

# Sports

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## Mercy still in hunt for softball honors

By Steve Kowalski  
staff writer

With some of the best Class A teams already eliminated, look who has emerged as one of the favorites in the state Class A softball tournament: Farmington Hills Mercy.

East Detroit, Waterford Kettering, Fraser and Temperance Bedford are among state-ranked teams upset in district play last weekend.

Mercy survived the Garden City district and plays Taylor Center, 23-9, at noon Saturday in the opening round of regional play at Dearborn Edsel Ford.

Sixteen teams are left in the four regionals, with the winners of each region advancing to the semifinal round next Friday.

The Marlins carry a 25-8-1 record with them into the regional and, behind pitcher Amy Edward, stand a decent shot at advancing to the championship against the winner of the Belleville-Highland Park game.

But Mercy coach Suzanne Brown won't guarantee anything.

"I'M NOT MAKING any predictions because every time I do it never turns out right," she said. "Taylor Center is a strong team with a real good pitcher (sophomore Wendy Jamula).

"You have to be a pretty good team to withstand the predistricts and then win two district games. But they (Taylor Center) are going to have to work hard to beat us."

"Amy (Edward) has been unreal." Both on the mound and at the plate, Edward has started every game for Mercy, and her earned run average is 1.34. Edward is batting .714, with two home runs and 48 RBI. She also has nine triples, 16 doubles and has struck out only twice in 91 at-bats.

In the first round of the district,

### softball

**'I'm not making any predictions, because every time I do it never turns out right. Taylor Center is a strong team with a real good pitcher. . . . You have to be a pretty good team to withstand the predistricts and then win two district games. But they (Taylor Center) are going to have to work hard to beat us.'**

— Suzanne Brown  
Mercy softball coach

Edward defeated Livonia Franklin 8-6 and later in the day had an easier time against Redford Union in the final, winning 16-3.

Jamula also had a fine district outing, defeating Western Lakes champion Westland John Glenn 6-2 and shutting out Garden City in the final 1-0. She allowed four hits in each game and was 4-for-4 in the championship game with two RBI.

TAYLOR CENTER'S coach is Jerry Abraham, and he's no stranger to the Catholic League. Last winter he led Redford Bishop Borgess' volleyball team to the finals in Class B before losing to Sturgis.

"This is only the second or third

parochial school we've faced and we're excited," said Abraham, in his first year at Center. "We've seen Mercy play and it should be a challenge."

Mercy lost in the regional final last year to Garden City, a state semifinalist. Catcher Nicki Fraser, who will play next year at Bowling Green State University, remembers that loss.

Mercy failed to get a hit in losing to Garden City 2-0, and the Marlins committed five errors.

"All their runs were unearned and if they didn't score, they got to third base unearned," recalled Fraser. "If we play errorless we can do it. Last year, it seemed like we all made errors at the same time. And that doesn't help."

BROWN ISN'T SO worried about the team's hitting. Shortstop Kristin Orlandoni is hitting .375 with 28 RBI, center fielder Kerry Sayens bats second and her average is .401. Orlandoni, Edward, Molly McWood, Cyndi Viall and Fraser are threats on the basepaths.

"We have a strong lineup," Brown said. "Anyone can come up with a game-winning RBI. I feel we have both power and speed."

"We're smart and win on a lot of hustle. Some of our advantage is base running but not necessarily stolen bases. We've been trying to capitalize on other team's mistakes."

Another advantage Mercy has is experience. Six seniors dot the 15-player roster, and seven others are juniors with plenty of experience.

"Thirteen of the 15 have been with me for three or four years," Brown said. "Their time has come. If it hasn't hit them, it'll blow right by them and they'll never realize it."



RANDY BORST/Staff photographer

Amy Edward and her Mercy teammates hope to capture a regional championship Saturday, something that eluded them last year in a low-scoring game with Garden City. Edward's pitching and hitting is key for the Marlins.



Nicki Fraser  
signs with Bowling Green

By Steve Kowalski  
staff writer

Nicki Fraser doesn't know if she'll be catching fast balls or fly balls next year for Bowling Green State University, but at least she feels wanted.

Fraser, a four-year starting catcher for Farmington Hills Mercy, originally wanted to attend Central Michigan, but instead settled Sunday night on BG.

The Falcons unseated CMU this year as Mid-American Conference champions. Fraser will receive a half-ride scholarship at BG and will sign a national letter-of-intent this week.

Fraser stands 5-feet-1 — a bit petite by softball catcher standards — and she got the impression Central's coaching staff preferred

a more dominant figure behind the plate.

Fraser might be small, but she's fast and can play the outfield and that's a selling point. Bowling Green couldn't overlook CMU, winner of three straight MAC titles (1985-87) and a participant last year in the College World Series, recruited Fraser but did not offer her a scholarship.

FRASER, WHO plans to major in psychology at BG, said she looks forward to roaming the outfield for the Falcons.

"I'm not really expecting to catch in college," Fraser conceded. "I'm kind of excited to play outfield. But we'll see what happens. I've played catcher against bigger girls before."

Still, there is the unsettling feeling she

received from CMU, a school she always wanted to play for.

"I don't think CMU wanted me," she said. "They go for bigger girls who are big hitters. I'm a base hitter. They don't have a lot of speed on their team."

"I'll see more playing time and be happier at Bowling Green. I wanted to go to Central because I have friends from there, but I'll just have to help BG kick CMU's butt."

Somewhat out of necessity, Fraser played catcher her freshman year at Mercy. She played the position so well, that Mercy coach Suzanne Brown had no reason to play her elsewhere.

Brown was an All-Observer first-team choice last year, batting .383 as a right-hand-

ed hitter. Three weeks ago, she switched to the left side of the plate — "because," she said, "that's the way I bat in the summer league I play in" — and is hitting .279 with 15 stolen bases.

Fraser has played outfield on occasion at Mercy, and Brown believes she can do so in college.

"SHE COULD BE an outstanding outfielder — but I think CMU already has some young, small left-handed hitters, so they don't need anyone to fill those shoes," said Brown.

At Mercy, we needed someone behind the plate, Nicki knows the game of softball. She calls pitches, and her big asset is speed. With nobody on base on a ground ball, I've seen her beat the batter to first base to back up the throw."

## CC's Campbell satisfies his appetite for success

By Steve Kowalski  
staff writer

At an awards banquet three years ago for the Redford Catholic Central tennis team, Steve Campbell managed to satisfy only one of his appetites.

Like the rest of Campbell's 1985 Class A state-champion teammates, Campbell finished off a plate of chicken and mashed potatoes. Later that night, after picking up CC's Most Valuable Player award, Campbell let coach Frank Garlicki know about a hunger of a different kind that would take three years to fulfill.

It's an appetite that no Michigan high school player ever satisfied on the tennis court.

"He told me after the awards banquet 'I'm going to win you four state titles,'" recalled Garlicki. "I agreed with him and said it would be a noble effort of him to try. Nobody had ever done it."

IMAGINE ISIAH Thomas telling Detroit Pistons coach Chuck Daly

### tennis

he was going to lead the Pistons to four straight NBA titles.

Campbell lived up to his end of the bargain.

In 1985, Campbell was a member of the No. 2 doubles team that won the state Class A title. He followed that with a No. 3 singles title in 1986, a No. 2 singles crown in 1987, and last Saturday in Midland, Campbell capped his ambition with a three set tie-breaker victory in No. 1 singles play over Birmingham Brother Rice rival Mike Herb.

As a team, CC finished fifth and Rice took first.

By now, Campbell must be full. "Coach Garlicki made it clear that night (three years ago) that it was possible," said Campbell, who will attend Rice University on a tennis scholarship. "The fact that no one had ever done it before made it appealing to me. I guess you can say I wanted to leave my mark."

Of all the titles, Campbell said his latest 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (7-3) victory in No. 1 singles over Herb was the most satisfying. Campbell had to defeat four other opponents before getting to the final round. He defeated Neil Deansha of Fortage Central in the semifinal round, 6-2, 6-4, in what he called "a tough match, but the scores might not show it."

"THERE ARE no easy matches in No. 1 singles," he said. "You have to be mentally tough all the way."

Then came Herb. The two split matches earlier this year, both being decided in three-set tiebreakers.

Herb is a vocal player — a mild John McEnroe — and the final became emotional, with Herb making gestures throughout the match at the CC fans, which Garlicki estimated at being "five or six percent of the total crowd."

Garlicki said the rest of the crowd began to turn on Herb and root for Campbell.

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