

During Plymouth competition

Young figure skaters reveal their dreams

By TERE BANAS

Garey Dye, 17, formerly from Ohio, has been living with his West Bloomfield coach for six years, training for the 1984 Olympics.

While most people his age attend high school, he received his high school diploma from correspondence courses. It gave him time for ice skating practice.

Jim Bowser, 26, of Westland, roller-skated for years before he took to the ice four years ago. He's a member of a pairs skating team and also works as a bartender at night to earn enough money to continue his amateur career. Someday, he'd like to coach.

Meanwhile, Sherry Snyder, 16, of Plymouth, enjoys her ballet classes but it's a secondary interest. Ballet, you see, keeps muscles conditioned for skating.

All three young people have different backgrounds, but their present time, energy and devotion is focused on skating.

They're amateur ice skaters who were among 322 from seven states to compete in the Great Lakes Figure Skating Regionals in Plymouth last week.

The competition was the first step toward a possible national and a world championship.

According to some area coaches, not all amateur skaters share the same dreams. Some keep the hopes of an Olympic medal tucked in the back of their minds, others plan to coach in the future, and some talk of joining the traveling ice shows.

'The Olympics is the ultimate goal. But a lot of skaters just take it as it goes because of the uncertainty of getting there.'

— Jim Bowser

BUT BEFORE these dreams are realized, they take one competition at a time to perfect their skills and gain a professional reputation.

"The Olympics is the ultimate goal," said Bowser. "But a lot of skaters just take it as it goes because of the uncertainty of getting there."

"Your primary goal at the regionals is to do as well as possible to align yourself for the next competition," said Jim Mills, a Detroit area coach and former Olympic bronze medal winner.

"At this level of competition, your foremost thought is to make it through."

"This kind of competition runs you through all the emotions you have," said Ann Seror, who coaches Livonia's Theresa Romano, a senior ladies entry. "We've had a hundred ups and a hundred downs in one week. The ones who make it are really emotionally strong."

To add to the tensions of competition is the week's grueling time schedule.

"The hardest thing is that we skate at different times," said Sherry Snyder, who lives in Plymouth and skates in the junior ladies division.

"Last night I skated until 11:30 and then I

had to get up at five in the morning to skate again. I'm getting drained, more or less."

WHAT BECOMES evident from conversations with amateur skaters at the regionals is that skating is number one in their lives, edging out other possible interests and activities common to others their age.

Immediate family members also play an important role in the skaters' interest in the sport. Many skaters talk of thousands of dollars spent annually to keep them in lessons and competitions. Registration fee for this competition alone was \$50.

"Skating is what takes up my time," said Colleen Armstrong, 12, who has been skating half her life. "If I do well in a competition, I just want to do better. I now practice about three hours a day and in the summer I practice five hours a day."

An intermediate figure skater, Colleen has competed for three years.

Dye, another figure skater, says he's given up "just about everything" to continue his amateur career. A member of the Ice Co. of Southfield, which produces amateur ice shows, he logs as many as eight practice hours daily on weekdays and weekends.

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West Bloomfield's Nancy Berghoff and Westland's Jim Bowser take a turn on the ice at the Plymouth Cultural Center. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)

Win regional championship

Mercy cagers advance

By TOM BAER

Coach Larry Baker was waxing nostalgic last Friday during halftime of the Our Lady of Mercy-Warren Mott girls' basketball Class A state regional final at Birmingham Groves High.

"It's just like the old days," said Baker, whose Mercy teams used to blow out tournament opponents on the way to the state finals.

Mercy, which hasn't been to the finals since it won the Class A championship in 1977, was leading Mott by 20 points (27-7) at halftime. The Marlins went on to maul Mott, 47-33, to win the regional crown and advance to the quarterfinal round of the state tournament.

Mercy, now 24-1, plays next at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at Grand Blanc High School near Flint. The probable opponent: Flint Northern, the defending state champion.

Mott, which bowed out with a 19-9 record, reached the regional final with a one-point victory over Pontiac Northern last Wednesday. Against Mercy, however, the Warren squad had trouble penetrating the Marlins' zone defense, and its outside shots weren't falling.

Mercy ran off 17 straight points at the beginning of the game, and Mott didn't score a point until Wendy Malczewski dropped in a free throw early in the second quarter.

Denise Basford, a 5-foot-9 junior forward, led the winners with nine points, and teammate Suzanne Dietz had eight. Mott's Sue Lawson, a 5-4 junior, led her team with 11 points, seven coming in the last quarter.

"We took No. 11 (Lawson) right out of the game by going man-to-man with her," Baker said. "She was the key. She scored 23 against Northern."

Hawks win

Farmington High's Jerry Liphardt and Farmington-Harrison's Goran Vasovski provided the heroics last Friday for their schools' basketball teams.

Vasovski, a 5-foot-11 senior, dropped in a seven-foot jump shot with just one second left to play as Harrison opened its basketball season with a thrilling 45-43 victory over city-rival North Farmington.

Liphardt, a 6-3 senior, played over an ankle injury to score 29 points — 10 field goals and nine of nine free throws — to lift Farmington past Livonia Bentley, 58-51.

The North-Harrison game was close throughout with no more than six points separating the two teams. North established a 14-12 lead after the opening quarter, but then scored six points to Harrison's 10 in the second quarter.

Steve Hollatz, a 6-4 junior, led Harrison with 16 points and eight rebounds. Vasovski followed with 13. Bruce Yeager pulled down nine rebounds for the winners, and teammate Klay Dillon dealt out four assists.

IN THE FARMINGTON-Bentley game, Pete Mantyla and Kevin Nichols each scored eight points for Farmington, which led by a point (23-22) at halftime.

Farmington Lutheran Northwest opened its season with an 89-49 loss to Detroit Country Day School. Damon Jones, a 6-5 sophomore, led DCDS with 19 points. Dave Austin scored 20 for Northwest.

Country Day led by 13 points (47-24) at halftime, and then scored 24 points to Northwest's four in the third quarter.

On Tuesday, Dec. 9, Harrison entertains Oak Park High at 8 p.m. On the same night, Farmington plays at Northville High, North Farmington plays at Walled Lake Central, and Farmington Lutheran High Northwest plays at Whitmore Lake.



Mercy's Mary Ellen Cox sets up a play during a tournament game. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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