Shamrocks silence Rice

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

basketball

By beating Birmingham Brother Rice away from home Friday night, Redford Catholic Central finally ended the beating it has heard the past three years inside the visiting locker room.

CC's 66-52 boys basketball win snapped a three-game losing streak at Rice and also gave Bob Kummer's ears a rest afterward in the locker room.

"Every year after we lose to Rice, they pound on the doors and we've got to sit in here and listen to it," said Kummer, pointing to the doors between the two locker rooms. "It's been eating at me for four years. I did not want to listen to that again."

CC silenced a fourth-quarter rally by Rice and then made eight of its last nine free throws to win its fifth straight and improve to 7-1 overall. The win left CC all alone atop the Catholic League's Central Division at 3-0.

"THAT'S ALWAYS good because then they have to chase you," CC coach Bernie Holowicki said.

Rice, which made only 21-of-64 shots from the field (33 percent), fell to 5-4 overall and 1-2 in the Central Division. *Rice's 6-foot-10 senior center* Paul Grant scored 21 points on 10-of-20 shooting but missed a 2-foot shot and was called for an offensive foul in the last two minutes when Rice was trying to cut into a seven-point CC advantage.

Senior guard Ken Harris was the only other Warrior in double figures with 13 points. Grant is a load inside for the Warriors, but the senior who has signed with Boston College had his hands full with CC's two 6-6 twin stars Kummer and Chad Varga.

Kummer is headed for the University of North Carolina-Charlotte and Varga to the University of Richmond.

"Everyone is going to double-team Paul, but I'll tell ya, Paul missed his share of shots, too," Rice coach Frank Carrico said. "It's been a problem the whole year — we're shooting around 35 percent as a team. I feel very discouraged. We played hard, but until we learn to play smart, concentrate and keep our composure, this team will never be any good."

VARGA, WHO PICKED up his fourth foul with 4:54 left, led all scorers with 27 points and 10 rebounds, while Kummer contributed 19 points and seven rebounds.

Not many high school teams can boast more height than CC but the Warriors do with Grant next to 6-8 *senior forward Jeff Mishko (eight* points) on the frontline.

"Both Chad and Bobby played smart," Holowicki said. "They got a little taunted earlier but didn't lose their cool. They have some tough, big-time people on Rice. Hell, there's not too many college teams as big as they are."

Kummer and Varga earn most of the praise they get but on this night Holowicki was eager to give support players Tom Laco, Andy Slankster, Sean Gallagher, Will Marcoux and Eric Justice their due.

The Rice cheering section chanted "weasel" every time the 5-6 Justice touched the ball for the Shamrocks, but the junior guard played big when he re-entered the game in the final four minutes.

JUSTICE'S PRETTY pass in the paint with 3:58 left led to a three-point play by Varga and a 50-43 lead. Marc Gondek's steal and layup gave CC a 52-43 lead with 3:46 left and Justice scored all six of his points in the last two minutes to assure the victory.

"No one understands how good Justice is," Varga said.

Said Holowicki: "Eric grew up and matured on the floor in the second half. He's a fierce competitor."

With Harris scoring eight first-quarter points, Rice led 11-9 after one quarter. Grant scored eight points in the second quarter, including two dunks as the Warriors opened up a 23-18 lead with about three minutes left before halftime.

But after a Harris free throw gave Rice a 24-20 lead, CC scored the last *seven points of the half* and led 27-24 on Kummer's layup at the buzzer. Rice made only 5-19 shots in the third quarter as the Shamrocks opened up a 41-37 lead heading into the final eight minutes.

"Our motto was 'We're playing Brother Rice, tonight, not Paul Grant,'" Kummer said.

Farmington plays well in WLAA loss

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"I think we lose some offensive punch when Brian Farr and Matt Fitzpatrick both go down with injuries. Farr is a threat. He can shoot the ball and the three if we need it."

The Chiefs went up 50-37 on five straight points from Heard early in the fourth, but Farmington rallied after Coshatt fouled out and left a void in the middle.

Afflerbaugh made back-to-back baskets — one outside, one inside — and John Coanil came off the bench to score consecutive field goals, the second a triple that put Farmington within four, 50-46.

BUT STAFFORD and McDonald rescued the Chiefs. Stafford sank three-point shots after the Falcons missed a one-and-one and a two-shot opportunity, and McDonald made a three-point play to give Canton a 59-46 lead with 2:31 to play. The Chiefs outscored Farmington 18-4 in the last 3½ minutes.

"It really bothers me that we had to go to a zone defense to stop this team," Van Wagoner said. "Our kids have to get tougher. Eighty percent of our practices are spent on defense, and our defense was horrible tonight.

"Right now we're searching for answers. We haven't found our chemistry, and the coaching staff is frustrated: We're trying to figure out which buttons to push."

The teams traded baskets in a wide-open first quarter, which had Canton leading 19-18 at the end. Farmington made seven of 12 shots and the Chiefs seven of 14.

The Falcons slowed down the pace in the second quarter, and the teams combined for only six points in the first six minutes. Canton made 23 of 47 shots overall for 49 percent, Farmington 19 of 50 for 38.

"Our thought was 'We're not going to be able to run up and down the floor with Canton, because that's their game,'" Mikel said. "We wanted to shorten the game down (by taking time off the clock) and work to get a good shot. For the most part, we did a good job of it."

the week ahead

BOYS BASKETBALL
Monday, Jan. 20
Belleville at Wayne Memorial, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21
Liv. Clarenceville at Hamtramck, 7 p.m.
S'gate Anderson at Wayne Memorial, 7 p.m.
Dearborn at Liv. Churchill, 7:30 p.m.
Liv. Franklin at Nov, 7:30 p.m.
Liv. Stevenson at Redford Union, 7:30 p.m.
Northville at Westland Glenn, 7:30 p.m.
Birm. Seaholm at N. Farmington, 7:30 p.m.
Waterford Mott at Farm. Harrison, 7:30 p.m.
Lake Orion at Farmington, 7:30 p.m.
D.H. Crestwood at Red. Thurston, 7:30 p.m.
St. Agatha at Immac. Conception, 7:30 p.m.
Harper Woods at Luth. Westland, 7:30 p.m.
Riv. Cornerstone at G.C. United, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23
A.A. Greenhills at Luth. Westland, 7:30 p.m.
Red. Thurston at Taylor Kennedy, 7:30 p.m.
W.L. Central at Liv. Stevenson, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24
G.C. United at Greater Life, 6:30 p.m.
Avondale at Liv. Clarenceville, 7 p.m.
Ply. Canton at Liv. Churchill, 7:30 p.m.
Liv. Franklin at W.L. Western, 7:30 p.m.
N. Farmington at Ply. Salem, 7:30 p.m.
Northville at Farm. Harrison, 7:30 p.m.
Farmington at Westland Glenn, 7:30 p.m.
Monroe at Wayne Memorial, 7:30 p.m.
Redford Union at Garden City, 7:30 p.m.
Warren DeLaSalle at Bishop Borgess, 7:30 p.m.
H.W. Notre Dame at Redford CC, 7:30 p.m.
Hom. St. Florian at St. Agatha, 7:30 p.m.
Ply. Christian at North Branch, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25
Redford Union Alumni Game, 7 p.m.

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Wednesday, Jan. 22
Flint Mott at Oakland CC, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23
Adrian JV at Schoolcraft, 7 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25
Oakland CC at Macomb CC, 7:30 p.m.
Highland Pk. CC at Schoolcraft, 7:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Monday, Jan. 20
Madonna at Wilmington (Ohio), 4 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22
Schoolcraft at Henry Ford CC, 5:30 p.m.
Madonna at UM-Dearborn, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25
Madonna at Concordia College, 3 p.m.
Schoolcraft at Highland Pk. CC, 7 p.m.

PREP HOCKEY
Wednesday, Jan. 22
Liv. Churchill vs. S'field Lathrup, Liv. Franklin vs. Lapeer West at Livonia's Edgar Arena, 6 and 8 p.m.
Liv. Stevenson at H.W. Notre Dame, 7:15 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24
Liv. Stevenson vs. Liv. Franklin at Livonia's Edgar Arena, 6 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25
Liv. Churchill vs. Milford High at Lakeland Arena, 6:30 p.m.
Redford CC vs. Birm. Brother Rice at Redford Ice Arena, 8 p.m.

Eagles coast to victory

The tone was set quickly Thursday at Spring Arbor College.

Jeff Suspeck hit a pair of three-pointers, then added a three-point play to get St. Mary's off to a fast start. The Eagles coasted from there, notching their ninth-straight basketball triumph, 121-104.

Suspeck, a senior guard, finished with four three-pointers, giving him 233 for his career to make him St. Mary's all-time three-point scorer. He passed Dennis Butcher.

The Eagles, now 15-4 overall and 2-0 in the NAIA District 23, were never seriously threatened after Suspeck's opening burst put them up 9-2. They led 61-30 with 4:30 remaining in the first half and were still up 71-43 at halftime.

The second half, though, featured a turnaround for both St. Mary's and Suspeck. He scored 18 points in the first half; in the second, he managed just two.

THE EAGLES nosedived as well, allowing Spring Arbor to get to within 10 points with nine minutes left. The Cougars stayed in striking distance — 12-to-15 points — until the two-minute mark, when St. Mary's finally pulled away to a 119-95 lead.

Six Eagles reached double-figures in scoring, led by Garth Howard and Jimmy Bolden, each with 21 points. Howard also had three threes, six rebounds and three steals; Bolden added seven assists, six rebounds and three steals.

Brian Koscielski continued his superb play in the pivot, collecting 17 points and a career-best 17 rebounds. Koscielski, a 6-foot-9 sophomore, has been exceptional helping to fill in for the injured Marvin Morrison, Kevin Nicefield and Kevin Karafa.

In the nine-game winning streak, Koscielski has scored 99 points, grabbed 93 rebounds and blocked 19 shots.

Jeff Szczepanski added 10 points and nine boards and Fred Russell had 10 points and five rebounds against Spring Arbor. Scott Elliott led the Cougars with 24 points and 12 boards. Soren Campbell had 22 points, Tim Opinski scored 19, Scott McManus netted 12, and Steve Smith and Jim Glanzman got 10 apiece.

The Eagles host the University of Michigan-Dearborn at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday.

OCC win streak ends

With the top gun back, one could only assume Oakland Community College's men's basketball team — winner of three straight Eastern Conference games going into Wednesday's homecourt encounter with Highland Park CC — would be more formidable than ever.

Sorry.

The Panthers' James Middleton hit two free throws with 18 seconds left to seal Highland Park's 84-82 triumph at OCC's Orchard Ridge campus. The win boosted the Panthers' record to 11-7 overall, 4-2 in the conference. OCC slipped to 8-9 overall, 3-3 in the conference.

The loss came in spite of the return of the Raiders' leading scorer, Rashe Reviere, who had missed two games due to academic problems. Reviere scored 17 points, but it wasn't enough.

Highland Park got 14 points, 13 rebounds and three assists from Anthony Marshall. OCC was led by Bill Knight's 19 points and 15 rebounds. Troy Coleman contributed 15 points.

OCC hosts Mott CC at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Orchard Ridge.

Pinkerton paces Mercy

Karen Pinkerton's efforts were instrumental in helping keep Farmington Hills Mercy's volleyball team unbeaten in Catholic League Central Division play.

Pinkerton, a senior outside hitter, had nine kills and five service aces in the Marlins' 15-8, 15-9 victory over Birmingham Marian Thursday at Mercy. The win sets up a showdown between the division's two unbeatens this Thursday when Mercy visits Livonia Ladywood.

Marian fell to 0-4 in divisional play.

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