Marian Catholic's Mike Taylor rocked by Brandon's Hurt's transfer

Marian Catholic coach Mike Taylor, left, wasn't surprised junior Brandon Hurt transferred. What stunned Taylor was the timing of Hurt's transfer. (Allen Cunningham / Daily Southtown)

By **Pat Disabato**

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Marian Catholic coach Mike Taylor woke up Dec. 28 to a voice message left on his phone.

It was the father of junior Brandon Hurt, a starting guard for the Spartans.

"He told me that Brandon was on his way to Florida," Taylor said. "That Brandon was leaving and going to (Victory Rock) prep school. I wasn't surprised that he transferred. But I was stunned by the timing."

Less than 24 hours earlier, Hurt helped Marian Catholic to a victory over Urban Prep-Englewood.

Welcome to the current state of high school boys basketball, folks.

In case you're not aware, it's a deepening cesspool of selfishness, misguided player evaluations and lack of accountability. And much of the blame lies at the feet of adults, whose priorities have gone awry.

Hurt is the fourth player from Marian Catholic to transfer since last season.

"A lot of selfishness," Taylor said. "'Why is this kid getting more attention than my kid? Why is my kid not making all-conference? Why isn't my kid getting a Division I scholarship? That's what the culture truly is today."

The 6-foot Hurt's willingness to leave in midseason, however, takes the cake. He's been on the varsity since his freshman year. He's been a starter for most of his Marian Catholic career.

What more could a player and family want from their high school coach?

"It's difficult to keep players and parents happy," said Taylor, in his 14th season at Marian. "The problem is driven mostly by parents."

Abandonment is a serious character flaw. Whether it's during a game — hello, Scottie Pippen — a tournament or, in this case, the middle of a season.

Why now?

"It all stemmed from him not getting a (scholarship) offer during the summer," Taylor said. "We (coaching staff) sat down in the fall with Brandon and his dad. Instead of him and his dad asking, 'What is missing in my game?' ... it was just, 'I'm going to go somewhere else and get the exposure.'

"There comes a time when you and your family have to be honest with yourself and where your game is truly at. Everyone thinks they're a D-I, Big Ten, ACC player and if they're not getting attention, it's everyone else's fault. It's sad."

No. It's sickening.

Hurt is a good player. But the reality, in my opinion, is he doesn't currently possess the skill set to play point guard at the Division I level, nor does he have the height and shooting acumen to play shooting guard.

He was averaging 7.7 points, 2.9 rebounds, 2.7 assists and three turnovers this season while shooting 32 percent from the floor and 60 percent from the free-throw line.

Sorry, but 6-foot guards with those types of numbers and skills are a dime a dozen. Why can't parents see this?

Here's why: Because many parents of an undersized basketball player believes their son is the next Tyler Ulis, a 2014 Marian graduate. Parents think if a 5-9 Tyler Ulis can earn a scholarship to Kentucky and get drafted by the NBA, surely their son can.

Ulis, however, was a generational talent who led the Spartans to 87 wins in four seasons. In case you're wondering, Marian Catholic (10-5) is 4-1 since Hurt's departure.

"What parents don't realize is it was Tyler's intelligence and competitiveness that separated him from everyone else," Taylor said. "Parents truly believe Kentucky and Duke are coming to offer their kid a scholarship.

"What's happened to coming to a high school, playing, getting better and getting a good education? There are a lot of misguided priorities, and parents are to blame. In a lot of ways, getting an education is not important. Most parents want their kids to be coddled and not coached. This isn't the high school basketball we grew up with."

Not even close.

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