



B.J. Armstrong, Birmingham Brother Rice graduate, finished strong for Iowa last Saturday but couldn't prevent a big win for U-M.

DAN DEAN/staff photographer

B.J. goes out fighting

THE BUZZER sounded. The game ended. The celebration began.

B.J. Armstrong stood dead still near mid-court, seemingly oblivious to the jubilant fans spilling on to floor in a wild frenzy all around him. Then he slumped over, bending and grabbing both knees in a combination of exhaustion and disappointment.

This could have been one happy homecoming for Armstrong. But if it had been, no one would have cheered. Or almost no one, anyway.

That's because Armstrong took his considerable basketball talents from Birmingham Brother Rice to Iowa. Not the University of Michigan. Not Michigan State.

"I looked very hard at both Michigan and Michigan State," Armstrong would say later. But he opted to accept George Raveling's bid to play at Iowa. That was 1985. By the end of Armstrong's first season as a Hawkeye, Raveling had split for the west coast and the University of Southern California. Armstrong decided to stick at Iowa.

GOOD MOVE. At least until Saturday it was. Iowa had lost just once, a home game against Indiana, and had spent a week or so at the top of the national rankings. Entering Saturday's game at Crisler Arena, the Hawkeyes were No. 2 in the country.

And B.J. Armstrong was their starting point guard. He was averaging better than 12 points a game. He was in charge of running new coach Tom Davis' fast-paced, full-court attack. Big responsibility for a sophomore, but so far Armstrong appeared to be up to the challenge.

A win over Michigan Saturday would have made him happier than at any time this season. He tried to downplay his feelings after the 100-92 upset, but his performance down the stretch betrayed him.

As Armstrong accurately assessed, "We just weren't sharp today. (Michigan) just outplayed us, outshutted us. They beat us to loose balls."

When asked if it was a tough loss to swallow, Armstrong said, "Sure it is, sure it is. You always like to win on the road. It's always frustrating to lose."

HE WOULD repeat those same thoughts a dozen times in the next hour to a variety of local media, all wondering what it was like to be bombarded with delectable cheers in his hometown — after losing the game.

"Every loss hurts," he said at one point. "I try to approach each game the same. It would have been nice to win one here."

For Armstrong, a win would have been sublime. But from the opening minutes it was apparent an upset was in motion. U-M would open up a lead. Iowa would battle back, then the Wolverines would answer with another charge.

Frustration is an integral part of sport, and Saturday's game was frustrating for Armstrong. He could see his team was operating at three-quarters capacity, a normally lusty V-8 plugging along on six cylinders. And he could not inspire any more out of his teammates.

Finally, Armstrong took matters into his own hands.



C.J. Risak

He had scored just five points, but with six minutes left and Iowa down 80-70 he started to force the action. Two free throws dropped, then two more. A driving layup for two. A beauty of a baseline jumper, 12 feet out, arched and ripped through the net. Another layup.

BUT THE LAST basket came with just 15 seconds remaining. The game was over; only the final point spread need be decided.

Armstrong had scored 10 of his 15 points in that stretch run, but it could not change the outcome. He made all four of his second-half free throws; his teammates managed just four-of-10.

"We're just going to have to pick ourselves up and work harder," he said outside the visiting team's locker room underneath the Crisler Arena stands. "We'll have to work harder, do the things that got us here."

Hard work is what earned Armstrong a starting role with one of the nation's best teams. He was listed way down on the Iowa depth chart in preseason, but quickly rose to the summit. Against U-M, he played 27 of 40 minutes, sharing the position with Detroit's Bill Jones.

"I believed in myself, in my ability," said Armstrong. "I just thought I could play. I look at all point guards, see what they do pick up things from all of them."

POINT GUARD is the most difficult position to play in basketball. Quarterback, ballhandler, defuser, defensive ace, passer, extraordinary, cheerleader, then scorer. Armstrong was hard on himself after Saturday's loss.

"I tried to get everyone involved in the game, all my teammates," he said. "I probably didn't concentrate enough. Some of (the blame) I take on myself. We weren't sharp enough."

There are perhaps six teams in the Big Ten that are among the top 30 in the nation. Add to that some difficult non-conference foes for Iowa, and it would be impossible to be sharp every game — particularly when even the work teams are taking dead aim at the one at the top of the pyramid.

Iowa is a mild club, 10 players deep, a team that can apply full-court defensive pressure for 40 minutes, and a team that can either muscle the ball inside or knock down a string of outside jumpers.

Armstrong is a big part of this team. He tried to disassociate himself with Saturday's disappointment. He already was looking ahead: "We'll just have to come back and win Wednesday."

He didn't need a crystal ball to foresee a bunch of victories ahead for the Hawkeyes, more than enough to carry them into the NCAA tournament and perhaps to a title (Big Ten) — or even two (NCAA).

Canton hosts elite gymnasts

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

If you are going to sponsor a tournament, you might as well bring in the best teams available, right?

That's more or less how Plymouth Canton gymnastics coach John Cunningham approached the inaugural Plymouth Canton Invitational, which will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, at Canton's Phase III facility.

The top two teams in the state will headline the 11-team competition. Troy Athens (ranked No. 1 by the Michigan Gymnastics Coaches Association) and Free-land (No. 2) will meet in a rematch. The two met earlier this season at the Troy Athens Invitational, and Athens won by a slim 15 margin.

"The Troy Athens meet was very exciting," Cunningham said. "We got a chance to sit and watch some great performances. Our meet should be a nice rematch to show what will happen with the rankings. I think there's going to be a change. I couldn't believe Athens beat Free-land the last time."

North Farmington, ranked No. 3 in the state and No. 1 in Observeland, had to pull out of the meet because of a scheduling conflict.

The field for the Canton Invitational can be divided into three groups. Athens, Free-land and state-ranked Ann Arbor Pioneer comprise the elite group. The trio scores consistently in the 130-plus range. Dearborn, Midland Dow, Canton and Plymouth Salem make up the second group. They score in the 125-130 range.

Royal Oak Kimball, Northville, Farmington and Vassar score 115-120 and comprise the third tier. Cunningham expects the competition to run from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Admission is \$1 for students, \$1.75 for adults.

ON MONDAY NIGHT, Westland John Glenn, the No. 2-ranked team in Observeland, scored a 130.25-125.95 Western Lakes victory against Plymouth Canton.

Glenn's Debbie Williams and Debbie Tomasko shared first place on vault, each scoring 9.1. Williams won on uneven parallel bars (8.6) and placed second on floor exercise (8.7). Tomasko and Angie Temelko tied for third on floor (8.6). Temelko was second on bars (8.2).

For Canton, Mary Jo Charron placed first on both balance beam (8.65) and floor exercise (8.6). Brenda Perry placed third on vault (8.45) and second on beam (8.35).

A.L. PRICE ALWAYS LOW PRICES Everyday on Everything

• ALLEN PARK—15421 Southfield Rd
PHONE: 381-6002
• DEARBORN—22250 Michigan
PHONE: 568-6350
• EAST DETROIT—24931 Kelly
PHONE: 771-6310
• GROSSE POINTE—Mack at Moross
PHONE: 581-8210
• LANSING—Duff Center
PHONE: 323-0940
• SOUTHFIELD—The Corners
PHONE: 258-0068
• WARREN—31016 Van Dyke
PHONE: 978-1007
• WESTLAND—Westland Crossing
PHONE: 522-0033

EXTRA STRENGTH SINE-AID
24-CT. CAPLETS
\$3.05

Aqua-Fresh TOOTHPASTE
6.4 OZ. TUBE
30% OFF Label
\$1.39

20% OFF Label AQUA FRESH NEW PUMP TOOTHPASTE
\$1.44

EXTRA STRENGTH SINE-AID
50-CT. CAPLETS
\$4.81

PEDIA CARE 3 CHILD COLD RELIEF
24-CT. Chewable Tablets
\$1.58

PEDIA CARE 1 CHILDREN'S COUGH RELIEF LIQUID
3 oz.
\$2.18

ALPHA KERI BATH OIL
8 oz.
\$4.46

TYLENOL CHILDREN'S
30-CT. Chewable Tablets
\$1.99

PEDIA CARE 3 CHILDREN'S COLD RELIEF LIQUID
3 oz.
\$2.78

ALPHA KERI MOISTURIZING SOAP BAR
4 oz.
\$1.59

DOW OVEN CLEANER
16 oz.
\$1.07

DELSYM 12-HOUR COUGH RELIEF
3 oz.
\$3.16

NESTLE QUIK REAL CHOCOLATE FLAVOR
2-LB. BOX
\$2.99

OPEN MON-SAT. 9 TILL 10 SUNDAY 10 TILL 6

INCREDIBLE LIMITED TIME OFFER! FREE \$500.00 UNITED STATES SAVINGS BOND!

With the Purchase of Either:

PULSE

- Low maintenance, energy saving
- Nearly twice as efficient as older furnaces because it operates on an entirely different principle
- The only furnace with the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, your assurance of quality and reliability
- Kast will guarantee heat the same day as installation

OR LENNOX HS19 Air Conditioner

- The most efficient single-speed model made by Lennox
- Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) up to 12 — extremely efficient
- One of the quietest, most rugged and advanced units on the market
- 45% reduction in operating costs compared to units 7 years old or older
- "Blow-out" control to protect compressor

9.9% FINANCING AVAILABLE* 90 DAYS TILL FIRST PAYMENT
Hurry, offer expires within 30 days!
*To Qualified Buyers

PLUS — A Trion TRIM T Electronic Air Cleaner for only \$299* (installed)!
PLUS — A White-Rodgers 7-Day Programmable "Set-Back" Thermostat for only \$99* (installed)!

Call Us For a FREE Energy Analysis of Your Home or Business.
We've been keeping families like yours comfortable for 50 years.

KAST Heating & Cooling
BIRMINGHAM 642-7150 ROYAL OAK 542-3850 PONTIAC 338-9255
Make the KAST call your LAST call!