

Livonia board invited to basketball contest

ONLY FIVE years have past, but now it's just a hollow memory. Bits and pieces, however, will stick my mind.

There was Bentley's Kim Archer, battling two Salem defenders for position underneath the basket. These teams used to go at it tooth and nail. It was a pleasure to watch.

The rivalry was real back then - Bentley vs. Salem. For high school girls basketball fans, it didn't get any better than this.

Since Bentley has closed, the three remaining Livonia schools have filled the void only as imposters, but don't blame it on the kids. The demise of girls basketball in this town doesn't rest with coaches, many of whom have come and gone.

The rivalry between neighboring school districts - Plymouth and Livonia - has become a joke. One district sits in the penthouse, while the other wallows in the out-house.

THE ONCE-proud rivalry between Bentley and Salem has degenerated into something that is hard to explain to outsiders.

On Tuesday, Livonia school board members may want to wheel over to Church II and take note. Yes, this is a long-standing

invitation to Joe Laura, Richard McKnight, Marjorie Roach, Carol Strum, Pat Tancill, Pat Sari and Richard Thorderson.

They'll get to see Salem, one of the best Class A programs in the state, against Churchill, one of the worst. Churchill has won one win so far this season against Farmington Harrison, a team with an 0-4 record.

And the mighty Salem Spartans? Well, they've already played Salem and the final outcome was all too familiar, 74-23.

And what about Livonia's third crown jewel, Franklin High? They've hit it big this year, Salem is not on its schedule. But Plymouth Canton was and the Patriots couldn't come within 20 points of the Chiefs.

TIM NEWMAN, the new Churchill coach, never dreamed he'd be in it so bad. It was only three years ago that Newman, coaching at Franklin, was voted Observerland Coach of the Year.

Newman's Churchill kids work hard and they never quit, but something is missing when they step out on the floor against Salem or Canton.

These girls are sorely lacking the fundamentals, the kind of training needed to survive against the Salems, Cantons, Lady-



Brad Emons

woods and Mercys. The fundamentals should be available at an earlier age.

Newman can't see things getting any better as long as the school board, the people we're inviting to Tuesday night's game, continue to take a non-competitive approach.

What these people on the board have told Newman indirectly is that middle school sports is an evil. Competition for seventh and eighth graders is harmful. Those format and eight graders is harmful. Those format and eight graders is harmful. Those format and eight graders is harmful.

We all know this time can be explored in a variety of ways - hanging out at Westland Mall, skate boarding down the street or becoming an MTV addict.

NEWMAN, an energetic young coach, can only find coaching basketball in his district frustrating, particularly after watching his

freshman team get trounced 66-4 and his junior varsity team unable to score a single basket by halftime.

It's obvious that Newman's kids are not athletically gifted, but given the chance like their neighbors from Plymouth they could compete in the basketball arena.

Newman and I frankly can't understand why this district can proudly compare math and reading scores with neighboring districts but fail to do the same thing in the field of athletics.

When Tuesday's game ends, these seven school board members should talk to Newman, talk to his girls and talk to Salem coach Fred Thomann.

Let's call it a time of exploration.

IT WAS only a few years ago that the Plymouth-Canton schools eliminated middle school sports. The program was eventually brought back, but some current varsity teams are still feeling a backlash. Fifteen football players from Plymouth now wear the blue-and-red uniform of Catholic Central High.

Inter-scholastic sports should be an integral part of any school district's curriculum. It gives kids a chance to compete and com-

pare themselves with other programs.

Newman's team is competing all right, but can they really feel good about themselves when they walk off the floor after being pounded by 60, 90 or maybe 100 points by Plymouth Salem?

Those good Bentley teams of yesteryear walked into gyms with their heads held high.

Their coach, Tom Lang, could tell you how much fun it was to compete - win or lose. The girls enjoyed it.

LANG LAID off coaching for a year. He missed it so he came back a year later. Unfortunately, Lang made it through only one season at Churchill. He soon found out competing against the Salems and Cantons wasn't fun anymore. He handed the reins over to the capable Newman, who now at age 36, has become totally disillusioned at this stage of his coaching career.

It's only right that members of the Livonia school board come down Tuesday and look Newman squarely in the eye. If the school board can spend six months debating whether gifted children should be bused they can certainly spend one night at a girls basketball game.

But do they have the nerve to do it?

Rocks avenge soccer loss

Salem soccer coach Ken Johnson put the whip to his players Tuesday and, like a thoroughbred on the back stretch, they responded with a rejuvenating victory Wednesday.

After being upset by Farmington Harrison 2-1 Monday, the Rocks bounced back and avenged that defeat, taking a 3-1 win from the Hawks in a Western Lakes crossover game.

Johnson had planned to give his charges the day off Tuesday but put them through a tough, two-hour workout instead.

"I told them this was one game we had to win," Johnson said, emphasizing the fact the Rocks are in the backstretch of their season with the district tournament set to begin today.

"We had to show a B Division team we were a quality team. One upset was OK, but two in a row would have been terrible. We came out fired up."

Salem's Gary Balconi scored his team-leading 12th goal to give the Rocks a 1-0 halftime lead. Mike Ulaszek's assist set up the scoring opportunity. Balconi also has 12 assists and Denny Reynolds eight goals.

The Rocks made it 2-0 when Jeff Gold scored off Ulaszek's deflected header. On a corner kick, Ulaszek knocked the ball out to the edge of the penalty area where Gold hit a low, hard liner toward the goal.

The Hawks got on the scoreboard when Craig Bailey netted a penalty kick. Salem goalie Dave O'Malley was called for interference when he dove at Bailey's feet in an attempt to prevent a shot.

With two minutes left in the game, freshman Joe Tippman scored an insurance goal (and his first varsity goal) off a pass from Pat Hayes. Hayes sent the ball through, and Tippman, who was just inside the middle line, caught up to the ball going through on the run.

After Tippman beat the goalkeeper who came out to break his

momentum, he had a clear shot at the goal, taking the ball right up to the goalmouth before knocking it in.

Salem finished 7-2 in the league and is 11-3 overall. The Rocks play the winner of Monday's Plymouth Canton-Ann Arbor Pioneer game on Wednesday at Centennial Educational Park.

A loss would have been devastating, two losses to the same team, and the team knew that," Johnson said. "And the other team knew they could beat us."

Johnson was very complimentary toward the Hawks, who are 5-5-1 in the league and 8-5-2 overall. Harrison has hopes of making a lengthy tournament run in Class B.

"I told Harrison coach Glenn Bruehan at Thursday's league meeting 'You guys can go all the way,'" Johnson said. "I think they can after the way they played us, and Steven-son only beat them 1-0."

CANTON 2, N. FARMINGTON 2: The Raiders led a 2-0 halftime lead slip away as the Chiefs made a second-half comeback Wednesday in another WLAAC crossover game.

Senior captain Brett Willis scored on a penalty kick, and Todd Menko, with an assist from Alastair Riddick, gave North its 2-0 lead on a deflected corner kick.

The teams played 17 minutes of the second half before Canton averted a shutout with Kris Kilpelainen's goal. Steve Marshall got the tying goal two minutes later at 25:00. Marshall and Kilpelainen assisted on each other's goals.

North coach Cathy Cole, whose team finished the regular season 2-7-2 in the league and 4-7-2 overall, was disappointed in her team being unable to hold the lead.

"That's pretty much a black mark in our playbook," she said. "It shouldn't have happened, but as you know there's ups and downs in any athletic contest."

"I really feel we should have been the winner by the momentum we

had," she said.

Canton coach Mike Morgan said the game followed the pattern consistent with other games in which the Chiefs, 4-4-1 and 5-9-2, have had plenty of opportunities but fewer goals than the opponent.

"We showed a lot of courage, heart and determination to make (the tie) happen," he said.

Canton plays Ann Arbor Pioneer in first-round district play at 7 p.m. today at CEP, and Morgan and Co. are hopeful of a victory that would set up a Wednesday rematch with Plymouth Salem at CEP. The Raiders play at Northville at 7 p.m. today in their district game.

"(The players) really want to play Salem, but to do that we have to get by Pioneer," Morgan said. "That would salvage an otherwise dismal season if we can beat Salem. But we're not looking past Pioneer. That's No. 1."

NORTHVILLE 1, FARMINGTON 0: Steve Yezbick scored the game's only goal as the Mustangs blanked the Falcons Wednesday.

Farmington, 5-5-1 in the league and 7-4-1 overall, outshot Northville 6-4 in the first half and 10-5 in the second.

Harrison splashes Rockets

Elizabeth Tucker met a Class B qualifying standard in the 200-yard freestyle and broke her own breaststroke time Thursday, leading Farmington Harrison past Westland John Glenn 100-50 in girls swimming.

Tucker will go to the state meet in the freestyle after posting a 2:06.41 time, and the breaststroke record is now 1:12.6.

Tucker also combined with Julie Farabee, Jenni Fitzgerald and Kelly Murany to win the freestyle relay in 4:11.85.

Farabee won the individual medley (2:23.8), Murany the 500 freestyle (25:09) and Fitzgerald the 100 freestyle (1:33.93).

Harrison's Jill Murany and Danielle King also had solo victories and helped the Hawks win the 200 medley relay.

Murany won the butterfly (1:07.3) and King the backstroke (1:14.66). These two, Lisa Skubinski and Aimee Katz captured the medley relay in 2:12.71.

The Hawks are 2-0 in the Western Division and 4-4 overall.

their record to 7-0 Thursday by trouncing their Western Lakes opponent.

North coach Pat Duthie used the meet to give each of his non-regulars a chance for varsity competition, and they produced the same kind of results.

"It was a nice opportunity for everyone who usually doesn't get in to score some points," he said. "It worked very well, and we had an awful lot of best times."

North's freestyle winners were Amy Schwartzberg in the 200 (2:17.85), Cindy Howard in the 50 (30.08), Jennifer Wagner in the 100 (1:04.99) and Dorothy Ashley in the 500 (6:01.75).

Kim Reese won the individual medley (2:44.59), Karen Paynter the butterfly (1:12.02), Jenny Williams the backstroke (1:16.30) and Alicia Barrett the breaststroke (1:28.49).

Duthie is still experimenting with his relay combinations and used his regulars in those events.

The Raiders swim against a strong Dearborn team Tuesday at home.

swimming

ta Orr and Liz DeMatella paced the unbeaten Marlins (5-0-1) to their victory over Royal Oak Shrine in Catholic League competition Thursday.

Both swimmers teamed up with Amy Cezar and Mary Quinn to win the medley relay (2:00.7), and both had solo victories. Orr won the individual medley in 2:19.87 and DeMatella the butterfly in 1:05.19.

Mercy's Katie Westhoff qualified for the Class A meet in the backstroke (1:04.94), and Anne Lang won the breaststroke with a personal-best time of 1:17.88.

Erica Campbell gave the Marlins first place in diving (17.3 points), and Jennie Olmstead, Polly Tenuta, Cetrar and Michelle McCallery won the freestyle relay (4:02.79).

N. FARMINGTON 131, W.L. WESTERN 37: The Raiders ran

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