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Marlin girls roar into cage quarters

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Larry Baker wanted a minute or two alone with his Our Lady of Mercy girls' basketball team following its landslide victory over Walled Lake Western, 48-23, in the state Class A regional finals Thursday at Plymouth Canton.

Upon returning, he said: "This is my sixth regional title in the last eight years, and I've never taken more satisfaction from a regional win. This is a young group and it was a tough path through the district with (Livonia) Bentley in their way. But they've played super well. They really know how to execute a game plan."

Mercy, enjoying one of its best seasons ever, is now 21-1 and headed into

the Class A quarterfinals and a Wednesday night showdown with Detroit Cass Tech at Livonia Bentley.

Mercy started off like a house afire against Western. The Marlin scored the first 11 points of the game and, pressing hard, allowed the Warriors just two shots in the first two minutes. All five Marlin starters had scored by the halfway point of the quarter.

The score at the quarter was Mercy 21, Western 8.

"That first quarter was money in the bank for us," Baker said. "The second and third quarters were pretty much even, which is to Western's credit. (Western coach) Roy (Artley) kept them coming at us."

Mercy, continuing its full-court press, led by 17 points (28-11) at half-time and by 15 (38-23) after three quarters. Mercy topped off the rout by ripping off 12 points to Western's two.

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Balance pays for Raiders in cage opener

Scoring balance helped North Farmington, just as had free throw shooting, hurt Farmington Harrison in the Raiders' 57-42 basketball victory over the Hawks Friday at Harrison.

The game opened the season for both teams.

Four Raiders scored in double figures. Guards Ray Boyle and Mike Black led the way with 14 and 12 points, respectively. John Dawson also had 12, and Will Reincke added 11. Wes Jones scored 10 for Harrison, which trailed by three (19-16) at halftime. North put it away by outscoring Harrison, 22-9, in the third quarter.

North had a hot hand from the line, making 15 of 16. Harrison was ice cold with eight of 20.

North travels to Walled Lake Central for a Tuesday night game.



Mercy's Annette Ruggiero (with ball) breaks toward the basket following a steal against Westland John Glenn in the first round of regional play Tuesday.

The Marlin had little trouble in beating Glenn, 61-33, then knocked off Walled Lake Western, 48-23, for the title.



Penetrating Mercy's defense proved difficult for Glenn, evident here as guard Julie Pucci (with ball) gives directions to teammate Daria Bergman as the Marlin's Annette Ruggiero (left) and Mary Rusowski apply pressure.

Mercy swimmers earn Catholic crown

Few things in life are as certain as the outcome of the annual Catholic League girls' swimming finals.

Farmington Our Lady of Mercy won its 19th-straight Catholic League title recently by finishing first in the conference meet with a whopping 446 points in Oakland Community College — Orchard Ridge's pool. Ten Mercy swimmers had qualified for last Saturday's Class A state meet.

"There are no stars on our team, but these kids have really worked hard," said DeLoris Yager, who has coached swimming at Mercy since the sport started in 1953.

In this season's meet, sophomore Brita Brooks won two individual events and junior Jill Andries established a league record to help Mercy dominate. Mercy finished first in five events and second in three others.

Birmingham Marian finished a distant second with 342 points, and Royal Oak Shrine landed third with 32.

Brooks won the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:59.9, and then posted a winning time of 5:14.2 in the 500 freestyle. Andries was timed in 1:08.9 in the

preliminaries of the 100 breaststroke for the league standard. She won the event with a 1:10.0.

Mercy's 200 medley relay (senior Pam Saunders, Andries, junior Nancy Nehr and senior Beth Drolet) finished first with a time of 1:57.6, and Saunders won the 100 backstroke with a time of 1:05.7.

Mary Faber, a Mercy senior, finished second in the diving event with 338.75 points and also landed 10th in the state meet qualifying regional. Junior Sue Herzog gave Mercy two more seconds with times of 2:00.2 in the 200 free and 5:19.0 in the 500 free.

Mercy won all nine of its dual meets this season.

MARIAN, LED BY the MacMillan sisters, Chris and Nancy, won the other six events.

The MacMillans combined with Bunny Knapp and Chris Gursick to log a winning time of 3:47.5 in the 400 freestyle relay. Chris MacMillan won the 200 individual medley in 2:16.1, and Nancy won the 100 butterfly with a 1:02.4.

Gursick was the meet's only other

double winner, taking the 50 free (25.1) and the 100 free (54.6). Michelle Loel of Marian won the diving event with 387.15 points.

NORTH FARMINGTON continued its swimming mastery of the Northwest Suburban League by winning its third-straight girls' championship with 285 points at Redford Thurston.

Westland John Glenn was a close second with 269 points, and host Thurston was third with a 152. Redford Union scored 137 points, Garden City had 128 and Livonia Franklin 112.

North's Mary Manderfield won two events, the 50 freestyle (25.8) and the 100 butterfly (1:05.8), and swam a leg on the Raiders' 400 freestyle relay (with Cathy Kierog, Jill Menelliey and Helen Sue Howard), which established a league record with a time of 3:53.82.

Pierog established another NSL standard when she posted a winning time of 1:05.3 in the 100 backstroke. Katy Harnden of North won the 100 butterfly in 1:05.8.

The Raiders' other relay, the 200-yard medley, won with a 2:04.31. The

team consists of Pierog, Kim Walquist, Kim Goins and Judy Ketterstock. Kim Dorsey of Garden City was a double winner with league records in the 500 free (5:45.0) and the 200 free (1:51.1). John Glenn's Shon Pilsarski set another conference record by amassing 336.10 points in diving.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE GIRLS' SWIMMING MEET

TEAM FINISH — 1. Farmington Our Lady of Mercy, 446 points; 2. Birmingham Marian, 342; 3. North Oak Shrine, 32; 4. Harper Woods Regina, 72; 5. Madison Heights Bishop Foley, 67; 6. Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher, 41; 7. Grosse Pointe Star of the Sea, 40; 8. Dearborn St. Albanus, 34.

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

200-YARD MEDLEY RELAY — 1. Mercy (Pam Saunders, Jill Andries, Nancy Nehr, Beth Drolet), 1:57.6; 2. Birmingham Marian, 2:01.7; 3. Harper Woods Regina, 2:14.

100-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Brita Brooks (Mercy), 1:59.9; 2. Sue Herzog (Mercy), 2:00.2; 3. Nancy MacMillan (Marian), 2:02.2.

500-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY — 1. Chris MacMillan (Marian), 1:14.1; 2. Jill Andries (Mercy), 1:14.1; 3. Beth Drolet (Mercy), 1:14.1.

Maureen Kelly (Mercy), 57.4.

DIVING — 1. Michelle Loel (Marian), 387.15 points; 2. Mary Faber (Mercy), 338.75; 3. Nancy James (Marian), 281.50.

100-YARD BUTTERFLY — 1. Nancy MacMillan (Marian), 1:05.4; 2. Nancy Nehr (Mercy), 1:05.8; 3. Pam Saunders (Mercy), 1:09.8.

100-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Chris Gursick (Marian), 1:02.4; 2. Beth Drolet (Mercy), 1:05.7; 3. Maureen Kelly (Mercy), 1:07.4.

500-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Brita Brooks (Mercy), 1:14.2; 2. Sue Herzog (Mercy), 1:20.2; 3. Chris MacMillan (Marian), 1:20.4.

100-YARD BACKSTROKE — 1. Pam Saunders (Mercy), 1:01.7; 2. Amy Spasman (Gallagher), 1:04.2; 3. Julie Chrasnowski (Mercy), 1:04.4.

100-YARD BREASTSTROKE — 1. Jill Andries (Mercy), 1:10.9; Andries set league record of 1:08.9 in preliminaries; 2. Clare Hramiec (Shrine), 1:11.7; 3. Beth Bower (Marian), 1:13.1.

400-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY — 1. Birmingham Marian (Chris MacMillan, Nancy MacMillan, Bunny Knapp, Chris Gursick), 3:47.5; 2. Mercy, 3:53.8; 3. Royal Oak Shrine, 4:10.2.

NORTHWEST SUBURBAN LEAGUE GIRLS' SWIMMING MEET

TEAM FINISH — 1. North Farmington, 295 points; 2. Westland John Glenn, 249; 3. Redford Thurston, 152; 4. Redford Union, 135; 5. Garden City, 126; 6. Livonia Franklin, 112.

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

200-YARD MEDLEY RELAY — 1. North Farmington (Kathy Pierog, Kim Walquist, Kim Goins, Judy Ketterstock), 2:04.31; 2. Redford

Schwinn. It is a 14-speed collection of the best parts in the world of cycling that, all assembled, cost him about \$2,000.

Despite the fine equipment and rigorous training, Blanchard almost had to drop out in Hawaii. He finished the swim and bike ride with no problems, but four miles into the marathon, "I came to a screeching halt. I had all the symptoms of hypothermia — my temples were pounding and I had goose bumps — it was sunny and 95. I was losing fluids excessively. I was getting overwhelmed with the heat."

"IT GOT TO WHERE I had to stop and walk for half a mile. Really, I thought there was a chance I'd have to drop out."

But his body cooled down, his strength returned and he finished strong to beat Tony Alessi of Pontiac and Dennis Kurts of Novi, his main competitors from the state.

"Kurts is a 2:30 marathoner. I knew he was close to me, and if he wanted to beat me out, he was going to have to

Thurston, 2:06.7; 3. Westland John Glenn, 2:13.4.

200-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Kim Dorsey (Garden City), 1:59; 2. league record; 3. Jill Menelliey (Shrine), 2:00.2; 4. Kira Johnston (Glen), 2:12.3.

500-YARD MEDLEY RELAY — 1. Robina Gow (Glen), 2:34.2; 2. Katy Harnden (North), 2:34.2; 3. Kim Goins (North), 2:34.2.

40-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Mary Manderfield (North), 2:34.2; 2. Helen Sue Howard (North), 2:34.2; 3. Shelly Pilsarski (Glen), 2:34.2.

40-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Mary Manderfield (North), 2:34.2; 2. Helen Sue Howard (North), 2:34.2; 3. Shelly Pilsarski (Glen), 2:34.2.

DIVING — 1. Shon Pilsarski (Glen), 336.10 (league record); 2. Karen Krzywada (Thurston), 292.50; 3. Janet Lowman (Redford Union), 277.20.

100-YARD BUTTERFLY — 1. Katy Harnden (North), 1:03.8; 2. Kim Goins (North), 1:07.6; 3. Cindy Walquist (Glen), 1:07.6.

100-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Mary Manderfield (North), 1:57.2; 2. Helen Sue Howard (North), 1:58.2; 3. Shelly Pilsarski (Glen), 1:59.7.

500-YARD FREESTYLE — 1. Kim Dorsey (Garden City), 5:45.3 (league record); 2. Kira Johnston (John Glenn), 5:45.6; 3. Karin Kisman (North), 5:47.6.

100-YARD BACKSTROKE — 1. Kathy Pierog (North), 1:03.3 (league record); 2. Robina Gow (Glen), 1:22.4; 3. Danielle Miller (Thurston), 1:30.7.

100-YARD BREASTSTROKE — 1. Kasia Wilson (Glen), 1:22.4; 2. Kim Walquist (North), 1:22.8; 3. Sue Murray (Glen), 1:23.6.

400-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY — 1. North Farmington (Kathy Pierog, Jill Menelliey, Mary Manderfield, Helen Sue Howard), 3:53.82 (league record); 2. Westland John Glenn, 4:06.04; 3. Garden City, 4:07.8.

pay for it, so I picked it up for the last 10 miles," Blanchard said.

No problem. He finished two minutes ahead of Kurts, turning in a time of 3:39 for the marathon, not a bad time at all, and an unbelievable considering what went before it.

WHAT'S NEXT? "I want to run a marathon this winter so I can qualify for Boston again," he said, making it sound as natural and as easy as crossing the street.

As for career goals, there's the new store and a fledgling career in broadcasting. He did commentary for Channel 4 for this year's Detroit marathon and would like to continue in TV doing features on participatory sports. Then there's his budding writing career and his new contract to run for Nike next year.

Blanchard is hosting a series of free running clinics, sponsored by Nike, at his store over the winter months. The next scheduled clinic is Dec. 14. For further information, call 354-1177.

You just can't slow Charlie down.

'Ironman' Blanchard masters triathlon

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

Charlie Blanchard has earned the title of Ironman.

Two years in a row now, Charlie has competed in the grueling Hawaii Ironman Triathlon. In October, 850 hardy men would say toothache — men and women gathered in the middle of the Pacific Ocean to spend the day swimming, biking and running. Charlie did enough of each to finish 42nd overall, first among 26 runners from Michigan and first in the Master's (over 40) Division.

IF THAT doesn't impress you, consider: Charlie and the 775 of his compatriots who finished the course began their day with a 2-1/4-mile ocean swim, climbed over a 118-mile ride across sun-baked lava fields that rolled up and down in mind-blowing one-mile inclines, then got off the bikes and immediately ran a 26.2-mile marathon.

As if all that weren't enough, winds were 20 miles an hour, the sun was scorching down out of the clear sky, and the temperature was 95 degrees, or 20 degrees more than for the recent Detroit marathon, which was considered blistering hot at 75.

"It's mentally exhausting, more mentally than physically," said Blanchard, a Birmingham resident who owns the Ted Runner store at the Franklin Plaza in Southfield. He completed his grind in 10 hours, 46 minutes. "It's especially tough when you're riding into that wind for hours at a time," he said.

BLANCHARD, 40, has been an athlete all his life. Originally a swimmer, he graduated from Notre Dame in 1964 with 12 school and pool records to his credit. But it wasn't until 1978 that Blanchard ran his first marathon, in Detroit.

He finished in 2:59:56, which by four seconds qualified him to run in the Boston Marathon. That's a great time for a first marathon, but if it sounds like he had an easy day, he didn't.

He passed out on his feet 200 yards from the finish line, crawled across it, passed out and was flown by helicopter to Huzel Hospital.

The first thing I wanted to know when I woke up was where was my son, and how did I finish."

CHARLIE HAS two sons, Todd, 13, and Neal, 11, who live with their mother in Dallas. They stay with Charlie in the summers, are avid runners, and are begging him already to do triathlons, presumably of a shorter distance than the monster in Hawaii.

If Blanchard, who has run nine marathons, including three Boston, has a personal best time of 2:46, seems a natural to own a running store, that wasn't always the case.

He went to Ohio State for a master's in business administration, "which prepared me for a life in corporate America." He got a job for Continental Can and after seven years, in 1974, was general plant manager of its big Melvindale factory. He had made it, but he wasn't happy.

"I WASN'T suited to a big organization," Blanchard said. "When running became the highlight of my day, I realized I was not cut out of that mold. That was at a time when if you ran at noon, you were weird, but if you drank three martinis on your lunch hour, you were conventional."

He quit and by 1978 was running his own store in Southfield. Despite a "bad economy and high interest rates, Total Runner prospered, so much so that Blanchard will open another store, at Vernier and Mack in Grosse Pointe, within two weeks.

After training for the triathlon, running a store comes easy. A typical day in his last month of training before leaving for Hawaii consisted of five hours of tough training — 3,000 yards of swimming, a 50-60-mile bike ride that took three hours alone, and a 10-mile swim. "And that five hours doesn't include things like stretching, changing clothes, and tinkering with my bike."

HIS BIKE isn't your average