

Fitness meet stars earn more than medals

By C.J. RISAK

Count the medals won by West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills in the 1979 Detroit Metropolitan Area Youth Fitness Meet last Thursday and you might conclude that both teams lacked depth.

But coaches Patty Riney of West Bloomfield and Evan Bageris of Farmington Hills wouldn't agree.

"We're happy with the results of the Youth Olympics," Bageris said. "The kids had a good time and we won two medals."

Riney also said it was a successful outing for her squad. "Going home with one prize (the first ever for West Bloomfield) is quite an accomplishment," she said. "And I'm hoping it was a fun time for the kids."

The fun part of the event seemed to be one of the more important facets of the meet to the two coaches. It was only the second year at the meet for West Bloomfield. Farmington has sent a team for the past four summers.

Neither of the communities has the number of participants other cities have. West Bloomfield's team had 28 members, while Farmington Hills had 33. Many Detroit-area communities had 58-member teams.

BOTH COACHES agreed, however, that the value of the program could not be estimated in the number of awards.

"It gets kids involved in athletics, to see if they're interested," Bageris said. "It introduces them to sports and sportsmanship. Some of these kids have gone on and tried sports in school (as a result of the Olympics)."

More than 2,500 youths from 58 communities took part in the meet, vying as much for the John J. Conidine Award (presented to the team exemplifying good conduct, sportsmanship and appearance) as for medals. This year's Conidine winner was Roseville.

Both West Bloomfield and Farmington should begin making advances in the competition as their programs begin to reach more youths. At present, Farmington's local Youth Fitness meet, which decides who will go to the regional meet, is run on a team basis, with each youth a member of a playground team.

West Bloomfield doesn't have a team setup yet, but the cooperation between the Community Education Department and Parks and Recreation, which runs the local Olympics, may not be far away. At present, Riney says the biggest problem facing them is drawing kids who haven't participated in sports before.

"They don't think they're good enough, so they don't come out," she explained. "We have to work on that,

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make it more of a fun day."

One name that can go down in the West Bloomfield record books is Diana Ambrose, the first girl from the community to win a medal at the meet. She leaped 11-6 for third place in the 10 and 11 age group girls' running long jump.

For Farmington, Mike Forge placed second in the 12 and 13 age division

boys' chinning with 19 chins. Chuck Heinrich was third in the 12 and 13 boys' running broad jump with a 14-8 inch leap.

The medal total may not look impressive, but, as Riney put it:

"It's only going to increase with more participation."



West Bloomfield's young athletes await the competition.



Chris Campbell of Farmington strives for distance in the triple jump at the Youth Fitness Meet. (Staff photos by Tom Baer)

Table tennis star paddles her way into Hall of Fame

By C.J. RISAK

Carol Ryan-Wolverton began her table tennis career 27 years ago while still in high school. Now, 14 state titles and two NCAA championships later, she is about to receive one of the greatest honors of her lifetime.

On Oct. 9, Ryan-Wolverton, who lives in West Bloomfield, will become the first woman

from the sport of table tennis to be inducted into the Michigan Amateur Sports Hall of Fame.

"I'm overwhelmed," was her reaction to the honor. "After hearing about the news, I just sat for awhile and tried to rationalize why I'm getting this honor."

Ryan-Wolverton's induction is more than deserved. During her career, she won the state

women's singles title five straight times (from 1952 until 1959), finished third in women's singles at the national tournament, and won the NCAA women's singles and mixed doubles championships.

She started playing table tennis in high school, and "went right into tournaments." Her first competition was in the Pontiac Table Tennis

League. State competition began with the Pontiac tournament, moved on to the Oakland county event and then to the state finals.

SHE RETIRED FROM tournament play in 1961, much to the relief of her leading rivals in the state. Connie Stace Sweeris, of Grand Rapids, was one of Ryan-Wolverton's toughest opponents. Three times the pair met in the state singles finals, and all three times Ryan-Wolverton came away the winner.

Despite her retirement from the table tennis tour, Ryan-Wolverton is still very active. She received her undergraduate degree from Central Michigan University and her Masters from Michigan State and now teaches English and social studies at Stevens T. Mason Junior High School, in Waterford.

"Table tennis really helped me as far as teaching is concerned," she said. "They're (her students) all interested in athletics."

Sports are still a part of her life. She shoots in the low 40s for nine holes of golf and plays racquetball as well. But, unlike Stace Sweeris, who retired from tournament play and is now, according to Ryan-Wolverton, attempting a comeback, she has no thoughts of returning to tournament table tennis.

"It takes tremendous amounts of time to get to the top, and tremendous amounts of time to stay there," she said. "It takes so much to do it justice."

"My philosophy always was that if you can't spend 100 percent on it, don't do it."

HER INDUCTION TO

the Hall of Fame is the culmination of her career.

"You work so hard for it; it's such a long, hard row to hoe. The people at the Hall of Fame tell you, 'You work for it, now they honor you for it.'"

Even though not active as a player any longer, Ryan-Wolverton does stay abreast of things in the table tennis world. When the Chinese team visited in 1972, she was the guest of honor at a banquet in Cobo Hall. The Chinese, "who look at table tennis the way Americans look at baseball," were much superior to the U.S. players.

"Their stature is different; they're built closer to the ground," she explained. "And their reflexes are out of this world. Both their agility and reflexes are much better than ours."

Ryan-Wolverton also noted that the Chinese game strategy is different than that of the Americans, and has resulted in many changes in the U.S. players' thinking.

"They're aggressive, much more offensive-minded," she said. "They use much more counter-driving, instead of a defensive-minded game." "The exposure to the Chinese game is bound to be a help for American players, especially the young ones, which, she feels, are numerous."

"There are a lot of young people coming up in this game, and there are camps all over the country for table tennis. And there are some very determined young people (participating in table tennis)."

There could be dozens of young table tennis stars on the horizon. But none may ever match the record compiled by Ryan-Wolverton.

Glen swimmers fall

Woodbrooke loses

Rochester Heart of the Hills, which is given a good chance to win the Northwest Suburban Swim League title at the league meet next month, defeated Farmington Hills Woodbrooke Hills, 297-271, last week in a dual meet. The loss put Woodbrooke Hills at 4-2 in dual meets this summer.

Scott Silson of Woodbrooke Hills, established a club record in a losing effort. He was timed at 40.8 in the 11-12 year 50-meter breaststroke.

Meadowbrook swimmers win

Jay Weaver and Sally Schuler each won two events to pace Meadowbrook Country Club's 255-228 victory over Orchard Lake Country Club last week in the Suburban Inter Club Swimming Association.

Weaver won the 50-meter backstroke (35.3) and the 50 freestyle (31.0). Schuler scored in the 50 breaststroke and the 50 freestyle (29.7). Meadowbrook went 1-3 in the girls' 15-17 50-meter freestyle with Nancy Malasky, Amy Edwards and Laura Edwards.

In another recent meet, Meadowbrook defeated Bloomfield Open Hunt, 301-192. Meadowbrook's girls' 52-year 200-meter freestyle relay (Kerry Hall, Amy DeMattia, Wendy Sayre and Kristin DeLaxandris) won in 2:01.8. The boys' 52-year 200-meter freestyle relay (Neil Davis, Dave Pietrowski, Tom Hankins and Weaver) posted a winning time of 2:05.3.

Woodbrooke Hills had four double winners. In the 9-and 10 group, Margie Cramer won the 50 freestyle (36.2) and the 50 breaststroke (46.92), and Michael Turney won the 50 butterfly (39.0) and the 50 backstroke (40.19).

John Pierog, swimming the 13-14 age group, won the 50 butterfly (32.82) and the 50 backstroke (36.44). Debbie Houser was a double winner in the 15-17 group, posting a 32.49 in the 50 butterfly and logging a 1:04.9 in the 100 freestyle.

On Monday (June 30), Woodbrooke Hills entertained Forest Hills Swim Club in the dual-meet finale for both squads.

BLOOMFIELD SURF 319 FARMINGTON GLEN 252

Bloomfield Surf, the defending Northwest Suburban Swim League champion, whipped Farmington Glen, 319-252, last Thursday in an NSSI dual meet.

Alec Campbell of Farmington Glen smashed a team record in the boys' 15-14 backstroke, recording 33.4. Mike Pelon, swimming in the boys' 11-12 group, won two events, the 50 breaststroke (41.8) and the four-length individual medley (1:21.37).

In the boys' 15-14 group, John Pelon won the breaststroke (37.23) and the butterfly (31.55).

Bloomfield Surf's Guy DeFranco won the boys' 15-17 group. He also took the backstroke (39.87) and the individual medley (1:16.27).

Farmington Glen swims next on Monday (July 30) at Cranbrook Swim Club.

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