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District hoops: Mike Griffie of Farmington (center) and North's Blair Weiss reaches for a rebound Wednesday.

trict champs Wednesday. "I just hope we can come back Friday and play with the same intensity and purpose," said Denny Mikel, adding the Falcons won two hard-fought games this week over West Bloomfield and North (15-6).

Farmington pulled off the upset win on solid team play and defense, holding North's Phil Watha scoreless in the second half and Emir Medunjanin to only 15 points.

Medunjanin scored a career-high 38 points in last year's district final to lead the Raiders to a 68-45 win over the Falcons.

"Those were our two concerns," Denny Mikel said. "We wanted to make sure Watha didn't have any wide-open looks on the perimeter."

"Emir had a good game, but I think we held him reasonably well. You're not going to stop him, but he didn't have the big game he had against us last year."

Mike Griffie, Justin Milus, Gray and Seaborn supported Matt Mikel's effort with 10, nine, seven and six points, respectively.

Mikel made a three in each quarter and was 4-for-4 at the line in overtime. Farmington made 13 of 16 free throws overall, including all eight in overtime.

"We still know we had to play a great game (despite an earlier, 44-41 win over the Raiders), because North is a great ballclub," Matt Mikel said.

"This is great for our confidence. North is our rival and the win will boost us up. We looking forward to Friday night. Lahser is a very good team; we'll have to play a good game."

Watha finished with 10 points; Mike Patterson and Mike Primeau added six points each for the Raiders, who were 12-of-15 at the line but missed three one-and-one chances late in the game.

Medunjanin rebounded a missed Farmington free throw and hit a three with 10 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter to force overtime.

"I was concerned," Denny Mikel said. "I saw them get a lift and our kids were hanging their heads a bit. But when they came over to the bench the kids were very positive."

"They said 'We played them even for 32 minutes; we'll play them even for another four.' Justin had a big basket right away, and that got our momentum back."

Milus scored the first basket in overtime, and the Falcons held the lead after that. But it was still just a two-point difference, 48-46, with 1:18 to play after Mike Primeau's basket.

Mikus and Griffie combined for the final eight points — six at the free throw line — to make the final score appear more one-sided than the game actually was.

"I thought our first possession was big for us," North coach Tom Negoshian said. "We had a wide-

open three and missed it. We went down and out, and I thought we were in a little bit of trouble."

North led 13-10 after one quarter. The teams were tied at halftime, 21-21, and after three periods, 36-36. Farmington made 18 of 46 shots (39.1); North sank 16 of 38 (.421).

"We had a great run," Negoshian said. "We were 26-3 in the league over two years. The kids have been unbelievable. They're upset because it's over."

LAHSER 20, HARRISON 33: Six-foot-7 senior center Joe Finland scored a game-high 17 points to lead the Knights in a district tournament game Wednesday, but teammate David Kemley had what was arguably the biggest basket.

The 6-4 sophomore, who passed up numerous shots and was 2-of-4 from the floor, sank a short-range basket from the wing to break a 33-33 tie with 1:02 remaining.

Lahser's James Mathis, who had a team-high 13 rebounds, added a free throw after being fouled while going in for a dunk.

At the end of the game, the Hawks (9-12) had three failed chances at shooting three-pointers in an unsuccessful attempt to force overtime.

"There were a few key plays," Lahser coach Chris Drogosch said. "Obviously, that was a huge shot (by Kemley). Ryan Cassan penetrated and kicked the ball over to Dave."

"James' non-dunk and foul got us the ball, and his decision to just throw the ball in the air at the end (denying Harrison another shot) was an intelligent move. It was over once he threw it in the air."

"Of course, we never would've been

in position to do anything without (Finland). He came up big in what could've been his last game."

Finland also had 11 rebounds. Kemley added six points. Joe Hundley scored 16 to lead Harrison. Brian Nelson chipped in eight and Nick Hall five.

Neither team played particularly well. Harrison shot 28 percent (15-of-54) and Lahser 27 percent (13-of-48). The Hawks had 16 turnovers, the Knights 15.

"We had three very good practices in a row," Harrison coach Dave Turnquist said. "I felt we were ready. Lahser is a good team. Joe Finland is a four-year starter and all-state candidate."

"We tried to take some things away and make the game more physical than maybe they're used to. But we didn't make it quite as physical as we would've liked."

Drogosch might disagree with Turnquist on that, however. "We had good looks; we just didn't make shots," Drogosch said. "I have to hand it to the kids, sticking it out and winning the game."

"That (Harrison) team was so physical. It was a consistently-called game, but the fact we didn't get many calls was not to our advantage."

Lahser led at halftime, 19-17, and after three quarters, 22-28. Deuce by Hundley tied the score at 31 and 33. Both teams missed several chances before Kemley made his big basket.

"We had chances throughout the night," Turnquist said, adding it's disappointing for the season to end regardless of how the Hawks executed. "I told my boys, to their credit, they never stopped playing hard."

"I can't express enough my appreciation to my team. They believed all year long and continued to work to try to get something done and, from that standpoint, it's been an absolute treat."

Falcons overcome Lakers' rally to win district opener

BY DAN O'HEARA
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What looked like a blowout victory in the making Monday turned out to be a good tipoff to March Madness.

Farmington overcame a second-half comeback by district tournament host West Bloomfield to win the postseason opener in boys basketball, 67-62.

The Lakers trimmed a 17-point, first-half deficit to two in the second half, but the Falcons held their ground at crunch time.

Farmington coach Denny Mikel had his team playing zone after 6-foot-7 junior Adam Stallard scored 10 of his 14 points in the first half for West Bloomfield.

But junior Charles Downey and sophomore Kyle Brown combined for 16 points in the second half (10 in the third quarter) to spark the Lakers.

"Having watched them play,

they weren't as consistent shooting from outside," Mikel said. "At halftime, we said we would stay with the zone. But, doggone, if they didn't start hitting perimeter shots."

The Lakers outscored the Falcons 20-12 in the third quarter, trimming a 32-17 halftime deficit to seven, 44-37, as junior Dan Wohl and Downey scored six points apiece.

"Charles gave us a boost of energy in the second half and then Kyle got going," West Bloomfield coach Larry Moore said, adding Wohl had the flu and played in limited stretches.

West Bloomfield got as close 64-52 with 3:22 remaining. Downey made a three-point play, junior Jason Mercer made the first of two threes in the fourth quarter and Warren Woodruff converted a turnover during an 8-0 run.

"I have to give them credit," Mikel said. "It wasn't anything we did wrong as much as they

getting some momentum on their side.

"I thought about going back to man, but I was trying to protect Justin (Milus) and some other guys and ended up riding it out with a zone."

Farmington answered with an 8-0 run of its own that restored its lead to 10 points and all but settled the issue.

Matt Mikel, who made nine of 10 free throws in the fourth quarter and 12 of 14 overall, sank four and Garlin Gilchrist two, and Mike Griffie hit a jumper to give the Falcons a 62-52 lead with 1:43 to play.

The Lakers were within five, 64-59, with half a minute left, but Mikel sank three more free throws to secure the win.

Farmington made 29 of 35 free throws in the entire game, while West Bloomfield (12-9) converted seven of 11 opportunities.

"We were box-pressing them and they were getting up the floor a few times," Denny Mikel

said. "We took the box off so the guys could sprint down there, because (the Lakers) were really pushing the ball."

"We went to a 3-2 zone to match up better, because in the 2-3 they seemed to have somebody open on the perimeter. That had an impact on who shot the ball and when, because they didn't have as many good looks after that."

Griffie, who scored a game-high 18 points, and Garlin Gilchrist came off the bench to

combine for 20 points in the first half.

With the score tied, 7-7, Mikel took a charge from Merritt, and the Falcons took charge of the game after that.

Farmington took a 15-11 lead at the end of the first quarter and outscored West Bloomfield 17-6 in the second, holding a 32-15 lead just before halftime.

"In the first half, we played in a daze," Moore said. "If we played with the heart and intensity we did in the second half, it

could have been a different outcome."

"We played one half of basketball tonight. Unfortunately, a basketball game is two halves."

Mikel scored 15 points, Milus 14 and Gilchrist 12. Wohl also had 14 points and Mercer 10. Downey finished with nine and Brown seven.

Farmington shot 462 from the floor (18-of-39) and West Bloomfield 436 (24-of-55). The Falcons made two of eight threes, the Lakers five of 21.

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