

Mercy plays host to quality quartet

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Five years ago Farmington Hills Mercy basketball coach Larry Baker became bored with the idea of opening his season with a pair of meaningless non-league games.

To alleviate his lethargy, he decided to organize a four-team, two-game tournament. Thus, back in 1980, the Mercy Hoops Classic was born.

Today, preseason tournaments are almost taken for granted with the likes of the Great Lakes Tip-Off Classic and the Harper Woods Regatta Season Opener Tournament looming about.

But back in 1980 hosting a preseason tournament in high school basketball was a novel — to the Michigan High School Athletic Association it was almost revolutionary — approach to preparing for a season.

College recruiters can thank Larry Baker and his concept for making their jobs a bit easier.

Last year, representatives from 40 colleges attended the Mercy Hoops Classic.

THIS YEAR, with the likes of All-American Franchise Price from River Rouge and all-star Terri Ford from Mercy participating, the number of scouts and coaches should rise.

The Mercy Hoops Classic kicks off at 6 p.m. Thursday night with River Rouge, the defending Class B state champs, playing Ulca Ford, champions of the Macomb Athletic Conference last year.

At 7:45, Mercy will play Ann Arbor Pioneer, champions of the South Central Conference.

The consolation and championship games will be played Saturday at 6 and 7:45 p.m., respectively.

The combined 1984 records of the

four participating teams was 85-12. Pioneer won its district championship, Ford made it to state quarterfinals and Mercy, for the third straight season, was among the state's final four in Class A.

With all the talent to look over, the college recruiters may think it's Christmas.

RIVER ROUGE, in addition to Price, will floor 6-0 center Zandra Jeffries who averaged 21 points and 13 rebounds a game last season and Alonita Bass who averaged 12 points and eight rebounds last year.

Price has already been selected to Parade Magazine and USA Today All-American teams. She was rated the No. 1 player this summer at the B.C. Basketball Camp in Indiana. She is a special player — just ask Livonia Ladywood, whom she also handily disposed of last season in the Class B championship game.

Ford is led by all-star Jenny Mallonowski, an 18-points-per-game scorer a year ago. Jackie Weber also deserves a look. She scored 12 points and grabbed nearly 10 rebounds per game last year for Ford.

The driving force behind Pioneer is 6-0 center Karin Rynard, an all-South Central Conference player last year who averaged 11 points and four blocked shots a game.

The host team, Mercy, has a handful of potent weapons at its disposal. Terri Ford, perhaps the most visible, received all-state mention last season as well as first team all-Catholic League and All-Area honors.

Other Mercy weapons include 5-10 post player Missy Duczynski and guard Michelle Fyatt.

Mercy High School is located on the northeast corner of 11 Mile and Middlebelt.



Jean Wassenberg is one of several senior standouts playing in the fifth annual Mercy Hoops Classic which begins tonight. The championship and consolation games are set for Saturday.

Ladywood grabs 2nd Tip-Off crown

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Ah, the power of persuasion.

Livonia Ladywood girls basketball coach Ed Kavanaugh, known as one of the more scintillating tongues around, exercised it between halves of Saturday night's championship game in the Great Lakes Tip-Off Girls Basketball Tournament at U-M Dearborn.

Ladywood came off the court after a lackluster half trailing Dearborn Divine Child, 22-21.

"We had a little discussion at the half about going through the motions," Kavanaugh said.

The "discussion" lit a fire under the Blazers, who proceeded to whip DC 63-

48 for their second straight Great Lakes crown.

"It was just an intensity thing," Kavanaugh said. "We hit a couple of shots at the start of the half and that seemed to get things going. And as we became more aggressive, Divine Child became more tentative."

CATHY SCHIRAM, as she did against Plymouth Salem in the first game of the tourney, hit two long-range jumpers at the beginning of the second half to put some distance between Ladywood and DC.

Also giving the Blazers a boost was senior forward Mary Joy Konczal. Konczal scored six points in the third quarter (14 for the game) and made

girls basketball

two key steals back-to-back triggering a 13-4 burst.

Other Blazer heroines were Sue Laliberte and Ann Marie Thomas.

Laliberte, voted the tournament's most valuable player, scored 17 points and was strong on the boards.

Thomas, a sophomore, was pressed into duty in the third quarter when

starting point guard Jenny Nadeau picked up her fourth foul. Thomas guided the Blazer offense virtually without error.

Schiram scored 13 for Ladywood and Debbie Lapinski chipped in 10.

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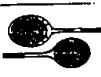
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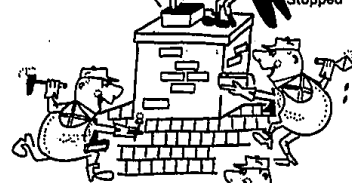
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