

Finals Flashbacks

1976

For the third straight year, all four MHSAA Girls Basketball Finals were hosted by East Kentwood High School. The Redettes of Marquette became the first and only U.P. school to win a **Class A** title with a 68-41 win over Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy. Shelly Chapman finished with 23 for Marquette, followed by Janet Hopkins with 19, and Caron Krueger who added 14 as Coach Barb Crill's starting five went the entire game without a substitution.

It was the third consecutive finals appearance by Mercy, which again came up short. The team would return to the Class A title game

again in 1977, emerging victorious.

Marine City jumped out to an early lead, then never looked back in a 52-38 win over Three Oaks River Valley in **Class B**. Mariners 6-2 center, Doreen Grote hit 12 field goals and was 1-for-2 at the charity stripe to lead all scorers with 25 points, while Debra Brown added 10 points for the victors. Deb Lundin paced River Valley with 15 points, followed by Ruth Simmons with 11 and Wendy

Schwark with 10.

Teammates Janet Goschanski and Carol Valchine combined for 36 of Allen Park Cabrini's points in a 48-35 win over Mason County Central in **Class C**. The Monarchs led 22-19 at the half, and then scored 12 unanswered points in the third quarter before senior



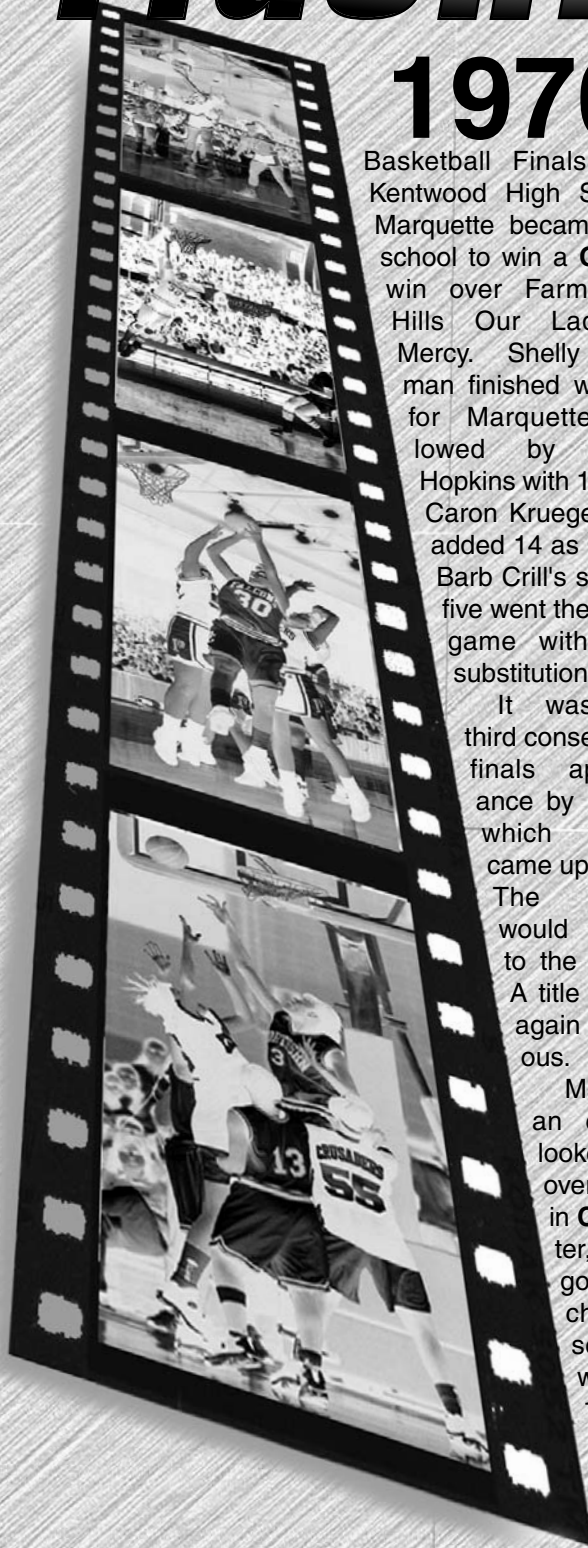
MHSAA File Photo

Marquette and Coach Barb Crill's 1976 Redettes are still the only U.P. team to win the Class A title.

guard Glenda Gruno hit a bucket for the Spartans with a minute to play in the period. Monarch center Goschanski ended the contest with 20 points, while Gruno led Mason County with 15 points.

Abby Currier, displaying a textbook jump-shot, scored 26 points including 18 points in the first half, while teammate Becky Sessions added 22 as Coach Linda McGinness' Lake City squad cruised past Perkins, 58-48, in **Class D**. It was the first MHSAA crown in any sport for Lake City.

With the performance, Currier ended her prep career with 1,456 points, before moving on to the University of Michigan, where she would end as the Wolverine's all-time career scoring leader.





Brian Quinn, Lansing State Journal

Okemos' Erika Holden grabs a rebound during the 1986 Class B overtime thriller, won by Dearborn Divine Child.

The smallest player on the court, 5-2 Lynette Royer led Perkins with 23 points. Both squads had advanced to the Semifinals in 1975, with Lake City falling to eventual champion, Flint Holy Rosary by a 22 point margin. The Trojans toppled the two-time defending champs, 59-57, in overtime in the 1976 Semifinals to avenge the loss and advance.

1986

Hattie Davis

scored 19 points, Kayette Jones dropped in 15, and Annette Babers added 14 as Saginaw came from behind to defeat defending **Class A** champion Detroit Martin Luther King, 58-52, at Grand Valley State College Field House in Allendale. Trailing 48-41 with 3:04 to play, the Trojans came back and tied the game on Jones' mid-court steal and uncontested layup. The senior guard hit a 12-

foot jumper with 13 seconds remaining to give Saginaw the lead. Following an intentional foul, Jones added a pair of free throws then Davis hit a 25-footer with two seconds remaining to round out the scoring. Guard Denise Kirby led the Crusaders with 17 points.

Runner-up in the 1985 **Class B** championship match, Dearborn Divine Child battled to a 50-45 overtime win over Okemos in 1986. Sue Nissen led the winners with 22 points. Leading most of the second half, Okemos fell behind 43-41 on Andrea McAllister's break-away with 1:33 left in the fourth quarter. Sophomore Amy Zack tied the game with a five-foot jumper, and the Chieftains had a chance to win with one second to play in regulation. After being fouled, Zack missed the front end of a one and one, and the game went into overtime. Divine Child scored the first six points in the extra frame.

Carol Szczechowski's last two of her 25 points were clutch free throws with six seconds left to give Wyandotte Mt. Carmel the **Class C** championship trophy over Evert. The foul shots put the Comets up 44-41, and Tammi



Grand Rapids Press

Saginaw's Denise Cook and company, shown here defending in the Semifinals, also put the clamps on defending champion Detroit Martin Luther King in the 1986 Class A Final.

Bruggema's basket at the buzzer for Evert wasn't enough.

Evert sophomore Carrie Isanhart scored 16 points, including a short jumper to pull Evert to within one point, 42-41. But in the final minute, the Lady Wildcats missed two chances for the lead, and were forced to foul.

The Peck Pirates capped a perfect season with a 72-58 victory over Climax-Scotts in **Class D**. Colleen Bradley paced the winners with 31, while Cherie Swarthout scored 34 points for the Panthers despite running into foul trouble.



Grand Rapids Press

Peck players celebrate in the closing seconds of the 1986 Class D Final victory over Climax-Scotts.

1996

Birmingham Marian picked up its third **Class A** title with a 54-40 victory over Howell, played at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek. Champs in 1988 and 1992, the Mustangs defense forced 24 turnovers by Howell in the game, many coming on the full-court press. Junior Breean Walas racked up five steals, seven assists and 16 points to lead the winners.



Aimee Pearson scored 24 points to lead Flint Powers Catholic to the 1996 Class B crown vs. Detroit Renaissance.

Teammate Nicole Anaejionu, a sophomore, added 12 points and 15 rebounds while holding the Highlanders' Sylvia Blakeslee to 12 points. Blakeslee posted 28 markers for Howell in the 48-47 Semifinal victory over Grand Rapids Christian. Jenny Esper chipped in with 11 for the Highlanders, who were previously unbeaten.

Dedicating their season to the memory of senior captain Liz Hallman, Flint Powers Catholic coaches and players wore "Mission Accomplished" t-shirts following their 60-53 win over

Detroit Renaissance in **Class B**. Hallman died in her sleep in July due to a defective heart valve. Sophomore Aimee Pearson paced the Chargers with 24 points, while Brandy Pickens added 14, including a big three-point play with 23.2 seconds remaining in the game to seal the victory. Shamira Thedford notched 24 for Renaissance, including a jumper from the lane to knot the score at 53 with 1:29 left in the contest.

Niki Blankenship scored 15 points on six of 10 shooting from the field as Frankenmuth dismantled Gwinn, 50-24, in the **Class C** contest. Christina Grossi hit three treys, finishing with 11 points. Gwinn, 22-5 on the year, was lead by Sonja Jacobson and Molly Van Damme, with six points apiece. At the time, the 24 points scored by Gwinn set a record for fewest point scored in an MHSAA title game.

Trailing Ashley by five points with 11 seconds to play, Portland St. Patrick staged a miracle rally to force overtime, eventually defeating the Bears, 53-47, in a **Class D** thriller. It was the third consecutive title for the Shamrocks and Coach Al Schrauben. Carissa Schneider's began the improbable comeback with a three-pointer, cutting the Ashley lead to 43-41 with 9.6 seconds to play in regulation. After the Bears missed the front end of a one-and-one opportunity following a Shamrock foul, the



Darcy Daenzer drives the baseline during Frankenmuth's 50-24 Class C title victory over Gwinn in 1996.

Shamrocks called timeout to set up the final play. With 3.1 seconds remaining, Schneider's court-length inbounds pass deflected off the foot of an Ashley player and ended up in the hands of Janet Russman. The freshman's layup tied the score at 43 at time expired. Trisha Fedewa led the Shamrocks with 11 rebounds and 20 points, including 14 from the free-throw line. Kristen Fabus tallied 13 points for Ashley and set a championship record with nine steals.

— Ron Pesch
MHSAA Historian

Portland St. Patrick's Cindy Smith goes up for two in the 1996 Class D Final, one of the most exciting finishes in MHSAA Finals history. The Shamrocks came from five points down with 11 seconds left to force overtime and eventually claim their third straight title.

