

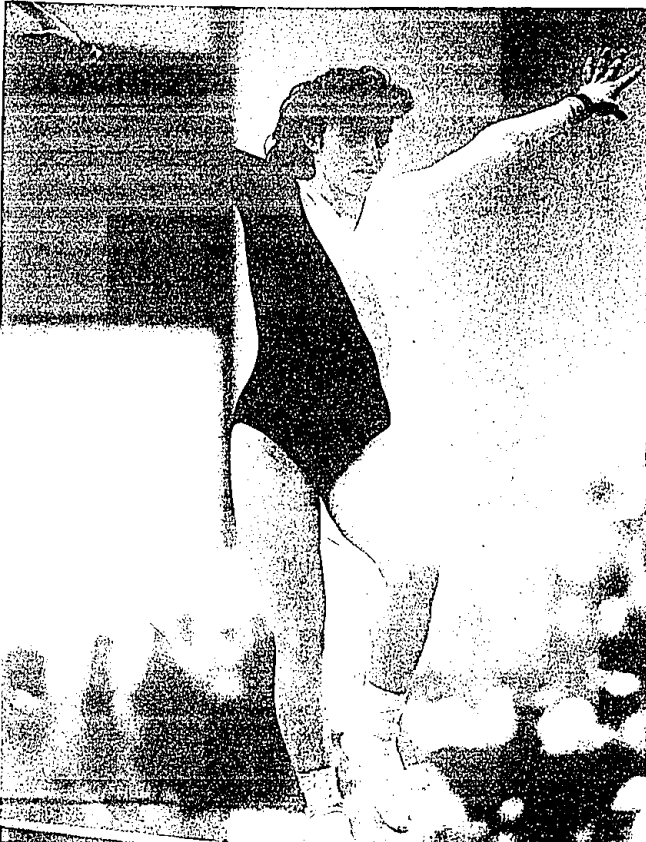
Sports

Chris McCooley, Brad Emons editors/591-2312

Monday, March 9, 1987 O&E



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The best all-around gymnast in the WLAA proved to be North's Lucine Toroyan, who to-

taled 35.80 points. Toroyan won three of four events, including the balance beam with a 9.3.

Raiders still rule WLAA gym-nest

By Bill Parker
staff writer

It was a team effort all the way. It was a combination of the new and the old.

It was Lucine Toroyan, Kim Heller, Kara Karhu and Nicki Yuskowicz. It was Marilyn Dunn, Cindy Tjian and Sharon Hewitt.

It was Raider night at North Farmington. The Raiders hosted the Western Lakes Activities Association gymnastics meet Thursday and when the team points were finally tallied, North stood head and shoulders above the pack. A team score of 138.30 points enabled the Raiders to clinch the league title for the 10th consecutive year.

Plymouth Salem surprised Westland John Glenn, finishing ahead of the Rockets with 130.70 points. Glenn settled for third at 126.10 followed by Plymouth Canton (124.70), Northville (123.35), Farmington (118.00), Farmington Harrison (111.25), Walled Lake Western (100.40) and Walled Lake Central (94.30).

"I DIDN'T think it would be a run-away at all," said North coach Jeff Dwyer, who took over the reins at North after Mary Glitz retired. "I knew we had to hit and we hit. This is our highest team score of the year and it should get the girls up going into the regional tournament."

"Mary Glitz deserves a lot of credit for our success. She had these seniors for three years. The talent was already there when I took over, all I had to do is get the girls to believe in themselves."

And believe they did. The Raiders placed three girls in the top 10 on the vault, four in the top seven on the bars, four in the top five on the beam and they swept the top three spots in the floor exercise.

"Today we had about a 34.5 (team) average in each event," Dwyer said. "The beam and the floor exercise are probably our strongest events when we hit. We don't have any one

gymnastics

really high scorer. Everyone contributes. We're real balanced and when we get our fourth scorer up there we do OK. The girls get all the credit. Everyone came through tonight."

THE TEAM leadership was split between the reliable veteran and the new kid on the block.

Toroyan, a senior with four years of varsity experience, paved the way for the Raiders triumph winning the all-around title with a total of 35.80 points. She placed first on the uneven parallel bars (9.0), the balance beam (9.3) and the floor exercise (9.0) and placed 10th on the vault (8.5).

Heller, a freshman in her first year of varsity competition, did an outstanding job for the Raiders finishing second in the all-around with a total of 34.75. She placed second on the vault (9.0), third on the floor exercise (8.9), and fifth on the bars (8.6) and the beam (8.25).

"I don't feel anything yet," said Toroyan after learning she won the all-around. "I'm just real happy we took the team title. I just wanted to work real hard because this is my last year here. This is the best way I can think of to end my career at North."

PLYMOUTH SALEM'S Jackie Huff captured third place honors in the all-around competition with 34.05 points. She finished second on the bars (8.8), fourth on the vault (8.75), sixth in the floor exercise (8.50) and seventh on the beam (8.0).

North's Karhu gained fourth in the all-around (33.95), followed by Glenn's Debbie Tomasko (33.35), Salem's Becky Talbot (32.75), Canton's Brenda Perry (32.00), Harrison's Tracy Solomon and Glenn's Angie Temelko (31.05) and Northville's Wendy Beach (31.80).

The top five finishers on the bars were: Toroyan, Huff, Dunn (8.70), Talbot (8.70) and Heller.

The top five in the vault were: Tomasko (9.4), Heller, Farmington's Jackie Daly (8.9), Huff and Farmington's Amy Frontier (8.70).

Top finishers on the balance beam were: Toroyan, North's Tjian (8.55), Canton's Mary Jo Charron (8.35) Karhu (8.35) and Heller.

The top five in the floor exercise were Toroyan, Karhu (8.95), Heller, Talbot (8.65) and Tomasko (8.55).

Salem's second place team finish was satisfying for coach Kathi Kinsella, although she was a bit disappointed with some of the individual events.

"I WAS HAPPY with our finish, but I thought we could have done better," she said. "The girls did well under pressure. We had problems on the bars and that was our first event. It kind of shook the girls, but they recovered well. I wasn't real happy with our performance on the beam, but that's one of those things where you either hit or you don't. Overall we did pretty good. I thought the scorers were tough but that's good. It will get the girls ready for the regional."

On March 14, the Rocks will compete in the Adrian regional, while North travels to the Troy Athens regional and will square off against the top-ranked class A Red Hawks.

"IF WE HIT at the regional like we did today, we should do OK," said Dwyer. "Troy Athens will really be tough, but I don't know who else will be there. Anything can happen. We have to go there and hit. Last year we thought we'd do OK and a team from nowhere (Lakeville) came up and beat us. (Lakeland) was sure of anything."

The one thing the Raiders can be sure of is that they are the reigning WLAA champs for the 10th year in a row. And that's got to be a big boost entering the regional competition.

District trail is treacherous

By C.J. Rissak
staff writer

New season, new life and a second chance. That's what the state district basketball tournament brings.

For Farmington's three high schools, the start of district play brings new goals, too. For North, there's a shot at an unprecedented (in Farmington, anyway) third-straight district championship. For Harrison, there's a chance to gain recognition in a very difficult district; and for Farmington, there's respect to be gained and built upon.

Lefty goals, to be sure. But in realistic terms, they may be much to expect. After all, none of the trio compiled a better than .500 record.

HARRISON, WHICH went 10-10 and missed, for the first time in three years, playing in the Western Lakes Activities Association (WLAA) championship game, might be considered to have the best shot at success. The Hawks are a Class B team that played an all-Class A schedule.

But Harrison's Madison Heights Bishop Foley district is as tough as they come. The Hawks open with Royal Oak Shrine at 6 p.m. Wednesday. Shrine finished with a 12-8 record and advanced to the Catholic League semifinals before losing to Center Line St. Clement.

"I think we're a dark horse," said Harrison coach Mike Teachman. "I would have to say Shrine is definitely the favorite. They're very quick and have two good outside shooters. And their point player is quick and jumps very well."

Still, the always-optimistic Teachman figures Shrine is beatable. Getting Shrine out of its patient, set-up style of offense is what he thinks to be the Hawks' defensive key.

"We want to make them run a bit, so they don't have such a well-organized offense," he said.

DEFENSE, THOUGH, has not come easily to Harrison recently. "We're giving up a few too many points," said Teachman. "We're allowing teams to score in the 60s, and we have to keep them in the low 50s."

Offensively, Harrison's plans are much simpler: get the ball inside to 6-foot-9 senior center Brad Ridgeway. "He's playing real well right

now," admitted Teachman, who called Ridgeway the key to how far the Hawks advance in the tournament.

Ridgeway's effectiveness inside could open things up outside for shooters like Scott Bissell. If one, or both, get rolling, Harrison's stock could rise dramatically.

"If you get one really good player hot, you can go a long way," said the Hawks' coach.

Still, Harrison will have to go the ways just to win its seven-team district. Getting past Shrine wouldn't end the Hawks' obstacles; that would only get them to the next one, the Bishop Foley-Livonia Clarenceville victor. And after that, there's Madison Heights Lamphere or probably Detroit Renaissance to deal with.

Should Harrison survive, it would advance to the Eastern Michigan regional to play the Willow Run district champion — again, a most difficult assignment. But, as Teachman said, "It'd be fun to go there."

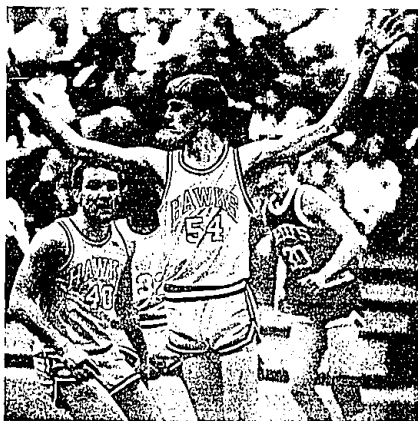
NORTH FARMINGTON has a less difficult road to travel in its Class A district at Walled Lake Western, but the Raiders have less to work with, too. Their success will be based on a single factor: defense.

"We were second in a 12-team league (the WLAA) in defense," said coach Tom Negoshian. "We have to play defense and we have to play hard. That's been our strength all year, and we're going to have to do it there (at Western). We have to hold them down."

North's first-round opponent is Bloomfield Hills Andover, a team with three wins in 20 games. For the Raiders, who were 8-12 in the regular season, it seems like an easy opener. But Negoshian isn't taking anything for granted.

"Their coach, Rich Krisinski, is in his first year there, but he's had a lot of tournament success before at Orchard Lake St. Mary's," said Negoshian. "He knows how to get a team ready for the tournament. No way are we going into this thinking it will be easy."

Still, North has the easy draw. A victory over Andover puts them into the finals against either Walled Lake Western, Walled Lake Central or West Bloomfield. Western and Central play in Monday's opening round, with West Bloomfield playing the



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Harrison's chief threat is 6-foot-9 center Brad Ridgeway, who will shoulder much of the Hawks' offensive load.

winner Thursday.

"Whoever wins the other bracket should be the favorite to win the district," said Negoshian. "Central should be favored, but they have to play Western first, at Western. There's no doubt we're the underdog going into this thing."

BUT THE RAIDERS have been the underdog before and succeeded. Two years ago, they dumped heavily-favored Southfield in a district final.

"If any tradition is involved, I hope we have it," said Negoshian. "We've won our last two districts. The kids know what to expect."

From North, expect to see changing defenses with half-court pressure designed not to force turnovers but to "take (opponents) out of their offensive schemes. I don't want to let them dictate to us."

Offensively, the Raiders like to work the ball inside to 6-5 Rick Karcher and 6-6 Chuck Howard. But

the lack of a perimeter scorer has made that difficult to do, with opponents sagging back in zone defenses. Still, Negoshian plans on getting the ball to Karcher and Howard as much as possible and "hope the other kids take the jump shot when it's open."

NORTH PROBABLY has the best chance to make it to the regionals. For Farmington, the probability of advancing beyond their opener in the district is remote.

The Falcons struggled to a 2-18 finish this season. Scoring was inconsistent, with Steve Howell the only threat. Farmington's wins came against Livonia Franklin, another 2-18 team, and Northville.

If their own record isn't enough to label the Falcons as longshots, their first opponent certainly will. Farmington is in the Plymouth Salem district, and will face the winner of the

Golden opportunity for teams of mettle

IT'S THAT TIME of year again for area high school basketball teams to show their mettle. But excuse me, according to Webster, it's mettle.

Either way, March Madness starts a bit later this season and I can't ever remember the Michigan High School Athletic Association's tournament beginning on the ninth day of the month.

It seems we've experienced a "dead end" during the final stretch of the regular season. Most teams, which swing back into action this week, have been idle for nearly 1½ weeks.

What will the future bring for area teams?

It's time to quote a few precious metals because there's going to be a busy three weeks of tournament action. Here is a prospectus on the state tournament.

PLATINUM (\$27 per ounce)

See you next season: There are no legitimate state contenders from Oberlin, but Redford Bishop Borgers is a team to watch in the future.

GOLD

Westland John Glenn (18-2): The Rockets have all the right stuff to make a run to the state Class A semifinals because they host both the district and regional and face a weak Troy Athens regional champion in a potential quarterfinal matchup. The key is getting center Andy Granulis more involved in the offense. Stumbling block: Glenn could have its hands full with the winner of the Detroit Cody district — which features four outstanding teams in Borgers, Detroit Coolley, Mackenzie and Cody. But look for Glenn to breeze through its own district.

SILVER (\$5.45 per pound)

Plymouth Salem (18-2): The Rocks open district play against



Brad Emons

rival Canton, a team that can give them trouble. If they get past the district, Salem could bump into the Gibraltar-Carlson district champ (probably Monroe) and then would face either Wayne Romulus, Ann Arbor Huron, Pioneer or Ypsilanti (the regional host). If front line standouts Mike Hale and Rick Taylor get help from the bench, Salem could conceivably win its district and take the regional.

Wayne Memorial (16-4): Mark Robinson and company could be playing the best basketball in Oberlin over these days. The Zebras have no real size, but coach Chuck Henry nearly pulled off the upset of last year's tournament, losing to state champion Romulus in triple overtime. The Zebras host their own district, but it won't be easy with the likes of Romulus, Belleville and Tri-River League champion Taylor-Kendy.

TIN

(\$4 per pound)

Redford Catholic Central (14-6): Hosting its own district should help, but CC needs supreme efforts by Lance Vaccarelli and Brian Dugas to get by Southfield (tonight) and possibly 6-foot-11 center Erik Wilson in Friday's final. The winner of the CC district tackles the Cody district champion in a first-round regional battle.

Redford Bishop Borgers (17-3): The Catholic League champions, loaded with underclassmen, have enjoyed a beautiful season. But unfortunately, its district draw was ugly. Tin could turn to rust