

Spartans get 3rd S'craft spike crown

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

It's time to consider renaming the Schoolcraft Invitational High School Volleyball Tournament. Try "Livonia Stevenson's Schoolcraft Invitational Volleyball Tournament."

The Spartans scored the hat trick Saturday, besting the 30-team field for its third consecutive tourney title. No team has ever achieved that in the tournament's 10-year history.

Perhaps the third crown was most special to Stevenson coach Lee Cagle. The last two years, his team has been heavily favored to win. This year, the young Spartans were hardly mentioned among tournament favorites. The past two years, the team went into the quarterfinals seeded No. 1. This year, they were seeded No. 5.

"I guess we have been overlooked a little bit because we haven't played as much as some of the other teams," Cagle said. "We're not even ranked in the Observerland top five. But after teams play us they realize we are a quality team. We do a lot of things very well for a young team."

WATCHING STEVENSON play, it's tough to tell the 1986 team from the teams of the last two years. The formula is basically the same: superb passing and power hitting.

The names and faces are different though. Instead of Joan Frysinger to Lisa Bokovoy, it's Kris Conn to Kristine Bailey. Conn and Bailey were on the same wavelength throughout the day, helping Stevenson dominate at the net.

"Kris Conn did a tremendous job after the first match of the day," Cagle said. "She handled the setter's role perfectly. In our system, if the setter is not the top player on the court, we do not get into the finals. You know, the hitters all get the awards, and they deserve to, but they can't do it without the sets."

The Spartans and Wayne Memorial got to the championship match by virtue of some heavy hitting.

WAYNE, LED by the spiking of Diana Swepe,

10th ANNUAL SCHOOLCRAFT INVOLUTIONAL PREP VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH: Livonia Stevenson def. Wayne Memorial, 15-12, 15-9.

SEMI-FINAL MATCHES: Stevenson def. Birmingham Marian, 7-15, 15-4; Wayne def. Walled Lake Western, 15-10, 15-2.

QUARTER-FINALS: Marian def. Walled Lake Central, 15-9, 14-16, 15-14; Stevenson def. Livonia Franklin, 15-10, 15-9; Wayne def. Garden City, 8-15, 15-14, 15-9; Walled Lake Western def. Livonia Churchill, 15-14, 14-16, 15-13.

POOL PLAY

Court I: 1. Franklin, 7-1; 2. Dearborn, 9-2; 3. Plymouth Salem, 4-4; 4. Ide, 3-6; 5. Clarenceville, 0-8.

Court II: 1. Wayne, 7-1 (won on points); 2. Walled Lake Western, 7-1; 3. Dearborn, 4-4; 4. Northville, 2-6; 5. Roseville, 0-8.

Court III: 1. Walled Lake Central, 6-0; 2. Marian, 5-2; 3. Fox River, 3-6; 4. Rochester Adams, 2-6; 5. North Farmington, 1-7.

Court IV: 1. Livonia Churchill, 7-1; 2. Grand Blanc, 6-2; 3. Dearborn, 5-2; 4. Lutheran East, 2-6; 5. Farmington, 0-8.

Court V: 1. Livonia Stevenson, 7-1; 2. Fenwick, 6-2; 3. Livonia Ladywood, 5-2; 4. (tie) Allen Park and Novi, 1-7.

Court VI: 1. Garden City, 7-1; 2. Farmington Harrison, 6-2; 3. Temperance-Bedford, 5-3; 4. Detroit Henry Ford, 2-6; 5. Redford Thornton, 0-8.

ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM: Kat Covich (Dearborn), Lisa Made (Plymouth Salem), Pam Roscoe (Walled Lake Western), Maury Ward (Garden City), Patty Condit (Birmingham Marian), Barb Abraham (Walled Lake Western), Jackie Wozniak (Livonia Churchill), Kristine Bailey (Livonia Stevenson).

Diana Dietz, Laura Verduzco and Val Anderson, swept into the finals by knocking off No. 3 seed Garden City (8-15, 16-14, 15-9) and Walled Lake Western (15-10, 15-2).

Stevenson topped Livonia Franklin (15-10, 15-5) and the tournament's Cinderella story, Birmingham Marian (7-15, 15-6, 15-0).

Marian, a last-second replacement for Bishop Borgess, showed up with just seven players, two of whom were brought up from the junior varsity team. Marian got into the finals by escaping a five-team playoff for the eighth quarterfinal slot. In single-elimination games, Marian beat Grand Blanc, Fenwick and Dearborn.

Then the Mustangs stunned the tourney's No. 1

seed, Walled Lake Central, 15-9, 14-16, 16-14. They beat Stevenson in the first game before losing.

"IT'S REALLY hard for seven kids to play all day like this," a delighted Marian coach Ron Hebert said. "It just shows what a small group of girls can do if they really want to. We came in here with no pressure, no expectations. I thought we'd just lose four games and come home."

Patty Condit, Ann Girardot and Noelle Nagy helped keep the youthful Mustangs from an early exit.

In the finals, Stevenson's non-stop pressure took Wayne away from its power game. The Spartans won the match 15-12, 15-9.

"Wayne would have dominated at the net like they did against Western if they were given a chance," Cagle said. "If you put a lot of offensive pressure on a team, they don't always have the same rhythm. They start to play more cautious and you start getting more balls you can handle."

Bailey, a junior, had five spike points, two ace blocks and one service ace against Wayne. She also had eight kills for side outs. Sue Zatorski, Kelly Gage, Amy Anderson and Cheryl Sullivan also played well for the Spartans.

"WHAT MAKES this championship really special," said Cagle, "is that we had to really be on our game all the time to get this far. These girls are sound fundamentally and have a burning desire to win."

Of the 22 teams that failed to make it to the quarterfinal round, few can leave the gym smiling. Farmington Harrison was one such team.

The Hawks, playing inconsistently all season, put together a string of impressive victories through pool play. Led by the strong play of Jennifer Hughes, Diana Raddatz, Theresa Spisz, Katie Doll and Janine Whittemore, the Hawks posted a 6-2 record in pool, taking games from Garden City and Temperance-Bedford in the process. The team lost in the playoff for eighth place — a tough 15-13 decision to Dearborn.

For others, there was little joy in getting to the quarterfinals. Livonia Churchill was seeded No. 2 among the final eight, but lost a grueling three-game match to Walled Lake Western. Churchill led in all three games.

Garden City, picked by many to win the tournament, was outgunned by Wayne. After losing game one 15-8, the Zebras rallied to take the next two.

All in all, the 10th anniversary showing of the Schoolcraft Invitational Volleyball Tournament was grand entertainment. Here's to another decade.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Diana Raddatz's strong play at the net helped Harrison take games from powers Garden City and Temperance-Bedford during pool play. The Hawks were one of five teams battling for the eighth quarterfinal spot.

Harrison plays host to new WLAA volleyball tourney

For the first time, a conference tournament will decide the Western Lakes Athletic Association volleyball champion.

The 12 WLAA teams will meet at Farmington Harrison beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday to vie for the crown. League officials decided on the new format following the addition of North Farmington, Livonia Franklin and Westland John Glenn to the league.

The teams will be seeded according to placings within the two divisions. The first-, third- and fifth-place teams from the Lakes Division will be in one pool with the second-, fourth- and sixth-place teams from the Western.

The other pool will consist of the first-, third- and fifth-place teams from the Western Division along with the second-, fourth- and sixth-place teams from the Lakes.

The top two teams from each pool will advance to the semifinals.

THE FINAL division standings were not complete until Wednesday. It is likely, though, that Westland John Glenn and Livonia Stevenson will be the top two teams from the Lakes, and Livonia Churchill and Walled Lake Western the top two from the Western.

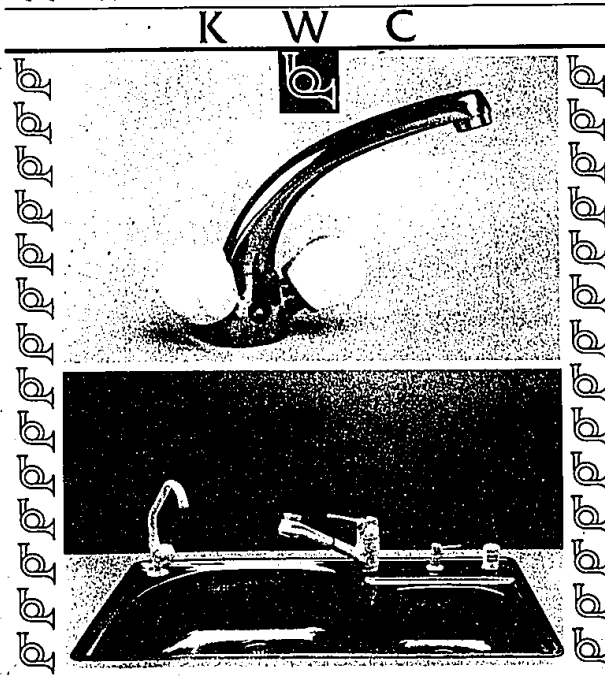
Other teams likely to make some waves at the tourney are Walled Lake Central, Livonia Franklin and Farmington Harrison. Rounding out the tournament are Plymouth Salem, Plymouth Canton, North Farmington, Farmington and Northville.

Livonia Stevenson, winner of last Saturday's Schoolcraft Invitational, has won three straight Western Lakes titles.

Farmington Harrison is on 12 Mile Road between Middlebelt and Orchard Lake roads.

— Chris McCosky

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