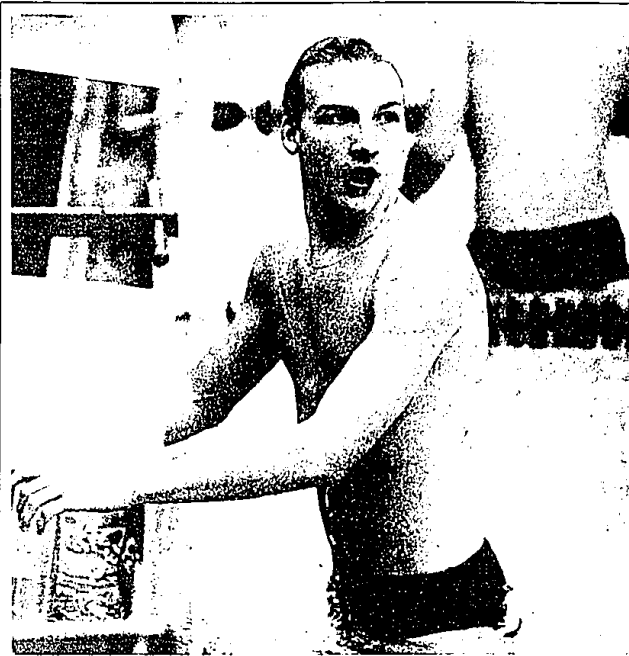


Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/644-1101

Thursday, December 17, 1987 O&E

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Chris Blackwell catches his breath after completing a 50-yard freestyle heat. Harrison lost the non-league swimming meet to West Bloomfield, 90-82.

RANDY BORST/ALAM photographer

Lakers edge Harrison

Individually, Farmington Harrison was supreme in its swimming dual-meet opener Tuesday against West Bloomfield. But it was the Lakers superior depth that made the difference, boosting them to a 90-82 win at Harrison.

The Hawks won seven of the first 10 events but trailed by six points entering the last, the 400-yard freestyle relay. Coach Pete Leonhardt opted to go for the victory, splitting his top swimmers in two relays in an effort to take first and third.

"If we had just stacked one relay, we could have tied them," said Leonhardt. His gamble failed, however, when the West Bloomfield foursome of Dave Notarius, Russ Novack, Brad Klintworth and Jason McCain combined for the meet-clinching victory in 3:41.5. Harrison's teams finished second and third.

IT WAS the second relay victory

swimming

In the meet for West Bloomfield. The Lakers also captured the 200 medley relay, with Nathan Wolf, Rusty Caplan, Steve Demeter and Doug Phelan combining for the win in 1:52.5.

Harrison won seven-straight individual events before Wolf ended the streak with a victory in the 100 backstroke (1:05.5). West Bloomfield also took top honors in the 100 breaststroke, with Jason McCain winning in 1:07.7.

Scott Farabee and Brian Fitzgerald each won twice for Harrison. Farabee's triumphs came in the 200 individual medley (2:12.20) and 100 butterfly (57.30), while Fitzgerald was first in the 200 (1:54.90) and 500 (5:11.80) freestyle.

Other winners for the Hawks were Jeff Whitehead in the 50 free (23.8), Karl Johnson in diving (209.30 points) and Marc Froesch in the 100 free (52.70).

Harrison is now idle until Jan. 7, while West Bloomfield hosts Hazel Park Thursday.

NOV. 31, N. FARMINGTON 81: Steve Turney anchored North Farmington's winning 200-yard medley relay team and also won the butterfly.

Bruce Goins, Jordy Greenstein, Doug Schwedland and Turney combined for a 1:49.3 time in the relay, and Turney posted a 1:00.83 butterfly time.

Goins had North's only other first place, winning the backstroke in 1:04.05. Greenstein did have two seconds, however, in the individual medley (2:16.62) and the breaststroke (1:06.87). The Raiders are 0-1.

Raiders capture title in volleyball tourney

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington should be a force among Observersland volleyball teams based on initial results of the new season.

The Raiders served notice, as well as quite a few aces, they will have to be reckoned with after winning the championship of the Mount Clemens Invitational Saturday.

And North not only won the tournament but never lost a game all day. The clean sweep enables the Raiders to begin the season with a 7-0 record.

"That's tough to do," coach Sandy Lubieniecki said, "because you're going to have times when you're flat."

The Raiders indeed had their down times, but managed to come back and win each time. North had a close call beating Romeo 15-13, 16-14 in the final match of pool play, and they trailed Roseville 10-2 in the second game of the final before winning 16-14.

NORTH DEFEATED Rochester 15-6, 15-3; Mount Clemens 15-3, 15-3; Brable 15-4, 15-8; Warren Mott 15-6, 15-13; and Romeo in pool play. In the semifinals, the Raiders beat Rochester 15-11, 15-3 and, in the final, Brable 16-16, 16-14.

The Raiders powered their way to the title behind some strong hitting, which included key contributions from four players.

Stephanie Knapp and Suzi Butcher, both seniors and returning starters, had 35 and 31 kills, respectively. Knapp was 83-of-97 on spike attempts, and Butcher had 80 chances.

In addition, seniors Missy Boscaen and Pam Konjarevich added 23 and 21 kills apiece, having 62 and 63 attempts, respectively.

"I think we've really improved our (hitting)," Lubieniecki said. "We've always played good team defense, and we've set a goal of going after

volleyball

More volleyball, 4D

some team records and really concentrating on offense.

"PAM AND MISSY help us a lot, because they've developed into such strong hitters," she added. "There will be matches when they will lead the team."

Lubieniecki will go with two setters because of the abilities of senior Carrie Leo and junior Debbie Weintraub, who had 53 and 60 assists, respectively, in the tournament.

Weintraub also is one of North's most effective servers. She was 63-of-67 for 94 percent Saturday, and she served for 49 points, 21 of which were aces. Butcher also had 49 points and 16 aces. She was 83-of-73 for 85 percent.

"That's something I look for," said Lubieniecki of points scored, "because it means you're staying up there for a while and have something on the serve."

The Raiders received 91 percent of their opponents' serves, an exceptional figure for so early in the season, Lubieniecki said.

ON THE OTHER hand, the opposition received only 75 percent of North's serves. Lubieniecki said she has her hardest-serving team in her 10 years as coach of the Raiders.

"Hopefully, that's going to be one of our strengths, because you can use it as a weapon just as much as your offense," she said.

"Every team has that one (good server). But, if you have three or four (as North does), it really makes it difficult on your opponents."

The Raiders also return junior Kelly Coulson, but she is still recovering from a basketball injury as is teammate Vicki Seamons, a 5-foot-

10 sophomore who will give North added height in the front row.

Coulson, who had knee surgery and won't be able to play until January, is an excellent server and defensive player. Lubieniecki said. Seamons also hurt a knee late in the basketball season, but didn't require surgery. She is working out in a limited capacity until after the Christmas break.

THE VARSITY roster also includes juniors Pam Gressler, Donna O'Brien and Patty Gooding and sophomore Courtney Knapp.

Gressler is another serving/defensive specialist who played on the junior varsity last year. Knapp suffered a preseason ankle injury and won't return until after vacation, also.

O'Brien didn't play volleyball last year, but Lubieniecki is glad to have her on the team.

"As the season goes on, she'll be one of our strongest hitters," she said.

Gooding is an attacker but can also serve the ball efficiently. She put 91 percent of her serves in play Saturday and had some key serves during the Raiders' comeback games.

North was 21-16 last year and finished third in the Lakes Division. The Raiders face another tough schedule, but Lubieniecki is optimistic. One thing the Raiders have going for them, she said, is team unity.

"VOLLEYBALL IS a game of chemistry on the court," she said. "Sometimes you can't get that if the team doesn't get along well."

"So far this team has gotten along. They're working hard and we haven't had a bad practice."

"That showed in the games Saturday. When a team clicks on and off the court, you usually have success," she added. "I see that and, hopefully, we'll keep that throughout the season."

Defending champ Salem host for WLAA relays

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Coach Chuck Olson sounded like he was in the holiday spirit, ready to extend a yuletide greeting to the rest of the Western Lakes Activities Association.

Olson and his Plymouth Salem team will be host for the annual WLAA Relays in boys swimming Saturday. But are the Rocks planning to be gracious hosts, or are they setting a Kirk Gibson-like bear trap for their guests?

"We always enjoy having everybody over," Olson said, "and we always enjoy doing well in this meet."

Indeed, the defending champion Rocks have virtually dominated the event. Livonia Stevenson is the only other team to have won any of the previous five.

This year's event begins at 1:30 p.m. and is being sponsored by the Plymouth and Canton Rotary clubs.

Salem is expected to be in the running for first place again, especially after winning the Belleville Invitational last weekend. The Spartans could be their chief competition again.

NORTH FARMINGTON has done well in the past, and Plymouth Canton and Northville, with some good swimmers among their ranks, are expected to make good showings. Farmington Hills Harrison is mentioned as a team to watch, too.

swimming

Until last year, the team that won the relays also ended up as the league champ. Salem won the relays last year, but the trend was broken when Stevenson prevailed later in the season.

"I would think the winner of this relay meet would have the inside shot at winning the league meet," Spartan coach Doug Buckler said.

"We expect to swim well, but we're a little short on numbers. We're not as powerful as we used to be, but we'll do well and, I believe, be there at the end."

Salem has plenty of swimmers and, thus, a lot of depth. That could go a long way toward determining the outcome. Each swimmer can enter only two events, so teams with greater numbers benefit from the format.

"WE CAN FILL all events with quality swimmers," Olson said. "We have always managed to do well in this meet."

Two of the big events could be the freestyle and medley relays. Salem and Stevenson have excellent teams, and these two plus North have strong medley foursomes.

The Rocks hope to do well in the

crossed relay with Mike Hill, John Irvine, Jeff Musson and Ron Orris competing.

"Some real good teams will be there, but we should be in there, too," said North coach Susan Gendron, who said diving could be another plus for the Raiders.

Above all, the teams take a laid-back approach to the relays. Most see it as a get-acquainted meet and opportunity to check out the competition for the dual-meet season ahead.

"THIS IS A fun meet," Buckler said. "It gives us all a chance to see what the other guy has in the league. We want to swim well, but we're going in to have fun with it."

"Trying to work out any strategy is minimal," Olson said. "It's hard to say 'We'll win this or knock somebody back here.'"

"We want to see what our capabilities are this time of year, and put kids in and hope they win and get a medal."

Gendron is in her first year as coach at North, so the league and relays are new to her.

"It will be more of a learning experience for me," she said. "It gives the kids a chance to show me what they can do in other areas besides what they normally swim."

"We'll find out who the teams to beat in the league are, and the kids can find out where they stand (in comparison to other league swimmers)."

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