

Mercy student wins double gold in roller skating

By Dan O'Moara
staff writer

It was no fun early last month when Tiffany Tyra was spending countless hours each week practicing on roller skates. It was no fun being secluded in the Riverside Roller Arena instead of socializing with her friends. And it wasn't any fun spending her summer vacation sweating through workouts and doing repetitious routines when she could have been sunbathing or going to the mall.

But when the 15-year-old Canton girl stood on the awards platform in the Will Rogers Coliseum in Fort Worth, Texas, to receive gold medals in two events at the national roller skating championships, it didn't seem so bad after all.

That was fun.

"WHEN YOU'RE up on the podium — and you have all the fame and glory — it's worth it," she said.

Tyra, who won the junior world class dance title with partner Philip Beuck and soloed to capture first place in figures, got a little emotional, considering all the time and effort that went into preparing.

"I started to cry, but I couldn't do that because we had to take pictures after," she said, "and that would have ruined all the make-up."

It was real nerve-racking. When you're done, they show your score on a big, high board. It's just like the Olympics.

Speaking of which, Tyra and Beuck, who will move up to world class next year, have been invited to compete next summer in the Olympic Sports Festival in Minneapolis.

"We'll be skating against the best of the best," Tyra said, expressing skepticism about doing well at that level right away.

"It takes time. They're not going to let a first-year team move up and place. Not that it's bad judging, but you kinda have to wait your turn."

THE TIME HAD come, however, for Tyra to be recognized among her peers. A sophomore at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, she became a celebrity last week when her achievements were announced on the P.A. system the first day of school.

Tyra, who has labored in relative obscurity since she doesn't compete in an interscholastic sport, was standing in the lunch line at the time and admitted to being a little red-faced.

"People in other sports who know what it is to win nationals said, 'Wow, we didn't know you skated competitively,'" she said.

Tyra expressed shock at winning in both events, because the competitors never know what's on the minds of the judges. That uncertainty can give anybody a case of the jitters, but staying cool is part of the act.

"You have to be really cautious without looking cautious," Tyra said. "You



All the hard work and long hours returned a dividend for Tiffany Tyra, who captured first place in junior world class dance and figures at the national roller skating championships. Her admir-

ing mother, Onalee Tyra, owns and operates the Riverside Roller Arena in Livonia where Tiffany trains.

could be favored to win and get blown out of the competition by making one mistake.

"You try not to think about being in front of five judges. You have to think about what you have to do."

WINNING IN figures came as more of a surprise than dance since Tyra and Beuck had been hearing how good they were all along.

"I was probably harder on myself for figures, because I thought I had to be much better than what I was," she said. "Obviously, I was good enough. I think I skated to my ability in both events."

In both dance and figures, the competition was trimmed to 28 couples and skaters in eliminations, and eight go to the finals in dance and four in figures. Tyra and Beuck were tied for first heading into the last round, and Tyra was second in figures.

"I wasn't sure we could pull it off during eliminations (in dance), because

other teams look better to you," Tyra said. "But I'm not a judge who looks at all the technical stuff."

"In dance, I knew we could win, but it depended on how we skated. I knew we had the ability. The team that got second was more showy, but we were technically better."

Tyra's figure skating coach had told her she had a chance to win this year, but she had heard that before from other coaches and wasn't so quick to believe it anymore.

BUT AS THE season progressed and she began to place in various competitions, Tyra started to gain confidence and foresee possibilities.

"Going into the finals, I realized I can actually get first in two events," she said.

She did and, to celebrate, Tyra, her parents, Jim and Onalee Tyra, Beuck and his parents, Dick and Jan Beuck of Cleveland, went dancing.

And they left the roller skates behind this time.

Harrison cagers rout Clarenceville

Having experienced its share of defeats in the past, the Farmington Hills Harrison girls basketball team was on the winning side for a change Tuesday.

The Hawks, after taking a 27-10 halftime lead, continued to roll in the second half en route to a 54-21 victory over visiting Livonia Clarenceville.

Sophomore guard Andrea Najarian scored 20 points for Harrison (1-1), and senior center Shari Barnes added 12. Karen Najarian added 10 points and led the Hawks with 17 rebounds. Guard Rhonda Saunders scored 10 to lead Clarenceville (0-2).

"It's improving, but we've got a lot of work ahead of us," Harrison coach Jim Neve said. "I'm happy with the victory."

N. FARMINGTON 48, NOV 31: The Raiders (1-0) outscored Nov 15-6 in the second quarter and 16-4 in the third quarter, en route to their victory Tuesday at North.

Eve Clear scored 19 points for the Raiders, while Kim Gurecki added 10. Vikki Seamons had seven points and eight rebounds for North. Angel Konarske had seven to lead the Wildcats.

"We didn't shoot well," North coach Greg Capling said. "It looked like a typical first game."

"We played good defense. The only thing I was a little disappointed in was our rebounding. It has to get better."

KIMBALL 50, FARMINGTON 38: The Knights scored 24 points in the first quarter and rolled up a 20-point lead from which visiting Farmington was unable to recover Tuesday.

The Falcons (0-1) were led by Kim Owczarzak's 12 points. Mandy Kannon and Bonnie Wheelers, who grabbed 10 rebounds, added eight points apiece. Senior center Becky Legris had a game-high 22 points for Kimball.

Coach's goal to revitalize Hawks

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But the Marlins, who won the Catholic League by 135 points over their closest challenger, are so strong McClune believes he can afford to withhold his swimmers from their main events and still win for the 22nd straight time.

FARMINGTON HILLS HARRISON The Hawks have a new coach in Terese Peterson, who hopes to build up the sagging program at Harrison. The Hawks were 3-8 in duals and eighth in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

"I feel the team has a great deal more potential than it exhibited last season and needs to feel confident and driven toward the goal that I asked each of the swimmers to establish," Peterson said.

"The girls seem to have a stronger sense of teamwork and togetherness that I feel will only help them to realize their full potential."

"The girls seem to understand that while (assistant coach) Lisa (Collins) and I have been tougher with workout schedules we are doing it to bet-

ter them both as a team and as individuals," she added.

The Hawks will be led by senior Danielle King, juniors Jill Murany and Michelle Doecker and sophomores Stacey Krause, Meredith Perish and Elaine Trager.

King, beginning her fourth year on the team, can swim backstroke, distance freestyle or the IM, and Murany, a state qualifier, is best in the IM but can swim all events.

Doecker is one of Harrison's best sprinters, and Peterson has hopes Krause can qualify for state in the IM and backstroke. Perish competes in the freestyle and breaststroke, and Peterson believes Trager could end up the WLAA champion in diving.

Harrison also has two promising freshmen in Lisa Schaner and Veronica Forberger. Schaner (breast and IM) has competed with the Clarenceville Swim Club in U.S. Swimming and Forberger (free and back) is a good sprinter, Peterson said.

"The incoming freshmen will provide the team with some depth it has

needed," she said.

Possible medley relay swimmers include Doecker, Murany, King, Krause, Forberger, Schaner and Perish, and all but Schaner are contending for a place on the freestyle relay, too. Back relays are potential Class B qualifiers, according to Peterson.

"I think we have many possible state qualifiers in Murany, King, Krause, Forberger, Schaner and Perish," Peterson said. "We want the girls to believe they have the capabilities to all qualify for state and to improve on their previous times, but it's up to them whether this actually happens."

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