

# Roch. Adams no match for Mercy

By Jim Hughes  
staff writer

As fans strolled into the Rochester Adams gymnasium Tuesday night for the second half of action, someone wondered aloud, "Is there a mercy rule in girls basketball?"

Sure enough. It's called Mercy wins. The Highlanders learned about that rule the hard way as they were defeated by Farmington Hills Our Lady of the Lake (5-1) Mercy, 83-22. Actually, it might have been 84-22 since the final score conflicted on different scoring sheets. It really doesn't matter, unless someone — on a friendly wager — was betting Mercy and giving 61 points.

The kind of basketball Mercy played hasn't been seen in these parts since Magic Johnson attended Isaiah Thomas' basketball camp at Oakland University. The Marlins (5-1) pressed and ran the fast break against the Highlanders (2-2), and scored seemingly at will.

**ADAMS COACH** Pat Graves-Weston's intends to run against teams in the Highlanders' league but didn't dare against a team completely out of their league.

"They did exactly what I thought they'd do," Graves said. "They score a billion points off that fast break. I told our girls they'd have to stop everyone on the fast break. You have to stop all five."

"They can beat you so many ways. You take the baseline away from them, and they don't think twice about going backdoor, they just do it. That's some program they have there."

The Marlins, one of the top five-ranked teams in Class A, came into the game following a tough 42-41 loss to top-ranked Class B power River Rouge in Saturday's Mercy Hoops Classic. But they showed no effects of that defeat, playing aggressively and with intensity.

"I was extremely concerned about coming out flat," Mercy coach Larry Baker said. "The last two years after the Mercy Hoops, we played Ann Arbor Huron in this spot and we played poorly."

"I lit into the kids before the game. We had a weak practice yesterday (Monday), and I told them, in our league, you can't afford to come out flat or a team like Marian or Gallagher will catch us right between the eyes."

## CC wins Holly race

Redford Catholic Central defended its AA Division cross country title Saturday at the Holly Invitational with the help of a new face.

Shamrock senior John Regan, who wasn't on the team last season, finished ninth overall to help pace CC to the first-place finish.

CC, with 58 team points, blew out runner-up Ann Arbor Pioneer, which finished with 134. Third-place Kalamazoo Loy Norris had 157 and fourth-place Troy had 162.

Tony Mizao, who placed seventh overall, was the Shamrocks' top finisher with a time of 16:23.

But the topic of conversation was Regan, a refugee from the track team.

## girls basketball

That happened to us last year in the (Catholic League) playoffs, and the next thing you know, we're watching the finals from the stands.

"BUT THESE kids responded. That's what I love about coaching these kids; they're responsive."

The Marlins hit their first six shots of the first quarter and built a 25-6 lead before the Highlanders knew what happened. The lead grew to 43-13 at the half and mushroomed to 65-14 at the end of three quarters.

To Adams' credit, it was without senior starting guard Liz Jones, who turned an ankle in last week's loss to Clarkson. But even with the averages of 15 points, six rebounds, three assists and three steals figured in, it still would have been lopsided.

Terril Ford led Mercy with 20 points, and Terry Nalodka added 13. Margaret DeMatitis and Yvette Mason each scored nine, and Jean Wassenaar had eight. Jamie Randolph's seven points led Adams.

Despite the lopsided loss, Graves said she was encouraged since playing a team of Mercy's caliber will help the Highlanders in the long run.

"A lot of people were asking me why schedule Farmington Mercy, and my reaction is: you've got to play the great teams. You've got to play to play, and that's what that team does. We've never played a team that's as well-rounded as Mercy. We'll play teams with two real good players, but not 10."

It was obvious the results also were pleasing to Baker.

"I thought Adams came out and tried to mix it up with us, and I was pleased with the way we handled it," he said. "I was happy with our execution and the intensity we played with. I was afraid we'd come out flat, but we did a lot of things right out there."

Adams opens Metro Suburban Activities Association play Thursday night at Birmingham Groves. Mercy hosts Saginaw in non-league action Saturday night.

"John ran a 4:48 mile for us last year," said CC coach Kevin Kavanagh. "He was walking the halls for three years. This is the first big meet he's been in."

**ASIDE FROM** Regan and Mizao, the Shamrocks had a bevy of runners place in the top 20: Jim Fedewa, 12th, 16:41; Jim Kolodziej, 14th, 16:43; and Greg Boller, 16th, 16:48.

In the A Division, Farmington finished fifth in a six-team field with 151 team points. Host Holly took first with 77.

Chris Inch, fourth overall (16:29), was the Falcons' top finisher. Al Stebbins followed Inch in fifth (16:31), while Bryan Lawton came in 17th (17:10).

# Tales of travail and pain

Winners grab glory,  
losers suffer alone

**HEROES MAKE** headlines. Tales of success and accomplishment fill out the text of the story.

That's the way this local newspaper game is played.

The disappointment and the heart-break of the defeated aren't emphasized although they are part of the same story.

But it was unusually tough to play down the losing side of the action I witnessed last weekend.

**FRIDAY NIGHT:** The site is Livonia Churchill High School. Churchill and Plymouth Salem renew an old grudge rivalry.

The subject is Brian Storm, Salem's sophomore kicker. Salem fought back from a 20-7 third-quarter deficit to pull even in the final quarter and needed an extra point from Storm to go ahead.

Churchill's Joe Payne spoiled Storm's bid by bursting through the Rock line and smothering the kick about the time it left his toe.

But that was the least of Storm's misfortune this night.

The game went into overtime.

Churchill managed a field goal on its first possession. So Salem needed to match that to keep the game going.

Predictably, it came down to Storm.

The sophomore got his kick away and raised his arms in jubilation. It looked to him, and to nearly everyone else on the Salem sideline, as though the ball split the uprights.

Imagine, then, the dismay on Storm's face when the referee ruled the kick no good.

It was a crushing moment for the young man and only those insensitive to human distress didn't share his pain as he walked off the field weeping, arm and arm with his older brother, John, Salem's quarterback.

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON:** The site is Farmington High. Again a pair of old friends meet on the gridiron — Farmington and Farmington Harrison.

Farmington, as has been the case four times in the last three years, got clobbered by Harrison.

But it wasn't supposed to happen like that this year. Farmington is improved team. But injuries to key people have dogged the Falcons, and their frustration was apparent.

Assistant coach Forrest Geary heaped a steady stream of abuse on



Chris McCosky

the officials that eventually cost the team 15 yards and nearly cost head coach Don Kuick an ejection from the game. (When a bench penalty is called, the head coach pays the price.)

Quarterback-defensive back Joe Bob Wenson, hampered by a bad ankle, heard jeers not only from the Harrison rooters but from the Falcon faithful as well.

Late in the third quarter, Harrison quarterback Mike Mack darted around left end. Only Wenson stood between Mack and the end zone.

Mack made a move, Wenson matched it. Mack switched directions. Wenson couldn't. Mack went into the end zone untouched. Wenson put his head down and tried to block out the jeers.

Craig Petersmark is 6-2 and a strong 240 pounds. He is one of the best linemen in the area, but a foot injury has forced him to play at about 70 percent of his ability.

After being pushed around by the smaller but quicker Harrison linemen, Petersmark came off the field. The frustration overwhelmed him.

"I can't run," he cried and ripped his helmet off in disgust.

Things weren't too cheery on the Harrison side, either.

Mark Mecklenburg, a senior two-way back and kicker, was on the bench crying. His knee heavily wrapped. His father hugged him. Stunned and speechless, the Harrison players milled around him.

For the last two years Mecklenburg played behind two-time All-American John Miller. With Miller at Michigan State, this was to be Mecklenburg's year.

Mecklenburg's year ended on the final play of the third quarter of the second game of the season.

A Farmington defender crashed into Mecklenburg following his extra point kick that put Harrison ahead 35-0. The defender hit him while his leg was in the air. Mecklenburg's knee buckled, torn both inside and out.

Damn.

**SATURDAY NIGHT:** The site is Farmington Hills Mercy High School. It is the finals of the prestigious Mercy Hoops Classic.



JERRY ZOLNYSKY/staff photographer

Michelle Fryatt's No. 1 asset as a basketball player may be her heart. That heart was broken last Saturday night in Mercy's loss to Rouge.

Mercy is trailing the state's No. 1-ranked team, River Rouge, by one point. There are eight seconds left and Mercy has the ball.

During the timeout, Mercy coach Larry Baker diagrams a play. Either Michelle Fryatt or Yvette Maison is to receive the inbound pass. Their job will be to either get the ball inside to Missy Duczynski or Terri Nalodka, or take the open shot if it's there.

Try to imagine what Fryatt might be thinking as she walks back onto the court.

Last year she served an apprenticeship for the role of Mercy's point guard playing behind Annette Ruggiero.

Fryatt is 5-2 with good but not great basketball skills. Her greatest asset is her heart. Through hard work and dedication, she made herself into a darn good basketball player.

When this season started, she knew she was ready to run the Mercy offense.

But things began poorly. She sprained her ankle during warm-ups

prior to the season opener. Replacement Yvette Maison scored 22 points in Fryatt's absence.

Since then, Fryatt has been sharing time at point guard. She didn't start against Rouge.

But she had made a key shot, a pretty reverse layup, to help Mercy's comeback, and now she had a shot to help her team win the game.

The inbound pass came to Fryatt. She caught it off-balance and nearly traveled before she regained her balance.

She drove to the left side of the free-throw line and her shot got a bit too soon and a bit too wide.

As the Rouge players streamed onto the court in celebration, Fryatt fought off the tears for a moment, then her reserve let her down. Her No. 1 asset had been broken.

Sure, the heroes get the headlines. But long after the game, long after the headlines and the stories are written, the trauma and travail of the losing side remain etched in my memory.

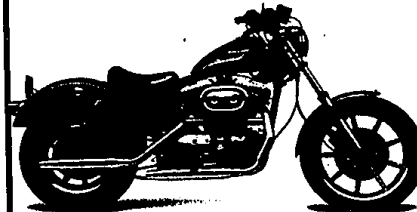
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