

Thursday, April 7, 1983 O&E

Luminary lineup

On vault, bars, floor or beam, these 5 girls are a dream

By Tom Baer
staff writer

KATHY MICHAELS, a senior on Troy High School's gymnastics team, is one reason why the Colts have been a state power in the sport the past several seasons.

And Troy can be expected to keep a hold on that position for a few more years thanks to young Colt gymnasts like freshman Suzanne Enciso.

Both gymnasts were honored recently by being named to the annual Observer & Eccentric All-Area team, selected by a panel of area high school coaches. Michaels was voted the area's top all-arounder; Enciso was picked for her vaulting talents.

The rest of the five-girl honor team

includes Bloomfield Hills Lahser's Staci Porretta in the balance beam, Farmington's Jo Smith in the uneven parallel bars, and Southfield-Lathrup's Lana Horowitz in floor exercise.

Troy's Sandy Smith, who guided the Colts to a third-place finish at the recent state meet, was named Coach of the Year for 1983.

Michaels, an All-Area selection all of her four years at Troy, capped an outstanding prep career by finishing fourth in all-around at the state meet with a score of 37.35. She qualified for state with a 36.5 and a second place in the regional, and her season-high score was 36.6 in a dual meet against Lahser.

Michaels has been offered a scholarship at Western Michigan University, but is also considering Central Michigan and Eastern Michigan.

"It's really been nice having her around for the past four years," Smith said. "Kathy's a real team person. Her main goal is to help the team do well. She's a perfectionist. She tries to get every routine as nearly perfect as possible."

ENCISO, ONE OF this area's top vaulters, placed sixth in the state meet with a two-day score of 18.05 after finishing second at the regional meet with a 9.45. She won the vaulting event at the Southeastern Michigan Association meet with another 9.45.

"Suzanne's improved a lot over the season," Smith said. "She was strong in vaulting when she came to us, but I'm really impressed with how hard she's worked to get her other routines up to par."

Farmington's Smith, a senior, had one of those days at the state meet on bars (she finished a lowly 22nd with a score of 8.35), but she had good scores in the other big meets.

Smith placed second on bars in the league — the Western Lakes Activities Association — with a 9.7, and landed eighth in the regional with an 8.4.

"She's shown a lot of leadership ability this season," said Farmington coach Maria Laird. "Because of that and her great gymnastics ability, she's been someone the others could look up to."

"We won't mention the state meet. Jo hadn't had a bad meet before that... she picked a bad time to have one. But she did real well in the regional. She walked into that (state) meet in the top 10 in almost every event. She's shown steady improvement all year."

Smith plans to attend Central Michigan University. "At this point, she's still hoping for a scholarship," Laird said.

PORRETTA, A JUNIOR participating in her first year of high school gymnastics, is a "super gymnast and a super person" in the words of Lahser coach Kathy Abbot.

Porretta, who transferred this past fall from neighboring Andover and thus wasn't eligible until the beginning of 1983, shattered every Lahser record, including the one on balance beam.

Despite being hobbled by a foot injury, Porretta managed a third place on beam at state with a two-day score of 18.05. She won the Metro Suburban Activities Association beam event with an 8.9 and placed sixth at the regional

with an 8.75.

"The beam is definitely her best event," Abbot said, "although she's very strong in vaulting and floor exercise, too."

Lathrup sophomore Lana Horowitz, like Porretta, is an experienced gymnast in her first year of high school competition. Horowitz earned "elite" status with the prestigious Steve Whitlock gymnastics program before joining the Lathrup team.

Once a Charger, she led the squad to six straight dual-meet victories and the MSA championship. "I just can't tell you what she's meant to our program," said Lathrup coach Robin Limoure.

Floor exercise is one of Horowitz's best events. She placed third in the

Please turn to Page 3

Vault	Bars	Beam	Floor	All-around	Coach
					
<i>Suzanne Enciso Troy</i>	<i>Jo Smith Farmington</i>	<i>Staci Porretta Lahser</i>	<i>Lana Horowitz Lathrup</i>	<i>Kathy Michaels Troy</i>	<i>Sandy Smith Troy</i>

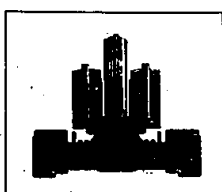


C.J. Risak

Oh, wouldn't it be grand? Detroit should keep 'Prix'

AUTO RACING THESE days is big-time business. Just like any professional — and some amateur — sports enterprise. In Formula One, sponsors sink much bucks into advertising on the sides of cars or on the walls that line the course. Watching these cars run through qualifying laps at the Long Beach Grand Prix March 25, I was left with the impression of a sleek advertisement streaking along a highway covered with billboards.

The cost of the race is absorbed by the community, including overseas transportation costs for 18 European cars, crews and drivers. That is the reason Long Beach has dropped its sponsorship. Next year, the city's race will feature Indy-style cars.



SO WHY IS our impoverished city bucking the trend? There is more than one good reason. First, Detroit may be a one-industry town, but that industry is cars. And while Detroit relies on the auto industry to keep its economy in gear, remember that what happens to the U.S. auto industry has a major effect on the world economy as well.

So Detroit deserves an auto race. But why Formula One?

It's the best in the world. The 15 Grand Prix races are on four different continents. Not as fast-out fast as Indy cars, Formula One instead combines handling with speed.

The result is a technically advanced type of car. Formula One teams experiment and test new innovations every year. Sometimes it takes years to perfect a new engine or concept. Sometimes it never works. But the effort is continuous.

An example is the turbo-powered engines most Formula One cars are using this season. They provide 100-150 more horsepower than the Cosworth engines. That means more speed, but braking, handling and durability are still in doubt.

ALSO, INDY CARS race in lots of American cities. But now, Detroit is the only city in the U.S. with a Grand Prix. That means a worldwide car racing audience will have its eyes riveted to Detroit June 3-5, instead of Americans only.

As for foreigners instead of homegrown, this is one race a year with the best in the world. If the Italian World Cup soccer championship team was to play at University of Michigan stadium, a sellout crowd could be anticipated.

Now, the toughie: cost. Does all the attention Detroit will receive offset the additional cost for a Grand Prix instead of an Indy race?

There's a big help: one week after Detroit's event, the Grand Prix circuit swings north to Canada. That means the transportation costs are considerably less, since the Canadian and Detroit sponsors share the responsibilities.

Indy-style racing is mostly oval track racing. A trip to Michigan International Speedway on one of several weekend dates will satisfy those enthusiasts.

GRAND PRIX is much different. The Formula One cars surge to speeds of 160 mph at Long Beach before braking to a dead crawl for a hairpin turn (Long Beach winner John Watson averaged 80.625 mph).

A good seat at a Grand Prix race will allow you to see much more than cars blurring by with engines whining. A straightaway and a sharp turn or two will provide enough insight to figure out the favorites are and why.

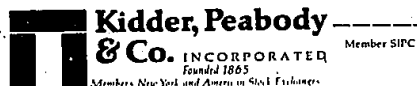
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