

Sports

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(F1C)



Kara Karhu



Lucine Toroyan



Beth Rafal



Tracy Solomon



Eileen Murtaugh



Jackie Huff

Area gymnasts: A mix of youth, talent

By Chris McCosky staff writer

WHILE BARRIE Murbeck's individual brilliance and Freeland's team muscle grabbed all headlines at the state gymnastics meet, North Farmington coach Mary Glitz was quietly selected the state's coach of the year.

"I was totally shocked," was her response.

North Farmington did not qualify for the state meet this season. In fact, North's representation at the meet was limited to two gymnasts competing only in individual events.

But the Michigan High School Gymnastics Coaches Association didn't base its coach of the year vote on the past year alone. Instead, it focused on a most successful career and selected a very deserving coach.

Mary Glitz has coached gymnastics at North for nine years and has completed a 111-16-1 record. In that span her teams have won eight league titles and a pair of state championships.

"The girls made this year very special," Glitz said. "It's basically the same group we had last year, we're very close."

Glitz was deep into her first pregnancy for much of the season (she gave birth last month) and thought seriously about retiring. But, the North gymnasts begged and pleaded for their coach to remain.

She did, and now harbors no thoughts of giving up coaching.

"I was very disappointed after the regionals, disappointed for the girls," Glitz said of her team's fourth place finish at the regional meet. "They had worked so hard all year and wanted to go on so badly. But, they just had falls they don't normally have."

Still, for eight straight years, Glitz's teams have dominated Observerland gymnastics. This year, North swept through the league dual meet season unbeaten and won the league meet with a 132 team score. The Raiders placed five gymnasts in the top 12 all-around at that meet.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Raiders dominate the 1985 All-Area Gymnastics Team, the second annual Super Six selected by Observerland coaches.

The Raiders placed three gymnasts on the first team and the coach of the year — Mary Glitz.

Here is the Observerland's Super Six for 1985:

Super Six

EILEEN MURTAUGH, NORTH FARMINGTON: The highlight of this personable junior's season came at the Western Lakes league meet. She scored a 34.50 all-around which, in most years, would have won outright. But, this year's league meet featured Olympic hopeful Barrie Murbeck. Thus, Murtaugh's 34.50 was a most impressive second best. Murtaugh placed in a five-way tie for the final qualifying floor exercise spot at the regional (8.55) and took 30th at the state meet (8.15).

LUCINE TOROYAN, NORTH FARMINGTON: When they describe the prototype body for a gymnast, they could use this talented junior as a model. Short, petite frame and full of strength. She is solid all-around (33.55 at the league meet), but her premier event is uneven bars, where she tied for fourth at the regional meet (8.5) and

placed 29th in the state (8.45). Her 8.85 score on bars was the best in Observerland this season. Watching her, one gets the feeling that Lucine Toroyan, as good as she is now, isn't even close to tapping her full potential.

BETH RAFAL, PLYMOUTH SALEM: Observerland gymnasts recorded but two scores better than 9.0 this season — Beth Rafal owns both. She scored 9.05 on both beam and floor exercise this season. She also earned the highest place at state of any area gymnast. After placing 10th all-around at regional, she placed 13th on balance beam (8.4). Rafal scored a third-best 33.70 all-around at the league meet, including a pair of 8.85s on vault and floor. Rafal is making her second Super Six appearance.

JACKIE HUFF, PLYMOUTH SALEM: This talented athlete earns the

mythical tiles Most Improved and Most Gritty gymnast in Observerland. After scoring 29.80 at last year's league meet, far back in the pack, Huff emerged with a 32.80 this season. That despite competing with a nagging leg injury all season. She placed 11th all-around at the regional meet and qualified in two events at the state meet. She placed 32nd on vault (8.35) and 42nd on beam (7.6). She had the second highest score in the area on vault (8.95), beam (8.8) and floor exercise (8.95).

TRACY SOLOMON, FARMINGTON HARRISON: 1985 proved to be a bit of a rollercoaster ride for this second-time Super Six gymnast. Alas, her season ended on a crest as she led Harrison to a Western Division title with a solid 33.55 all-around showing at the league meet. She qualified for state with a sixth-place 8.55 on floor and placed 36th at state (8.15). A junior, Solomon's bests were 8.85 on vault, 8.4 on bars, 8.2 on beam and 8.8 on floor.

KARA KARHU, NORTH FARMINGTON: A flamboyant performer, Karhu placed 10th all-around at the league meet with a 32.15. To show the improvement of this sophomore, Karhu did not score all-around at last year's league meet. This year, Karhu notched an 8.75 on vault, an 8.4 on bars, an 8.65 on beam and an 8.5 on floor.

gymnastics

THE SUPER SIX

1985 All-Area Gymnastics team

- Eileen Murtaugh North Farmington
- Lucine Toroyan North Farmington
- Beth Rafal Plymouth Salem
- Jackie Huff Plymouth Canton
- Tracy Solomon Farmington Harrison
- Kara Karhu North Farmington
- Mary Glitz (coach) North Farmington

SECOND SIX

- Katie McIntosh Farmington
- Lisa Brundie North Farmington
- Jill Bane Farmington Harrison
- Megan McDow Plymouth Canton
- Sara Michalek Plymouth Salem
- Ann Hasley Plymouth Canton

HONORABLE MENTION: Westland John Glenn; Torry Verde; Shari Schlenker; Mary Dipewen; Clarenceville; Julie Jacobs; Berlie Rose; Farmington Harrison; Julie Funk; Lauri Rank; Jody Solomon; Jamie Eason; Farmington; Debi DeWitt; Karen Runyan; North Farmington; Marlyn Dunn; Chris Carter; Cindy Tish; Laura Dickson; Jenny Noltem; Plymouth Canton; Carol Horvath; Mary Jo Chamon; Plymouth Salem; Sue Luby; Jerry Broad; Debra Flynn; Sharon Way; Livonia; Ladywood; Debbie Borko.

In like Flint?

Suburban basketball has a way to go

IT WAS SATURDAY afternoon in Ann Arbor and the sky was filled with rain. It was pouring down inside of Crisler Arena as well as poor Detroit Southwestern, who went down to defeat in the Class A basketball final for the fourth year in a row.

Just think, if it wasn't for Flint, the Prospectors would have been state champions four times in a row.

But it wasn't to be. Since I've been on the beat in Observerland, I've been going to the state semifinals and finals exclusively as a spectator instead of a member of press row.

Who cares if I paid \$6 to a scalper out in front of the Crisler marquee? I had to see this Flint Northwestern team, the one they call the best of all time in this state.

This was my last chance to see if this team was truly all it was cracked up to be.

THERE WAS Mr. Basketball, Glen Rice, banking shots off the window and skying above the rim. He looked more like Mr. Universe, while his four teammates played like Charles Atlas, Hercules, Lou Ferrigno and Arnold Swartzenegger.

These were men playing in a boys game. I'm afraid to say they toyed with the Detroit Public School League (PSL) champs much of the second half.

Maybe they should make Flint Northwestern play in a new class. How about A++?

But as I sat in row 25 of the gold seats I wondered how these teams from Flint always dominate the state tournament.



Brad Emons

AN ANSWER to that question caught my eye last week in Joe Falls' column in the Detroit News.

Flint Central coach Stan Gooch, who started the Flint reign with three straight championships of his own at the start of this decade, credits the Flint Schools' Community Education program.

He told Falls that the gyms are open 10 months a year and six nights a week. Kids learn to love the game by becoming gym rats, according to Gooch.

That's how Catholic Central's John McIntyre, who is going to the University of Detroit on a basketball scholarship, became a player.

A typical McIntyre day in the winter would be school, practice, dinner, study and practice again (on his own).

Garden City went farther than any Observerland boys basketball team this year. The Cougars reached the regional finals before getting dumped by Southwestern.

This GC team succeeded because their school district is committed to building a solid athletic program.

COACH BOB DROPP gave credit to the school's administration for giving him a basketball technique class (for boys and girls), giving him access to the gym on Sunday (anytime he wants it) and providing a junior high program.

ling, basketball and volleyball squads won league titles.

But it appears the other districts in our coverage area (Livonia, Redford, Plymouth-Canton, Clarenceville and Farmington) have paidcocked the door on this gym.

Being a product of the Livonia Public Schools, I can speak from experience.

Back in the early 1970s, Franklin High School would have never won a district, league or regional basketball title, or provided three full-ride basketball scholarships had it not been for the kindness of a custodian named Clarence Nelson.

Nelson routinely slipped the Franklin players into the gym to enable them to develop their game. Many cherished thoughts still go out toward the white-haired man.

TIMES HAVE NOT changed. I found the stumbling blocks still exist today.

This season, Franklin's freshman basketball team was told they could not enter an Invitational tournament at Dearborn Divine Child. The district said no because they don't schedule games on Sundays and the necessary funds could not be appropriated.

This is the same district that is sitting on an \$8-10 million surplus.

Had it not been for the efforts of Stevenson soccer coach Morene Divens, the popular Observer & Eccentric Girls All-Star Soccer Classic, featuring a number of Livonia Public School students, would be defunct.

Divens was able to cut through the bureaucratic tape and was able to get the \$600 field rental fee, quoted originally by Community Education chief Dan Rechnowski, waived.

Bob Sluka, another All-Observer basketball player from Livonia-Stevenson, said he spent a majority of his time shooting at his church, Ward Presbyterian, because the school gyms were usually closed.

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