

Camera Catches GC 'Tournament' Fever



COACH BILLY JOE YOUNG does a bit of jawing during a time out in the championship game against Pontiac Central. Whatever words he used, they worked like magic—the Panthers went back out on the court and chewed up the Chiefs.



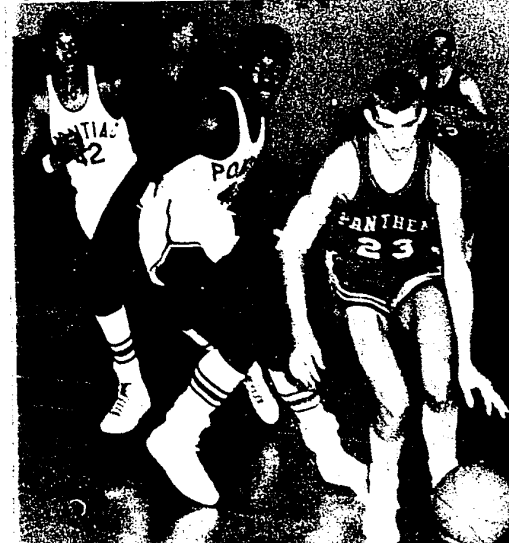
THE FACES of Garden City rooters show they are satisfied with the performances of their favorites in the regional tournament sweep.



GO PANTHERS GO!! That was the cry of these smiling followers of the Eastsiders, clearly showing that the team had the game well in hand at this stage. This picture was snapped just after the Panthers started their now famous "deep freeze" during the final 10 minutes of the championship contest.



TOURNAMENT MANAGER Robert Bentley, of Franklin High, presents the regional championship trophy to happy members of the East High squad. That's Coach Billy Joe Young (at left) watching Bentley while Center Mike Maciasz (21), who was a big factor in the victory over Pontiac, waits on his knees to accept for his teammates. All was quiet for a moment until Maciasz received the trophy and then the entire Garden City squad broke loose in a wild celebration of a well-earned victory.



CHARLEY SAKMAR (23), who made life miserable for Pontiac with his brilliant marksmanship from the side, is shown dribbling away from defenders during the "Kitty bar the door" stall.

Why Garden City Is Afflicted With Fever

The state basketball tournament fever has hit Garden City like no other community in the state as the once-beaten-East High quintet, coached by Billy Joe Young, has marched into the quarter-final round after six tourney victories. Young knew he had prospects for one of the school's finest teams at the start of the season but he wasn't about to make that fact known—not even to his wife. Now his fondest dreams have

been realized with the Panthers becoming the first Garden City team ever to go as far as the quarter-final round. For those not too well acquainted with journey basketball, that means Garden City is one of the final eight class A teams in the entire state remaining in competition. Advancing to that point takes a lot of hard work, discipline, understanding.

In this instance, Billy Joe has had the complete understanding of his squad from the start of the year. This was demonstrated when the Panthers rolled to 10 straight victories before losing to Ecorse in the finals of the River Rouge Holiday tournament. Since then, they have won 12 in a row, including six in tourney play, and boast a season record of 22-1.

Just to add a bit of praise, the Panthers suffered a severe loss in January when veteran Paul Kightlinger, rated as one of the finest rebounders in the state, became lost for the remainder of the season with a serious back injury.

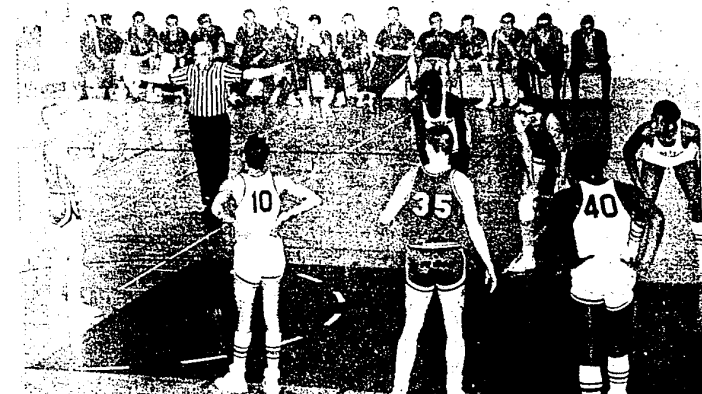
It appeared as if that loss might cripple the team but Coach Young quickly made some shifts and has succeeded in welding together a machine that thrives on pressure.

It is built around 6'5" Mike Maciasz, who has become the chief offensive threat and the key rebounder, and Tiny Harold Slade, 5'7" guard, who is the playmaker and field general. Young has developed a "deep freeze" stall in which his players withhold the ball for minutes on end, generally in the final seven to 10 minutes of a game. It has worked admirably for

the simple reason that every one of the starters is an excellent ball handler. Slade, Rick Clack and Charley Sakmar are better than average dribblers and every single player is a sharpshooter from the foul line. In the finals of the regional tournament, Garden City scored 24 points in the final 10 minutes while involved in the

"freeze" and 22 were free throws. Small wonder that the entire city has tournament fever. They have watched their team win six straight tourney tests. They saw the Panthers whip Farmington, 74-69; Ecorse, 74-66; and Pontiac Central, 74-62, in a span of five days. They hope their team has

the same kind of luck against Catholic Central's city champions from Detroit Wednesday in the quarterfinals. The scout-tell-it is that the winner of the state crown will probably come from that game. Every fan in Garden City hopes this is true—they're certain that their team will win—and go all the way.



GETTING READY to sink one of the free throws that marked the play of Garden City in the final 10 minutes is Harold Slade (15), smooth, ball-handling guard. He made eight of nine during the "stall" and his generalship was a major factor in the play of the team in the district and regional tournaments.



WE'RE NO. 1 shout rabid followers of the Panthers while Cheerleader Sheryl James waves pom-poms and screams her delight over the triumph. The victory over Pontiac was Garden City's 22nd against one loss and the 12th in a row. The team had a 10-game string snapped in the finals of the River Rouge holiday tournament by Ecorse.

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