



Gold medalists

Three Farmington Hills Mercy High School students are members of the Team Elan Junior synchronized skating team that won the gold medal in February at the Spring Cup International competition in Milan, Italy. The skaters are (left to right) senior Andrea Roman, freshman Meredith Galt and senior Nicole Hicks. Team Elan competed next in the U.S. national championships and earned a spot on Team USA for the world championships last month in Kungsbacka, Sweden. Team Elan, coached by Brooke Sloan of Farmington, placed seventh in the world.

Vondracek blends talent into success

BY DANIEL STICKRAUT
STAFF WRITER

With a talent-laden lineup, usually one of two things can happen. A team can put it all together and enjoy tremendous success, or egos can rub against one another and self-destruction and underachieving is the result.

At Birmingham Marian this season, Anne Vondracek had by far the most firepower and depth of any prep volleyball squad in the area.

She molded this melting pot of talent into a solid unit and guided the Mustangs to a stellar season.

For her effort, she was voted unanimously as the Observer & Eccentric girls volleyball Coach of the Year.

"At the beginning of every season, you never can tell exactly how good you can be, but this team worked extremely hard all season," Vondracek said.

"They worked together and they were able to have a very successful season. Last year we were very successful, but the girls didn't rely on that. They did whatever they had to be successful this year.

"This was an outstanding group of 12 girls. I think they deserved everything they earned."

Vondracek is stepping down after three years on the Marian coaching staff, the past two as head coach, because of a job conflict.

Marian advanced to the Class A state quarterfinals for the third straight year, finished sec-

ond in the area in victories only behind Oxford with a 43-8-4 ledger and won the Catholic League championship.

The Mustangs also won the Walled Lake Central and Wayne State tournaments, finished second at the Schoolcraft Invitational and was third at the Temperance-Bedford Tournament.

As many as eight players earned some type of post-season recognition, and eight of the 12 players are expected to return for the 2003-04 campaign.

"I wish them all well," Vondracek said. "Whoever takes over next season will get a good group of girls."

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VOLLEYBALL

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Defensive: Racheler: Davison was 160-for-185 setting (84%), 100-for-97 serving (91%) with 28 aces and 147-for-170 (86%) on serve reception.

"She was always one of the most spirited girls; she really got everyone fired up," Harris said.

Jaria Atkins, Southfield: Atkins led the Blue Jays to a 21-9-5 record and the OAA Division III

title with her all-around play. She led Southfield in multiple categories.

"Overall, Jaria was our best, most versatile player," Southfield coach Kirk Gardner said. "She's a great leader and does so many things on the court."

Meredith Anderson, Athens: Whether she played on the outside or in the middle, Anderson was a stable force for the Red Hawks.

"She's a very powerful hitter, and she was more valuable to us on the outside," Marr said. "Once I figured out that we needed to get her the ball more, we started playing bet-

ter as a team." Brittany Von Buhren, W. Bloomfield: Perhaps the area's most underrated player, Von Buhren served at over 90 percent and her setting percentage was over 90%.

"We wouldn't have won half as many games this year without her," coach Jason Gold said. "She was consistently one of the best players on the court; she rarely made a mistake."

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SHAMROCKS

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"Crepeau made a bare-handed stop on a chopper at short; Todd Tindall made two diving stops, and Aaron Pauling made a running, back-to-the-plate, arm-extended catch in center field that could have gone for a double or a triple."

FARMINGTON 6, KIMBALL 5: Farmington scored a run in the bottom of the 12th inning Thursday to defeat visiting Royal Oak Kimball. Tom Scott scored the winning run on a single by Mike Rish.

Scott was 3-for-6 and scored two runs. Tim DePaulis and Andy Brown had two hits apiece. The Falcons scored four runs in the third inning and one in the fourth.

Kimball put a run across in the third and tied the score with four in the sixth.

Mike Raab hit a three-run homer and Ryan Spangler a solo shot for the Knights in the sixth. Andy Anderson pitched the final two innings to get the win. Brown worked three innings of scoreless relief before that.

On Wednesday, the Falcons lost to host

Redford Union, 9-2. Chris Ripley got the win, holding the Falcons to five hits, one earned run and two walks; he had three strikeouts. Ryan Brodowsky started and lost the loss.

"Two through six in their lineup can hit, and that's why we threw Ripley," RU coach Mike Taylor said. "They're slugging a bit, but they'll be a different team by the end of May."

"We've been struggling with them for the last few years, so it's nice to beat an opponent like that."

Ripley and Matt Thieleman were 3-for-4 with three RBI, and Shawn Meyers was 2-for-4 with a double and two RBI. Brown led the Falcons by going 2-for-3 with a double.

SEAHOLM 3, N. FARMINGTON 1: Seaholm continued its fine early-season play Wednesday by squeaking out a two-run decision over OAA Division II foe North Farmington.

Junior pitcher Devin O'Meara made single runs in the first, third and fifth frames stand up to earn a second victory without a loss. O'Meara scattered three hits and struck out nine in the complete-game effort.

Mike Piernick's ground ball plated the Marples' first run, and his double in the third brought home Chris Grant with the second.

Seaholm (5-0-1, 2-0) scored its final run on a double by Jeff Leone, a balk and a run-scoring single from Kyle Wood. Brad Levick drove home the lone run for North (2-1, 5-3) in the second.

SOCCER

FROM PAGE C1

be content with the tie in the last 10 minutes.

"They were starting to play more like a prevent defense. They had more people back and playing defense. We were still penetrating and trying to get some opportunities."

Montgomery added he was not unhappy with the way his team played other than the lack of additional scoring.

Erica and Joyce Rose were outstanding in the midfield, he said, and outside defenders Maggie Vaillancourt and Malloy McCrez did a good job of marking their opponents.

Mary Peszek was asked to play forward, center mid and outside mid and did very well handling the various assignments, according to Montgomery.

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Winner of the Carrier of the Year (COTY) award will be given a \$100.00 Savings Bond, 4 movie passes and dinner at East Side Mario's with his parents and the subscriber (and guest) who nominated the winner. In order to be considered for the COTY award, the carrier will have had to be named a Carrier of the Month.

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