

Star-less Chiefs rout Raiders

BY RICHARD L. SHOOK
STAFF WRITER

If someone had said at the start of the season Plymouth Canton would still be a viable basketball team when missing both Ron Hunter and Rob Johnson, Canton fans would have laughed. Once they stopped shuddering, that is.

Yet, there they were Tuesday night, minus both key players from last year's team.

And all they did was demolish North Farmington 58-37 at Canton.

Which should only make the Chiefs stronger, though both Hunter and Johnson return — as it seems increasingly likely they will.

"They're a great team," coach Brian Swinhart of North Farmington said after his Raiders dropped to 3-9 this season and 2-4 in the Western Lakes Activities Association. "They work hard. You just can't prepare for the kind of defense they're going to throw at you."

"They're a heckuva team with Hunter and Johnson. I'm glad we don't have to see them with those two."

Hunter suffered a foot injury, possibly a stress fracture, in Canton's only loss of the season, last Friday to Northville.

Johnson's injury was a torn knee ligament, but he since has undergone surgery to repair damaged cartilage.

"He's already in rehab," Young beamed. "We're hoping he'll be able to play maybe at the start of the league tournament, maybe the state tournament."

A visitor was intently looking for signs of timidity, four and

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fragile self-confidence. There was none to be found — at least on the Canton side.

North came out using a patient offense, moving the ball well. But after holding a 7-0 lead with 5:23 remaining in the first quarter, the Raiders hit a dry spot — a dry spot that lasted until the fourth quarter.

They went scoreless the remainder of that period, had four points in the second and nine in the third to trail, 46-20, entering the fourth.

Rich Beal, Julian Cochran and Corey Porth scored six points each to lead North. Brad Rivera and Tim Dolan had five apiece.

Mark Bray picked up the slack for Hunter with a 16-point performance. Dante Scott did also, getting 11. Brandon Hancock got nine while Matt Ammons and Nick Hurley picked up eight apiece.

"I was real happy with our play," Young said after the Chiefs improved to 11-1 overall and 5-1 in the WLAA. "Our concentration was as good as it's been for an entire game all year."

CENTRAL 52, HARRISON 11: A few throwaway bounces helped Walid Lake Central defeat the host Hawks Tuesday.

The Vikings sank 29 of 41 chances at the line, including 17 of 19 in the fourth quarter. Harrison made 12 of 21 overall.

"It wasn't a good night for the blind guys in striped shirts," Harrison coach Mike Teachman said. "Our players were ready to win and had it taken away from them. It's tough playing against seven."

The Hawks trailed by just a point at halftime, 25-24, but were outscored 10-6 in the third period. The finale was even at 21 points apiece.

"In the third quarter, we didn't play real well for about a four-minute period and

made a lot of turnovers," Teachman said.

"Otherwise, we played awfully well, being as young as we are and considering the kind of opposition they put on."

Mark Drexler scored 12 points to lead Harrison. 3-3 in the Western Lakes Activities Association and 2-7 overall. Brian Lewis and Justin Snow had eight apiece.

Grey Tobias sank 13 of 15 free throws and finished with 25 points for the Vikings. 5-1 and 11-2. Kevin Lynch added 13 and Todd Nepehian 10.

WILSONVILLE 70, FARMINGTON 58: The host Mustangs used a 20-point advantage in the second quarter Tuesday to turn back Farmington.

Northville outscored the Falcons 21-12 to lead 47-26 at halftime. Farmington made a comeback in the fourth quarter when it outscored the Mustangs 20-10.

"Actually, it was a very close game except for the second quarter," Farmington coach Denny Mikal said. "They got very aggressive with the full court press, and we made some costly turnovers."

Farmington's Nick Bertle scored 10 points. Jake Smith had 14 and Dan McLaughlin 11. Dave Dilworth and Jiri Murphy grabbed seven rebounds apiece.

Dan Smith netted 18 points for the Mustangs. Mark Sander 17 and Phil Kordun 12.

DETROIT CC 68, UD MONT 78: Marc McBurnett and Michael Jordan scored 25 points each to help Catholic Central rebound from its first loss of the season.

The Shamrocks are now 11-1 overall and 6-1 in the Catholic League.

Chris Mink scored 10 points and Eric Gilbo 10 as Catholic Central gradually increased its lead in the game.

The Shamrocks led 35-35 at halftime and 55-48 after three.

Danley Petret scored 24 points and Steve Price 12 for Detroit Jesuit.

HARTFORD 109, CLAREMONTVILLE 64: Hartman jumped out to a 24-11 lead in the first quarter and scored 24 in the third to cruise to its sixth Metro Conference win without a loss.

Junior guard Castanos Hoffman scored 24 of the 25 points in the first half to lead the Cosmos, 9-3.

Host Claremontville, 5-6 overall and 2-3 in the Metro, got 25 points and 15 rebounds from junior forward Jason Morris. Scott Hamstead had 10 points and six rebounds.

Falcons receive forfeit victory

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Stevenson athletic director Roger Frayer announced Tuesday the Spartans will have to forfeit a 54-38 win Jan. 19 against Farmington High in boys basketball.

Frayer reported a rules infraction to the Michigan High School Athletic Association late last week after 6-foot-5 senior center Jim Balow failed to serve a one-game suspension following a 90-35 rout of Redford Union on Jan. 16.

Balow was disqualified from the game after being assessed a pair of technical fouls by the officiating crew of Art and Keith Opaluch.

As a result of the MHSAA ruling, Balow ultimately served the suspension, sitting out a 64-51 loss to North Farmington last Friday.

Balow, the team's second leading scorer and top rebounder, received one technical foul during a basketball during a dead ball situation. The second was for hanging on the rim after a jam.

Frayer said the MHSAA's interpretation is that any two technical fouls to a player during a game result in an automatic disqualification and one-game suspension.

"The official (MHSAA) handbook says that anything leading to a disqualification is unsportsmanlike," Frayer said. "These

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were not flagrant fouls, taunting or unsportsmanlike behavior."

"Our kid got the second technical trying to avoid landing on somebody else. He was also trying to avoid getting hurt."

"It was an honest mistake on our part. The mistake is in the interpretation of the rule."

Farmington coach Denny Mikal brought up the suspension issue to Stevenson coach Jim McIntyre during the warm-up of the Jan. 19 game.

Mikal told the Observer late Tuesday that he learned of Balow's disqualification after sharing scouting information on Stevenson over the phone with RU coach Tip Smathers.

Prior to the Farmington-Stevenson game, Mikal and McIntyre asked referees Dennis Hill and Mike Gniwiew to intervene and make a ruling.

"I didn't agree with Mac and there was some doubt in Hill's mind because he couldn't find it in the National High School Federation rulebook," Mikal said.

"Mac insisted it had to be a flagrant foul or something unsportsmanlike to be out the next game, but I had talked to other coaches and was almost sure the MHSAA rule was different than the National Federation's. But we couldn't come to an agreement, so I just said it was Mac's call

whether he should play."

Mikal, however, called MHSAA assistant director Nate Hampton on Jan. 22 and posed a hypothetical situation similar to Balow's.

"I never named the schools or anybody's name, but I was satisfied I was right, so I contacted our athletic director Ron Holland on Tuesday," Mikal said. "I never contacted the state association or lodged a formal protest."

"My intentions were not to get a win over the protest."

After both Holland and Frayer conferred and reported the information to the MHSAA, the Stevenson A.D. agreed with the ruling and informed McIntyre that Balow would have to be held out of the game against North.

"It's a matter of self-enforcement," Frayer said.

Balow's penalty, however, does not sit well with McIntyre.

Not only does the forfeit drop Stevenson to 5-6 overall and 2-4 in the Western Lakes Activities Association, McIntyre also believed Balow's absence cost his team in a three-point loss to North.

"If he's in there, we win that game," McIntyre said. "Now we're 7-4 and 4-2 instead."

"But the team has accepted it and I have to accept it, and go on."

But despite the ruling, the Stevenson coach believes he is still in the right.

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Oakland CC cagers edge Schoolcraft

A relentless rally in the final seven minutes allowed Oakland Community College to overcome host Schoolcraft College's 15-point advantage and post a 72-71 victory Saturday in men's basketball.

Derrick White capped the rally by nailing a jumper with 25 seconds left, giving OCC the game-winning points.

The result was another frustration in a season full of them for

SC, which fell to 6-13 overall, 1-6 in the Eastern Conference. OCC improved to 4-3 in the conference, 9-9 overall.

Dave Pavlak led SC with 19 points. Tim Hays and Dwan Wermack added 12 apiece, and Bruce Gaudle scored 10. Wermack's seven rebounds were best for the Ocelots.

OCC got 14 points, six assists and four steals from Troy Dan-

iels; 13 points, eight rebounds and three assists from White; and 10 points and two blocked shots from Jason Hanson.

SC led 32-28 at the half and remained in front until the Raiders' stretch drive.

OCC outshot the Ocelots, making 26 of 57 from the floor (46 percent) to SC's 27 of 66 (41 percent) and held a 44-36 edge in rebounding.

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