



Lakers roll past 'Cats
 Bryant, Gasol combine for 57 points as L.A. wins third straight
 - 5B



Fred Costello

SLAP SHOTS

MAC hockey races going down to the wire, again

Ladies and gentlemen, get your calculators ready. This is going to be one wild finish to the 2007-08 boys hockey season in the Macomb Area Conference.

At this point, we know two things: St. Clair Shores will not win a share of a fourth consecutive Macomb Area Conference Red Division title; either Dakota or Utica will emerge victorious in the Red.

It is in the MAC White, however, that all the craziness reigns.

There are five, yes, five teams that still hold a mathematical chance of taking the MAC White crown in the final two weeks of the regular season.

But, before we get into that, we should consider the historical significance of the occasion.

The MAC opened play for the 04-05 season. It saw the Lakers' top Eisenhower by six points in the Red and L'Anse Creuse hold off Utica by a single point in the White.

In 2006, Eisenhower and SCS shared the Red title with 22 points apiece. Utica went unbeaten for a record 32 points atop the White, but Anchor Bay (20), L'Anse Creuse (18), Lamphere (18) and Dakota (17) went neck-and-neck in the battle for second place.

Last year, the Lakers held off second-place St. Clair by five points with a total of 27. Close behind were Dakota with 19 and Utica with 18. Stevenson won the White with 24 points, followed by Romeo (17), L'Anse Creuse North

(15), L'Anse Creuse (14) and Warren-Sterling United (13).

I think you get the picture. The MAC, which has always strived for parity, has done well with its biennial realignment pattern. Of course, the Chieftains' perfect 2006 regular season is obviously the exception to the rule.

Yet for all of the photo finishes, in years past, nothing compares to the way this season

See COSTELLO, Page 2B

No offense, Wings

■ Detroit's defense solid, goals hard to come by in third quarter.

By Bruce MacLeod
 Macomb Daily Sports Writer

DETROIT — It wasn't the big picture so much as the details that were cause for concern for the Detroit Red Wings in their third quarter of the regular season.

Staked to a large lead in the overall standings because of a tremendous first half (30-8-3), the Red Wings faltered only slightly over their next 17 games (11-4-2) and remain ahead of the pack. In fact, Detroit's 1.41 points per game in the third quarter mirrored a successful first quarter (1.45 points per game with a 1.62

points per game second quarter).

But the devil of the third quarter was in the details.

Detroit's defense remained sound, giving up 2.2 goals per game in the third quarter, which matches the season-long average. The offense and special teams, however, were bad. After scoring 3.5 goals per game in the first half of the season, Detroit managed just 2.8 goals per game in the third quarter.

The power play dropped from 23 percent in the first half to 13 percent in the third quarter while the penalty-kill dropped from 86 percent in the first half to 75 percent in the third quarter. Put it together and the Red Wings were outscored 13-8 in power-play goals in the third quarter.

The biggest cause for concern,

Hasek sidelined

DETROIT — Detroit Red Wings goalie Dominik Hasek is out day-to-day with minor inflammation of his hip flexor. The Red Wings recalled Jimmy Howard from the Grand Rapids Griffins and put defenseman Niklas Kronwall (shoulder) on injured reserve (retroactive to Jan. 30) to make roster room.

Chris Osgood will get his second consecutive start, today, in Nashville with Howard backing him up. Detroit general manager Ken Holland said that Hasek could be back for Sunday's game in Dallas.

Howard has appeared in 39 games this year for the Griffins, compiling a 17-19-2 record with a 2.61 GAA and .914 save percentage. He was named the AHL Goaltender of the Month for December when he posted a 1.72 GAA, .939 save percentage, two shut-outs and allowed two or fewer goals in 10 of 13 games played.

— BRUCE MACLEOD

however, came in injuries. Near the end of the third quarter, forward Dan Cleary's jaw was broken by a shot and he likely won't return until the playoffs. Cleary was the team's second leading goal scorer when he was sidelined. Earlier in the quarter, defenseman Niklas Kronwall was shelved with a shoulder injury. Then yesterday, the team recalled goalie Jimmy Howard to give Dominik Hasek's hip flexor inflammation a rest.



Detroit's Pavel Datsyuk, front, celebrates his goal with Henrik Zetterberg in the first period against Anaheim, Sunday. Datsyuk and Zetterberg are two of the team's few bright spots, offensively, in recent weeks.

All of which is bad news in Hockeytown. The good news is that there's one more quarter of the regular season to get the roster healthy, special teams performing and the offense scoring once again.

Here are individual grades for the third quarter (the past 17 games). The grade is for performance in the quarter only. Previous

quarters' grades are also listed.

Goalies

Dominik Hasek: Although he never lost the No. 1 role, Hasek was finally the best goalie on the team in the third quarter. Hasek went 7-1-1 with a 1.55 goals-against average and a .931 save percentage in

the quarter, all much better than Chris Osgood's statistics. Hasek has let in a few softies, but the Wings are 14-3-2 with him in net over the past half of the season. A (C- first, A- second)

Chris Osgood: You're not going to read here that Osgood

See GRADES, Page 3B



Jim Hawkins

COLUMNIST

Zumaya trying to keep quiet

— LAKELAND, Fla.

A thin, red scar stretches across the top of Joel Zumaya's priceless right shoulder. It is all that outwardly remains of the major reconstructive surgery the flame-throwing relief pitcher underwent in early November. But the mental scars left by the rumors, accusations and innuendoes that raged across the Internet and talk radio in the wake of his freak accident won't fade away so quickly.

"It's tough having people who don't even know me and know what happened, calling me a liar," Zumaya admitted Monday in the Tigers' Marchant Stadium clubhouse, stung by speculation that he was goofing off again and obviously eager to unburden his soul in his first comments to the media since immediately after the surgery.

"I've gotten a lot of criticism," admitted Zumaya, one of about a dozen Tigers, including Justin Verlander, Jeremy Bonderman, Gary Sheffield and Curtis Granderson, already in training camp and taking advantage of a warm, sunny, spring-like day.

"My family and friends hear people say things or they see things on the Internet and they come to me and say, 'Hey, we heard this' or 'We heard that,'" continued Zumaya, who has been stunned by the skepticism and hostility. "I don't know what I did to deserve this. It's sad, really.

"Last Friday some guy came up to me down here and said, 'Hey, you're not going to come into camp hurt again, are you?'"

"Then he had the nerve to ask for my autograph.

"I've learned to let it slide, to not let it bother me, but it's been really hard," admitted Zumaya, who was being groomed to take over as the Tigers' closer before he was sidetracked by injuries, first to his finger and then to his shoulder.

"I told everybody what happened, a box fell on me," he said. "I was just doing what anyone else would have done. Anybody would go get their stuff. Things happen."

Zumaya was injured while moving cartons packed with souvenirs from the 2006 World Series as last fall's Southern California wildfires closed in on his family's home. The boxes were in the attic and one, weighing "50 or 60 pounds" according to Zumaya, came crashing down on

See HAWKINS, Page 5B

Pistons looking to sweep Hawks, Pacers

By Dana Gauruder
 Journal Register News Service

AUBURN HILLS — Though more than two months remain on the regular-season schedule, the Pistons are already entering sweeps week.

They can finish off 4-0 season series sweeps of Atlanta and Indiana on back-to-back nights, beginning in Atlanta this evening. By doing so, the Pistons can ride a 10-game winning streak heading into the All-Star break.

Their current eight-game streak makes them the NBA's hottest team.

"We've been successful against both of those teams thus far and I just look to continue that," Chauncey Billups said. "I look to try to get these last two wins and close the break out."

As was the case during their 11-game winning streak spanning December and January, the Pistons are closing out opponents in the early going. They have led at halftime in seven of the eight games, with the exception a tie with Miami. In the last two games, they led Portland by 24 and Charlotte by 17 at halftime.

The Pistons' vaunted starting unit has won the first quarter in

See PISTONS, Page 3B



Detroit Pistons forward Tayshaun Prince has averaged 20 points per game in the last two meetings with Atlanta.

Purdue 'not a fluke'

■ Spartans host first-place Purdue tonight on the road.

By David Birkett
 Journal Register News Service

EAST LANSING — When Michigan State coach Tom Izzo handicapped the Big Ten race for reporters back in October, he installed Indiana as league favorite, his own team as a contender and called Purdue a darkhorse to watch.

"I thought he was crazy when he said it," Purdue coach Matt Painter said in a teleconference Monday. "But maybe he knew something that we didn't know."

Izzo's premonition turned out to be correct.

With less than a month left in the regular season, the Boil-

ermakers (19-5, 10-1) sit alone in first place in the Big Ten, a half game ahead of Indiana, entering today's top-20 showdown with No. 9 MSU.

Purdue starts two freshmen and two sophomores and hasn't lost since Jan. 8,

when the short-handed Boilermakers, playing without No. 2 scorer and reigning Big Ten Player of the Week Robbie Hummel, fell, 78-75, at the Breslin Center.

"It's not a fluke," Izzo said. "Flukes don't go into the second

See SPARTANS, Page 3B

SPORTS INSIDER



Moving on

Lutheran North's boys basketball team breezed past Hamtramck in the first round of the Metro Conference Tournament 76-60.

— 2B

Macomb Daily

Sports Talk

Check out the weekly high school picks and commentary by sports writers Chuck Pleiness and John Hetzler exclusively at www.MacombDaily.com

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Mustangs run wild over Cosmos

Lutheran North triumphs in tourney opener, 76-60.

By Tom Willard
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — Lutheran North's boys basketball team likes to run and the Mustangs reached a full gallop in their Metro Conference tournament opener Monday night.

Boys Basketball

Looking comfortable on its home court, Lutheran North raced to a 20-4 first quarter lead and never looked back, en route to a 76-60 victory over Hamtramck. Four players scored in double digits for the Mustangs, who were led by Drew Dennison's season-high 23 points.

"We played well at times when we had our starters in, I thought," said Lutheran North coach Gary Gutenkunst. "When we got the fast break we've been good at ever since we've been playing with each other freshman year," said Dennison, who shot 8-for-10 from the floor on the night.

Indeed, the Mustangs ran relentlessly against Hamtramck, using their quickness and aggressive style of play to create easy scoring chances throughout the game.

"We like to get teams tired because we're a smaller team so we like to get past everybody, and it's what we've been good at ever since we've been playing with each other freshman year," said Dennison, who shot 8-for-10 from the floor on the night.

The Mustangs closed the second quarter with a 6-0 run to enter halftime with a 38-14 lead but opened the third quarter with several ill-advised passes that allowed the Cosmos to creep to within 20 points midway through the stanza before back-to-back buckets by Dennison and an Andrew McDonald field goal pushed the lead to 50-24.

Darius Braxton (22 points) scored two straight baskets at the end of the third quarter to pull Hamtramck to within 12 points, but the Cosmos would not narrow the deficit any further.

"They came out and played well in the second half," Gutenkunst said of Hamtramck. "This was one of those games where I was hoping we could sub a lot and we did a little bit, but they made us keep our starters in for most of the second half."

McDonald finished with 20 points and grabbed a team-high eight rebounds for Lutheran North, which also received solid performances from Brian Budchuck (14 points, seven rebounds) and Robbie Schneider (13 points) in the victory.

The Mustangs, who improved to 7-2 in league play and 11-6 overall, will play the winner of Cranbrook and Harper Woods on Friday.

Lutheran North lost at Cranbrook during the regular season and will have to shoot considerably better if a rematch materializes, Gutenkunst said.

If Monday was any indication, the offense is on track, said Den-



Macomb Daily staff photo by Ray J. Skowronek

Lutheran North's Brian Budchuck goes up over a Hamtramck defender in his team's 76-60 win.

nison. "I'd say we have to pick up our defense if we want to be ready for the game on Friday to go to the finals," he said. "We've all got to step up from the starters to the bench but tonight we came together pretty well and offensively got the job done."

Lutheran North 76, Hamtramck 60	
Hamtramck	4 10 29 17 - 60
Lutheran North	20 18 19 19 - 76
HAMTRAMCK (2-12): Chris Taylor 10, Arron Caudill 3, DeWayne Stephens 4, Andrew Caudill 5, Darius Braxton 22, DeWayne Slappy 3, Joshua DeWalt 10.	

Lutheran North (7-2, 11-6): Jordan Buick 2, Brian Budchuck 14, Andrew McDonald 20, Robbie Schneider 13, Chris Yee 2, Kevin Geisler 2, Drew Dennison 23.

NCTL MEMPHIS 60, KINGSTON 33: Ben Abraham had 10 points and 13 rebounds and Devin Kling had 19 points and five assists for the Yellowjackets.

Memphis 60, Kingston 33	
Memphis	14 13 21 12 - 60
Kingston	5 9 8 11 - 33

MEMPHIS (12-3, 13-4): Tyler Huber 2, Nikko Gurley 6, Jay Hayes 8, Mike Roberts 3, Adam Jock 2, Bryce Bischer 6, Devin Kling 19, Lee Davenport 2, Ben Abraham 10. Totals: 24 (5) 7-13 60.

KINGSTON: Hill 4, Williams 6, Vanhom 2, Germaine 7, Shinarbarger 2, Jordan Pennington 11, Spencer 1. Totals: 12 (1) 8-16 33.

Girls Basketball

MAC GOLD DIVISION LAKEVIEW 53, EAST DETROIT 38: Nicole Dennis led the Huskies (11-1, 15-3) with 16 points, while Brittany Chapman added 14 to go with 12 rebounds. Ashley Savoie added 10 points.

East Detroit (9-3, 12-6) got 21 points from Lanea Williamson.

Lakeview 53, East Detroit 38	
Lakeview	8 15 18 12 - 53
East Detroit	9 8 12 9 - 38

LAKEVIEW (11-1, 15-3): Ashley Savoie 10, Lauren Korolowicz 5, Kayla Habrowski 5, Jackie Bodnaruk 3, Brittany Chapman 14, Nicole Dennis 16. Totals: 20 (2) 11-20 53.

EAST DETROIT (9-3, 12-6): Emily Klinefelt 6, Caitlin Carter 2, Lanea Williamson 21, Shanta Bass 3, Caitlin Schneider 5. Totals: 16 (4) 2-4 38.

MARINE CITY 49, STERLING HEIGHTS 14: Traci Taylor had six points and five rebounds and Brittany Allen had five points and five steals to lead Sterling Heights in a losing effort against Marine City.

Marine City 49, Sterling Heights 14	
MC	14 9 17 9 - 49
SH	0 5 0 9 - 14

MARINE CITY: Kassie Snyder 13, Lesley Kucharski 2, Emily Archibald 7, Ashley Beversdorf 3, Jessica Rombach 10, Nicole Franey 1, Jessica Koehler 4. Totals: 21 (3) 4-

10 49. **STERLING HEIGHTS:** Traci Taylor 6, Danielle Zito 1, Brittany Allen 5, Patty Szczepanski 2. Totals: 5 (0) 2-5 14.

MAC SILVER DIVISION SOUTH LAKE 31, CENTER LINE 28, Alyssa Karpinski scored four of her five points in the final minute for the Cavaliers (9-2, 12-6). She made a layup with less than a minute to play and then sank a pair of free throws with 10 seconds left to seal the win.

Carly Luke led South Lake with 12 points, while Stephanie Lee made four triples to finish with scored 15 points for Center Line (6-5, 10-8).

South Lake 31, Center Line 28	
South Lake	14 4 7 6 - 31
Center Line	6 4 13 5 - 28

SOUTH LAKE (9-2, 12-6): Caitlin Jones 2, Lauryn Giles-Marzette 2, Jennifer MacDonald 3, Alyssa Karpinski 5, Katlin Winters 4, Carly Luke 12. Totals: 13 (0) 5-12 31.

CENTER LINE (6-5, 10-8): Kate Hensler 8, Mikaela Burch 2, Stephanie Lee 15, Jennifer Warack 3. Totals: 8 (4) 8-15 28.

MADISON 69, NEW HAVEN 39: Meesha Nolan scored 19 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead Madison (7-3, 12-6). Heather Baker added 13 points.

New Haven (0-10, 0-18) got 10 points each from Tasha Lenont and Alex Allen, who also took down eight boards.

Madison 69, New Haven 39	
Madison	14 21 16 18 - 69
New Haven	6 7 15 11 - 39

MADISON (7-3, 12-6): Autumn Cantrell 9, Bianca Clemons 2, Christa Towns 8, Courtney Pappas 4, Meesha Nolan 19, Waelene Towns 2, Heather Baker 13, Katie Malak 6, Jasmine Lipford 2, Ashley Olsen 4. Totals: 27 (6) 9-15 69.

NEW HAVEN (0-10, 0-18): Alexis Taylor 5, Brooke Berger 6, Monique Williams 2, Tasha Lenont 10, Alexis Allen 10, Brittany Watling 2, Shelby Sims 4. Totals: 17 (0) 5-17 39.

See **ROUNDUP**, Page 3B

STATE BASKETBALL RANKINGS

GIRLS

The top 10 teams in the Associated Press high school girls basketball poll, with records in parentheses. Totals are based on 15 points for a first-place vote, 14 for second, etc.

- CLASS A**
- Rochester (18-0)
 - Detroit Pershing (13-0)
 - East Lansing (16-1)
 - Grosse Pointe North (16-2)
 - Livonia Ladywood (16-3)
 - Detroit King (11-3)
 - Saginaw Arthur Hill (14-4)
 - Benton Harbor (16-2)
 - Hudsonville (16-2)
 - Grand Haven (16-2)
- Also receiving votes:** North Farmington (15-2) 19, Lake Orion (15-2) 17, Temperance-Bedford (16-2) 15, Clinton Township Chippewa Valley (17-1) 11, Walled Lake Western (17-2) 9, Southfield (14-3) 5, Lansing Sexton (16-2) 2, Mattawan (14-4) 2, Okemos (13-5) 1.

- CLASS B**
- Detroit Country Day (16-1)
 - Detroit Community (17-0)
 - Portland (18-0)
 - Midland Bullock Creek (18-0)
 - Ludington (17-1)
 - Flint Powers (15-2)
 - Detroit Renaissance (15-2)
 - Comstock Park (17-1)
 - Grand Rapids South Christian (15-3)
 - T-10. Chesaning (16-2)

- T-10. Warren Woods Tower (16-2)**
- Also receiving votes:** DeWitt (15-2) 15, Richland Gull Lake (16-2) 11, Wyoming Park (14-4) 11, Plainwell (16-2) 11, Tawas (15-2) 6, Almont (18-0) 5, Lansing Waverly (14-3) 5, Reed City (14-3) 4, Grand Rapids Catholic Central (14-4) 3, Ida (15-2) 2, Holland Christian (14-4) 2, Ionia (12-6) 1.

- CLASS C**
- Saginaw Nouvel (15-1)
 - Ishpeming Westwood (18-0)
 - Bangor (18-0)
 - T-3. Watervliet (17-0)
 - Care (15-1)
 - Flint Hamady (15-2)
 - Kingsley (15-2)
 - Saginaw Valley Lutheran (16-2)
 - Charlevoix (14-2)
 - Houghton (16-2)

- Also receiving votes:** Morley Stanwood (17-2) 28, Hanover Horton (16-2) 17, L'Anse (16-2) 16, Napoleon (16-2) 11, Sandusky (14-3) 7, Marlette (14-4) 7, McBain (15-3) 4, Adrian Madison (15-3) 2, Elkton Pigeon Bay Port (14-1) 2, Dryden (13-4), 1, Pewamo-Westphalia (14-3) 1.

- CLASS D**
- Bloomfield Hills Roper (17-0)
 - New Lothrop (18-1)
 - Cedarville (16-1)
 - Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart (16-1)
 - Portland St. Patrick (15-1)
 - St. Joseph Lake Michigan Catholic (16-2)
 - Burton Genesee Christian (16-2)
 - Big Rapids Crossroads Academy (17-1)
 - Marine City Cardinal Michigan (16-1)
 - T-10. McBain North, Michigan Christian (13-4) 10, Central Lake (16-2)

- Also receiving votes:** Iron Mountain North Dickinson (16-2) 24, Muskegon West Michigan Christian (13-3) 20, Johannesburg-Lewisville (16-3) 17, Ontonagon (14-4) 10, Onaway (15-3) 3, Eben-Superior Central (15-3) 2.

- BOYS**
- The top 10 teams in the Michigan Associated Press high school boys basketball poll, with records in parentheses. Totals are based on 15 points for a first-place vote, 14 for second, etc.:

- CLASS A**
- Saginaw (15-1)
 - Ann Arbor Pioneer (17-0)
 - Romulus (15-2)
 - Saginaw Arthur Hill (14-2)
 - Detroit Henry Ford (14-3)
 - Clarkston (14-2)
 - Lansing Sexton (14-2)
 - T-8. Westland John Glenn (16-1)
 - T-8. Detroit Finney (12-4)
 10. Detroit Pershing (10-3)

- Also receiving votes:** Kalamazoo Central (14-2) 26, Holt (14-2) 22, Detroit Northwest (13-4) 19, Orchard Lake St. Mary (12-5) 13, Grand Rapids Christian (15-2) 8, Jackson (13-3) 6, **Warren DeLaSalle (12-4) 5**, Detroit Cody (12-3) 4, Flint Carman-Ainsworth (14-3) 4, **Romeo (15-2) 1**, Birmingham Brother Rice (12-4) 1.

- CLASS B**
- Detroit Country Day (12-4)
 - Wayland Union (14-0)
 - Frankenmuth (17-0)
 - Detroit Renaissance (14-3)
 - Stevensville-Lakeshore (14-1)
 - Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern (15-2)
 - DeWitt (15-1)
 - Hudsonville Unity Christian (15-2)
 - Wyoming Park (15-2)
 10. Goodrich (15-1)

- Also receiving votes:** Grand Rapids Central (11-3) 15, Madison Heights Madison (15-1) 14, Zeeland East (14-3) 13, Bridgeport (13-3) 9, Livonia Clarenceville (14-1) 5, Muskegon Heights (12-4) 4, Marshall (12-4) 3, Richland Gull Lake (13-3) 2, Dearborn Divine Child (12-4) 2, Allendale (15-2) 2, Inkster (11-4) 1, West Branch Ogemaw Heights (13-3) 1, Flint Powers (10-7) 1.

- CLASS C**
- Kalamazoo Christian (17-0)
 - Negaunee (17-0)
 - Reese (16-0)
 - Charlevoix (14-1)
 - Bangor (15-1)
 - Carson City Crystal (14-2)
 - McBain (15-1)
 - Flint Hamady (15-2)
 - Napoleon (15-1)
 10. Albion (13-3)

- Also receiving votes:** Bath (14-2) 26, Adrian Madison (15-1) 22, Ithaca (13-3) 12, Hanover-Horton (14-2) 6, Ottawa Lake Whiteford (14-2) 5, North Muskegon (13-2) 3, Unionville-Sebewaing (12-2) 2, Houghton (13-3) 1, Schoolcraft (11-4) 1.

- CLASS D**
- Cedarville (16-0)
 - Climax-Scotts (16-0)
 - Wyoming Tri-Unity Christian (14-2)
 - T-4. Detroit City (14-2)
 - T-4. Ewen Trout Creek (17-0)
 - Lawrence (14-1)
 - Bear Lake (15-0)
 - Crystal Falls Forest Park (16-1)
 9. New Lothrop (15-1)
 - T-10. Muskegon W. Michigan Christian (13-3)
 - T-10. Ellsworth (14-2)

Also receiving votes: Mackinaw City (13-3) 16, Bellaire (15-1) 15, Painesdale Jeffers (14-2) 11, Webbville (13-2) 7, Cooks Big Bay de Noc (13-2) 5, St. Joseph Lake Michigan (14-2) 5, Adrian Lenawee Christian (12-3) 4, Lansing Christian (14-2) 3, Baldwin (14-2) 2.

— The Associated Press

Crusader swimmers continue to hit their marks

LCN repeats as MAC Gold dual meet champ.

By Tom Willard
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

It was hardly a surprise when L'Anse Creuse North clinched a second-straight Macomb Area Conference Gold Division dual meet championship last week, but the Crusaders took immense satisfaction in the accomplishment nonetheless.

"They love it," LCN boys coach Mike Owensby said of his swimmers and divers, who defeated Marine City 95-84 to finish 5-0 in the division and successfully defend their crown.

"To go back-to-back was just an incredible season for them," said Owensby. "They swam together as a team. They pushed each other. The seniors are help-

Swimming Notebook

ing our young kids to become better, which in turn is making the program better. Our ultimate goal is to produce a team that can knock out the (elite programs in Macomb County.)"

LCN features virtually the same roster that went undefeated in MAC Gold competition in 2007, led by Kevin Engelman, who broke former all-state swimmer Craig Jakowiac's school record in the 100 butterfly with a time of 55.58 seconds versus Cousino on Jan. 8. Engelman, who finished second only to Eisenhower's Kevin Galerneau at the Feb. 2 county meet, is closing in on a Division 1 state qualifying cut.

"He's having an incredible season," Owensby said of the senior, who will compete in both the 100 butterfly and the 200 freestyle at this weekend's 2008 Michigan

Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association boys meet at Eastern Michigan University.

Junior Chris Ciesinski (100 freestyle) and the Crusaders' 200 medley, 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle relay teams will also compete at the MISCA meet, which is expected to draw 300 or more of the best prep swimmers in the state.

Owensby said his goal is "to swim our best, set some team records and see if we can get close to some state cuts" at the competition.

LCN finished seventh in team scoring at the county meet behind Anchor Bay and ahead of Chippewa Valley.

"I didn't have any outstanding swims but we finished right where we should have, six positions higher than last year with the same team," said Owensby. "My entire team is swimming pretty well.



ANTHONY RADTKE and ERIK STANLEY

Ford continues to shine

The Macomb Daily sports staff

Things are going well for the Ford boys bowling team these days. The Falcons recently capped off a 9-1 record and a

Bowling

MAC Red championship this past Friday. On Sunday, Anthony Radtke and Erik Stanley added to the program's hardware, taking home the championship at the Eisenhower/Utica Bakers Doubles tournament at Sterling Lanes.

Radtke and Stanley defeated Cody Johnson and Kevin Campbell of Southgate Anderson in the championship match.

Radtke and Stanley were seeded fourth entering the tournament draw.

Romeo's David Kennedy and Kyle Stokes captured third place with a win over L'Anse Creuse North's Tim Bertrand and Kolten Zak.

Anchor Bay's Ashley Raden and Sarah Lokker took home the

See **BOWLING**, Page 3B



ASHLEY RADEN and SARAH LOKKER

COSTELLO: Dakota tops Macomb County's top five rankings

Continued from Page 1B

is shaping up.

In the MAC Red it's Dakota on top with 21 points on the strength of a 9-1-3 division record. Their final league game is against Anchor Bay. A win, and the Cougars are champs. A loss to the Tars opens the door for Utica, which has an 8-2-2 mark and 18 points. Should the Chieftains defeat St. Clair and Marysville, they'd win the Red with 22 points.

An up-to-the-minute look at the MAC White standings shows just how close things really are.

At the top, for the moment anyway, is L'Anse Creuse. The Lancers are 10-4-1 in the division and have 21 points. Next is a three-way tie for second place.

Ford is 9-3-2. L'Anse Creuse North is 8-2-4 and Warren-Sterling is 8-1-4. All, of course, have 20 points in the division.

Stevenson is currently in fifth place — but is just two points back — with a 9-4-1 record and 19 points.

Confused yet? Good, because this is only the tip of the iceberg.

The great news for Warren-Sterling United fans is that the team is the only one in control of its destiny. Because they have a game in hand on Ford and LCN, if the Thunder win all three remaining league games, they'd finish with 26 points, while the Falcons and Crusaders can earn a maximum of 24 should both teams win their remaining games.

Actually, WSU fans can breathe easy: the Thunder could net two wins and a tie in their final three games and still have the best possible record.

That doesn't lessen the pressure?

Let's move on and consider the other possibilities, however unlikely they may seem.

The Lancers have just a single league game left. It's not a cream puff either. L'Anse Creuse plays Ford on Saturday. With a win giving them a theoretical 23 points, the Lancers would need two WSU losses, a L'Anse Creuse North loss AND a Stevenson loss or tie to win the title.

Power Five

The county high school power rankings

- Dakota — The unbeaten streak continues at 11 games
- Warren-Sterling — Still controls its destiny in the White
- L'Anse Creuse North — Now unbeaten in eight straight in the White
- Ford — Crossover win over Utica should provide a lift
- Utica — Needs help from the Tars to stay in division race

— FRED COSTELLO

Hey! It could happen.

But if Ford can beat L'Anse Creuse, it would go up against lowly Warren-Mott for a chance at finishing with 24 points. The Falcons would then need two WSU losses (or three WSU ties) and a L'Anse Creuse North loss to win the White.

The scenario is much the same for the Crusaders. If they can topple Stevenson and Romeo and wind up with 24 points, they'd need the requisite WSU losses/ties and an LCN loss to Stevenson or Romeo to finish first.

The Titans final two games are against WSU and LCN. If they win both and gain 23 points, they would need two more WSU losses/ties, a tie or loss by L'Anse Creuse and a Ford loss to the Marauders to reach the top.

But what if we have multiple teams tie when it's all said and done? My apologies, dear readers, but I'm not going there today. Some things are just better left to fate.

It looks, however, like I made a mistake. There is actually one more thing we know about the MAC this year: trying to figure out every possible scenario can give you one heck of a headache.

Why don't we just wait another two weeks and then look forward to the playoffs?

I probably should've thought of that hours ago.