

# Hawk vaulter earns tie for 3rd at state

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Beth Raffal didn't try anything so complicated that it would take a computer to figure out Saturday at the Class A state gymnastics meet.

Yet the senior Plymouth Salem gymnast dazzled the judges with the basics to tie for second on the balance beam with a total score of 17.80 in the two-day event at Grand Rapids' Creston High.

North Farmington made it to the final eight in the team competition but finished seventh with a score of 121.45. Holland took first as a team with 141.25 to take the Class A championship.

Raffal, who had the meet's highest individual score for both days on the beam with a 9.25 Saturday, tied with Holland's Jeni Hescott for runner-up.

Andrea Veurink, also of Holland, took first place on the beam with a combined score of 17.85.

FOR RAFFAL, it was Saturday's strong showing that almost netted her a 9.55.

"The other girls were trying high-risk techniques, but they weren't clean," said Salem coach Kathi Kinsel. "Beth's routine didn't have a lot of

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high-risk stuff, but it was clean . . . Fortunately that's what the judges wanted."

Her performance Saturday followed a rough time Friday. Raffal's highest score on the beam this season was 9.05. Friday's 8.55 was well below her standard.

"It was a little shaky on Friday," said Kinsel. "But on Saturday, it was poetry in motion . . . I told her, 'You got all of the crap out of the way Friday. Saturday, you're going to get up there and jam.'"

RAFFAL WASN'T the only one to have a fine individual outing. Farmington's Tana Burningham, a sophomore, tied for third on the vault with a combined score of 18.80.

Burningham, with a 9.4 on both days, shared third place with Hence Wienski of Muskegon Catholic Central, also with an 18.80. Chris Ebert of St. John's captured first place in the vault with an 18.95.

Friday, though, Ebert notched a 9.3, which gave Burningham hope on Saturday.

Burningham also had a chance to place in the all-around at the meet. She collected an 8.5 on bars and an 8.3 on the beam. She slipped, though, on the floor exercise and finished with an 8.55.

If not for the mishap, Farmington Harrison coach Linda Perkins thought Burningham could've received a 9.1 on the floor. Her vault score didn't eclipse her season best, which was a 9.45.

"DOING IT in the state is a different thing," said Perkins. "The judges are much tougher. We're real excited for her. (Tana is) a super kid."

Like the rest, Burningham was subjected to a little pre-event jitters.

"A little bit, but they all get nervous," said Perkins. "It's hard for them to swallow and all. She has great concentration, though."

North Farmington, which had a couple of falls on the beam and bars, was a bit rattled, also. Kara Karhu, who tied for 11th in the vault with a 9.25, had the Raiders' highest individual finish.

"We didn't have our best meet," said North Farmington coach Mary Glist. "No way could we take any firsts or seconds. Holland was amazing. Their fourth girl was getting nines in every thing."

"I THINK PART of it was nerves," Glist added later. "Most of this group hasn't been to state before, and I think it's scary for them for the first time."

Eileen Murtaugh had scores of 9.2 on vault (15th in state), 8.7 on bars (15th) and 8.9 on floor (14th). Lucine Toroyan had a 7.95 on beam (26th) and an 8.5 on floor (17th).

# Raiders humble consolation foe

The situation looked gloomy for Oakland Community College's basketball team. The Raiders had lost 69-59 in the NJCAA Division II semifinals Friday night to eventual champion Parkland CC, wasting a valiant comeback from a 16-point deficit.

Now they had to play the consolation final against Meramec (St. Louis) CC. And they had to do it without starters Pat Gardner and Gary Holt, both sent home by interim coach Fred Thomann for disciplinary reasons.

Thomann was subbing for Tom McPhillips, absent because of medical problems.

That moment never arrived. OCC led 34-21 at the half and never let up. "We never had to go to our man defense," said Thomann.

Willie Jones popped in 30 points for the Raiders and earned this praise from Thomann: "I think he was the best player there. If we could have won the tournament, he would have been the most valuable player."

Thomann also singled out Rod Thompson and Darrell Darling for accolades, calling their performances "outstanding." Thompson netted 20 points against MCC. Joe Liggins came off the bench to score 12.

Jeff Hummel paced MCC with 21 points.

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Thomann was limited in his defensive options. He had the Raiders pressure from three-quarter court, then fall back into a zone. He planned to use the man-to-man defense only when necessary.

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# Pioneers 3rd at NCAA meet

A TRIO of second-place finishes highlighted OU's performances during the final two days of a competition in which several records were bested.

Sophomore Bruce Verburg placed second in the 200-yard freestyle (1:40.24) Friday, with freshman teammate Dan Andrus taking 11th (1:41.40).

OU's 400 medley relay team of junior Steve Larson, sophomore Mark VanderMeij, freshman Eric Dresbach and senior Mike Koleber also finished second (3:24.34).

Other Pioneer scorers from Friday's competition were sophomore Jeff Cooper, ninth in the 400 individual medley (4:07.61); freshman Mike Nation, 11th in the 100 butterfly (5:11.65); and VanderMeij, who won the 100 breaststroke on Thursday to qualify for the NCAA Division I meet April 3-5 in Indianapolis, placed second in the 200 breast in 2:01.92 to highlight Saturday's

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Pioneer performances. Senior Matt Croghin rebounded after a disappointing swim in the 500 free to finish third in the 1,650 free (15:59.80). Cooper was 11th in the 1,650 (16:10.27).

Three Pioneers scored points in the 200 backstroke. Larson was fourth (1:54.76), with Verburg 11th (1:55.59) and sophomore Doug Cleland, from Rochester, 15th (1:57.99). In the 100 free, Koleber placed 13th (46.37) and Andrus was 15th (46.88).

Larson, Koleber, VanderMeij and Verburg combined to finish third in the 400 free relay (3:04.20).

OU'S WOMEN SWIMMERS also performed well in placing eighth in the team standings. Clarion State was first with 433 points, with Tampa second at 343. OU had 193.

Sophomore Nancy Schermer topped the Lady Pioneer swimmers and Loe Ann O'Neill, another sophomore, did the same for the divers over the last two days of competition. Schermer

placed third in the 1,650 free (17:22.25), sixth in the 200 free (1:54.43) and ninth in the 100 free (52.75).

Her 100 free clocking broke her own OU record of 53.10, set earlier this season.

O'Neill captured fifth place in the three-meter diving (420.40 points) and was sixth on the one-meter board (393.40 points).

Senior Kim Pogue also scored in a pair of events for OU. The Farmington native was eighth in the 1,650 free (17:39.80) and placed 13th in the 200 free (1:56.43). Linda Scott, a senior from Rochester, also scored for the Lady Pioneers in the 200 free, ending 15th (1:56.70).

The 200 free relay team of sophomore Allison Klump, Pogue, Scott and Schermer were eighth (1:39.80), and the 400 medley relay foursome of sophomore Kristi Spiker (from Lathrup Village), freshman Dana Goerke, freshman Ginlie Johnson (from Canton) and Schermer swam to a 10th place finish.

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