



## CC coach admits he fixed document

By Dan O'Meara  
staff writer

Redford Catholic Central wrestling coach Mike Rodriguez has admitted he falsified documents regarding senior Mike Gentile's eligibility to wrestle at 119 pounds in the individual district tournament.

As a result, Rodriguez faces a possible suspension, and Gentile, whom Rodriguez removed from the tournament after he won the district championship, could be stripped of his title.

Following the district, Rodriguez said it was a matter of conscience that caused him to withdraw Gentile from the individual tournament.

"When it got to the final, I couldn't let it go any further," he said. "I knew it wasn't right. I lived with a lie, and I let it go on."

"Had he gone on and won (the state title), it probably would have been a bigger can of worms."

RODRIGUEZ, who has coached high school wrestling for 32 years and spent the last 22 at Catholic Central, reflected on the impact his actions will have on his credibility and CC's reputation.

"I've been questioned before, but not to the point I've gone ahead and done this," he said. "I've always been straight up with everybody but this one time."

"When you get on top, everyone is going to point. This really makes it bad — I go ahead and justify everything they've been saying."

Independent investigations by the Observer and CC officials revealed Gentile, who had wrestled at 125 pounds the entire season, had not met the requirement to wrestle once at 119 during the season.

In a meeting Monday between the Rev. Dennis Andrews, the principal at CC, Bob Santello, the school's athletic director and Rodriguez, the latter acknowledged he submitted false



STAFF PHOTO

CC coach Mike Rodriguez said he expects to receive disciplinary action from the MHSAA.

Information regarding Gentile's eligibility to Garden City High School, the pre-district tournament host.

Rodriguez made no attempt to defend his action, saying he told Andrews and Santello: "It's all a lie, I'm responsible."

SANTELO TOLD the Observer he immediately reported the violation to the Michigan High School Athletic Association, the organization which governs high school athletics.

Jerry Cvengros, associate director of the MHSAA, said he has talked with CC officials and is awaiting their written statement before the MHSAA begins its own review of the matter and possible penalties it

### wrestling

might impose on Rodriguez and/or Gentile.

Cvengros said action taken against Rodriguez could range from probation to suspension.

"They'll probably strip (Gentile) of the title," Rodriguez said. "Whatever I get I deserve."

When told by the Observer that Rodriguez admitted to having falsified documents and acknowledged his wrong doing, Cvengros said:

"These aren't the kind of admissions you get every day. There would have to be some action taken, because in my opinion (Gentile) wrestled illegally. It sounds like that."

Cvengros said there is no precise timetable for resolving the matter, but he expects the MHSAA to rule on it this spring. He added the MHSAA will consult CC officials and possibly Rodriguez before issuing a decision.

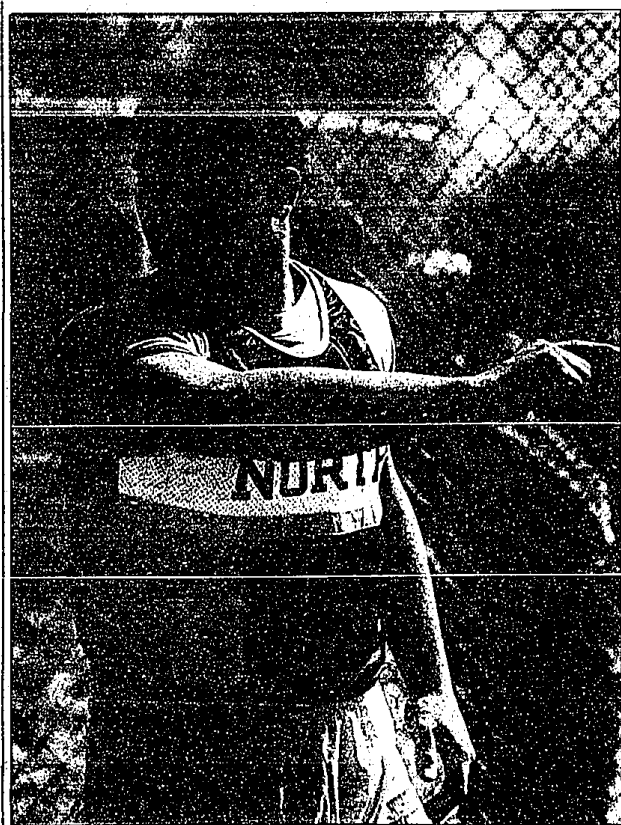
"As I told the state, I would hold any decision in abeyance until I hear what action they and the Catholic League recommend should be taken," Andrews said. "We'll be working together on it."

Rodriguez said he entered Gentile at 119 pounds for the tournament to enhance his chances of winning an individual state title.

MHSAA rules state a wrestler must certify at a particular weight and also have wrestled at that weight at least once during the regular season to be eligible to compete in post-season tournaments.

GENTILE HAD certified at 119 — meaning he weighed in at that weight and it was witnessed by a registered official — on Dec. 29 at a

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

### Track preview

Zaim Cunnulaj is expected to be a key member of the North Farmington boys track team this spring. An all-area football player

and outstanding wrestler, Cunnulaj excels as a shot-putter and discus-thrower in track. See Page 2D for the story on North's team.

## North rebuilds squad after losing top talent

By Steve Kowalski  
staff writer

Like most of his colleagues in the coaching profession, North Farmington boys tennis coach Rick Jones asks his players to attain certain goals.

The most reasonable goal Jones might want the Raiders to meet this spring is making it to practice on time. Duplicating last year's 11-0 dual meet record in Western Lakes Activities Association play might be too much to ask. The Raiders opened the season with a 5-2 loss Friday to Southfield Lathrup, so Jones knows this season might be a struggle.

North might need all the practice time Jones can get. "Everybody knows it's going to be tough following that year," Jones said. "I want to win like everybody else, but it's not a major focus. We're looking to have a good, long-range program. When you do that, you'll get your share of winning."

"ANY TIME YOU win big that sets good standards and goals to shoot for. But I don't want them to have to live up to someone else's expectations, and that's pretty easy to do in tennis."

Graduated from last year's star-studded group are the top three singles players, Josh Hoffman, Jay Graff and Jason Weiss. Graff was the league champion in the No. 2 singles, and Hoffman and Weiss each made it to the semifinals before losing.

Although Jones might have trouble replacing the talented trio, his lone singles returnee, Joe Howitt, brings some impressive credentials with him into his senior year.

Howitt lost in the finals of the league meet at No. 4 last year, and this spring he's been elevated to No. 1. Seniors Tim McEldin and Matt Berman have earned the Nos. 2 and 3 singles spots, respectively, for the Raiders.



McEldin, who played doubles last year, was the only singles performer to manage a win against Lathrup, but good things are expected out of all three. Recently, the three seniors were named tri-captains.

"THEY'RE GOOD kids and they work hard in practice," Jones said. "I have no problem with them being captains at all."

The No. 4 singles position against Lathrup was filled by sophomore Adam Corbin, a transfer student from North Carolina. Jones doesn't rule out the possibility of Corbin moving up to North's singles lineup.

"He hits the ball real hard," Jones said. "I think he'll improve a great deal. There's a possibility of him moving up the ladder. I don't know if he can challenge for the top couple spots, though."

The Raiders' other win Friday came from their No. 3 doubles team of Brian Rottinghaus and Todd Stoneman. Rottinghaus is a senior and Stoneman only a freshman. The other doubles tandems are seniors Tom Tudek and Nir Basse at No. 1 and juniors Ken Yeshida and Rick Benton at No. 2.

Jones said Tudek might fill in at singles some time this spring, and he added he's been impressed by the play of Stoneman.

"Todd's pretty good," Jones said. "He's worked really hard and he's real consistent. He's not a one-in-a-million type kid, but he's pretty outstanding for a freshman. He plays within himself and doesn't try to do more than he's capable of."

blanco, Misaros also added three assists.

Debbie Westerkamp was Farmington's goalkeeper.

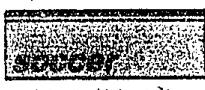
"We played a pretty disciplined game," Farmington coach Cathy Cole said. "I know if the girls play well we're going to do well. Just like any team, it takes a lot of luck and consistency."

## Maier sparks Falcon win

High-scoring forward Carrie Maier picked up Friday where she left off last spring for Farmington's girls soccer team, scoring three goals in the team's season-opening 8-1 win over Bloomfield Hills Lahser.

The Falcons, who host Redford Union at 5:30 p.m. Friday, took a commanding 4-0 halftime lead.

The other Farmington tallies were



scored by five different players. Scoring the goals were Jennifer Misaros, Margaret Martis, Amy Trunk, Kim Popyk and Elson Mem-

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