

# Cruz lends his voice to high school sports

By John Hetzler  
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

Willie Cruz, a senior basketball player at L'Anse Creuse, speaks his mind.

"Sports should be fun," Cruz said. "That's a key concept. A lot of people take it serious, especially as far as parents and peer pressure. But we just want to key it on having it fun."

On and off the basketball court, Cruz has made himself heard — and known.

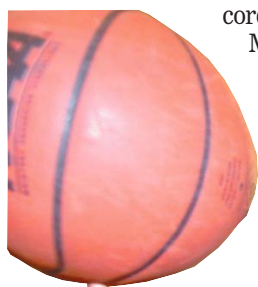
As a starting guard on the L'Anse Creuse basketball team, Cruz made his mark on the court after averaging 20 points, 8.4 rebounds and two steals per

game as a junior.

As a member of the MHSAA Student Advisory Council, Cruz has made his mark off the court by having his voice heard on a number of topics concerning student athletes and high school sports.

"I consider myself to be a leader," Cruz, a senior at L'Anse Creuse, said. "I wanted to be a voice, and voice the opinions that people at the MHSAA don't get to hear."

Cruz has served two years on the Student Advisory Council, a 16-member group of boys and girls from across the state who act "as the voice of Michigan's student-athletes," according to the MHSAA's Web site.



It's quite an honor that he's in the group.

— John Haas  
L'Anse Creuse boys basketball coach

"We've gotten input from students on everything from trophy designs to sixth graders playing in seventh-eighth grade teams to steroids to summer and out-of-season workouts," Andy Frushour, the MHSAA's marketing coordinator, wrote in an e-mail to The Macomb Daily. "We cover a lot of things."

In addition, the group voices its opinions to the MHSAA's Representative Council, assists in student leadership events and helps with medal ceremonies at state finals.

"It's quite an honor that he's in the group," L'Anse Creuse basketball coach John Haas said.

The SAC meets in Lansing five Sundays a year, and the group often gets to deal directly with MHSAA executive director Jack E. Roberts.

"We're basically a voice for all the students around the state," said Cruz, the only representative from Macomb County on the council. "We voice our opinions to him about different sports topics with different ideas."

Cruz has taken an active role on the SAC.

Last year he helped the group write a Student-Athlete Belief statement that the MHSAA filmed as a public service announcement. Along with the rest of the council, he appears in the short video.

In the winter, Cruz helped hand out the Class B boys basketball trophy after Lansing Catholic defeated Flint Powers Catholic.

This fall Cruz took an active part in the MHSAA Sportsmanship

See CRUZ, Page 6



Macomb Daily staff photo by David N. Posavetz

For the first time in nearly 20 years, Fraser High School will field a boys ice hockey team. The Ramblers won a Class A state title in 1983 before the program was ended.

# Four county teams have eye on first MAC Blue title

By Fred Costello  
Special to The Macomb Daily

## Boys Ice Hockey

The Macomb Area Conference Blue Division is brand new for 2008. Fraser, Ford, Warren-Mott, Port Huron, Marysville and Lamphere will compete for the first division title. Fittingly, the new division has a new team in the Fraser Ram-

blers, who have recently resurrected the hockey program. Here's a look inside the Blue:

See MAC BLUE, Page 6



**MICHIGAN**  
SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT  
CREDIT UNION

586.263.8800  
1.866.MSGCU4U  
www.msgcu.org



## Auto and Recreational Vehicles

**WE ARE STILL OFFERING NEW AND USED AUTO LOANS!**



5.24%

As Low As  
APR\*

**New or Used Same Low Rate!**

\*APR=Annual Percentage Rate with Direct Deposit and automatic payment transfer. Rates based on term, credit and collateral. A loan amount of \$15,000 at 5.24% for 60 months would have an approximate monthly payment of \$284.72. New money only. Rates are effective as of 11/11/2008. Rates are subject to change at anytime. Ask a Member Service Representative for details.



**HOURS**  
Monday-Friday  
9am-6pm  
Sat. 9-1:30

- Drive-Through Window
- 24-Hour Prescription Drop Box
- Private Patient Consultation
- Instant Access To The Pharmacist

**MEDICAP PHARMACY**  
*Will always make time for you.*

11460 12 Mile West of Hoover  
**(586) 582-9670**

Most Insurances Accepted

Free Calcium

600 Mg. with Vitamin D



With Any New Or Transferred Prescription One Coupon For Free or One Bottle For Person \*With coupon Expires 10/31/09 • Only available at 11460 12 Mile 582-9670

# Shores schools plan girls, boys holiday hoops bash

Event features eight varsity games in two days

By George Pohly  
Macomb Daily Sports Editor

Ho, ho, ho, hoops junkies. Holiday basketball is coming to St. Clair Shores.

The city's three high schools,

## Boys & Girls Basketball

Lake Shore, Lakeview and South Lake, are starting

this year what is expected to be an annual girls and boys tournament involving one invited school and themselves.

Played on the Monday and Tuesday between Christmas and New Year's, and hosted this year by Lake Shore, the varsity tournament will feature four games on Dec. 29 and four more on Dec. 30.

Also on those days, a JV tournament involving the same schools will be at South Lake. Start times for some of the JV contests will be earlier than those of the varsity games.

The real basketball junkies could probably get in six games or even part of seven in one day.

— Russ Collins  
Lake Shore athletic director

"The real basketball junkies could probably get in six games or even part of seven in one day," said Russ Collins, the athletic director at Lake Shore.

"That's like dying and going to heaven for people who love basketball and their community."

The Shores tournament, which this year will include Michigan Collegiate High, was a byproduct of the girls season moving from fall to winter, Collins said.

"We knew from history in other states that what happens is, participation and attendance drop (when girls and boys play at the same time of year)," Collins said. "We watched for a year and saw that attendance did drop off, although participation stayed good.

"It (the attendance decline) was a combination of too many games in a week and too much expense for people to go to all those basketball games."

The Macomb Area Conference and the St. Clair Shores athletic directors, Collins said, considered ways to create more interest, especially in girls games.

Collins and his Lakeview and South Lake counterparts, Sean Zaborowski and Roger Opsommer, respectively, collaborated on the creation of the Shores tournament as a way to have the boys and girls teams play in the same place on the same days.

"We're really excited about

See HOOPS, Page 7

## CRUZ: Helping out the MHSSA

Continued from Page 5

Summit, which involved almost 1,000 students across the state.

Cruz helped at a presentation at Warren that included 50 to 75 students from Macomb County and across the surrounding area.

"It was great to talk to our peers, and get feedback from them," Cruz said.

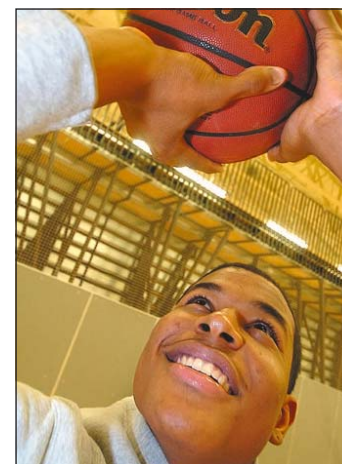
Haas said that Cruz's leadership traits — he has the ability to relate to everybody — make him a perfect fit for the SAC.

"No doubt about it," Haas said. "On top of being a good player, he competes in the classroom. He's one of those guys who takes everything to heart. ... It translates from the classroom to the hallways to the basketball court."

When L'Anse Creuse Public Schools toughened up their academic standards for athletic eligibility, Cruz took a leadership role in making sure his teammates were prepared.

"He was already talking to kids three months before the season," Haas said. "He was proactive rather than reactive."

Now Cruz has his sights set on the L'Anse Creuse boys basketball season, which tips off in two weeks.



Macomb Daily staff photo by David Dalton  
**L'Anse Creuse basketball player Willie Cruz is part of a student advisory board that meets with the MHSAA.**

In addition, Cruz already has signed a national letter of intent with Eastern Kentucky.

"This is big time, going into my senior year," Cruz said. "Signing with EKU was great. Now I can focus on high school basketball and finish strong."

His time with the SAC has proved a "worthwhile experience," Cruz said. He has made friendships with other student athletes from across the state, from the Upper Peninsula to the west side.

"I just learned that as far as across the state there are so many different views, from big high schools to little high schools," Cruz said. "There are so many different ideas. It's just a great experience."

## MAC BLUE: Fraser, Ford and Warren-Mott are in new division

Continued from Page 5

### Ford

If any team is confident about its chances in the Blue, it's the Falcons. And perhaps for good reason. Last year in the White, Ford finished 10-3-3, just three points off the division lead. After moving down, coach Lee Jenkins expects to win a lot of games in the new division.

"I think we can win the Blue Division the next two years, no doubt about it," Jenkins said. "I think Port Huron and Fraser are going to give us a run, but we're starting to come together."

One area Jenkins sees as a lot stronger is in goal. In his opinion, the Falcons have improved greatly between the pipes.

Junior Matt Mueller was the starter last season. He'll try and

fend off challenges from sophomores Eric Lafferty, Cody Forst and freshman Alex Stickney.

"Goalie is the number one bright spot on the team," Jenkins said. "It has improved phenomenally over the last spring and summer."

Up front, Ford will rely the production of first team All-MAC selection Kyle Hataula and fellow returnee Eric Alexandrowicz. Juniors Jeff LaHood and Rob Reed, who should be the team's best setup guy, also will contribute. Meanwhile, senior defenseman Chuck Bidwell will anchor the blue line.

### Fraser

For the first time in more than 20 years, the Ramblers are back in high school hockey. Coach Don Krussman and assistant coaches Jason Neale and Bob Fluent will

### MAC BLUE DIVISION

Fraser  
Lamphere  
Marysville  
Port Huron  
Ford  
Warren-Mott

embark on a mission to restore the excellence for which Fraser's program was once known.

"The biggest challenge has been making our student athletes recognize that high school hockey can be a nice place to play hockey, develop, get better and have fun," Krussman said. "A lot of the kids didn't know much about it because it was a new thing for them."

Krussman will field a team of 18 players this season. He was reluctant to mention any of them as

individuals, preferring to keep the team concept in focus.

"We're really trying to build a team approach and build around the idea that the team is stronger than the individual," Krussman said.

The coach does believe that Fraser's defensemen will be its strong suit.

### Warren-Mott

The Marauders had it tough in 2007-08, their first season after splitting off from the Warren-Sterling United program. Warren-Mott finished last in the White Division, winning just one game all season. Coach Pat Rall never wavered in his enthusiasm, however, and all but one player from last year's team have returned.

"I'm really pleased with what we've done so far," Rall said. "This team, if they play as well as they can

— I wouldn't doubt we'll be competitive this year in the division."

An All-MAC White honorable mention pick as a freshman last year, team scoring leader Kory Richardson is back. So are the second- and third-leading scorers in senior captains Bobby LeBlanc and Jarrett Green. LeBlanc was a second-team All-MAC selection, while Green was voted to the first team a year ago. Sophomore Chris Kiely also will be counted on.

On defense, bruising senior captain Tyler Sevakis will anchor the unit. He'll be joined by classmate Matt Machota, whom Rall considers one of the team's hardest-working players.

Senior Zach Cullen and sophomore Tyler Ross will compete for time in goal.

Rall sees this group as one that is much improved, deeper and even more skilled than last season's team.