

Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312

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Mercy trio among area's elite players

Observer unit rates with best

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

WHEN THE SPORT is girls volleyball, Observerland teams take a back seat to no other region of the state.

Three area teams — Livonia Ladywood, Farmington Hills Mercy and Wayne Memorial — won regional titles. Mercy was a state semifinalist, eliminating Wayne in the quarterfinals, and Class A runner-up Ladywood was in the finals for the third straight year, ousting rival Mercy in the semis.

Furthermore, three-time Western Lakes Activities Association champion Livonia Churchill and Livonia Stevenson also won district championships.

Individually, the talent found in Observerland gets high marks, too.

Mercy's Nikki Burns and Ladywood's Karl Domanski were named to the Class A all-state first team, while Jennifer Goff and Wayne's Evette Sluder were second team. Marjie Pili of Redford Bishop Borgess was a first-teamer in Class B.

The honor squad chosen by area coaches in conjunction with the Observer sports staff includes four repeat selections: Goff, Pili, Burns and Domanski. Garden City's Diane Allison, Sluder and Stevenson's Sue Bell were second-team picks a year ago.

Mercy coach Tim DeBeliso, who guided the Marlins to the Catholic League title in his fourth year at the school and the No. 2 ranking in the season's final poll, was named Coach Of The Year.

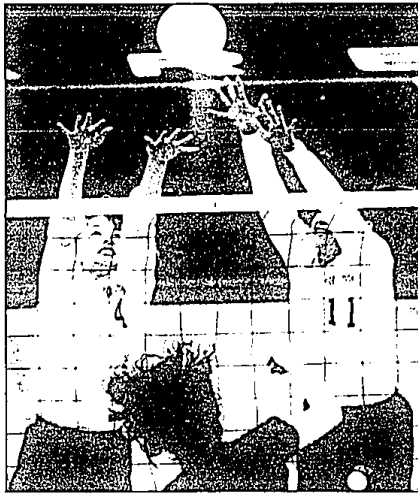
The following are profiles of the 12 players comprising the 1990 All-Area team:

FIRST TEAM

Evette Sluder, senior, Wayne: The all-Wolverine A Conference player averaged five kills per game and set a single-season school record with 567.

Sluder was an 80-percent spiker, having 1,054 good attacks out of 1,194 chances. She recorded 121 solo blocks and 71 aces, putting 88 percent of her serves into play (357-404). Sluder also rated 85 percent (296-347) on serve receive and 80 percent on digs (262-326).

"Evette is the smartest volleyball player I have ever coached," Ann Kohns said. "She gave every opponent a rough time,



JIM JAGOFF/staff photographer

Andrea Velthoven (11), making a block assist in the state quarterfinal match, is one of three Mercy players on the All-Area first team.

all-area volleyball

1990 ALL-AREA VOLLEYBALL TEAM

FIRST TEAM	
Evette Sluder	Wayne
Christina Garry	Churchill
Nikki Burns	Mercy
Andrea Velthoven	Mercy
Diane Allison	Garden City
Karl Domanski	Ladywood
Marjie Pili	Ladywood
Sue Bell	Stevenson
Henka Blonier	Bishop Borgess
Marjie Pili	Wayne
Sara Brody	Wayne

COACH OF THE YEAR

Tim DeBeliso	Mercy
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SECOND TEAM

Alyssa Belaire	Churchill
Progg Kniel	Ladywood
Kelli Haeger	Ladywood
Karl Watson	Clareville
Maureen Paulin	Mercy
Diane Koester	Thurston

THIRD TEAM

Brandy Camcross	Wayne
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Courtney Knapp	H Farmington
Stephanie Speck	Churchill
Terisa Sarno	Stevenson
Amy Schumann	Wayne
Lee Albrecht	Mercy

HONORABLE MENTION

Mercy: Amy Miller, Betsy Pope, Thurston: Kara Kress, Jennifer Bagala, Patty Haney, Lynn Tello, Ladywood: Rebecca Wiley, Jane Konecni, Mary Jo Kelly, Churchill: Jane Porga, Amy Baron, Wayne: Goni Rutting, Laura Fisher, Jennifer Telsa, Kate Corwin, Clareville: Tara Reed, Garden City: Tina Emery, Lisa Payne, Bishop Borgess: Stevenson: Patty Diamond, Corbett Rockwell, Andrea Willock, Laura Zatorski, Wayne: Central: Jackie Brown, Shannon Burr, Wayne: Lake Western: Angie Gierl, Laura Calt, Dawn Goodley, Shawna Schumpert, Salem: Anne Ruth, Kileen Lawrence, Jenny Justice, H Farmington: Vikki Seamons, Eve Clair, Canton: Christy Halliday, Susan Ferro, Lorena Sanford, Farmington: Bonnie Wrecks, Carrie Miller, John Glenn: Michele Myers, Kara Boony, Naki Wogick, Franklin: Erica Sundbeck, Redford Union: Kelli Pennano, Amy Mullen, Lutheran Westland: Ellen Anderson, Michele Corbin, Sarah Love, St. Agathe: Laura Rakowski, Nancy Rycknicki, Autumn Batta, Tracy Vandenhoff.

and she performed very well under pressure. She was the main reason Wayne had such a successful season.

Christina Garry, junior, Churchill: Garry was the driving force behind Churchill's continued dominance in the WLAA.

She pounded 210 kills out of 490 good serves, and she had 35 aces while serving at 80 percent. Garry, a first-team WLAA player, rated 87 percent on her serve reception, and she had 56 solo blocks and assisted on 95 others.

"Christina is an extremely competitive person and takes pleasure in playing opposite the opposing team's toughest offensive player," coach Mike Hughes said. "Her competitive nature makes her an outstanding blocker as well as a fine middle hitter."

"Christina's greatest asset is her constant desire to achieve excellence. As a consequence, she has improved all aspects of her game and could be one of the outstanding players in the state next year."

Jennifer Goff, senior, Mercy: Goff started all four years at Mercy and was twice an all-league and all-region performer.

An outside hitter, she had a kill percentage of .376, and she also had efficiency levels of 92 percent on her serving and 91 percent as a passer. Goff recorded 101 aces and averaged 3½ digs per game.

"Jennifer is extremely dedicated and was our emotional leader," DeBeliso said. "She was able to raise her level of play to new heights in our toughest matches. She is an outstanding hitter and has tremendous range on defense."

Nikki Burns, senior, Mercy: Burns was the unsung hero on Mercy's team, the one who set the table for attackers Goff, Lee Albrecht, Andrea Velthoven and Maureen Paulin.

She averaged 9½ assists per game and had more than 2,000 assist attempts for the season. She also served at 87 percent and had 80 aces. Burns is a two-time, all-league player, too.

"She ran our 5-1 offense to perfection for two years," DeBeliso said. "Our hitters had outstanding years because of Nikki, the finest setter to come out of our district. She had her best performances in our biggest matches, too."

Andrea Velthoven, senior, Mercy: Velthoven, a three-year starter and an all-Catholic League choice, played opposite Goff as the outside attacker.

She served out a .303 kill percentage, and she was a 91-percent server and 85-percent passer. Velthoven contributed 88 service aces for the year and more than four digs per game.

"Andrea's improvement from last year was dramatic," DeBeliso said. "She turned herself into a powerful hitter and aggressive defensive player."

Diane Allison, senior, Garden City: Allison was voted the most valuable player in the Northwest Suburban League and received a berth on the all-region first team.

Forty-three percent of Allison's spikes went for kills, and 24 percent of her serves resulted in aces. She also averaged three blocks per match.

"Diane is a very good player with excel-



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Nikki Burns (center) was an integral part of Mercy's volleyball team, serving as the setter for her powerful-hitting teammates.

lent potential," coach John Groves said, adding Allison, who has a 3.5 grade-point average plans to attend Henry Ford Community College on a scholarship.

Karl Domanski, senior, Ladywood: Domanski, who was a three-year regular and helped the Blazers win back-to-back state championships in her sophomore and junior seasons, was named to the Michigan High School Coaches Association's Dream Team this year.

During her three varsity seasons, Ladywood was 147-17, which included two Catholic League titles and a runner-up finish this year. She was called on to be a middle blocker, left-side spiker and setter as a senior.

"Over the last three years, Karl has had

the greatest combined impact on Ladywood volleyball," coach Tom Teeters said.

"Just prior to the district tournament, we had our eighth lineup change, and Karl's new responsibilities were setter, left-side spiker and cross-court defense."

"This added to our offense in a big way and resulted in victories over Churchill, Sterling Heights Stevenson and the big one — Mercy," he added. "Even though we lost to East Kentwood in the final, Karl's performance was one of the best I've seen."

Marale Sponder, senior, Ladywood: Sponder took on a starring role in

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Spring speedsters

Harrison counts on sprint strength

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington Hills Harrison will rely heavily on its wealth of sprinters to contend for the league championship in girls track and field this spring.

The Hawks, who were runners-up to Plymouth Canton in the Western Division and sixth in the Western Lakes Activities Association, return seven sprinters who should make Harrison competitive in those events.

"I think we'll have good balance in the sprints from the 400 on down," Harrison coach Mark Babcock said. "We'll be able to put some good relay teams together as well as open sprints."

The top returning sprinters are seniors Nitvin Hakim and Nicole Leo and sophomore Audra Cokerham, who was second behind Livonia Churchill's Alyssa Belaire in the WLAA at 400 meters.

"She was just a hair from being the best as a freshman," Babcock said, "so she ought to be up there this year."

"(HAKIM) HAS the most experience. She's been through it all and has been a steady competitor all the way through."

Sophomore Colleen Heinemann will do some sprinting in addition to helping in the high jump and hurdles. Junior Carrie Hennik is another key returnee in the sprints, and sopho-

mores Nicole Addis and Heather Conley will be part of the relay combinations.

"(Heinemann) does a good job in all three (events)," Babcock said. "We expect big things from her. She went to camp and has been working at it all year long. She's spent some time preparing herself."

Harrison lost some of the area's top talents to graduation. Jayne Peters was a standout hurdler, winning the 300-meter regional championship and finishing fourth in Oakland County and sixth in Class B.

Almee Jarvenpaa was a quality person in the shot put and discus, and Maria Chalagianis was another good hurdler who also ran on the mile relay team that included Peters and finished 10th in the state.

Junior Jill Rosenthal was seventh in the regional in the discus last year, and senior Shawna Knight brings back experience in the shot put and discus.

BABCOCK EXPECTS the Hawks to be competitive in the distance runs, too.

Senior Jennifer Carpenter is the veteran of the group that includes Junior Nikki Hesano, junior Jeannie Klotzer, senior Joanne Hannawa, sophomore Alice Chu and junior Alyssa Imami.

"Jennifer has the most experience, and that counts for a lot in distance running," Babcock said. Hesano, who runs everything from the 800 up, "came on at the end of



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Carrie Hennik is a versatile track-and-field athlete.

girls track

last year and is really doing well this year," according to Babcock.

He also has big expectations of Klotzer, who finished third in the regional two-mile race as a sophomore.

"She's a good one," Babcock said. "I'm hoping she does even better this year."

He added, because the WLAA meet was stopped with two events remaining due to poor weather last year, Klotzer didn't get a chance to run her event in the league meet.

"Some kids who didn't do well at league came on at the regional," he said. "We've got some tough distance runners, especially in our city with (Lisa) Rives at North Farmington and (Jennifer) Kiel at Farmington."

WITH THE Hawks having quality in the sprints, good people in the specialty events and depth in the distance runs, Babcock anticipates a good year for Harrison.

"This team has the talent to go a long way," he said. "I hate to make a prediction on wins and losses or how well we might do in the league, but we should be up there in the division unless something goes drastically wrong."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Jill Rosenthal of Harrison returns after finishing seventh in the discus at the Class B regional last year.