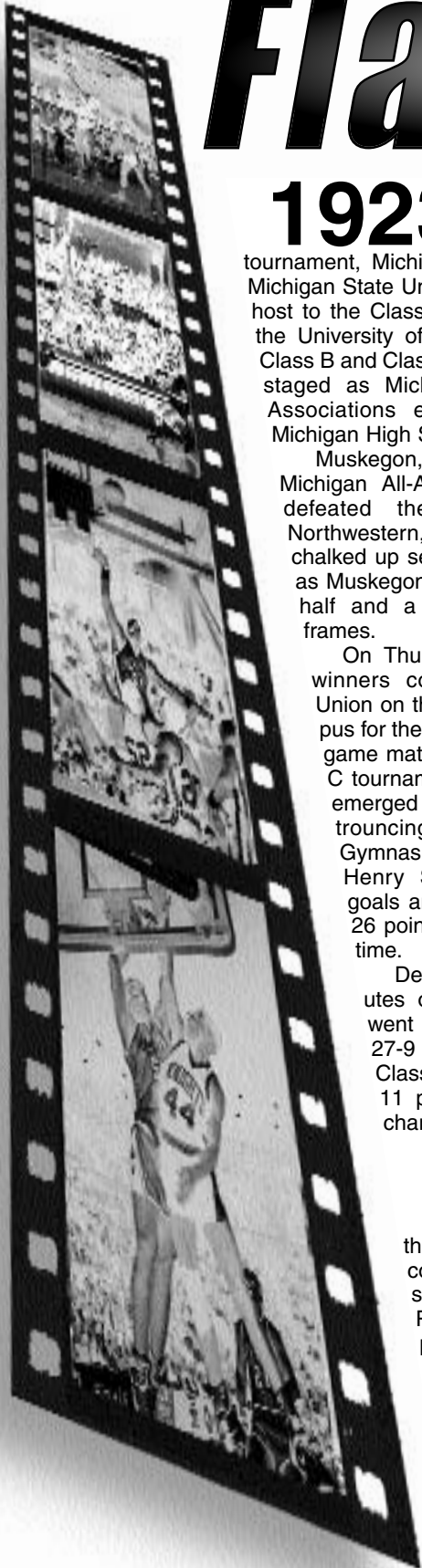


Finals Flashbacks



1923

Continuing the tradition of alternating the sites of the state basketball tournament, Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University) in East Lansing played host to the Class A prep championships, while the University of Michigan played host to the Class B and Class C games. The contests were staged as Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Associations events, a forerunner to the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

Muskegon, led by future University of Michigan All-American Bennie Oosterbaan, defeated the tourney favorite Detroit Northwestern, 36-24, at MAC. The senior chalked up seven field goals in the contest, as Muskegon opened up a 17-9 lead at the half and a 15-point margin after three frames.

On Thursday, March 29, 16 regional winners congregated at the Michigan Union on the University of Michigan campus for the draw to determine the opening game matches in the Class B and Class C tournaments. Niles, defending its title, emerged as the champion in Class B, trouncing Alma, 34-9, at Waterman Gymnasium in Ann Arbor. Team captain Henry Schrupf scored eight field goals and hit 10 of 13 free throws for 26 points, a tournament record at the time.

Deadlocked at 0-0 after 11 minutes of play, reigning champ Holly went on an 8-1 run then rolled to a 27-9 victory over Carson City in Class C. Hartz led the winners with 11 points, including five from the charity stripe.

1933

A stunning rally in the final quarter of the Class A contest allowed Flint Northern to snatch the win from Grosse Pointe, 22-16. The Finals were played at Lansing's Boys Vocational School. In perhaps the greatest comeback in tournament play up to that point, Northern opened the fourth quarter trailing 14-8. Led by Dodson Truss, the Flint cagers roared to 14 unanswered points to capture the crown. Truss led Northern

with 12 points.

Grand Haven picked up its fifth crown with a 24-11 victory over Mt. Pleasant in Class B. Coach Gus Cohrs' squad busted open a 14-2 lead at the intermission, then coasted to victory. Charles Dirkse led the winners with seven points.

Orchard Lake St. Mary's defeated a squad of giant killers from Boyne City, 32-8, to earn its first MHSAA crown. One night before, Boyne City delivered a shocking 16-15 win over three-time defending Class C champion Kalamazoo St. Augustine in the semifinals.

The third time was the charm as Ann Arbor St. Thomas topped Kent City, 17-16, in an overtime thriller for its first Class D title. Deadlocked at 16 following a Kent City bucket with less than two minutes remaining in regulation, the squads were forced to a three-minute overtime. Team captain Jimmy Walsh emerged as the hero, sinking a free throw in the extra frame to secure the win. Kent City had four opportunities from the charity stripe but failed on each before Walsh found the mark.

For the second year in a row, Michigan's Upper Peninsula held a separate basketball tournament, crowning champions in Class B, C and D. This arrangement continued through the 1947 season. Iron Mountain captured the Class B crown, defeating Stambaugh 22-19. Stambaugh had won two previous regular-season contests between the neighboring schools.

In Class C play, Newberry and its high-powered offense built a 24-5 lead by halftime, then coasted to a 44-16 drubbing of Amasa.

A free throw by Alpha center LaCount with under three minutes to play snapped a 28-28 tie in Class D. The point provided the winning margin as Alpha upended Bergland, 29-28, for the Class D crown.

1943

No statewide championship tournament was held due to our country's engagement in World War II. The title games were resumed in 1944. In a "streamlining" of the annual playoffs designed to limit travel, a number of locally based tournaments were hosted around the state following the end of the regular-season. Roughly equivalent to today's district play, approximately 100 schools claimed titles. In the Upper Peninsula, 19 schools were awarded cage honors.

1953

Dearborn Fordson delivered a solid team effort to earn its first ever basketball crown with a 53-47 upset victory over previously undefeated Lansing Sexton in Class A play



tom komon

Photo courtesy Britton-Macon HS

before 12,204 fans at Jenison Fieldhouse. Sexton hit just 20 of 75 field goal attempts, and only seven of 21 attempts from the line. Dick Skruch poured in 21 points for the Fordson, while teammate Don Greenleaf provided 13 points and solid rebounding.

Despite posting a 9-7 mark in the regular season, St. Joseph earned its sixth Class B crown overall, downing Ludington, 60-51. St. Joseph opened up a 28-18 halftime lead, and then upped it to 49-37 after three quarters. Nate Duncan finished with a game-high 18 points for the winners, while Tilliotson ended with 16, his second lowest output of the season, to lead the Orioles.

Eight lead changes in the final quarter provided plenty of excitement for everyone as Saginaw St. Mary defeated Muskegon St. Mary, 59-57, in a thrilling Class C matchup. Denny Troester's shot with four minutes to play gave the Saginaw squad a 55-51 lead, but Muskegon pulled back to within two with five seconds to play. An inadvertent buzzer that sounded at the three-second mark started a premature celebration by Saginaw fans. After the court was cleared, the Muskegon team received the ball out-of-bounds and had a chance to tie, but the ensuing shot, which hung on the rim at the final gun finally fell out.

Muskegon St. Joseph emerged with a 58-51 overtime win over the previously undefeated Detroit All Saints in Class D. A free throw with 22 seconds to go by All Saints freshman Larry Anderson knotted

the score at 51-51, forcing the game to overtime. It was all Muskegon in the extra session. Dave Imonen led all scorers with 18, while Martin Mullally added 17 points for St. Joseph.

In Class E play at Houghton in the Upper Peninsula, Nahma picked up its second straight crown as freshman Harold Newhouse's free throw with two seconds remaining shattered a 64-64 deadlock. Newhouse finished with 23 points as the Arrows downed the Milltowners from Marenisco, 67-64.

1963

Ferndale completed its first perfect season in school history, topping Adrian, 76-58, for the Class A title. The Eagles opened up a 44-30 halftime lead before 12,473 fans at Jenison Fieldhouse in East Lansing. Bruce Rodwan led the way with 25 points and 20 rebounds. The win was especially sweet for Ferndale coach Roy Burkhart, who had handled the squad for 17 years before winning a title.

Lofton Greene's top-ranked River Rouge Panthers picked up the Class B crown for the third year in a row with a 59-49 victory over second-ranked Hudsonville Unity Christian. To the delight of the crowd, 10 straight points by the Crusaders cut a 12-point third quarter lead by Rouge to a 38-36 battle in the opening moments of the fourth. But the Panthers responded quickly to kill the rally, including a three-point play by Larry Brazon. Bill Dunson led the Rouge attack with 16 points, while Brazon added 15.

George Gooch's free throw with 15 seconds to go proved to be the difference as New Buffalo squeaked out a 59-58 thriller over Upper Peninsula representative Houghton in Class C play. Trailing by as many as 14 points in the third quarter, the Bison's Glenn Mankowski deposited a field goal with 52 seconds left to knot the game at 56-56. Fouled on the shot, Mankowski missed the free throw but teammate Jerry Kissman tipped in the rebound for a 58-56 lead prior to Gooch's free throw. Kissman ended with 26 points.

Britton-Macon's 6-8 center Phil Benedict scored a game-high 26 points to lead the Tories to a 59-58 win over Negaunee St. Paul in Class D. The win capped an undefeated season for Britton-Macon and earned the school its first championship. With the Tories trailing 54-52, Tom Komon hit a 20-foot jumper with 51 seconds remaining to tie the game. Fred McCrate added another basket to give Britton-Macon a lead that they never relinquished.

1973

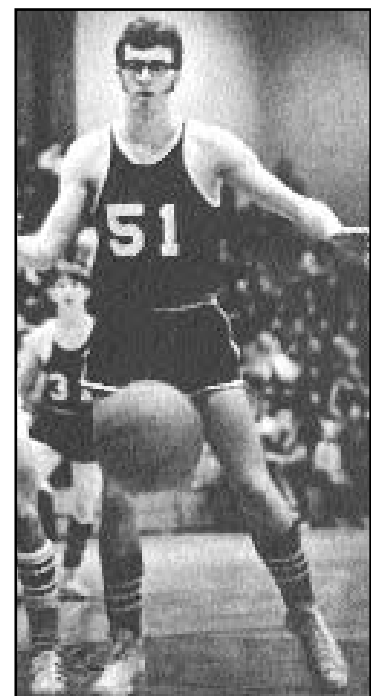
Despite playing only 11 regular-season games, Detroit Southwestern earned its first MHSAA cage crown with a 66-60 victory

over Saginaw in Class A. Following the first half, the Prospectors switched to a press that helped control Saginaw's potent offense. Trailing by four points midway through the third, Southwestern grabbed a 44-42 lead behind the shooting of Kenny Davis and Daryl Robertson. Davis finished with 20 points, while Robertson added 16 points for the Prospectors.

Dearborn Divine Child coach Bill McCartney acknowledged that Hudsonville Unity Christian's 6-9 center Mark Veenstra was an outstanding player, and admitted that his team was not big enough to stop him. Instead, the Falcons allowed Veenstra his points, and concentrated on shutting down the rest of the Unity Christian squad. McCartney's game plan worked to near perfection as Veenstra scored 34 points, but the rest of the team was held to 20, allowing Divine Child to emerge with the victory, 58-54, over the top-ranked and previously unbeaten Crusaders. It was the first Class B championship for Divine Child. The Falcons committed only six turnovers and were whistled for a mere six personal fouls in the contest.

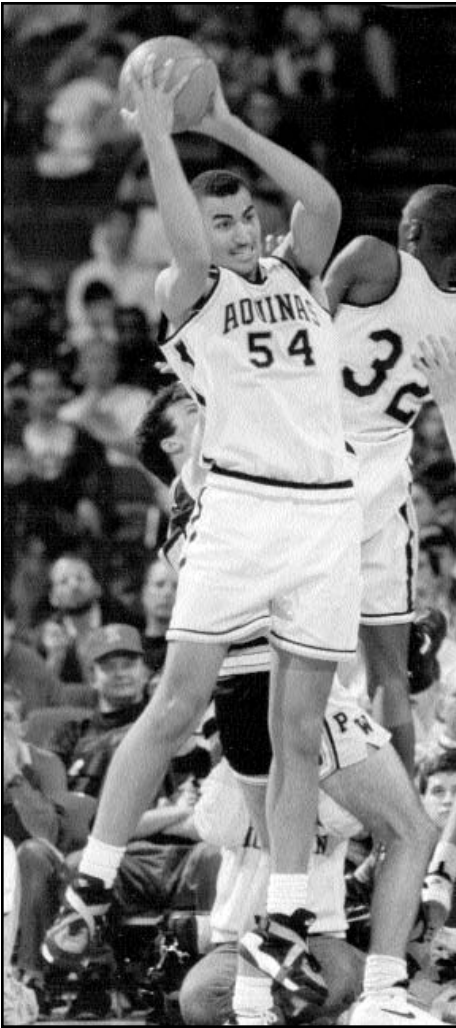
With four ticks remaining on the clock, Larry Merchant's 18-foot jumper from left of the key gave underdog Detroit East Catholic a 50-49 win over top-ranked Saginaw St. Stephen in Class C. Merchant, who scored 10 of his 14 points in the first half, gave the Chargers a 48-47 lead with just over a minute to play, but a pair of free throws by Elijah Coates pushed St. Stephen out front 49-48 with 45 seconds left.

Grand Rapids Covenant Christian, in only its fifth year of existence, grabbed the Class D title from previously unbeaten Flint Holy Rosary, 68-61. It marked the second straight year in which the Wolverines were defeated



john bol

John R. Fulton Jr., Grand Rapids Press



jon garavaglia

win negated an outstanding shooting day for Fred Marshall, who hit on nine of 13 attempts from the field in the first half, leading Oak Park to a 31-23 lead at intermission. Marshall ended the day with 29 points.

In Class C, Kalamazoo Christian trounced Flint Hamady, 81-60. Christian's Kevin Dungy opened up the third quarter with eight points as the Comets extended a 21-12 halftime lead to 33-18. Dungy ended with 10 rebounds and 24 points on 10-of-11 shooting from the floor.

An off night by Detroit East Catholic still was not enough to derail its title hopes, as the Chargers earned a fifth title under Coach Dave Soules with a 54-43 win over St. Ignace. East Catholic hit on only 40 percent of its shots, but St. Ignace shot just 27 percent. Clayton Hendley led the Chargers with 14 while all-stater Anthony Sands helped East Catholic control the boards with 19.

1993 Junior Willie Mitchell

scored 22 points to lead Detroit Pershing to back-to-back titles with a 67-64 victory over Benton Harbor at the Palace of Auburn Hills in a rematch of the 1992 Class A Final.

The showdown was a thriller from start to finish. Pershing posted a 20-12 lead at the end of one quarter, but the Tigers pulled to within two by halftime, 32-30 and led 53-50 with 4:36 to play in the fourth quarter. The game teetered back and forth until, with 18.6 seconds remaining, Benton Harbor's Correy Childs pulled up for a 17-footer to take the lead, however the ball hit the rim and bounced off. Pershing's Todd Burgan was fouled and hit two free throws to provide the final margin.

In a rematch of regular-season opponents, Saginaw Buena Vista earned its second consecutive Class B title and extended its unbeaten streak to 49 games with a 69-52 victory over Muskegon Heights. It was seventh championship appearance in 10 seasons for the Knights, and their fourth title. Shedrick Murrell led the Knights with 21 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists, while teammate Chester Surles added 16 points and nine rebounds.

Jon Garavaglia grabbed 13 rebounds and scored 15 points, as Southgate Aquinas downed Pewamo-Westphalia, 50-44, for Class C honors. The win negated an outstanding performance by P-W's Steve Ecklund. The 6-4 senior guard knocked down four buckets from three-point range and finished with 25 points to lead all scorers. Trailing by 11 with 2:25 to play, the Pirates fouled in an attempt to get back in the game. Aquinas missed the front end of

five one-and-one free throw opportunities, allowing P-W to pull within four points with 15.9 seconds to play before running out of steam.

Despite being held to a season low offensively, Grand Rapids Covenant Christian capped a perfect season with a 53-42 win over reigning Class D champion Muskegon West Michigan Christian. All-state center Dave Meulenberg led the Chargers with 16 points, while Ryan Arkema topped West Michigan Christian with 16 and a game-high 12 rebounds. It was the seventh loss on the year for the Warriors, three of which came at the hands of Covenant Christian. At halftime of the contest, the MHSAA honored Battle Creek Central graduate and Parchment resident Dick Kishpaugh with a plaque commemorating his 50 years of service as keeper of the state's prep record book. The MHSAA game day program featured Kishpaugh's final look back at covering a half-century of tournament play.

— Ron Pesch

Ron Pesch is the historian for the MHSAA. To submit story ideas and potential statistical records, write to Pesch at 1317 Lakeshore Drive, Muskegon, MI 49441.

in the title game. Holy Rosary grabbed a 48-45 lead to open the final frame on a basket by Jim Buckley, but the loss of four Wolverine starters to fouls in the final moments of the game sealed their fate. John Bol, Covenant's 6-7 center, led all scorers with 23 point, including seven consecutive free throws down the stretch.

1983 Antoine Joubert

shattered the championship single-game scoring mark with a 47-point performance for Detroit Southwestern, but his individual effort could not offset the team play of Flint Central. The Indians became only the second team in tournament history to win a third consecutive Class A title with an 84-80 victory over the Prospectors at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor. Trailing by as many as 11 points in the first half, Joubert pulled the Prospectors even, 53-53, with a bomb to end the third quarter. But Central, led by lone returning starter Darryl Johnson, took command in the final moments. The senior scored 30 points, including all eight of his free throw attempts, to lead the Indians offense.

Phil Zielinski scored 16 points, including a field goal and a pair of free throws in the final 20 seconds, to lead Corunna to a 52-49 upset of Oak Park in Class B. The



mark veenstra

Photo courtesy Hudsonville Unity Christian HS