

# Mercy headed for another good season

By TOM BAER

Farmington Our Lady of Mercy, which started girls' track only three years ago, has developed a successful program under coach Bob Kirkland.

Last spring, Mercy compiled a 5-1 dual-meet record and won Catholic League and regional titles before finishing ninth in the state Class A meet. What sort of team will Mercy field this season?

"We've got even more raw talent than last year," said the enthusiastic Kirkland, who teaches English at Mercy. "It's going to be a matter of refining it and developing it."

"But the big question is: How many other schools around the state are going to have just as much talent? Girls' track has made some incredible strides in Michigan in the past two or three years."

Mercy senior Michele Collins, who has already signed a letter of intent to attend Idaho State University next fall, is a strong candidate to excel in the mile and half mile this season. Last year, she finished fourth in the state meet 880 with a time of 2:18.1.

Teammate Sue Heinlen, a junior, took fourth in the state in the two-mile run last year with an 11:23.6 clocking. Some other returnees are senior Julie Basford (quarter mile), and juniors Sherry West (sprints), Kathie Whalen (sprints) and Beth Bosse (discus). Freshman Cathy Bridges has potential in the sprints, according to Kirkland.

"We'll be strong in the distance events, and we'll have a lot of depth and talent in the middle distances," Kirkland said. "The big question mark will be our field events. We have the potential, but getting the technique down is something else."

AN OLD PROBLEM — lack of a

home track — remains unsolved at Mercy. Mercy's girls must practice on the parking lots and run their home meets at faraway schools.

"It makes it kind of tough for our fans," Kirkland said. "They're never really sure where we'll be running."

The girls' track situation is looking up at another area high school — West Bloomfield.

Coach Lee Averill, who also coaches boys' track at West Bloomfield, is working with a large girls' turnout, more than 40 athletes. All of them are underclassmen, according to the coach.

"Right now I don't have any seniors," said Averill, whose team had a 4-1 dual-meet record and finished second to Milford High in the Greater Oakland Activities League last year.

"But we should be just as strong as in the past. Girls' track is a little different than boys'. Freshmen girls often can be tough for you right away because the competition isn't quite as fierce as in boys' track."

Averill is looking for a good spring from junior Monique Ozimkowski, who finished fourth in the state in the 110-yard hurdles with a time of 1:44 last year. This year, she'll be running in the new 220-yard hurdles.

"SHE'S AN outstanding athlete, and we're looking forward to seeing what she can do in this new (220) hurdles event," Averill said. "She's looked good in some of the indoor meets over the winter."

Some other West Bloomfield hopefuls include juniors Cindy Poly (distance), Lisa Gagnon (sprinter), Jane Perry (high jump, quarter mile) and Elaine Brenner (hurdler), and sophomores Wendy Rankin (quarter, half) and Lisa Flitzkam (sprinter).

West Bloomfield opens its season at home on April 10 against GOAL-oppo-

nent Clarkston.

At Farmington Harrison, former coach Mark Timmins established a successful girls' track program before leaving to take a job as assistant track coach at Idaho State. Marge Grimmer, a health worker at Detroit Chadsey High, will coach the Harrison girls this season.

"These girls are easy to handle," said Grimmer, who has coached girls' track at Chadsey. "They want to run — and that's the most important thing."

The coach expects a good year from Linda Tremont in the 220 dash and quarter mile. Other Harrison hopefuls are Dawn Johnston (sprints), Terri Duckett (high jump), Jane Evans (half, quarter) and Sue Kitiński (mile and two mile).

"We'll be strong in the half, quarter and 220," Grimmer said. "We're two and three deep in each event. But right

now we have only one long jumper and one high jumper. We're hurting in the field events."

FARMINGTON HIGH didn't win a girls' track meet last season, but hope springs eternal with coach Ron Short.

"Hopefully, our sprints will be improved this year," Short said. "I'm hoping to get some speed from our sophomores. I'll know more when I see their times. My big problem is lack of people. Right now I have just 22 girls out. It that continues, we're going to be hurting."

Some Farmington veterans include senior Cheryl Lacey (field events), and juniors Shelly Tomkow (sprints), Denise Germaine (sprints, hurdles), Melony Churella (sprints), Ann Barber (mile, half mile) and Lourie Krench (mile, two-mile).



Michele Collins (left) and Sue Heinlen put in the miles at Mercy.

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Kathie Whalen (left) and Sherry West make tracks at Farmington Our Lady of Mercy. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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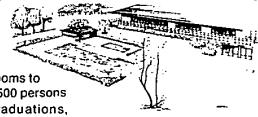
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