

## Sports

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# Marlin win is Baker's 200th

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

Win No. 200 for Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy basketball coach Larry Baker — a nail-biting 53-47 victory against Dearborn Divine Child Thursday night — was in many ways similar to most of the first 199.

Baker wore his typical blue suit coat (don't call it a blazer) with a yellow carnation neatly pinned to the lapel. His eyes were slightly red, unable after many years to adjust to his contact lenses. Before the game he assisted Mercy JV coach Mike King through an overtime victory.

Routine. Same old Larry Baker. The big man (6-foot-7 all told) hasn't changed (much) in the 10 years he's been at the helm. Nobody mentioned the milestone he was facing. You had to wonder if anyone was even aware of it. The players weren't. King wasn't. No big deal. Just another game.

And the game was just like so many other Marlin victories. They fell behind early. DC, entering the Mercy gym with a 5-0 record, wasn't about to be a cakewalk. In fact, at the outset of the

third quarter DC reeled off seven straight points to take a 34-27 lead.

"WE DIDN'T expect an easy time from them," said Baker. "I'll take great satisfaction in this win. We really did some growing up in this game."

The Marlin — again, like they have done so many times — put on a rally that simply overwhelmed their opponent.

Annette Ruggiero, the feisty point guard, stopped DC's momentum by forcing a turnover and converting it into two points. Another turnover, Ruggiero hit Sue Scott with a pretty pass — four straight.

Then it was Amy DeMattia's turn. With center Mary Rosowski in foul trouble and on the bench, the senior forward was handed a heavy load. She responded with a 14-point, nine-rebound performance. Six of those points came in succession during Mercy's third-quarter rally.

Superstar Bev White was the next to shine during this Marlin comeback. While made three straight steals off the press, one of which she converted into a three-point play.

"I couldn't have been happier with

## girls basketball

the play of Bev off the bench," Baker said. "I was also pleased with Michelle Fryatt's play off the bench, and Sue Scott was tough when she re-entered. We made all those substitutions and didn't lose a beat."

AFTER WHITE's three-point play, Mercy had run off 13 unanswered points. Suddenly, Mercy was in command, 40-34.

Divine Child, however, didn't roll over and die. The Falcons got within a point with 4:55 left in the game.

Scott, however, ended that threat with a steal and a driving layup. Scott, Rosowski and Ruggiero hit key free throws down the stretch to keep DC at bay.

"We won this game," Baker said. "They (DC) did not lose it. They have a beautiful team."

Baker talked about how his team

"grew up" during the course of this contest. And, indeed, some things happened Thursday that hadn't previously this season.

No. 1 was free throws — the Marlin sank them regularly. "We got the free-throw monkey off our backs tonight," Baker said.

DeMattia was a superb 10 of 14 from the line. The team was 20 for 32 on the night.

Scott played perhaps her best game of the season. Her quickness on defense created several turnovers and offensively she contributed 13 points.

Ruggiero controlled the tempo of the game in the second half. She finished with seven points and nine steals.

JUNIOR TERRI Ford, a consistent performer all season, was again sharp. She scored 10 points, made four steals and pulled down several key rebounds in the final quarter.

Add in DeMattia's sizeable contributions and you have a nice coming-of-age performance for Mercy, who is now 5-1.

It couldn't have come at a more opportune time. Mercy was coming off a tough defeat to Flint Northwestern and

DC was primed for an upset.

The Falcons got 12 points from Sue Lubbe and 10 apiece from Karen McDonnell, Maribeth Birch and promising sophomore Sue Nissen.

The biggest thorn in the Falcon side was point guard Jennifer Dyer's foul trouble. She sat out the third quarter with four fouls. Without her, the Falcons were at a loss to deal with the Marlin press.

"We went right after their reserve player. They couldn't take the same advantage of our reserve players," Baker said.

BUT, COACH, what about your 200th win?

"Oh, I'm very proud of that. I won't try to lie to you," he said. "I'm especially proud of the way it averages out. Twenty victories is an impressive milestone for any coach at any level. It makes me kind of feel like I haven't been sluffing off too much."

Baker has won 20 or more games in each of his first nine seasons at Mercy. His record now, in his 10th year, is 20-23. His teams have won two state titles and eight regional titles.

Sluffing off? Not hardly.



Larry Baker got his 200th coaching victory at Mercy Thursday night as his team nipped DC.



Bruce Kelsey takes the handoff from Farmington quarterback Chris Green in Friday night's victory at Plymouth Salem.

## Hawks settle old debt by trouncing Churchill

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

Just when you think he's played as well as a high school football player can play, he goes one notch better. John Miller.

The Farmington Harrison senior back simply would not be denied Friday night in what was billed — by the Harrison boosters — as "Revenge of the Hawks."

Revenge is what they got, too, in a big way. The Hawks romped past Livonia Churchill — the team that shattered Harrison's season last year — 49-21.

"Not revenge," said Miller, always the gentleman. "Just a long year of sweating and working for this game. Everyone was pumped up, to say the least."

None more so than Miller. All he did was run the ball 31 times for 281 yards and four touchdowns, caught three passes for 44 yards and a touchdown and intercepted a pass.

"We knew how good he was," said Churchill coach Herb Osterland of Miller. "But, when you see him from the sidelines it's a whole different story. He's really something."

MILLER WASN'T expected to carry the ball that much. The initial plan, according to Harrison coach John Herrington, was to test the Charger secondary.

"Last year they played us three deep (in the defensive secondary)," said Herrington. "So, we wanted to throw four receivers out there and go at them that way. But, it didn't work out and we went to the run."

The tempo of the game swung in Harrison's favor very early in the game. Harrison sophomore Scott Bissell picked off a John Stoitsiadis pass on Churchill's second play. It was one of two interceptions for the talented sophomore and one of five Harrison interceptions on the night.

Harrison marched 34 yards in five plays, all handoffs to Miller, after Bissell's interception. Miller took it in from the 9.

Churchill's second drive of the night netted two yards. Harrison then forced a bad punt — it traveled 3 yards. Four handoffs to Miller and 36 yards later, it was 13-0. Miller scored this one from the 4.

Harrison was off and running. Before the half ended, Harrison had built up a 35-7 lead.

Miller scored from the 6 capping a 51-yard drive (he gained every yard in that drive also). Quarterback Vince Enright ran in the 2-point conversion.

On Hawks' next possession they went 88 yards in two plays. One was a 44-yard run by Miller, the other a pretty 45-yard TD pass from Enright to Brian Smolinski.

THE CHARGERS, however, showed a lot of grit. Stoitsiadis engineered a 72-yard scoring drive, and capped it off by hitting Tim Davis on a 17-yard scoring strike. Harrison scored with 1:14 left in the

*'... if we weren't going to win, at least we were going to score more points against them than anyone else. And that's exactly what we did.'*

— Herb Osterland  
Churchill coach

half on an Enright-to-Miller pass worth 20 yards.

Enright completed 8 of 18 passes for 135 yards on the night.

Miller scored on a 1-yard run and reserve quarterback Matt Dowd threw a 28-yard touchdown pass to Rod Sarevich to close out Harrison's scoring in the second half.

Stoitsiadis was the spark plug in Churchill's 13-12 win at Harrison last year.

He didn't beat Harrison this year, but, with the help of an outstanding group of receivers and a pugnacious offensive line, he rolled up more points on a Harrison defense than any team has since the fifth game of the 1980 season when Walled Lake Western scored 28 points in a 31-28 loss.

"I NEVER would have thought we'd give up 21 points against them," Herrington said afterward. "We just couldn't stop Stoitsiadis. He's just a super athlete. And their offensive line was super. We couldn't get to him."

In the fourth quarter, when most opponents would have long since given up the ship, Stoitsiadis directed his team to two long scoring drives.

The first one went 80 yards in 15

plays. Stoitsiadis ran for 55 of those yards, including the 1-yard score. He also completed two passes to Chris Philter for 25 yards and another to Tim Dey for 17.

The final scoring drive concluded on the last play of the game — a 22-yard scoring pass to Chuck Robertson. In the 56-yard drive, "Stoitsiadis" completed four more passes for 60 yards.

On the night, the senior racked up 268 yards in combined offense against one of the stingiest defenses in the state. He completed 12 of 34 passes for 171 yards. He was also intercepted five times. He ran the ball 11 times for 97 yards.

He threw for two TDs and scored the other. He also kicked all three extra points.

"Playing against him was good experience for us," Miller said of Stoitsiadis. "I don't think we're going to face a tougher quarterback."

Said Osterland: "I told the team at halftime that, if we weren't going to win, at least we were going to score more points against them than anyone else. And that's exactly what we did."

The loss drops Churchill to 1-3 on the season. Harrison is now 3-0.

## Farmington stops Salem, sets sight on Lakes crown

By Rich Swenson  
staff writer

Are the Farmington Falcons for real?

Who would've thought the Falcons would have a legitimate shot at capturing the Western Lakes Activities Association (WLAA) Lakes Division crown this season?

They made firm believers of Plymouth Salem Friday night, coming up with a convincing 23-19 win over the Rocks.

The visiting Falcons dominated the game both offensively and defensively, and head coach Don Kulick couldn't have been happier with the result.

"IT WAS A whale of a game — we came to play," said Kulick, whose team won its third game in four outings. "The kids really played well to tonight. We controlled the game in the second half."

Now in his second season as head coach, Kulick believes the Falcons have finally turned their program around.

"I don't think we've won three games in a season in the last seven years," he said. "The league title is up for grabs. If we continue to play well, we can win it."

The Falcons used a ball control offense, amassing 233 yards on the ground while rushing the ball 82 times. They compiled 16 first downs in the game, while holding Salem to just five.

Junior tailback Jim Laird was the

workhorse, carrying the ball 22 times for 65 yards. Senior Dave Cunningham rushed for 62 yards on 12 carries, including a touchdown and Bruce Kelsey added 64 yards on 13 carries. He scored the Falcons' final touchdown.

"Our running game was good and our blocking was great," Kulick said. "We've had a few problems with our passing game, but we threw for a TD tonight."

THE FALCONS jumped out to a 9-0 lead, taking advantage of several Rock turnovers.

Salem quarterback Steve Sobditch fumbled on the Rocks' opening possession, recovered by the Farmington's Craig Petersmark at the 34-yard line. The Falcons drive stalled at the 7-yard line, but placekicker Bruce Kratt connected on a 23-yard field goal to give the Falcons a 3-0 lead.

Farmington struck again after another Rock turnover. An interception of a Sobditch pass by cornerback Joe Bob Wenson that gave the Falcons the ball at the Salem 49-yard line. Farmington moved the ball deep into Rock territory. Then, on third and one, quarterback Chris Green hit receiver Ab Hazen with a 14-yard scoring strike to make it 9-0.

Kratt missed the conversion when he collided with one of the linemen while making his attempt.

The Rocks came back late in the half to make it close. Sobditch was replaced by junior quarterback John Storm, who hit four straight passes to

give Salem its only sustained drive of the day.

AFTER CONNECTING with split end Brian Tiller for a 40-yard gain, he unloaded a 19-yard scoring strike to Steve Brodzik, who made a circus catch at the 8 and carried it into the end zone.

Placekicker Mark Dixon took a pitch from Sobditch on the fake extra point attempt and dashed into the end zone untouched, making it 9-8 at the half.

But Farmington came out storming in the second half, scoring on its first two possessions — a 4-yard run by Cunningham and 1-yard plunge by Kelsey to win it. Salem coach Tom Moshimer said, "We had the momentum, but we gave the ball up on our first drive in the second half and they came down and scored."

Salem made a last ditch effort to catch the Falcons late in the game on Brian Tiller's brilliant 50-yard punt return for a touchdown. The Rocks made the two-point conversion to pull within seven points.

But Salem's onside kick on the ensuing kickoff fell harmlessly into the hands of Farmington's Dave Bottrill.

FOR SALEM, the game was a comedy, or tragedy, of errors. The Rocks committed six turnovers, including four fumbles and two interceptions.

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John Miller continues to wow the prep gridiron. The Harrison senior rushed for 287 yards and scored five TDs Friday night.