

# North squeezes past Farmington for one-point win

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super effort, but I have to give their kids credit for staying in there. "They played strong defense in the second half and prevented us from doing anything," he said. "My man-to-man (press) took us out of everything we wanted to do." The Falcons raced to a 16-6 lead after a late first-quarter scoring spurt and were on top 26-18 at halftime. North rallied to get back within five, 32-27, on back-to-back jumpers by Dudek and Hoffman off the fast break. But the Falcons pulled ahead again, 37-27, on baskets by Browne and McDougall and a Brandon London free throw.

Farmington's lead appeared safe, but grew increasingly tenuous as Hoffman's long-range bombs pulled the Raiders into contention.

"He was quite a ways out there," Kaump said. "Three times my kids were right on him, and they were going in the hole."

"HE'S A VERY, very good player for a sophomore," said Negoshian, noting other good games Hoffman has had. "But I don't know if all that is as important as what happened to-night. (The victory) far overcomes any individual things."

**'I couldn't be happier being the coach of the North Farmington Raiders. I don't know where else we could have gotten through this but in the North Farmington School District.'**

— Tom Negoshian  
North basketball coach

Negoshian also thanked Farmington High for its show of support. Some of the Farmington students attended Leiter's funeral Thursday, and the school canceled its prep rally Friday.

"If those things aren't what high school basketball is all about, I'm in this job for all the wrong reasons," Negoshian said.

"I couldn't be happier being the coach of the North Farmington Raiders," he said. "I don't know where else we could have gotten through this but in the North Farmington School District."



Drew McDougall hops out of bounds along the baseline in order to put the ball back in play for Farmington. The Falcons led throughout the game only to lose at the end.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

# Raiders cope with player's death

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lapse, at first, was attributed to it. But the other players quickly sensed the gravity of the situation and called for Negoshian and assistant coach Deny Mikel.

"The travesty, when you're dealing with kids, is that they all saw it," Negoshian said.

"That it happened at a school function, with his peer group with him, certainly made this more traumatic and harder to deal with," North Farmington principal Don Cowan said.

"ALL OF THEM wanted to go to the hospital," Negoshian said. "I told them they couldn't go, and I promised them I would call them."

Though it was past midnight, Negoshian telephoned each player and each time repeated the difficult task of relaying the somber news.

The team met early Wednesday morning and stayed together much of the day. Their teachers, who were "understanding and felt some empathy toward the kids and what they were going through," Negoshian said, released them from their classroom responsibilities.

Forging a regular practice session Wednesday, the team had an informal shoot-around, a casual practice where players shoot baskets on their own or organize small pick-up games.

Such practices are usually filled with laughter, a laid-back atmosphere and plenty of verbal and physical jostling.

IT WAS JUST the opposite Wednesday at North

Farmington. Some players sat on the sideline, appearing to be in trance-like thought. Others were active, shooting repeatedly at the basket, but were probably concentrating more on the last 24 hours than putting the ball in the net.

"We tried to talk about it as best we could," Negoshian said. "They were just kind of quiet, sad."

"Hopefully, with me being their coach, we'll be able to keep things out in the open and discuss things."

Negoshian fought back tears Wednesday afternoon, pausing to regain his composure, as he recalled how Leiter, a 6-foot-1, 145-pound reserve forward, got into his first game of the season and scored his first basket.

Though the Raiders lost their game with John Glenn, 55-42, and tragedy befell them afterward, Negoshian viewed Leiter's accomplishments in that game as a triumph.

"I THINK IF there's something to be said, Matt was the victor," he said. "He got into the game, scored his first basket, and he was smiling and happy as can be, with all of his goals still ahead of him. Because of that, I can say he was the victor."

Actually, Leiter had realized a personal goal when he made the North Farmington varsity team. Cowan said he had "found his niche with basketball." Leiter planned to continue his devotion to the sport in hopes of becoming a starter next year as a senior.

"He was just a gym rat," said Negoshian, using a sports euphemism that is invoked with a sense

of endearment to reflect an individual's commitment.

"If you talked to Ralph Temby, our phys-ed man, he'd tell you (Leiter) was always around in the summer. The custodians — they knew who he was. He just loved basketball."

Leiter went to a prestigious basketball camp in Indiana last summer to improve his skills. The best high school players in the Midwest usually attend the camp since many college scouts can see them play. Leiter had simpler motives.

HE WANTED TO become a better player "just so he would have a chance to make the varsity," Negoshian said. "That said something about his love for the game."

Negoshian, who teaches at Warner Middle School, first met Leiter when he transferred from the Southfield school district and became one of his students.

Negoshian recalled a good-natured exchange he had with Leiter when North Farmington was to play Southfield, then a state-ranked team, for a district championship.

"Matt was still a Southfield fan even though he attended North Farmington," he said. "I told him we were going to beat Southfield, and he said 'no way.'"

"But we upset them, and Matt came back and shook my hand and said 'Some day I'm going to play basketball for you.'"

"At that point, Matt quit being a Southfield fan and became a North Farmington fan."

# Harrison rolls over Northville

It was an enjoyable night for the basketball team at Farmington Hills Harrison as the Hawks coasted past Northville 68-51 Thursday.

Coach Mike Teachman's ballclub improved its record to 3-2 in the Lakes Division and raised its overall mark to 7-4.

Everything went right for the Hawks, who had the best-executed game of the season. They also were a bunch of hot shooters, connecting on five three-point field goals in the first quarter.

That kind of accuracy staked Harrison to an immediate lead, and the Hawks never looked back. Harrison nailed three triples in the opening minutes to take a 10-0 lead.

Teachman emptied his bench in each half as the Hawks went in front 21-14 at the end of the first quarter and began the second half with 23 points in the third period. Harrison

## basketball

led 32-26 at halftime, but extended that to 55-34 with one quarter remaining.

Junior forward Chad Burgess once again paced the Harrison scoring with 18 points, and Jason Lichtman added 12. Bryan Waudron sat out the first half and finished with six points, which included a dunk by the 6-foot-2 junior.

Kevin Hains scored 13 points to lead Northville, which dropped to 1-4 in the division and 1-10 overall.

The Hawks were 24-of-42 from the field for 57 percent and made 15 of 22 free throws. The Mustangs were 14-of-21 at the line.

# Ocelots take pounding

Outmanned Schoolcraft College got stalwart performances from Landon Tall, Steve Hawley, Brad Ridgeway and Andy Stephens Wednesday — and it still wasn't enough. Not against the Eastern Conference basketball leaders, Highland Park CC, which whipped the Ocelots 109-53 at Highland Park.

Tall scored 24 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Hawley netted 16 points and nine boards and Stephens had 11 points and 11 rebounds, connecting on all five of his floor shots.

But 35 turnovers doomed SC, which fell to 1-9 in the conference and 7-14 overall. Hersey Otis topped the Panthers (10-1 in the conference) with 22 points. Tony Racka, from Farmington Hills, scored 21 points — all on three-pointers. Highland Park CC made 11-of-21 from three-point range.

Hawley, the conference's leading scorer, was plagued with foul trouble. He fouled out with 15 minutes left in the game and was whistled for three offensive charges.

SC'S WOMENS TEAM fared no better against their counterparts at Highland Park CC Wednesday, losing 86-58. The defeat just about ended any hopes the Lady Ocelots had of winning the Eastern Conference title, dropping them to 5-3 in the

league (13-6 overall). Highland Park went to 8-1 (19-2 overall), trailing unbeaten Oakland CC (8-0) by a half-game.

SC's slide against the Lady Panthers came quickly. Before the game was five minutes old, Highland Park CC led 13-2. SC never got closer than 10 the rest of the way.

"We were intimidated, there's no question about it," said Lady Ocelot coach Jack Grenan. Five of his eight players are freshmen. In addition, SC was without Linda Lankford, who is out with academic problems.

Tammy Adkins sank seven-of-eight floor shots and notched 20 points to pace the Lady Ocelots. Debbie Georgevich had 14 and Sharon Miller finished with 11. But SC forwards Michelle Dykanski and Denise Kokowicz, who average in double figures in scoring, did not contribute a point.

Grenan's game plan was "to take our time and go inside, and not try to run with them. Be patient." But SC could not control the tempo and slow down the Lady Panthers.

"It was pretty much a case of anything that could go wrong, did," he said.

SC's women host Alpena Wednesday, while the mens team hosts the Siena Heights junior varsity tonight and travels to Alpena Wednesday.

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