

SPORTS

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C. J. RISAK

No one wins this scandal

Well, it's been said sports are for kids, and the way a few college coaches are acting, that adage has certainly proven true. It's just too bad they didn't leave it to the kids. Here's my (unscientific) opinion on how eligibility problems should be handled on collegiate levels below the NCAA's Division I, where big bucks are at stake: Immediately, quietly, in-house. If there's a problem, rectify it.

If one school becomes aware of potential trouble at another school, alert that other school.

Tom Testers and Gary Gray have defied that and become embroiled in what can only be termed a very ugly mess. Testers coaches Schoolcraft College's volleyball team; Gray coaches Henry Ford CC's.

A brief history leading up to the controversy: Two Henry Ford players, Kristen Barnes and Danielle Pfeffer, transferred to Schoolcraft in January. No problem with Barnes, who had signed with the Hawks for just one year; but Pfeffer's letter of intent at Henry Ford covered two. She needed to get a release to be immediately eligible.

She didn't get it. The oversight wasn't discovered until the season was one-third over. SC had to forfeit all matches played to that point in which Pfeffer had played.

Henry Ford took over as the Eastern Conference's kingpin, earning the top seed in the NCAA's Region 12 Tournament, hosted by SC. The Lady Ocolets were up to the challenge, however, advancing to the championship round after

See RISAK, 4B

De-pressed



SHARON LEMMER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hawks ousted: Carey Perkins (with ball) and her Farmington Harrison teammates felt the wrath of Felicia Brooks and the Farmington Hills Mercy defense in a 52-39 district tournament loss Monday. Story on 2B.

Mercy zooms, North fumes

By CHRIS MCCOSKY
STAFF WRITER

Maybe sometime today, after he's had time to calm down and reassess what happened Wednesday night, North Farmington girls basketball coach Lance Davis will regret what he said following his team's 72-46 loss to Farmington Hills Mercy in a Class A district semifinal game at Farmington Harrison.

Maybe he'll realize that the blame shouldn't have been hurled at the officials or his own athletic director. Maybe he'll instead throw praise at a revved-up, imperturbable Mercy team and accept some of the blame himself for arming his team with a risky game plan.

But first, the pertinent facts: Mercy (10-12), led by a 25-point, 14-rebound effort from junior Julie Angell, dug out of eight-point deficits to start both the first and second quarters and then ran roughshod over the foul-plagued and leg-weary Raiders in the second half.

The Marlins will go after their fifth straight district title on Friday (7 p.m.) against Bloomfield Hills Lahser (12-9) who ousted Farmington Wednesday, 49-30.

Davis, surprising just about everybody in the gym, including Mercy coach Larry Baker, decided to attack Mercy with a ferocious full-court press and play run-and-gun right from the opening tip-off. This was surprising for two reasons:

The Marlins are notorious for playing superb press-and-run basketball, few teams in the state do it better. They are fast, athletic and Baker's bench goes about nine or 10 players deep.

North, though quick, athletic and comfortable with an up-tempo game, lacks both experience and depth.

Davis started two sophomores and a junior and brought in two freshmen off the bench.

If you are going to run with the Marlins, you had better be able to give up some fouls and be ready to sprint for 32 minutes.

"My reaction (to the press) was that he put all his eggs in one basket," Baker said. "I knew he didn't have the depth to keep it on and I knew we were the 32-minute team. But it did rock us."

North ran off eight unanswered points to start the game, then Mercy fought back to tie it. North ran off another string of eight to start the second. That proved to be the last gasp. Mercy finished the half with a 17-1 run.

Davis — ignoring the fact that his team missed 10 of 15 free throws, made just three field goals and turned the ball over five times in the second quarter — went into the locker room at halftime raging at officials David Flammer and Mike Callahan.

The foul count at the end of the first half: Mercy 15, North 14.

"How can you play a good game when the officiating is that bad," Davis said after the game. "That was the most one-sided game I've ever seen in terms of officiating. We could not play our game."

North's key players did find early foul trouble. Shannon McCoy, one of the Raiders' key press-breakers who finished with 16 points, had four first-half fouls. Allison Skain, one of two senior starters, picked up three. Alisha Gordon (13 points), the leading scorer at the time, had three. All three fouled out in the fourth quarter.

See MERCY, 2B

Fraser throws 'big' block in Hawks' path to the Dome

By CHRIS MCCOSKY
STAFF WRITER

John Herrington has won 202 football games, 31 post-season games and five state championships at Harrison. And he's still taking lessons from his mentor.

On Monday, Herrington was discussing the virtues of the Fraser football program, Harrison's opponent in the Class A semifinals at 11:30 a.m. Saturday at Eastern Michigan's Rynearson Stadium.

"Man, they are big," Harrison said. "Their offensive line averages around 270 pounds and we don't have a single lineman over 200. I don't know if we can stop their power game."

Overhearing the conversation with Farmington Athletic Director Ron Holland, legendary former North Farmington coach who used to tutor a young, hot-shot assistant named Herrington.

"Your kid, won't know they can stop them either if you keep talking about how big they are," Holland chided.

Herrington nodded. "He's right. Everybody has tried to power us and only one team really pounded us," Herrington said, referring to a 35-0 loss to Birmingham Brother Rice. "We'll just have to do what we've been doing, try to offset their size with our quickness."

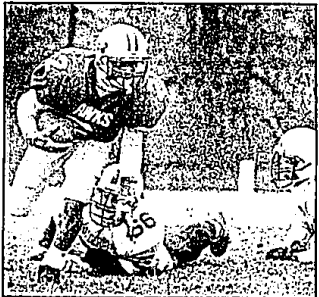
Then, after Holland walked away, Herrington added, laughing. "What we really have to do is hope they get a lot of holding penalties."

Fight the power

Fraser (10-1) is huge up front and its success is tied to a powerful, albeit one-dimensional, running attack and a punishing defense.

The Ramblers' line weighs in at 285, 270, 230, 256 and 270 from tackle to tackle. Much of the traffic flows behind tackle Brian Wilcox (6-7, 285), son of former Detroit Tiger pitcher Milt, and center Robb Moore (6-3, 230).

And that traffic is usually in the form of senior tackle Ron Fresh. He has set a school record with 284 carries and has rushed for more than 1,200 yards.



SHARON LEMMER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dash or smash: One of Fraser's concerns Saturday is trying to contain Harrison's two-pronged running attack featuring the speed of Jason Granger (top) and the power of Nick Williams.

But Fraser coach Ray Barr isn't convinced his team can just ram the ball down the Hawks' throats. "I would like to think we can, but I'm not sure," said Barr, whose teams have been 28-5 the last three years, 20-2 the last two, and won its first regional title last week beating Birmingham Seaholm, 20-3. "We're pretty big but we aren't that fast. We look good coming out of the locker room, but we're cumbersome. And with Harrison's great quickness, that could present a problem."

Herrington, whose team is 9-2, knows he'll have to gear up to stop the run, but he also fears Fraser's quarterback Fred Schwarz. "He can throw when he has to," Herrington said. "And he has quick feet." Harrison's defense has been a bit schizophrenic of late. After putting the clamps on Westland John Glenn, the Hawks allowed 58 points and 769 yards to Rice and Edsel Ford. Against Northville last week they allowed 16 points in the first half, then completely shut the Mustangs down

See HARRISON, 2B

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