

Norsemen end Ford's run

'We didn't get hurt by the 3,' GPN coach says

By John Hetzler
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — Ford senior point guard Lea Jones put her head on her coach's shoulder and said, "Don't take me out!"

Jones still wanted to play, even though only one minute and 33 seconds remained and her team

Girls Basketball

trailed by 18 points. She and her Falcons team had achieved so much this season, and she was not ready for it to end.

But Ford's season ended with heartache, not celebration, after Grosse Pointe North defeated the Falcons 62-46 in a Class A regional girls basketball semifinal on Tuesday night at Dakota High School.

"It was a rough way to end the season," Jones said. "But we had a great year."

Indeed, the Falcons overcame injuries to go 19-5 overall, finish

second in the MAC White Division and win a second straight district championship. But Ford could not overcome GPN, the champion of the MAC Red Division, on Tuesday.

Sophomore forward Ariel Braker scored 17 points, junior guard Olivia Stander added 12 points and senior forward Christine Klein had 10 points for the Norsemen, who improved to 22-2 overall and advanced to the Class A regional final on Thursday against Chippewa Valley.

"We were really concerned about their 3-point shooting," GPN coach Gary Bennett said. "That was the biggest point of emphasis. They may have gotten to the basket but we didn't get hurt by the 3."

Klein also grabbed 15 rebounds to help the Norsemen dominate the boards.

"She did a good job of rebounding tonight," Bennett said. "Basically for her losing was not an option."

Grosse Pointe North led for all

but the first 2:28 of the game, though Ford pushed the Norsemen much of the night.

GPN built an early 10-2 lead and led by as many as 12 points in the first quarter before the Falcons rallied with a 7-0 to close the deficit to 20-15 at the end of the opening period.

That margin remained the same after Ford junior center Allie Drewes hit a layup with 19 seconds left in the second quarter to make the score 30-25 at halftime.

Drewes made back-to-back baskets to slice the Falcons deficit to 32-29 with 6:15 left in the third quarter, but that was as close as Ford would get the rest of the game.

GPN finished the quarter with a 15-3 run to open up a 15-point lead, and the Norsemen maintained a double-digit lead for the entire fourth quarter.

Drewes finished with 10 points, and Jones scored a game-high 11 points for Ford, a team that started preseason practice

It was a rough way to end the season. But we had a great year.

— Ford's Lea Jones

with only eight players and with two key seniors, Meredith Smith and Lace Harris, out with ACL injuries.

But Ford rallied through the challenge, winning its first five games, thanks in large part to Jones' leadership, on and off the court. Jones led the team in scoring at 15 points per game, and when Smith and Harris returned in midseason, she made sure the Falcons never missed a beat.

"She made everyone around her better," Ford coach Matt Joseph said. "That's why we were able to do what we did. That's the best compliment I can give a player."

Even with her team trailing

late in the fourth quarter, Jones still raced around the court, pressuring the ball all the way up the court on defense and driving hard to the basket on offense.

When Joseph finally pulled Jones from the game, she did not want to leave, even as Ford fans rose to give her an ovation. She sat on the bench and put her head in her hands as Smith consoled her.

"Lea, she's the best all-around kid I've ever coached," Joseph said. "She's just a special player, a special person."

After the game, Jones could take solace in what the Falcons had overcome — and achieved — this season.

"It was great," Jones said. "A lot of people didn't think we could get anywhere."

Grosse Pointe North 62, Ford 46					
GP North	20	10	17	15	- 62
Ford	15	10	7	14	- 46
GROSSE POINTE NORTH (22-2): Kelly DeFauw 8, Kayla Womack 7, Olivia Stander 12, Jasmine Kennedy 8, Christine Klein 10, Ariel Braker 17. Totals: 25 (2) 10-22 62.					
FORD (19-5): Lea Jones 11, Meredith Smith 5, Jasmine Flanagan 4, Kelsey Raczak 9, Lace Harris 4, Jill Kaltz 2, Emily McKay 1, Allie Drewes 10. Totals: 18 (2) 8-15 46.					

Dakota downs Utica, 3-0

The Macomb Daily Sports Staff

The Dakota Cougars hockey team beat Utica for the first time ever to win their Division 1 pre-regional final 3-0 on Tuesday.

"This is the first time ever that we've beat them," said Dakota coach Dave Koons. "We were very enthusiastic coming into the game and they played really hard."

Hockey

Dakota opened up the scoring in the first period when Eddie Lewis knocked one past the Chieftains goalie to make it 1-0. The score would remain the same until the third period when David Demick and Tyler Kolb both scored to make it 3-0.

"(Utica) came close a couple of times, they had some chances, but the guys really wanted this," Koons said.

In goal, Paul Savage racked up 20 saves. Lewis and Demick also had assists.

"Our game plan coming in was to contain their two big scorers and that's what we did," Koons

said.

The Cougars are now 19-4-3 and will play the winner of the Troy pre-regional semifinal at 6:15 p.m. Saturday in Troy.

"I'm really proud of the seniors that have been in this program for four years," Koons said. "This is the furthest we've ever been in the state playoffs."

Division 2

(Host Great Lakes Sports) DE LA SALLE 5, L'ANSE CREUSE NORTH 0: Frank Sorise scored two goals and assisted on another and Bill Coole had one goal and three assists.

De La Salle (15-8-2) jumped to a four-goal first-period lead. Ethan Steiner and David Sitarski also scored for the Pilots. Sitarski, Tom Fredal and Joe Arena had one assist, apiece. Goalie John Kleinhans made 15 saves for the shutout.

The Pilots will play L'Anse Creuse, 7:45 p.m. Thursday at Great Lakes Sports, with the winner advancing to a Division 2 state regional.



Utica's Chad Jetts (19) goes airborne for the puck while battling Dakota's Josh Agrusa in the Cougars' 3-0 victory.

Macomb Daily photo by David Angell

CV: Jumped out to a 9-0 lead after the first four minutes

Continued from Page 1C

to play.

Fraser had a couple good looks at a game-tying three pointer. But they all fell short.

"They're a good team and every time we made a mistake on defense they made us pay for it," Fraser coach Dave Kuppe said. "Simon had probably the best game of her life tonight. She hit those threes and coming into tonight she hadn't been hitting them. So we played off her a little bit and she buried shots."

Chippewa Valley jumped out to a 9-0 lead after the first four minutes and never trailed in the game. Kim Candela scored five points in the first quarter for the Big Reds and Simon had eight points in the second. The team's biggest lead was 23-6 after Simon hit a 3-pointer with 3:56 left in the half.

Simon said the whole team knew Fraser would concentrate on stopping Cannon, who is the Big Reds's leading scorer. "I knew that from the get-go," said Simon, who finished with a19 points. "Fraser knows how we play, they know Clair is our shooter. The first time we played them they ran a box-and-one so I knew they were going to come out with something different."

"I wasn't going to hesitate to shoot because I knew it was going to be difficult to get Clair the ball and I had to step it up."

Chippewa Valley extended a 13-point halftime lead by a point in the third quarter. That's when McHenry elevated her game and gave her team a chance to win.

The Ramblers' leading scorer hit a jumper, a pair of free throws and had a steal and a layup as Fraser scored 10 of the first 12 points in the fourth quarter.

That's when Simon hit her clutch 3-pointer and the last sequence of events played out.

Chippewa Valley coach Dave Prestinini praised Simon for her offense, but credited her defense just as much in the win. Simon, who picked up her fourth foul

with 3:40 left in the third quarter, saw her team's 15-point lead shrink to eight points with her on the bench.

"Her fourth foul hurt us a little bit because she wasn't out there for us defensively and she sets the tone for us," Prestinini said. "So it did change the complexion of the game. We're not used to playing without her. I think the girls got a little nervous so I had to call a timeout and get her back in the game."

The Chippewa Valley coach touted his team's defense, particularly in the first half. Fraser scored just 12 points in 16 minutes.

"Our whole plan early was to stop both (McHenry and Kelsey Irvin)," Prestinini said. "In the first half I think we did an excellent job of it. We came out today playing and had a tremendous first half."

McHenry did break out in the second half, but her teammates scored just 10 points over the final two quarters.

"(McHenry) didn't play her best in the first half and she was pretty upset at halftime," said Kuppe, whose team finished 18-6. "In the first half we couldn't get to the basket. In the second half I think we tired them out a little bit and allowed her to get some penetration."

Chippewa Valley will now face Grosse Pointe North for the regional championship Thursday at 6 p.m. The Norsemen defeated Ford 62-46 in the night's second semifinal.

It's the second-consecutive regional final appearance for the Big Reds, who lost to Brighton last year on their home court.

"This has been their goal since last August," Prestinini said. "So now that we're here the pressure should be off of them. I think the pressure was getting back to this point. Now the pressure's off. We're here. We're where we want to be and we've got a shot."

Chippewa Valley 43, Fraser 40					
Chippewa Valley	12	13	11	7	- 43
Fraser	4	8	10	18	- 40
CHIPPEWA VALLEY (22-1): Claire Cannon 3, Kim Candela 5, Britany Simon 19, Emily Cizmas 8, Nicolina Vitale 8. Totals: 17 (7) 24 43.					
FRASER (18-6): Kaitlyn Minchella 2, Becka McHenry 22, Liz Krause 4, Kelsey Irvin 4, Sadie Howell 6, Kaity Marko 2. Totals: 14 (0) 12-12 40.					

SPARTANS: 'The game plan coming in was to deny the big girl, because Davis is legit'

Continued from Page 1C

the semifinals of the Class B girls basketball regional tournament at Detroit Renaissance, 66-41.

In theatrical terms, this one was a contest between a veteran actor accustomed to the spotlight and her talented-but-raw understudy.

While St. Clair reached the state finals last season, Fitzgerald was making its first regional appearance with a team that featured five freshmen and four sophomores on its roster — and four underclassmen in its starting five.

The difference was obvious from the opening tip.

The Saints jumped out to a 7-0 lead before the game was three minutes old and led by as many as 13 points before ending the first quarter with a 19-7 lead.

"A lot of it was nerves," said Fitzgerald coach Sam Hines. "You've got to understand, four of these girls were in eighth grade last year. So the crowd, the arena, the magnitude of the game got to them in the first half."

Fitzgerald was also dazzled early on by St. Clair's frontcourt, especially 6-2 junior center Sarah Davis, who repeatedly beat the Spartans' post defenders to the basket with a quick first step. She scored nine of her 24 points for the game in the quarter.

"The game plan coming in was to deny the big girl, because Davis is legit and we tried to take her away," Hines said. "(After a while) I went small-ball and tried to attack her body, tried to keep her out. But with her length and her size, it was hard to deny her that inside position."

There was also no denying St. Clair's Gina Vito, a 6-0 junior who scored 10 of her 16 points in the second quarter to put the Saints firmly in charge by halftime, 37-15.

"I thought we had great ball movement; we got our posts the ball right

where they wanted it," said St. Clair coach Sandy Rutledge. "I guess I was happier with the defensive effort in the first half. I thought we did a great job keeping their guards out of the paint."

St. Clair pushed the lead to 43-15 with 4:38 left in the third quarter before Fitzgerald finished the stanza with a 13-5 run almost single-handedly engineered by Kristian Hines, who scored 11 points including three 3-point baskets. She finished with a game-high 29 points.

"We came out with butterflies," the sophomore guard said. "Our coach was there to pick us up, to tell us to get focused."

The offensive outburst seemed to embolden the Spartans' defense, which took on a physical and aggressive style that led to several turnovers and quick baskets the rest of the way, though not enough to overcome the high-powered Saints.

"What you saw in the second half was the heart of a champion," said Sam Hines, whose squad finished the season 20-4 overall.

"A lot of people said we were a year ahead of ourselves. I look at it as getting good experience," he said. "No matter what we have accomplished with our youth, now we know what we have to keep working on. Now we know what level we're going to next year and we understand about team ball. We had the privilege of playing with teams that have been here before... What we have growing, we'll be back."

St. Clair, which improved to 15-9, will face Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day (which defeated Detroit Renaissance 54-43 on Tuesday) in the regional final Thursday at 7 p.m.

St. Clair 66, Fitzgerald 41					
St. Clair	19	18	11	18	- 66
Fitzgerald	7	8	13	13	- 41
ST. CLAIR (15-9): Kelsey Rood 6, Alexandra Bernardi 6, Megan Johnson 8, Gina Vito 16, Amanda Askew 2, Karly Starbuck 3, Elizabeth Miller 1, Sarah Davis 24. Totals: 26 (0) 14-18 66.					
FITZGERALD (20-4): Kristian Hines 29, Courtney Dyer 6, Phillipe Davis 2, Mariah deNooijer 2, Ajai Meeks 2. Totals: 16 (5) 4-12 41.					

Girls Basketball Regionals

CLASS A (Host Dakota)
Today: Semifinals - Chippewa Valley 43, Fraser 40; Grosse Pointe North 62, Ford 46

CLASS B (Host Detroit Renaissance)
Today: Semifinals - St. Clair 66, Fitzgerald 41; Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day 54, Detroit Renaissance 43

Boys Basketball Districts

CLASS A (Host Grosse Pointe North)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Grosse Pointe South 70, Lakeview 36; Grosse Pointe North 69, East Detroit 46

CLASS B (Host Rochester Adams)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Troy 59, vs. Rochester Hills Stoney Creek 46; Rochester 35, Rochester Adams 34

CLASS C (Host Marine City)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Mount Clemens 67, Richmond 58; Marysville 69, Marine City 53

CLASS D (Host Roesper)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinal - Roesper 57, Conner Creek West 45

CLASS B (Host Center Line)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Fitzgerald 66, Center Line 50; Detroit Crockett 63, South Lake 61

CLASS C (Host New Haven)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Detroit Loyola 62, Academy of Oak Park Mendota 55; Detroit Communication Media Arts 60, Harper Woods 62; New Haven 51, Eaton Academy 47

CLASS D (Host Marquette)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Burton Bentley 56, Sandusky 53; Brown City 32, Marquette 19

CLASS E (Host Marquette)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Burton Bentley 56, Sandusky 53; Brown City 32, Marquette 19

CLASS F (Host Marquette)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Burton Bentley 56, Sandusky 53; Brown City 32, Marquette 19

CLASS G (Host Marquette)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Burton Bentley 56, Sandusky 53; Brown City 32, Marquette 19

CLASS H (Host Marquette)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Burton Bentley 56, Sandusky 53; Brown City 32, Marquette 19

CLASS I (Host Marquette)
Feb. 25: Quarterfinals - Burton Bentley 56, Sandusky 53; Brown City 32, Marquette 19

Boys Ice Hockey Pre-Regionals

DIVISION 1 (At Troy Sports Center) Semifinals
Feb. 27: Troy vs. Troy Athens, 6:35 p.m.; Stevenson vs. Ford, 8:45 p.m.

Championship
Feb. 28: TBD, 7:05 p.m.

(At Suburban Ice Macomb) Semifinals
Feb. 25: Dakota def. Eisenhower; Utica 3, Chippewa Valley 2 (OT)

Championship
Feb. 26: Dakota 3, Utica 0

(At St. Clair Shores Civic Arena) Semifinals
Feb. 25: U-D Jesuit 2, Warren-Sterling United 0; vs. Grosse Pointe North 3, St. Clair Shores Unified 0

Championship
Feb. 27: U-D Jesuit vs. Grosse Pointe North, 7:30 p.m.

DIVISION 2 (At Glacier Pointe) Semifinals
Feb. 26: Romeo vs. Rochester Hills Stoney Creek, (n); Port Huron vs. Anchor Bay, (n)

(At Suburban Ice Macomb) Championship
Feb. 28: TBD, 6:15 p.m.

(At Detroit City Ice Arena) Semifinals
Feb. 26: Royal Oak vs. Berkley, (n); Grosse Pointe South vs. Warren-Mott, (n)

Championship
Feb. 28: TBD, 7:30 p.m.

(At Great Lakes Sports) Semifinal
Feb. 26: De La Salle 5, L'Anse Creuse North 0

Championship
Feb. 28: L'Anse Creuse vs. L'Anse Creuse North/De La Salle winner, 7:45 p.m.

Wrestling Quarterfinals

All matches Friday at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek Division 1 - 5:30 p.m.

- 1 - Davison (33-1) vs. Canton (25-8)
- 2 - Holt (26-0) vs. Hartland (32-3)
- 3 - Rockford (27-2) vs. Temperance Bedford (29-2)
- 4 - L'Anse Creuse (35-7) vs. Lake Orion (33-4)

Division 2 - 7:45 p.m.

- 5 - Oxford (25-3) vs. Tecumseh (30-6)
- 6 - Mt. Pleasant (25-1) vs. Eaton Rapids (33-4)
- 7 - Hazel Park (23-9) vs. Greenville (25-1)
- 8 - Hastings (26-4) vs. Stevensville Lakeshore (29-5)

Division 3 - 3:15 p.m.

- 9 - Remus Chippewa Hills (31-2) vs. Sag. Swan Valley (33-1)
- 10 - Corunna (27-5) vs. Dundee (23-3)
- 11 - Gladstone (10-3) vs. Goodrich (42-2)
- 12 - Allendale (24-5) vs. Lake Odessa Lakewood (28-5)

Division 4 - 1 p.m.

- 13 - New Lothrop (19-7) vs. Bronson (27-4)
- 14 - Hudson (30-4) vs. Hesperia (28-1)
- 15 - Springport (30-9) vs. Rogers City (30-3)
- 16 - Leroy Pine River (26-2) vs. Manchester (30-5)