

Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312



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(F10)



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Katie McDonald, a senior defender, clears the ball from the Farmington end of field and keeps it away from Beth Huck of Troy Athens.

Huck, however, scored the winning goal as the Red Hawks dealt the Falcons their first loss of the season in the state semifinals Wednesday.

Athens trips Falcons

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The desire to win was about all that Troy Athens had left. Time and hope were nearly gone.

With less than a minute left in the semifinal game of the Class A girls soccer tournament Wednesday, the Red Hawks appeared to be headed for defeat and Farmington the state final.

But the opposite was true when the game ended as Athens stunned the top-rated Falcons with a 2-1, overtime victory at Fraser High School.

The Red Hawks take a 21-21 record into the championship game at 1 p.m. Saturday at North Farmington against Northville, which edged Kalamazoo Central 1-0 in a shootout. Farmington suffered its first loss during a 16-1-4 season.

"I've been to six other state finals and won three," Athens coach Tim Storch said, "but I don't remember feeling as much emotion at a point when things seemed so hopeless."

IT LOOKED as if Farmington would hang on for a 1-0 victory, but that changed quickly and dramatically when Christie Stevens scored the tying goal with only 45 seconds left in regulation time. Beth Huck got the winning goal in the first 16-minute overtime period.

Stevens was alone on the left side, and teammate Jaecle Silagyi spotted her and placed a crossing pass right in front of her. Stevens booted a solid, left-footed shot into the corner of the goal.

"She turned and looked left, and I was wide open," Stevens said. "It was the perfect angle to shoot, and it was a good looking on Jaecle's part."

"I think that made us come out pumped up (for the overtime) and ready to go again. We knew we had to score again. We couldn't let it go that long."

The Red Hawks didn't as Huck scored the go-ahead goal midway in the first overtime.

She rolled off a defender as the two made contact in front of the Farmington goal and, as the defender went down, took a centering pass from Michelle Koby. Huck had a free shot at the goal and knocked it past Falcon keeper Deb Westerkamp.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Heather Markoy of Athens takes possession of the ball as Farmington's Amy Trunk loses her footing on the wet grass Wednesday. The Fal-

cons' hopes of winning a state title were dashed when Athens posted a 2-1 victory in overtime.

North's Cunmulaj captures state title

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Zaim Cunmulaj saved his best for last.

In the most important meet of the year, the North Farmington senior could rival Corey O'Brien of Rochester and won the state championship in the discus throw Saturday.

In the Class A finals at Eastern Michigan University, Cunmulaj threw the discus a career-best 163 feet, 11 inches. O'Brien, the runner-up at 163-2, had beaten Cunmulaj by two inches at the West Bloomfield Invitational and eight inches at the Oakland County meet.

"We figured, if he got off a good throw, he had a great chance of winning," North coach Mark Bechard said. "Actually, he threw less than I thought he would. In practice, he's been hitting 170."

"I thought, if he threw close to 170 he'd be tough to beat, and it so happened 163-11 was enough to win it."



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Zaim Cunmulaj of North Farmington won the Class A discus throwing title with a toss of 163 feet, 11 inches.

"He has the potential of throwing that," Bechard said. "He throws that far in warmups, but once he gets in the circle he gets nervous and doesn't settle down. When he's relaxed he gets it out there."

Cunmulaj's first place also made North the highest finisher among Observerland teams at the state meet. The Raiders were 21st with 10 points, and the closest were Livonia Churchill and Redford Union, both of whom tied for 51st with three points apiece.

Plymouth Salem senior Roger Parry was one of six who leaped 6-4 and finished sixth in the high jump. Churchill's Jason Belaire didn't

Track

place in the high jump but was sixth in the 300-meter hurdles with a 39.4 time, and Redford Union's Eric Shoppard was sixth in the discus at 154-1.

IN THE CLASS A girls meet, Farmington's Jennifer Kiel was eighth in the 1,600 run with a school-record time of 5:17.5. She competed but didn't place in the 3,200.

Julie Lawton twisted an ankle and went out at 5-1 in the high jump, but she has been invited to the Tri-State Meet, too. Sprinter Jennifer Reed and hurdler Shellie Gaud made it as far as the semifinals.

Reed and Angie Forge were chosen co-most outstanding trackwoman on the Farmington team.

Farmington Hills Mercy's Kathleen Gerlik, named that team's most outstanding runner, was ninth in the 1,600 at 5:17.9 but only the top eight in each event score points and receive medals.

Teammates Charese Sanders and Jeanette Turner, the team's most improved performer, were 11th in the shot put and discus, respectively. Carrie Walton and Heather Noll were 14th and 15th, respectively, in the 3,200 run with personal-best times of 11:49.

Plymouth Canton's Heather Spencer didn't place in the high jump. She made the opening height of 4-11 on her first jump, cleared 5-1 on her third attempt and failed to make the next step to 5-3.

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