



Harrison coach Neve is dismissed

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

Ernie Harwell wasn't the only one to get a Christmas surprise. A week before Christmas, Harwell — the longtime Detroit Tigers' announcer — was sacked.

The public outrage — that followed has been unprecedented. Jim Neve certainly doesn't expect anything to match that, but he feels equally victimized.

Neve, the varsity girls' basketball

coach at Farmington Harrison for the past five seasons, was dumped a week ago. And like Harwell, he isn't sure why.

"It was a unilateral decision," said Ron Holland, the Farmington schools athletic director. "There were three of us involved."

And the reason? "There were a lot of things that can't be said," replied Holland.

Clay Graham, Harrison's principal and one of the three in on the decision (the third was Harrison AD Norm Dickson), also would not sup-

girls basketball

ply specifics. "There were some things we don't want to talk about publicly," said Graham. "Things we were looking for that needed to be done, of a personal nature."

ALL OF which has left Neve as puzzled as anyone. "I never had the foggiest idea I was going to get terminated," said Neve. "I'm baffled by

decision, apparently. Said Graham: "Take a look at the team before (Neve) got there. There's no question they're more competitive now than they were then."

"I would certainly not want to criticize him for not putting in the work."

Added Holland: "He was a hard worker. He put a lot of time into it. If it was just wins and losses (that concerned us), we probably would have gotten rid of him three years ago."

WHAT THEN?

Neve agreed he did not get along with all those connected with his program — notably some parents of players. That tenuous relationship apparently played a role in his dismissal.

"No coach is loved by everybody," said Neve. "I'm not going to get into that. I'm not ashamed of what I did there. I enjoyed the relationship I had with the five teams I coached there."

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Hockey haven

Area players back for GLI tourney

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

Michigan State's normally powerful hockey team is finally thawing.

The Spartans are just returning from the deep freeze — a victory at the Great Western Freeze-Out Tournament in Los Angeles — and they are red-hot.

Michigan Tech was struggling, but the Huskies have shown signs of life lately. They come to Detroit after a Western Collegiate Hockey Association road win at Denver Saturday.

But the team Michigan State and Michigan Tech, along with the University of Maine, will likely be chasing for the Great Lakes Invitational championship this weekend is defending champ University of Michigan. The Wolverines have been impressive through the first 18 games of the Central Collegiate Hockey Association season; they are tied with Ferris State for second, each with 25 points.

The GLI, now entering its 26th year, will start at 5 p.m. Friday at Joe Louis Arena with Tech facing off against Michigan. MSU will battle Maine at 8 p.m. Friday. The consolation game will be at 4 p.m. Saturday. Friday's winners will battle for the GLI title at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

IT WILL be a homecoming of sorts for several players. A pair of Spartans — senior forward Walt Bartels, from Plymouth (and Redford Catholic Central), and junior goalie Mike Gilmore, from Farmington Hills — will try to give their team its fifth GLI championship in nine years.

college sports

Tech senior defenseman Rob Tustian plans to deny MSU that distinction, while extending the Huskies' leadership for most GLI victories.

Making the trip to Joe Louis for the GLI is nothing new for Tustian. It's something the Livonia Stevenson graduate looks forward to each year.

"You get family out (to the games), there's a big crowd . . . It's a good atmosphere for hockey," said Tustian.

This has been a season of adjustment for Tustian. He was at forward for the first three years of his collegiate hockey career; he switched to defense this year.

TUSTIAN SHOWED he still had some offensive instincts Saturday when he scored the go-ahead goal on a power play in the second period, helping push the Huskies to a 3-2 over Denver.

Still, he isn't completely comfortable. Not yet.

The biggest adjustment? "The speed of the game," he answered. "We've got a real fast league."

Tech is 5-10-1 in the WCHA, 8-11-1 overall. They are in seventh place in the WCHA.

MSU's fortunes have started to reverse. After a 1-1-2 start to the season, the Spartans went into a tailspin, posting three wins in 11 games.

They've rebounded since, winning five straight to improve to 10-4 overall, 7-7-4 in the CCHA. Gilmore and Bartels have played a role in the Spartan resurgence.

GILMORE, WHO shares goaltending duties with Jason Muzzati, is atop the CCHA goals-against list. He has a 2.52 goals-against average and a 4-3-2 record, and his save percentage is 89.4.

Bartels, a team co-captain, is coming off his most productive season (seven goals, 16 assists). This season, Bartels has two goals and five assists.

It will take quite an effort for either to upend U-M. MSU has played the Wolverines twice this season, losing once and tying once. In last year's GLI final, the Spartans were beaten by U-M 6-3.

One factor favoring Wolverine foes is the absence of sophomore defenseman Pat Neaton, a Redford native who attended CC until his senior year. Neaton is with a U.S. team currently playing in Canada. He won't be in the lineup this weekend.



BOB KALMBACH

Patrick Neaton of Redford is one of the University of Michigan's top defensemen, but he won't be playing this weekend in the Great

Lakes Invitational Hockey Tournament. Neaton was selected for the U.S. team currently playing in Canada.



Rob Tustian Walt Bartels

Adams matmen 3rd in Oakland County

By Mike Stewart
staff writer

The Rochester Adams wrestling program has improved dramatically over the past three seasons, but its performance this weekend at the Oakland County Meet proved the Highlanders must work even harder if a state title is in this year's plans.

To be sure, the Highlanders' were impressive in the two-day, 43-team tournament held at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes Campus. Adams tallied 174 points, good for third place behind Clarkston (210 points) and Lake Orion (183 points).

The Highlanders were accompanied in the top 10 by Metro Suburban Activities Association foe Troy Athens (129.5 points, ninth place) and the Southeastern Michigan Association's Troy High (139.5 points, seventh place).

That's not bad company to be in. Lake Orion was last year's state champion and Clarkston is ranked second this year, with its only dual-meet loss coming to No. 1-ranked Temperance-Bedford.

The Highlanders placed five grapplers in what many coaches referred to as the most talent-laden wrestling event of the year — save the state tourney. Only Clarkston showed better, placing seven of its wrestlers. The real difference between the two squads was evident in the championship matches. Clarkston won three of its four title matches, while the Highlanders were 0-3.



JOHN STORMSZANDER/staff photographer

Kael Williams, of Southfield-Lathrup, won the championship in the 130-pound bracket at the Oakland County Wrestling Tournament Saturday and earned one of two Outstanding Wrestler trophies.

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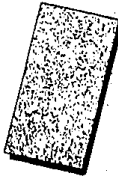
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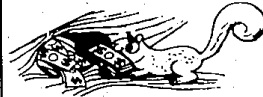
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