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy coach Larry Baker made an interesting point Monday night after his team walloped Livonia Stevenson in the semifinals of the state district girls basketball tournament, 61-38.

He said when most teams win their 20th game of the season, it's cause to uncork the champagne and celebrate. But in the case of Mercy, the defending Class A state champs, the season has only just begun.

"We are now 0-0," he said. The man is not complaining, mind you. He may just be a little proud.

AND THE MARLINS gave him plenty of reason to be proud Monday night. They played a swarming man-to-man defense that totally debilitated a much taller Stevenson contingent. They also got tremendous games from Sarah Basford, the only senior on the Merlin squad, and sophomore Terri Ford.

Stevenson is an unusual team in that they have so much height," Baker said. "We knew for once we wouldn't automatically be the dominant team underneath the basket. So we wanted to play as much mid-court basketball as we could."

And the Marlins did, thanks to Basford and Annette Ruggiero expertly directing the fastbreak.

Ford got Mercy off and running with eight first-quarter points. She finished with 15 points. Mercy led 21-10 after a quarter. By halftime it was 35-16. The closest Stevenson got in the second half was the final score. The Spartans reeled off eight straight points to finish the game.

Turnovers and poor shooting hurt the Spartans. They committed 33 turnovers and made just 18 of 58 shots. A good percentage of their misses were from close range.

THE MERCY defense contributed much to Stevenson's large number of turnovers. The Marlins made 12 steals, four by Ruggiero and three each by Bev White and Amy DeMatia. DeMatia was also the game's top rebounder with 12.

But, when it was all said and done, Basford's star shone brightest. The senior scored a game-high 19 points, was

extremely hot from the outside and was the catalyst of Mercy's break.

"I told Sarah after the game that I have never seen her handle the ball with better vision than she did tonight. She hit the open man and that kind of thing is contagious. The team began looking for one another very well," Baker said.

For Stevenson, Mary Kay Hussey had 11 points and numerous blocked shots. Joan Fryberger had 10 points and seven rebounds. Lisa Bokovsky had eight rebounds.

The loss ends the Spartans' season at 11-10.

Mercy (20-2) will host North Farmington (15-3), who defeated Farmington 64-38 in the other semifinal match, at 7 p.m. Wednesday for the district championship.

"North is a fine team. Amy Austin and Laina Shaw have the potential to be very dominant," Baker said. "The key for us will be to prevent them from becoming just that. This is the type of game where I hope our awesome schedule will become a factor for us."



RANDY BOST/Staff photographer

It was Sarah's night. Sarah Basford scored 19 points to lift Mercy past Stevenson Monday.

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