



## Hawk hoops: a bid for respectability

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

Life is never easy for a first-year coach. But for a first-year girls basketball coach at Farmington Harrison life is, well, you'd better have the patience of Job and a good sense of humor.

Chris Lessnau has both. "The way I look at it, we win one game this year and we've done 100 percent better than last year," the new Harrison boss said.

Farmington Harrison girls basketball program went 0-for-1984 and 0-for-1983, the Hawks own a string of 41 consecutive losses.

The backbone of such losing is this: Quality athletes refuse to tryout for the team. Parents of quality athletes refuse to allow their children to be a

part of the program. The program can barely sustain enough players to floor a varsity squad, let alone junior varsity and freshmen teams.

It's a very unpleasant situation, especially at a school rich in a winning athletic tradition.

Enter Chris Lessnau.

"OBVIOUSLY, WE'RE strictly in a rebuilding process," said Lessnau, a successful JV coach at Garden City the past three years compiling a 37-23 record.

"When I took this job, Ron Holland asked me what my goals were. I told him I wanted to floor two teams," he said. "First thing we have to do is turn the attitude around. We will be respectable this year. If you come see us at the beginning of the season, and then at the

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end, you'll see a different team."

Lessnau has 17 players in the program and he expects more to come out once school is back in session. He said he will carry 18 on the varsity roster, six more than last year.

Jennifer Hughes, a superb three-sport athlete, is the top player in the Hawk camp. She will be counted upon to carry a large load, scoring and rebounding.

She may also be the team's lone senior. Jeanne Whittemore, a two-year starter for Harrison, has yet to come

back out for the team. Lessnau is hoping she does.

THE HAWKS will be a freshmen-sophomore dominated team — not a healthy sign in the short term, but very healthy for the future of the program. Lessnau is especially high on sophomore point guard Kris Waldman.

"She has tremendous skills for a sophomore and she's a leader," he said. "She'll be our quarterback."

Lessnau fully expects to take some licks this season. He also expects his team to play four quarters of competitive basketball. He also expects his players to come away from the game, win or lose, feeling good about their effort.

"This is a huge challenge for me and I'm the type of person that loves a challenge," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, there's nowhere to go but up."

### FARMINGTON

There's another new face on the area coaching scene this season and another refreshing, positive addition to a struggling program.

Diana Schwartz has been Bruce Brown's assistant coach at Farmington the past six seasons. She now runs the program.

"I know this team can compete," said Schwartz, who led her JV team to a 13-7 record last year, 12-4 in the Western Lakes. "I have high hopes. If the attitude stays positive and the girls pull together, we might just surprise a few people."

The biggest problem Schwartz is having thus far is settling on a starting five.

"They are all real equal in ability. It may take three or four or five games before I settle on one group," she said.

For certain, senior Patti Matthews will be in the lineup. A strong 5-9, she should provide the type of strong inside play that has been missing from Falcon lineups in the past.

Others likely to see significant duty are sophomores Kelli Koss and Stacy Swanderaki, Juniors Tracy Jourdan, Karen Jenkins and Carrie Hale and seniors Tammy Smith, Lynn Looser and Lisa Spence.

Also expected to contribute are Mary Kay Orrico, Becky Philp and Jennifer Cunningham.

Noticably absent from the list is All-Area standout Alyse Fortune who graduated last year.

"The biggest adjustment was getting these girls to shoot the ball," Schwartz said. "They were all so used to watching Alyse shoot. But, they all shoot the ball well."

"I believe in being positive. I really think we can win here. I want to be up there with the Salem's and the John Glenn's. I want my players to feel the same way."

### NORTH FARMINGTON

The North Farmington basketball program has reached the point where it



Heather McPhillips is being counted on for both scoring and rebounding contributions for the 1985 North Farmington team.

is regarded as a team to watch each year, regardless of graduation losses and talent shortages.

That respectability has been brought to the North program by coach Greg Grodzicki. In his five seasons he has amassed a 59-47 record and earned a reputation as one of the best coaches in Observerland.

On paper, it would appear to be a down season for the Raiders. All-Area point guard Lisa Mummert is gone, as are starters Patti Kozicki, Sue Shiffra and Isaly Butler.

But, as Grodzicki says, North is the type of team "no one will take lightly." Returning is 6-0 center Heather McPhillips who came on strong last year to solidify the Raiders' inside game.

Sandy Spana, a scrappy, aggressive forward who saw extensive duty last year, also returns.

"We are big up front," Grodzicki said. "Heather has played real well. We also have Nancy Colbran, a senior and a great athlete out, and senior Erica Wolf who'll help us."

The biggest area of concern for the Raiders is finding a replacement for Mummert at the point. Mo Paradis, a

senior who saw action last year, and Renee Fishell, an outstanding defensive player, are battling for the spot.

"No one has really shaped up at that position," Grodzicki said. "I'll take a few games. Hopefully we can hang in there."

Grodzicki expects help from a pair of transfer students. Senior Ann Howard, who made stops at Mercy and Country Day before stopping at North, and sophomore Susie Butcher, who came in from Indianapolis, should be strong contributors.

"I think we will surprise a few people," Grodzicki said. "I'm sure we'll play at least .500 ball. We could finish as high as second or third in our division and no worse than fourth."

North plays in the toughest of the two Western Lakes divisions, the Lakes. The Raiders will have to fight area and possibly state powers Plymouth Salem and John Glenn, as well as Livonia Stevenson, Walled Lake Central and Farmington.

All three Farmington-area teams will open up with non-league games: Harrison will host Milford Lakeland Thursday, North will host Novi and Farmington will host Redford Union.



Patti Matthews (white jersey) may be the only sure starter thus far for the Farmington girls basketball team, but new coach Diana Schwartz isn't shy on optimism.

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## Starters back, OU eyes national kick title

By C.J. Rieak  
staff writer

There is one significant difference between last year's Oakland University men's soccer team and this season's edition — newcomers.

A year ago, coach Gary Parsons was trying to blend five junior college transfers — Meally Freeman and Gray Haisel from Rogers State (Okla.), Don Gemmill and Greg Nasello from Lewis and Clark (Ill.) and Dan O'Shea from Scholersville College — into the lineup.

The Pioneers got off to a bit of a shaky start, losing in the first round of their own National Invitational Tournament to California State-Los Angeles, but the transition wasn't too unsettling. They finished 16-3-1 and earned their third-straight NCAA Division II playoff appearance.

OU LOST its first-round match to Seattle-Pacific in a 1-0 shootout. In an effort to bolster the defense, Parsons,

who signed just three new recruits, made two of them front-lineers.

"Realistically speaking," the OU coach said, "all of them are challenging for a starting position."

One of the trio expected to break into the starting lineup is forward Brian Fitzgerald, a sophomore in eligibility who transferred from Indiana-Purdue at Ft. Wayne. Fitzgerald played in high school at Southfield.

Another newcomer getting a long look is Ray Cerekas, a transfer from Macomb Community College where he was a two-time NJCAA all-American.

Cerekas will play both forward and midfield. The third recruit challenging for a starting role is stopper John Stewart (Sarnia, Ontario).

"We only lost two players, (forward) Tag Graham and (back) Barry Vinco," said Parsons. "We're already a lot further along than last year."

"I'd like to think we'll do much better. By the end of last season, we were at this level," he said, raising his hand to his shoulder. "We hope to take it

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from there and go higher. Whether we do or not is up to the coaches and players.

PARSONS IS counting on the experience gained after a year of playing together to carry the Pioneers to his No. 1 objective: a national championship. With the team's top three scorers back and players with experience at every other position, that goal is within striking distance.

Back on the front line is Freeman, a senior left wing from Monrovia, Liberia, who netted 18 goals and 10 assists. Joining him are Marty Hagen, a junior from Troy (Athens) who finished with nine goals and 10 assists, and Mark Christian, a senior from St. John's, An-

tigua, who had 10 goals and four assists.

"With Hagen, Christian and Freeman and the two new additions, we have five good forwards," said Parsons. "Any three of the five could start. And I think there'll be some improvement in our cohesiveness, which should produce more goals."

Mike Vigh patrols center midfield for OU. An all-Mideast Region performer, the junior from Detroit had nine goals last season. Other midfielders are Haisel, a junior from Monrovia, Liberia (six goals, seven assists) and Gemmill (five goals).

LEADING THE BACKS are junior sweeper Raul Delgado, from Sterling

Heights; Nasello, a senior; O'Shea, a junior who prepped at Livonia Franklin; and Allan Schneck, a sophomore from Troy (Athens).

The pride of any defense rests in the goals-allowed column, and OU has plenty to be proud of. Senior Paul Larkin (Scarborough, Ontario), an all-Mideast selection and a three-year starter in goal, boasts a 0.70 goals-against average, with a school-record 29 shutouts.

He is backed up by senior Dave Martilla (Okemos), who has given up just one goal in 15 games. In all, OU has surrendered just 25 goals in its last 41 games.

Still, Parsons is searching for improvement. "I'd like us to be stingier on defense, as a team," he said. "We were a little loose in some areas. We did a good job keeping the ball out of the net, but we could play tighter."

THE PIONEERS face another tough schedule, with NCAA Division I powers

Akron (home, Oct. 23) and Illinois State (away, Nov. 3) providing difficult tests. Games against Michigan State (home, Oct. 3), Gannon University (away, Oct. 19) and Wright State (home, Nov. 9) are also key confrontations.

But Parsons figures the second annual National Invitational Tournament, set OU Sept. 14-15, may provide the greatest challenge on the schedule "because they are all national-caliber teams."

In the Sept. 14 opening round, Bridgeport faces Davis and Elkins (1 p.m.) and OU meets East Stroudsburg (4 p.m.). The consolation game is at 1 p.m. Sept. 15, with the championship following at 3:30 p.m.

OU and Davis and Elkins were the Mideast Region qualifiers to the NCAA Division II tournament last year. "They have most of their team back, and they have a very strong program," said Parsons of Davis and Elkins. The tournament's championship game will be televised by Pro-Am Sports Systems.

Thursday: Special Oakland County football section