

# Marlins reel in district volleyball crown

A favorable draw coupled with several outstanding performances enabled Farmington Hills Mercy to capture the Class A district volleyball tournament Saturday at Farmington Harrison.

The Marlins, 32-7 overall under second-year coach Tim DeBello, have qualified for the Wayne Memorial regional this Saturday where they will meet Ann Arbor Pioneer. See tournament pairings.

Mercy advanced by defeating Detroit Public School League champion Henry

Ford, 15-10, 15-7, in the district final.

DeBello's team breezed through their first two district matches on the day, routing Southfield-Lathrup (15-3, 15-1) and Livonia Franklin (15-4, 15-4).

Meanwhile, on the other side of the draw, Western Lakes Activities Association champion Livonia Churchill held off perennial power and city rival Stevenson (16-14, 15-13) before being eliminated in the semifinals by Henry Ford in three games, 14-16, 15-12, 15-13.

"We literally had the luck of the draw because Churchill had to play two emotional matches," said DeBello. "But against Henry Ford we may have played our best volleyball of the year. We got our hands on a lot of balls, and we were able to get good transition from defense to offense."

A BIG KEY to Mercy's victory was 6-foot-1 Jennifer Slosar, who had 20 kills on the day, including six against Henry Ford. The team's other middle hitter, Kristen Orlandi, also turned in a strong performance.

"Both our middle hitters did a good job of blocking," said the Mercy coach.

Both Slosar and Orlandi got strong support from outside hitters Meg Pinkerton, a senior, and Jennifer Goff, a sophomore.

Goff recorded three hard hits in a row to break a 10-all deadlock against Henry Ford in the first game.

"Both outside hitters were able to sustain our attack," DeBello said.

But playing a vital role in the district con-

quest was Kandi Boyle, the team's setter.

"That's the best setting I've seen from her in two years," said DeBello. "She got to every ball."

The victory should bolster Mercy's regional hopes.

"OVERALL IT WAS a great day for the kids," said the Mercy coach. "It was a great win for our program because we struggled last year when we thought we were better than what we showed. But we came back, and it says a lot for our kids."

## The Farmington Observer

# Sports

Brad Emons, Dan O'Meara editors/591-2312



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## Air Jordan imitation doesn't phase 'Skins

By Steve Kowalski  
staff writer

When it was all over, after Oak Park had defeated host Farmington Hills Harrison 65-54 Wednesday in a district basketball game, forward Bryan Wauldron gathered his belongings and tucked them away inside a black-and-red duffel bag.

"It's just an 'Air Jordan' bag," said Wauldron, who led Harrison's futile effort with 17 points.

Fittingly, Wauldron left the gymnasium carrying a Michael Jordan-endorsed bag. With 6:45 left in the third quarter of Harrison's semifinal against Oak Park, Wauldron's thundering two-handed dunk ended a six-point Harrison run and cut the Redskins lead to six, 39-33.

But the Jordan-like dunk failed to inspire the underdog Hawks. Instead, Oak Park outscored Harrison 14-2 in the next three minutes, regaining its dominance. The Redskins led 62-44 after three quarters.

"THAT WAS THE sequence that ended it," said Harrison coach Mike Teachman. "Waldo's dunk got them upset and they played extra hard. It should have turned us on. Instead, it turned them on."

Harrison finished the season at 14-8. Oak Park improved to 13-7 and will meet Royal Oak Shrine for the district title at 7 p.m. Friday at Harrison.

The loss was especially devastating for Wauldron, who until the eighth grade, lived in the Oak Park

### basketball

school district. In fact, one of the Oak Park assistant coaches cut Wauldron from the eighth-grade team.

"I wanted to win; they were just the better team," Wauldron said. "We shouldn't be ashamed to lose to them. I don't know what happened. We just let up too much."

What happened was Oak Park shot 51 percent from the field, making 37 of 72 shots. Harrison took 40 shots, with 18 falling through the nets.

THE QUICKER Redskins helped cause 22 Harrison turnovers. The Hawks turned the ball over 15 times in the second half — and most of those turnovers turned into Oak Park baskets.

"They definitely got to us," Teachman said. "We wanted to penetrate more and get to the free-throw line. But those turnovers . . . you can't shoot without the ball."

The senior guard tandem of Garth Howard and Shawn Jones hurt the Hawks. Howard scored 23 points on 10-of-20 shooting, including two successful three-point shots. Jones also took 20 shots, making nine. He finished with 29 points.

Head Thomas, another senior guard, added 15 points in Oak Park's balanced attack.

CHAD BURGESS scored 20 points

to lead the Hawks, followed by Wauldron's 17 and senior Jason McDonnell's eight. Senior Jim Hill chipped in with six.

Wauldron and Burgess were Harrison's most consistent performers. Burgess scored 10 and Wauldron eight in the first half as the Hawks managed to trail by 10, 37-27, at halftime.

Harrison played zone to start the game against the quicker Oak Park team. But the zone did not bother the Redskins, who haven't seen a man-to-man defense in quite some time.

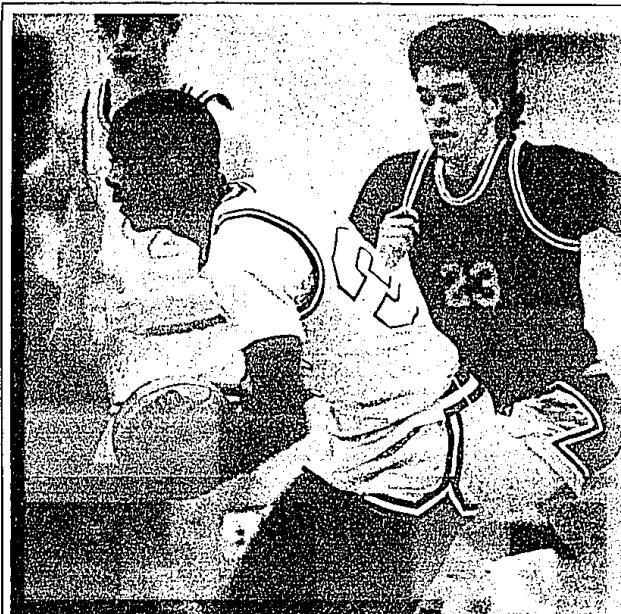
"We had good patience on offense, outside of the last three minutes of the first half," said Oak Park coach Richard Griest. "Very few teams play man against us. We would like them to, but they don't."

Oak Park dominated both the offensive and defensive boards in the second half. The Redskins, who were out rebounded 14-13 in the first half, had a 20-9 edge in the second half.

THOMAS LED the Redskins with 11 rebounds. Wauldron paced Harrison with six and Burgess added four.

Teachman said he enjoyed working with this year's Harrison team, although the season had to end on a losing note. But with Wauldron and Burgess both returning, improvement next year in the won-loss category seems possible.

"This was a sad occasion for me, because this group got along so well," Teachman said. "Now the season's over — forced over — not over because you wanted it to be over."



THOMAS ARNETT/staff photographer

### Scoring record falls

Farmington Hills Harrison junior Chad Burgess scored a school-record 44 points Monday night as the host Hawks won the district

opener. Game story on Page 2D. More basketball on 4D and 6D.

## Raiders reach end of line in cage rematch

By Dan O'Meara  
staff writer

With his opportunities nearly exhausted, Layne Herrington beat the clock and eclipsed a family basketball record Tuesday night.

Herrington scored a career- and game-high 31 points to lead district tournament host Walked Lake Central past Western Lakes champion North Farmington 70-59 in an emotionally-charged game.

With his high school career winding down and elimination always a possibility in post-

season play, the 6-foot-6 senior didn't have many chances left to surpass his father's single-game scoring total of 30 points.

John Herrington, the highly-successful football coach at Farmington Hills Harrison, made that his career-high total when he starred at Waterford High in the late 1960s.

The elder Herrington was beaming with pride Tuesday as the Vikings, 19-2 overall, avenged a defeat at the hands of North. The Raiders, who finish at 9-12, dealt WLC its first loss last month and went on to win the league title.

"I'M LOOKING at what his rebounding

and floor leadership meant to us tonight," said WLC coach Steve Ernst, while acknowledging it to be Herrington's best offensive game. "He's a senior and has to rise to the occasion — and he did."

Herrington, who also pulled down 13 rebounds, had 12 points in the fourth quarter as the Vikings fought off a last-ditch attempt by North to pull out a victory.

WLC played a tight zone defense that forced the Raiders to take a lot of perimeter shots, and North consequently didn't shoot as well as it did when beat the Vikings.

"That's going to happen," North coach

Tom Negoshian said. "That's why this game is as crazy as it is."

"That's why you're going to shoot well one night and not shoot well the next."

For most of the game, the Raiders couldn't get closer than 8-9 points, but they were always close enough to make it successful and leave the outcome in doubt.

WHEN IT HAD a chance to cut WLC's lead to six, North missed three shots on the same possession, and the Viking went up 59-48 with 2 1/2 minutes left.

But Jim Ratajski scored off a rebound,

and Vancoy Hill's steal at midcourt led to a tip in by Ratajski. John Shelton made the front end of a 1-and-1 with 1:47 to play and made it 59-53.

Hill, who had one of his best scoring games, hit a three-pointer that kept the Raiders within seven (63-56), but North missed several three-point attempts and the Vikings finished up at the free-throw line where they were 16-of-21.

"We were right there," Negoshian said.

"That's all you can ask of your kids — to

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## Vellucci's NHL stay brief

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Some call it having a cup of coffee. Except Mike Vellucci didn't even have time to ask for cream and sugar.

Within a week, the Farmington native was called up from the Milwaukee Admirals of the International Hockey League, played in three games with the Hartford Whalers of the National Hockey League, and was sent back down to Milwaukee. The postcards home hadn't even arrived by then.

The 6-foot-1 defenseman scored no goals, had no assists, and collected 11 minutes in penalties with the Whalers.

Yet his brief stay in the NHL marked a triumph of sorts.



Mike Vellucci

NEARLY FOUR years ago, Vellucci's chances of playing hockey at all seemed about as good as a candle staying lit on a March day in Chicago. He was a passenger with Al Iafate when their car flipped on Highway 401 in Ontario.

Iafate came out with a couple of broken ribs. Vellucci fractured a vertebrae in his back, and his hockey career was threatened.

"It was scary," said Vellucci, who would use the same term to describe his first game with the Whalers. "I heard so many different opinions from different doctors. Some said I should never play hockey again. Some said it would be all right and some said I should wait and see. I just wanted to get healthy again. I wasn't worried about playing hockey."

All I remember is my face hitting the dirt," said Vellucci, recalling the accident. " . . . Al kept yelling my name because I was thrown so far away from the car."

### hockey

VELLUCI SPENT 3 1/2 months in a body cast following bone fusion surgery to help repair the broken vertebrae. As a result, he missed the entire 1984-85 season with the Belleville Bulls of the Ontario Hockey League while he recuperated.

Out of shape ("All the muscles in my legs were gone"), Vellucci didn't start skating again until the following summer. He managed to begin the season with Belleville.

Vellucci struggled at first, but still finished the season with 11 goals and 31 assists for 43 points. He was able to overcome an injury that would've knocked most players out of the game.

So, perhaps, it's a little understandable why Vellucci speaks with the glee of a 12-year-old about looking in awe at the Whaler jersey with his name on it hanging in the locker room, the nervousness of meeting his Whaler teammates ("I was worried if they would remember me.") or the thrill of skating during the warm up at the Boston Garden. The stay, although short, made an impression nonetheless.

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