

# A night in the lives of rivals

— Mount Clemens

A victory over a chief rival can define your season. While this mantra is the law in football, it also applies to the Macomb Area Conference boys hockey scene.

The Macomb Daily decided to take a closer look inside the Dec. 14 contest pitting L'Anse Creuse against L'Anse Creuse North at Mount Clemens Ice Arena.



## Fred Costello

### SLAP SHOTS

By 6:30 p.m., every one of the Lancers and Crusaders are in the arena, checking out the junior varsity game that also features both schools. As they cross paths in the lobby area, a few players from each side briefly greet friends on the opposing team. Soon after, they go their separate ways to begin their pregame routines.

L'Anse Creuse coach Bob Kotowski arrives dressed in his bright blue Lancers warmup jacket, looking eager to get the game started.

"Both of these teams have a lot of respect for each other," Kotowski says. "Some of them are good friends, but the second the game starts it's really intense. I'm ready and I know my guys are ready."

Minutes later, LCN coach Chris Rojem arrives (fresh from work) in a shirt and tie with a full-length dress coat. A dead ringer for Colorado Avalanche coach Joel Quenneville, Rojem is about to take place in his first ever LC/LCN hockey game.

"It's going to be jam-packed in there at both ends tonight," Rojem says. "The team that's the smartest is going to win. The referees aren't going to tolerate any



Fans stand and cheer their team last Friday night at Mount Clemens Ice Arena. Macomb Daily staff photo by David Dalton

silliness, so I'm expecting a clean game."

Asked what he plans to tell his team in the last moments before they take the ice, Rojem says, "I'll tell them that they've got 24 more games to go and for many of them they won't be playing organized hockey anymore. I want them to have the mindset that they have to come out every period and play this game as though it's their last seconds on the ice."

Both the Lancers and Crusaders players have gathered in front of their respective locker rooms, which are at opposite ends of the rink.

Senior forward Robert Zak tries to put the game in perspective. As a four-year player for the Crusaders, he's been through several battles with the Lancers.

"This is by far the most important game of the season," Zak says. "We have to get pumped up. The nervousness doesn't hit you until you first step on the ice. But,

after that first shift it goes away. The best feeling is hearing people cheer for you when something big happens. No matter what, *everyone* comes to this game."

Down at the other end of the arena, the Lancers are also lined up along the glass rooting on the JV. For the most part they're calm and focused.

Senior defenseman and co-captain Anthony Frontiera has seen more than his share of the Crusaders. A member of the football, lacrosse and hockey teams, Frontiera knows what the mood will be once the puck drops.

"It's indescribable," Frontiera says. "When we mentally prepare for this game we just want to go out and beat them. Normally, we take it period-by-period, but in this one everyone's worried about the final outcome."

Fellow senior co-captain Ryan Champine weighs in as well.

"This is without a doubt the biggest game of the year," Champine explained. "The fans are really into it and people are even making t-shirts."

At 7:41 p.m., the JV game ends, with the Lancers topping the Crusaders 6-4.

By 8:08, the recording of Karen Newman's version of the national anthem is over and the puck drops.

It's a lot warmer than usual in the rink, and it isn't hard to see why. Fans engorge the arena, packing the stands and lining the glass down at ice level.

The game lives up to its billing and winds up tied 2-2 after one period and 4-4 after two.

What intermission would be complete without the Soulja Boy dance? Yes, we're "treated" to several valiant attempts by the L'Anse Creuse student section in between the first and second period as "Crank That" booms through the sound system.

By 9:15 p.m., the third period gets underway and the Lancers quickly jump ahead.

Champine nets the eventual game-winner on the power play early in the period, helping the Lancers to a 6-4 win.

"That was pretty emotional," Kotowski said in summation.

After the game ends around 10 p.m., all the spectators file out peacefully into a comical scene in the parking lot. Let's just say it's a good thing CityplaceMount Clemens' finest weren't ticketing. People got creative to catch a glimpse of this one.

The Lancers and Crusaders play twice a year. The winner of the second game, which will be Feb. 9 this season, stakes their claim to the

Creuse Cup trophy. It currently rests in the trophy case at LCN.

As far as this last game was concerned, it was definitely fun to be a part of.

After every crushing body check, after every goal or highlight play, the student body on either side responded with ear-blistering enthusiasm.

This was high school hockey at its best.

## Benefit Game

On January 12, 2008 a charity benefit hockey game will be held between the Macomb County Sheriff's Department and the staff of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools.

Proceeds from the game will benefit the L'Anse Creuse North hockey team and homeless organizations in the county. Sheriff Mark Hackel will play and coach in the game.

Tickets are \$10 at the door, or \$5 with a donation of canned food or clothing. Game time is 8:30 p.m. at Mount Clemens Ice Arena, located at 200 N. Groesbeck.

## Power Five

The county high school power rankings

1. Ford – On top but needs a big weekend to hang on
2. L'Anse Creuse – Earned every inch against LCN
3. Warren-Sterling – Unbeaten in six straight
4. Stevenson – Quietly strung together three in a row
5. Dakota – Split against downriver foes

**Fred Costello writes a weekly hockey column for The Macomb Daily. Please send comments, story ideas or player of the week nominations to macombdaily-hockey@yahoo.com**

## High School Schedule

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

#### Boys Basketball

Anchor Bay at South Lake  
New Haven at Warren-Mott  
Ford at Sterling Heights  
Chippewa Valley at Romeo  
Richmond at Armada  
Center Line at Lakeview  
East Detroit at Roseville  
Conner Creek West at Inkster  
Mount Clemens at Marysville  
Fraser at Fitzgerald  
L'Anse Creuse at Dakota  
Lake Shore at Lamphere  
Memphis at Kingston  
Port Huron at Cousino  
L'Anse Creuse North at Port Huron Northern  
Grosse Pointe North at Eisenhower  
Clintondale at Marine City  
Conner Creek East at Detroit West  
Roeper at Macomb Christian  
St. Clair at Lincoln

#### Girls Basketball

South Lake at Anchor Bay  
Richmond at Armada  
Divine Child at Regina

#### Conner Creek East at Detroit West

#### Girls Ice Hockey

Regina at University Liggett

#### Gymnastics

Troy at Fraser

#### Swimming

Stevenson at Warren Woods-Tower

#### Fraser at Utica

St. Clair at Anchor Bay

L'Anse Creuse North at Sterling Heights

West Bloomfield at Chippewa Valley

Hazel Park at Fitzgerald

Cousino at East Detroit

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

#### Boys Ice Hockey

Chippewa Valley at Anchor Bay

St. Clair Shores Unified at Dakota

#### Girls Basketball

East Detroit at Warren Woods-Tower

Chippewa Valley at Utica

Fitzgerald at Warren-Mott

Stevenson at Ford

St. Clair at Fraser

Lake Shore at Sterling Heights

Romeo at L'Anse Creuse

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

#### Boys Basketball

Anchor Bay at East Detroit

Cousino at Stevenson

Armada at Imlay City

South Lake at Sterling Heights

Center Line at Lake Shore

L'Anse Creuse at Grosse Pointe North

Owendale-Gagetown at Memphis

Lamphere at Clintondale

Lincoln at Madison

Conner Creek East at Summit Academy

#### Boys Ice Hockey

L'Anse Creuse North at Port Huron

#### Girls Basketball

Memphis at North Huron

Conner Creek East at Summit Academy

Conner Creek West at Detroit West Village Academy

#### Swimming

Utica at Cousino

Chippewa Valley at Fraser

Center Line at Roseville

Dakota at L'Anse Creuse

East Detroit at Lake Shore

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

#### Boys Basketball

Warren Woods-Tower at Lakeview

Dakota at Utica

Richmond at Capac

Marysville at New Haven

Fraser at Roseville

St. Clair at Mount Clemens

Detroit University Prep at Conner Creek West

#### Boys Ice Hockey

Eisenhower at Utica

Romeo at Lamphere

## WRESTLING: Bara's improvement leads to title

Continued from Page 1B

Anchor Bay's Robbie Bidlingmaier scored a three-point nearfall. Those three points helped him avoid defeat, edging the No. 1 seed, 11-10.

"Those were the most important points of that match," said Bidlingmaier, a junior. "I knew if I didn't get pinned after that I would win."

Amateis was able to get off his back and score a reversal with 10 seconds left in the third period and then immediately took Bidlingmaier to his back where the match ended before the Lancer wrestler could get his pin.

"I was just trying to keep getting quick nearfall points on him," said Bidlingmaier, who placed second last year. "I was close to (getting pinned) when he first put me on my back, but I'm pretty good fighting off it."

In the 171-pound final, Nick Licari edged Lakeview's Steve Conway, 7-5.

"I was looking forward to this tournament all week," said Licari, who placed third as a junior. "I bumped up from 160 for the team. It makes me feel good I can still hold my own up a weight."

Licari, a junior, pinned three of his five opponents over the weekend.

## Always one place better

Nick Bara improved on his placing at the county tournament each year. His senior year he finally came home with a first-place medal.

Bara, who placed eighth as a freshman, fourth as a sophomore and third last year, beat Anchor Bay's Steve Sattler, 3-1, in overtime to claim the 130-pound title.

"I was too defensive," Bara said after the match. "I could feel a stalling call coming soon."

Bara scored an escape point midway through the third period and then avoided a throw by Sattler just before time expired to send the match into overtime.

"I was putting way too much pressure coming on me," said Bara, who was seeded first.

With less than 30 seconds left in the first overtime, Bara went for a double-leg take-down and got it.

"I've been practicing hard (on) double legs for three straight weeks," Bara said. "I finally finished that one."

## Richmond trio

Ryan Mack was never able to crack Richmond's starting lineup when the county tournament rolled around. He made good use of his first and only time competing, beating the defending 152-pound champ, Lamphere's Josh Swanson, 12-10.

"It's been a battle just to wrestle here," said Mack, who wrestled behind Bryan Decker and Jordan McKiernan.

Mack, who was named the tournament's MVP in the upper weights, was one of three Blue Devil wrestlers to win titles.

Brett Burg, who was at Memphis last year, beat Warren Woods-Tower's Kyle Lowry, 4-3, to win the 135-pound title.

"I love fighting for my team," Burg said. "That makes wrestling more exciting. It was all individual at Memphis."

Mike Lasinski finished Richmond's run after pinning Roseville's Mike Petrone at 3:25 of the second period in the 189-pound final, using a double under-hook throw.

"I went straight over with it," Lasinski said. "I'm good with my hips."

## On the offensive

Roseville's Robert Nash was able to wrestle his type of match all weekend long at the county tournament.

Nash outscored three of his four opponents 47-10 and pinned another on his way to winning the 140-pound title, 14-3, over New Haven's Eric Matthews.

"I just went after everyone," said Nash, a junior. "I really felt like I was at the top of my game. I like to work hard so if I'm ever in a close match, I know I'll be fine in the end."

Nash, who placed eighth at states last year, finished second in the county last year and placed eighth as a freshman.

## Just one step

Warren Woods-Tower's Brennan Brumley was focused on the bigger picture after win-

ning his second straight county title, pinning Romeo's Spencer Simmons at 5:18 of the third period in the 145-pound title match.

"The only thing that really matters is the state tournament," said Brumley, who normally wrestles at 140. "It's not where you start, it's where you finish."

Brumley, who placed third at the county meet as a sophomore, has finished second in the state each of the last two years, going a combined 105-12 along the way. He was second at 135 last year and second at 130 two years ago.

"Winning this again is cool, but the state meet is what it's all about," Brumley said.

## Putting on weight for a reason

L'Anse Creuse's Josh Batkins doesn't look anything like he did a year ago. The sophomore bumped up to wrestle at 160 pounds this season and so far it looks like a wise choice after he beat Sterling Heights' Fadi Moosa, 12-10, in the county final at that weight.

"I really worked hard in the summer," said Batkins, who wrestled at 135 at last year's county meet. "I wanted to go up to take advantage of my speed against the bigger guys."

Batkins, who took fifth at 135 last year, was seeded first.

## Longtime friend

Cousino's Vito Patrico finally got the best of his friend, L'Anse Creuse's Jarrett Lintz, pinning him at 5:38 of the third period in the 215-pound title match.

"I haven't beaten him since eighth grade," said Patrico, a senior. "He's been my motivation to get better and be as good as he is."

Patrico knows that Lintz, who was seeded first, will be out for him the next time they meet, perhaps at the state tournament.

"He doesn't like to lose and when he does he comes back hard," Patrico said. "He got out of position and I put a neck-wrench (on him) and I just squeezed with all I had. I didn't know if I was going to pin him; all I knew was if I kept him there I was going to win."

Send comments to [chuck.pleiness@macombdaily.com](mailto:chuck.pleiness@macombdaily.com).

## Marcotullio paces Pilots

The Macomb Daily Sports Staff

Alex Marcotullio scored 27 points and dished out seven assists to lead De La Salle to a 60-54 home victory over Detroit Consortium College Preparatory

**High School Roundup**  
High School on Monday. Marcotullio went 9-for-10 from the free throw line

and connected on six of the 10 three-point shots he attempted.

Alexander Harville added 16 points and seven assists for the Pilots, who improved to 4-0 overall heading into winter break.

Desmond Barnes and Stephen Brown scored 14 points apiece for Consortium Prep, which fell to 2-2.

De La Salle 60, Detroit Consortium Prep 54  
De La Salle 20 11 14 15 - 60  
DCP 9 14 15 16 - 54  
DETROIT CONSORTIUM PREP (2-2): Stephen Brown 14, Desmond Barnes 14, Martel Drew 3, Paul Elliot 6, Jeremy Derrico 12, Berendelle Smith 2, James Fox 2, Matthew Howard 1. Totals: 16 (2) 12:16 54.  
DE LA SALLE (4-0): Alex Marcotullio 27, Alexander Harville 16, Joe Biemet 5, Darryl Pitts 5, Ben Hayes 5. Totals: 9 (8) 15:19 60.

## Girls Basketball

**GROSSE POINTE NORTH 53, GROSSE POINTE SOUTH 39:** Kelly DeFauw had 16 points and six steals, and Ariel Braker contributed 13 points, eight steals and seven rebounds to help the Norsemen. Chloe Srebernack scored 13 for GPS.

Grosse Pointe North 53, Grosse Pointe South 39  
Grosse Pointe North 12 16 15 10 - 53  
Grosse Pointe South 13 5 11 10 - 39  
GROSSE POINTE NORTH (6-0): Kelly DeFauw 16, Kayla Womack 6, Olivia Stander 5, Katelyn Vargo 1, Jasmine Kennedy 8, Christine Klein 2, Ariel Braker 13, Sarah Perry 2. Totals: 16 (3) 10:14 53.  
GROSSE POINTE SOUTH (3-2): Megan DeBoer 4, Chloe Srebernack 13, Clare Conway 12, Aisha Rodney 7, Emily Flom 3. Totals: 11 (2) 11:13 39.

## Hockey

**UTICA 4, ST. CLAIR 4:** St. Clair's Steve Mauk scored with 15 seconds remaining to force a tie, after Anthony DiGaetano's goal staked Utica to a 4-3 lead with 45 seconds to play.

Derek Sabiston, Dave Burke and Chris Schwarzkoff also scored for the Chieftains, who lead the MAC Red with a 3-1-1 record. Goalie Adam Bolton stopped 24 of 28 shots for Utica.



## Fury squads complete hot season

BASC teams Fury Xtreme, Fury Select and Team Fury all had outstanding fall seasons in the Travel Soccer – Michigan Youth Soccer League. They collectively contributed to a 23-4-3 season, putting 96 goals in the net and allowing just 15. Team Fury finished first and Fury Xtreme was the overall high point winner at the Romeo Peach Fest.

Fury Xtreme finished first in the Girls U10 Major Gold division with an 8-0-0 record. Fury Select finished first in the Girls U13 Major Gold division with an 8-1-1 record. Team Fury finished runnerup with a 7-3-2 record in the Girls U13 Premier division. The three teams are comprised mostly of Macomb County girls and all belong to the Bay Area Soccer Club.

**Coaches call in your scores to (586) 469-4771.**