

Humble Annette a catalyst on court

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

SWELLNESS. THAT'S the best way to describe Annette Ruggiero.

The word describes not only her personality, but the way she plays basketball as well.

There's another word that accurately describes her — leader.

On the defending state Class A Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy basketball team, Annette Ruggiero is the leader.

She's the point guard. She controls the tempo of the Mercy attack. Her ball handling, passing ability and court sense allow her to consistently set up and assist Mercy scorers. Her tenacity on defense is inspirational to the other players. If one of her teammates is having a rough night, Ruggiero is the one to pat her on the back and say, "Keep your head up, get 'em next time."

Or if the player is dogging it, she'll be the one slapping her in the can to get her going.

YET, RUGGIERO is the Marlin who gets the least attention. Her name rarely appears in newspaper accounts of the games.

Her accomplishments on the court, however, do not go unnoticed by coach Larry Baker.

"On our team, the point guard has to deal with more pressure," Baker said. "The point guard is responsible for reading the defenses. Annette has done that as well as any player has ever done for us."

Ruggiero's value to the team became most apparent in the semifinal round of the Catholic League Playoffs. Ironically, she was noticed most in absence. She had slightly injured her ankle and sat out the first half against Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher.

Though replacement Kim Wesser did a good job, the Marlin seemed out of

sync in that first half. They seemed unorganized. Baker inserted his floor general back into the lineup in the second half, and Mercy promptly ran up an 18-4 third quarter margin.

"SHE IS A COMPLETE baller," Baker said. "It takes five to play man-to-man defense like we do, and Annette plays so hard. She's a source of inspiration for the others. And unlike some, it doesn't take a lot of recognition to keep her happy. She's very self-motivated and very sure of herself. But, the other side of that is, no one gets down on Annette more than Annette."

It didn't take long for the Mercy basketball program to learn to Ruggiero's skills. As a freshman, she was the starting point guard on the junior varsity team.

"It was rare for a freshman to start for us," said JV coach Mike King. "But, she was so smart. She was our quarterback."

Where did she acquire such talents? From several places. Ruggiero was born and still lives in Plymouth. She began playing basketball in the Plymouth-Canton junior basketball leagues. Her coach was her father, Tony Ruggiero, who once played quarterback for Bowling Green State University. Certainly, papa Ruggiero played a significant role in his daughter's athletic development.

As did her sister, Reggie Ruggiero, who was a standout at Plymouth Canton High School.

ACCORDING TO Ruggiero, Tom Williams was instrumental in her basketball development.

Williams, Plymouth Salem cross country coach, coached Ruggiero in seventh and eighth grade at Plymouth's West Middle School. Ruggiero's teammates were Fran Whittaker, Pam McBride and Dawn Johnson, all starters on this year's Plymouth Salem team bound for the regional tournament.

"I understand that there are no stars on this team. I look at all of us as being equal. My job is to play defense, organize things a little and get the ball to the person that's open. If that's what I can do to help the team win, then that's fine."

— Annette Ruggiero
Mercy co-captain

Williams' teams went 17-1 those two seasons.

"Mr. Williams gave me a lot of confidence in myself," Ruggiero said.

Williams, who often comes to see Ruggiero play, said she might have been the best player ever to come out of West.

"She's just a great kid," Williams said. "She was always so unsure of herself, though. She never really knew how good she was. She was so humble. Finally I just told her she had to forget that humbleness and take over the floor. Which she did."

The Plymouth-Canton Community School District decided in 1978 to keep ninth graders in middle school instead of bringing them into the high school. That was the year Ruggiero was in eighth grade.

THE THOUGHT of staying a third year at West didn't appeal to Ruggiero. So, she began to seek out alternatives.

"I didn't come to Mercy for the right reasons, but I stayed because of them."

Ruggiero said. "Basketball had nothing to do with me coming to Mercy. I just felt like I had to do something different. I didn't even know Mercy had a basketball team."

She found out about the basketball team soon enough. Or rather, the basketball team found out about her.

"Bob Blohm (Salem assistant basketball coach) told me that Ruggiero was the best girls player ever to come out of West Middle School," Baker said. That's all the advice he needed.

And Ruggiero melded into the Mercy program perfectly. She has excelled on the court and in the classroom. She has a 3.57 grade point average.

"She is the epitome of arrogant," Baker said. "Few kids have more desire to play team basketball than Annette. She is happiest when we are working as a team."

"I DON'T LOOK at myself as a non-scorer," Ruggiero said. "But, I don't feel I always have to score. Tonight (against North Farmington), my job

was to play defense. Sarah (Bastford) was hot, so I got her the ball everytime I could.

"I understand that there are no stars on this team. I look at all of us as being equal. My job is to play defense, organize things a little and get the ball to the person that's open. If that's what I can do to help the team win, then that's fine."

And Ruggiero takes winning very seriously.

"I love to go places and have people say, 'Oh, you're from Mercy.' I didn't realize just what that meant until we lost to Ladywood," she said.

She and the rest of the Marlin are gunning for their second straight state title. Ruggiero is cautious.

"It bothers me when people start taking these games for granted. We've got to take them one at a time. Like the North game. Everyone said we'd win easy, but I was as nervous before the game as I have ever been," she said.

Summing up a person like Ruggiero isn't easy, but Baker probably does it best:



Annette Ruggiero
quiet leader

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As a community service, Botsford General Hospital will be offering a free training program for area citizens in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The ultimate purpose is to enable citizens to perform CPR for heart attack victims until emergency medical personnel arrive. Certified instructors will teach the course.

The one-session, 3-hour "Heart Saver" course will be offered the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 P.M. in the Community Room of the Administration & Education Building directly to the East of the hospital.

To pre-register (required), please call the Department of Health Promotion and Development at 471-8091, on Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 5 P.M. Class size is limited, so please register early. Botsford General Hospital is located at 28050 Grand River Ave., Farmington Hills 48024, (North of Grand River, behind the Botsford Inn).

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF OAKLAND FOR THE YEAR 1984

To Whom It May Concern:

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Act 43 of the Public Acts of the State of Michigan for the year 1983, Second Extra Session, and Article VII, Section 32 of the 1953 Michigan Constitution, and the Code of Federal Regulations 52 C.F.R. 31, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the Proposed Budget for the year 1984. The hearing will be held in the Courthouse Auditorium in the Oakland County Service Center, 1200 North Telegraph Road, Pontiac, Michigan (at 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, December 8, 1983).

Interested citizens may appear and present written and/or verbal comments on the proposed budget and particularly the manner they think the County's allocation of Federal Revenue Sharing Funds should be spent. The recommendation in the proposed 1984 budget states:

"That the \$23.3 million 1984 Federal Revenue Sharing Funds be equally divided between the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Management and Budget," as included in the following budget summary:

1984 PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY

REVENUES	AMOUNT
Taxes	\$ 66,503,581
Intergovernmental	14,435,283
Charges for Services	14,815,343
Use of Money, Etc.	10,259,000
Total Current Revenue (General Fund)	\$105,013,207
Intergovernmental	\$ 14,704,598
Charges for Services	\$ 935,501
Total Current Revenue (Other Funds)	\$ 16,644,699
Total Current Revenue	\$126,968,306
Resources carried forward	\$ 2,461,541
GRAND TOTAL	\$129,429,847

A copy of the proposed 1984 budget will be available on and after Wednesday, November 30, 1983, for public inspection in the Office of the Oakland County Clerk-Register of Deeds, Courthouse, 1200 North Telegraph Road, Pontiac, Michigan.

LYNN D. ALLEN,
Oakland County Clerk-Register of Deeds

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 28, 1983

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