

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1993

## SPORTS

## CC advances on Paluk's tip-in



Redford Catholic Central had a happy St. Patrick's Day, rallying to win a thrilling Class A regional semifinal over stubborn Dearborn High.

BY STEVE KOWALSKI  
STAFF WRITER

Redford Catholic Central basketball coach Bernie Holowicki has probably never been happier to see one of his players miss a free throw. Senior forward Brian Paluk kept the Shamrocks alive in Class A Wednesday night, tipping in a missed free throw before the buzzer sounded to beat Dearborn 63-62 in a regional semifinal at Southfield High School.

Only on St. Patrick's Day. CC's sophomore center Joe Delong made the first of two free throws with 4.5 seconds left to cut the deficit to 62-61. Delong's second attempt missed but junior forward Andy Kummer kept the rebound alive and Paluk tipped in the second rebound over Dearborn's Tom Berry.

The Shamrocks (18-9 overall), who played without point guard Damien Baskerville, ruled academically ineligible by CC, play Detroit Cass Tech in Friday's 7 p.m. regional final at Southfield. Cass is the only team to beat No. 1 Pershing.

"We didn't want him (Paluk) to beat us," said Dearborn coach Don McConney, who thought he had the luck of the Irish on his side. "That's the lucky Irish — St. Patrick's Day. Someone got a finger on it to win the game."

Dearborn's strongest rebounder, senior forward Kevin Austin, had fouled out minutes earlier after scoring 17 points.

"We had 22 (Paluk) blocked out, there was no way he could have gotten a rebound," Dearborn's Ali Abdabbah said. "He just jumped up and tipped it."

With Baskerville ineligible, Dear-

born played a box-and-one defense against Paluk and limited CC's star to two points at halftime, none in the first quarter.

Dearborn led 26-13 after one quarter and 30-23 at halftime before CC's bench and Paluk brought the Shamrocks' back. The parade of players off the bench included Delong, Jeff Gutt, Anthony Hesano (eight points), including two three-pointers in the third quarter, Sean Gallagher and Eric Justice.

Starting guard Andy Slinkster also played strong, contributing 19 points.

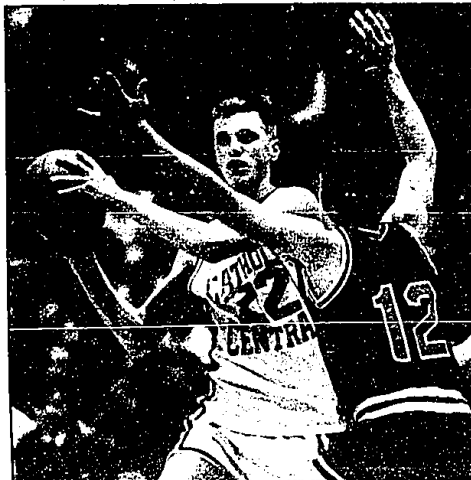
"Everything went wrong for us in the first 12 minutes," Holowicki said. "We tried everything. We were ready to get blown out but our bench came through and the other guys woke up and played hard."

Paluk scored 17 of his game-high 19 points after halftime, including nine in the fourth quarter.

Paluk tipped in his own miss to tie the score at 58 with 1:30 left. Nick Haratsaris, Dearborn's gutsy senior guard, who finished with 11 points, sank a pair of free throws to put the Pioneers up 60-58 with 1:24 left.

Paluk's driving layup tied it again at 60 before Abdabbah broke loose in the open court for a wide-open layup and a 62-60 lead with :24 left. The Shamrocks had one last chance and the ball went to Delong, who played one of his stronger games and finished with nine points off the bench.

Delong made a pair of free throws with 1:45 left that tied the score at 66 before splitting his last two. Paluk gave credit to Kummer for tipping



JIM JACOBFIELD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Entry pass: Redford Catholic Central forward Brian Paluk, who tipped in the winning points in Wednesday's Class A regional semifinal against Dearborn, is defended by Nick Haratsaris.

Delong's second miss.

"Andy kept it alive," Paluk said. "I had a good feeling about it and am just happy to still be alive (in the tourney). We had to go all out and had nothing to lose. This could have been the end of my (high school) career."

Kummer also scored three key baskets in the fourth quarter.

Dearborn ended one of its best seasons with a 20-3 overall record. The Pioneers were outscored 16-10 in the second half and 16-7 in the second quarter.

"We've got to keep the (opponents) offensive rebound total to 15 for the game," McConney said. "I knew at halftime we were in trouble because they already had 10 offensive rebounds."

## Jud earns state medal

Despite a chronic back ailment, North Farmington sophomore gymnast Annie Jud still finished 10th in the state on vault at the individual championships Saturday at Trenton High School.

Jud was unable to compete at state last year because of her back, and the injury severely limited her competition this season. North coach Jeff Dwyer said doctors have been unable to determine the source of the problem.

"Surprisingly, that's the event that hurts the least," Dwyer said of Jud's participation on vault. "We just did what we could this season. She started working out and managed to qualify."

Dwyer said he was surprised Jud did so well at the state meet because of the injury but wasn't because she has such a competitive nature.

Jud was the Heartland regional champion on vault and was tied with six others for eighth place after scoring 9.0 the first day of state competition. She scored 9.15 the next day but placed 10th. The top 10 in each event received medals.

## Mercy skier wins

Farmington Hills Mercy High School sophomore Nicole Gable of Livonia, representing the Bay Race Academy, won the women's giant slalom with a time of 1:00.55 at the U.S. Ski Association's final event of the season Sunday at Sugar Loaf.

Gable added the 15-16 age-group title to her credit after finishing second in Saturday's slalom event.

## Brazilians stop USA

The U.S. Under-20 National Soccer Team fell 3-0 last Sunday to Brazil in the quarterfinals of the seventh World Youth Championship for the FIFA/Coca-Cola Cup in Adelaide, Australia.

The USA team included former area high school stars Jeff Caesar (Livonia Churchill) and Kerry Zavagnin (Redford Catholic Central). USA was 1-2-1 in the tournament.

## Swim duo paces Raiders to 8th place in state meet

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

North Farmington juniors Karl Kozicki and Jonathan Kershaw showed why they are among the best high school swimmers in Michigan at the Class A finals Saturday.

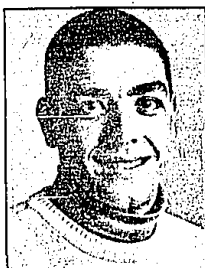
Each scored in two individual events and two relays, helping the Raiders achieve an eighth-place team finish with 69 points at Eastern Michigan University.

Kozicki was second in the 200-yard individual medley with a 1:56.13 time and third in the 500 freestyle at 4:37.38. Both swimmers were lifetime beats.

"He showed a lot of poise," North coach Jon Teal said. "He wasn't overcome with the pressure involved in a big meet. He handled himself well and because of it was able to swim well."

"He also showed a lot of class. He was very congratulatory toward the other swimmers. A lot of guys respond to stress in different ways, but he handled it like a Pro."

Kozicki attempted an unusual maneuver in the IM while doing the turn from the backstroke to breaststroke. Trying to meet the junior national requirements with the swim, he chose not to touch the wall.



Karl Kozicki  
N.Farmington swimmer

"He swam the race a little differently and probably added a half to one second to his time," Teal said, "but he did meet the junior national requirement."

Kershaw finished fourth in the 200 freestyle (1:43.2) and sixth in the 100 (47.23). Birmingham Brother Rice's Kon Ehlen (1:41.03) and Dearborn's Jeff Neumeyer (46.46) were the respective winners.

"We really challenged him with this meet," Teal said, adding Kershaw led off the medley relay in

the backstroke and went right into the 200 freestyle.

"He had only 10 minutes between the two events, and he really proved he is a team player. He overcame the problem with the short rest, worked through it and did something for the team because we needed the points."

Kershaw attempted what Teal called a negative split in the 200 freestyle. Instead of starting slowly and swimming a faster second half, Kershaw opened up at the beginning and tried to hold that pace for the entire race.

"We decided it was in his interest, if he was going to win it, to go out fast," Teal said. "But if you do that you have to expect the pain to come sooner."

"He had a draining meet as far as the position of events, but I was proud of him that he showed some courage by going out and being aggressive."

Teal considered the duo to be potential champions in each of their events, but there will be a next year for each one.

"We set high goals for the guys, but without goals you don't have anything to shoot for," Teal said. "We didn't accomplish those goals, but we hope to get Jon and

See FINALS, 2B

## OU women earn national title

Freshman Ellen Lesig turned heads and raised eye brows across the country last week by winning the 50-yard freestyle and swimming legs on four NCAA Division II championship relay teams in helping the Oakland University women's swim team to an unprecedented fourth consecutive national title.

But Lesig's success should surprise no one who follows high school swimming in Observance. Lesig, a member of the 1991 All-Area team, was one of the best sprint freestylers to come of Livonia Churchill and the Western Lakes. She still owns the

conference record in the 50 free.

"I was surprised at how well the freshmen swam and how well they handled their composure," said OU coach Tracy Huth, who had five freshmen competing at the nationals. "Kristen Negulick and Ellen Lesig (who combined for 14 All-American spots and eight national titles) were two of the most talented freshmen at the meet. Many freshmen score points, but these two performed way beyond your normal freshman."

Lesig won the 50 free with a time of 23.59 and placed second in the 100 free (51.44). Of her four relay victories, the 200 medley

(1:45.39), 200 free (1:52.74) and the 400 free (3:25.03) set new OU and Division II records. She also swam on the winning 800 free relay which set a school record (7:32.97).

The Pioneers won the meet by a record 203 points over second-place Clarion (Pa.). OU amassed 609 points, second only to its 621.5-point output last year in Division II history.

The OU men's team placed second to Cal State Bakersfield. It was the fifth time in six years that the Pioneer men placed second. The Pioneers have placed among the top three in the nation 15 times in the last 16 years.

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