

Sports

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(F1C)

Monday, February 22, 1988 O&E

Harrison seeking to defend crown

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington will be favored to regain its title as champion of the annual Observer volleyball meet when the Raiders face Farmington and Harrison Wednesday.

The Raiders surrendered the trophy to Harrison last year after winning the tournament five of the previous six years. Farmington will be host for this year's event, which gets underway at 3:45 p.m.

North has enjoyed the most success this season than its city rivals, and the Raiders loom as the favorite based on earlier victories over their two opponents and their 23-7 record.

When the tournament began in 1977, Harrison and Farmington won alternating titles before North entered the championship picture with the first of four straight victories in 1980. The Hawks won again in 1985 with the Raiders taking a record fifth win in 1986.

"Obviously, we would be the favorite, but we have a lot of respect

volleyball

and we root for each other," said North coach Sandy Lubienicki, emphasizing the sportsmanship between schools.

"IT'S BEEN A friendly rivalry. I hope all three teams play their best and show the respect and unity we do have. Sure, we're rivals and want to win, but we share a sport and a community together, too."

A key to North's success is that it is blessed with four solid attackers in Stephanie Knapp, Suzi Butcher, Missy Bosscaen and Pam Konjarevich.

Lubienicki knew she had two proven players in Butcher and Knapp coming into the season, but Bosscaen and Konjarevich have been an added plus, especially since

Butcher missed the first half of the season with an injury.

Consequently, Knapp has become the team leader in hitting. Konjarevich is probably the most consistent hitter, and Bosscaen is second in kill percentage behind Knapp.

The Raiders also have two excellent setters in Carrie Lee and Debbie Weintraub and have played a 4-2 lineup instead of the more conventional 5-1 to capitalize on that strength.

WEINTRAUB HAS been outstanding on the service line, and North has scored 215 points off her serves this season.

"We're much stronger than last year," Lubienicki said. "People didn't expect us to be as strong as we are, but we're much improved."

"We have a terrific passing team, and if you can pass well you can play with anybody."

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Mercy falls in Catholic final

Revenge was definitely on the minds of the Livonia Ladywood volleyball team Thursday in the finals of the Catholic League A-B Division final held at Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher.

The Blazers stood for one of their two losses on the season, defeating Farmington Hills Mercy, 15-1, 15-11. Ladywood, 43-2 overall and ranked the top team in Class A, now has a chance to avenge their only other defeat when it takes on Detroit Public School League champion Henry Ford at 6:30 tonight in the Operation-Friendship clash at Gallagher High.

"We were really hyped up for Mercy and it was the best serving match we've had all year," said Ladywood coach Tom Teeters, whose team notched its fourth tournament title of the season.

IN THE FIRST game, Ladywood did not make any hitting mistakes.

Individually, Mary Kelly recorded 10 assists kills out of 12 sets. Nancy Wagner served four aces out of 11 serves and Corinne McNamara added three aces.

In the second game, the Marlins trailed 8-2 before Christy Johnson served five consecutive points to pull them to within one.

The score remained tight until Ladywood broke away from an 11-10 lead on a key hit by reserve Jenny Belcher. Kari Domanski then wrapped up the match by serving the final three points.

The Blazers got a lift from Stacey Girard off the bench. Defensively, Sarah Adzima stood out. Offensively, Moe Knittel was able to successfully hit through the Mercy blocks.

"We definitely got beat a better team," said Mercy coach Tim DeBellisio. "There's no shame or disgrace in losing. I'm proud of our kids. Ladywood just earned it."

Senior middle-hitter Jennifer Slosar collected eight kills in 16 attacks and Kristin Orlandini had four kills in eight attacks. Mercy finished its regular season at 29-6 overall.

"Our kids have taken this program and put it on the map," said DeBellisio. "Maybe they've established a tradition at Mercy."

Farmington flips North

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington rolled the dice once again Friday night and hit the jackpot for the third time in as many basketball games.

The Falcons, with their backs to the wall heading into the final week and a half of the regular season, all but clinched a Western Lakes playoff berth with a 69-63 victory at North Farmington.

Farmington, 4-6 in the Lakes Division and 6-11 overall, had to win its last three games to qualify for post-season play, and coach Bob Kauppin's team bucked the odds by doing just that.

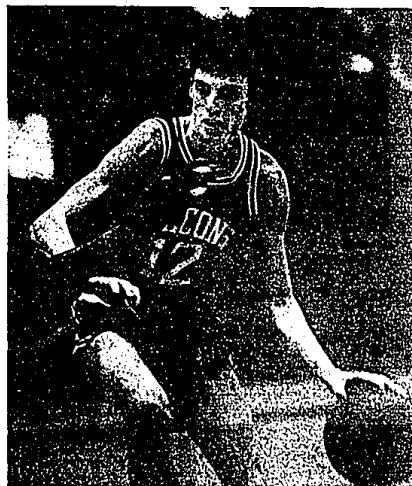
Farmington's spot in the playoffs, however, was contingent upon the outcome of Saturday's makeup game between North, 3-6 in the division and 6-10 overall, and Walled Lake Central.

If the Raiders could upset unbeaten Central, they would tie Farmington for the division's fourth and final playoff berth, and North would win the tiebreaker based on its victory over the first-place team.

A LOSS FOR the Raiders, however, would make it a moot point since the Falcons would have a one-game advantage and automatically get the nod.

Farmington, which also defeated Livonia Stevenson in overtime and playoff-bound Plymouth Salem down the stretch, had plenty of incentive going into Friday's game.

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BILL DRESLER/staff photographer

Steve Quenneville sank five three-point baskets and scored a game-high 21 points Friday to pace surging Farmington's 69-63 victory over the Raiders.

33-4 lead after T.J. Armstrong's favorable decision at 133.

Groves won the next three contests to get within 12 points, but Farmington's Bill Lindbert (185) won by technical fall and Charles Wyatt (169) by pin to put it out of reach.

Lindbert's only points after the 119 bout came from an 8-8 draw between Mike Kelly of Farmington and Ben Weisenfeld at 155.

The Falcons, otherwise, won everything from 135 on, getting pins from Rob Woodbeck (133), Steve Walters (167) and Lindbert.

The Falcons jumped in front 58-3 against RU, with Chris Gardiner (113), Jamie Madrey (119) and Woodbeck scoring pins.

THE PANTHERS won the next four bouts to close the gap to 29-20 following the 167

contest. But Lindbert and Wyatt had back-to-back falls and heavyweight Paul Daniels received a void to give Farmington another lopsided win.

In the district at Walled Lake Western, Harland defeated North Farmington 50-10. The host Warriors won the tournament, beating West Bloomfield 46-20.

The Raiders, who voided six weight classes, had four winners. Zalm Cummalaj (169) and Bill Murley (153) recorded pins, and Doug Hoyt (138) and V.J. Matol (145) won by decision.

Cummalaj, a regional qualifier in the individual tournament, boosted his record to 36-4 and increased his single-season school record for pins to 31. The old mark was 27.

Stephanie John of Mercy cuts a turn on the Alpine Valley slopes Thursday in the girls regional ski tournament. The Marlins had hoped

to repeat their victory of a year ago, but finished third and failed to qualify for state.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Marlins take 3rd in region

Farmington Hills Mercy's hopes for a return trip to the girls state ski championships met with disappointment Thursday in the regional at Alpine Valley.

But it was only by a small margin that the Marlins were nudged out of the picture. Mercy, the defending regional champ, finished third out of 14 teams, but only the top two advance to the state level.

"It was disappointing for the girls," coach Cass Zarlikowski said. "They thought, for sure, they were going to make it to the state championships."

"Even though she qualified for the individual race, Beth McIntosh was upset because the team didn't make it," he added.

McIntosh finished ninth in the slalom race and will compete for the benefit of her own gain at Marquette on Monday, Feb. 29. The top four individuals in each event, excluding members of qualifying teams, advance.

Millford Lakeland won the regional and Bloomfield Hills Kingswood was second, followed by Mercy and East Lansing.

THE MARLINS were dealt a setback in the slalom when three of their six skiers (the maximum for each team) fell coming down the slopes. Had those mishaps not occurred and one of the three finished where she might normally be expected to, Mercy probably would have finished second and gone to state, according to Zarlikowski.

Following McIntosh were Deanna Senatore, Jennifer Moore and Sarah Frizzell in 10th, 16th and 47th place. Stephanie John and Molly McDonald were top, season-long performers and had earned the right to compete,



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Deanna Senatore was Mercy's top skier in the giant slalom, finishing 10th overall in that event. She also was 10th in the slalom, one place behind Beth McIntosh.

also. In the giant slalom, Senatore was 10th overall, McIntosh 16th, John 24th and Frizzell 26th.

Zarlikowski added the difference in course conditions between Alpine Valley and the Marlins' home base at Mount Brighton posed a problem. The regional took place on a flat course, while the Mercy skiers are accustomed to steep slopes.

"The technique changes," he said. "If the race had been at Mount Brighton, we probably would have won it."

"But we never had a chance to train on it, we run all our races on a steep course."

Zarlikowski added that the Marlins, coming back after losing three top skiers to graduation last year, enjoyed a successful season in that they were undefeated in dual meets and won the league championship.

He anticipates Mercy putting another quality team on the slopes next year since the Marlins have a talented group of sophomores coming through the ranks.

Falcons survive 3 duals

Farmington faced its biggest test right off the bat Wednesday night in tournament team wrestling, and even that wasn't very close.

The Falcons, having to wrestle three dual meets in the same evening, clobbered every opponent they faced to become a district champion in the state's first post-season competition for teams.

Farmington, which boosted its season record to 10-1, faced Birmingham Groves in the first match, and that turned out to be the toughest one even though the Falcons whipped Groves 45-24.

Coach Al Beyer's squad went on to demolish Southfield Lathrup 56-11 and smother Redford Union 47-20 in the final.

The Falcons will be in the midst of some heavy-duty company Wednesday when they go to Redford Catholic Central for the regional tournament, however. The host Shamrocks are ranked No. 1 in the state, and Novi is rated among the top 10. Plymouth Salem won its own district tourney.

FARMINGTON has seen its wrestling fortunes turn around after posting a 4-10 record last year. The Falcons tied with Salem for the Lakes Division dual-meet crown this year.

Farmington broke an early tie against Groves when Chris Gardiner pinned Eric Gray in the 113-pound bout. That was the first of four straight pins for the Falcons, who also won the next four bouts to take a