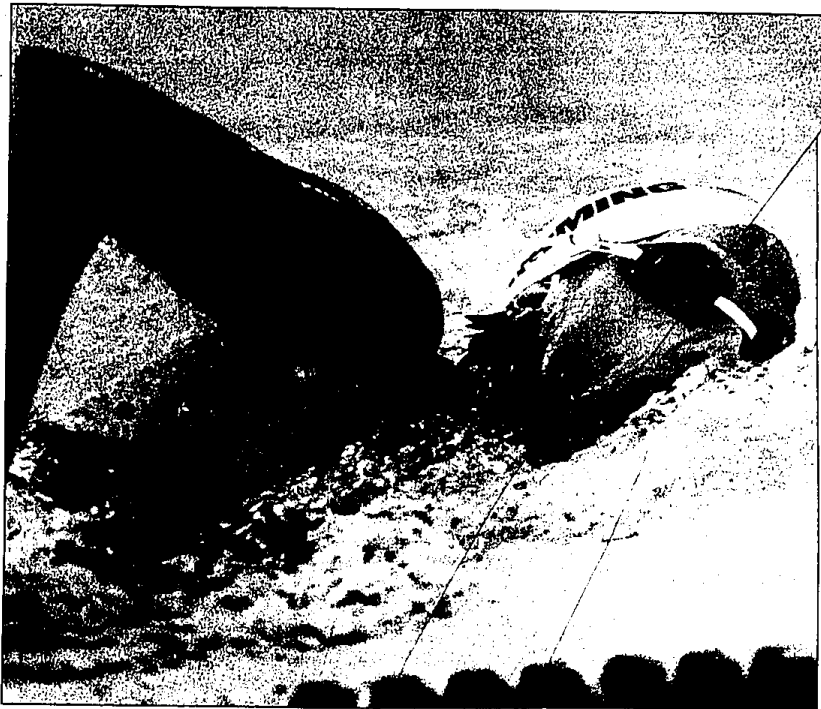


Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312

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Undefeated swimmers

Colleen Kelley won the 50-yard freestyle Tuesday night in Farmington Hills Mercy's 80-13 victory over Livonia Ladywood in girls swimming. The victory improved the Marlines to 5-0 on

the season, but Mercy will put its perfect record in dual meets to the test Thursday when it swims at Ann Arbor Pioneer. See story on Page 8D.

JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer

Davidson retains state tennis title

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Winning her second straight state singles championship was a bitter-sweet experience for Farmington Hills Harrison senior Kori Davidson. Actually, it was more sweet than bitter.

The thrill of defending her Class B title was "awesome," but it also signaled the end of Davidson's illustrious high school career. "I was so happy but I was so sad, because it was my last high school match," said Davidson, who defeated Sarah Akhtar of Bloomfield Hills Kingswood 6-1, 6-0 in the final Saturday at Holland Christian High School.

"I was up 40-love and thinking about the last point. It went to deuce, and I couldn't decide if I wanted it to end or not. But it was too cold to stay out there any longer."

DAVIDSON, WHO led the Hawks to a fifth-place finish in team competition, breezed through the tournament, winning eight sets and losing just six games.

More difficult than actually repeating as state champion was the mental challenge of living up to others' expectations. Having won as a junior, Davidson was the odds-on favorite all year to win again.

"The competition was easier, but the pressure was a lot harder," she said. "It was probably the best I've played all year."

"My serve was better than it's ever been. It's been the worst part of my game, but it was the best it's been in the last seven years."

"It was close during some games," she said. "It just didn't show in the



Kori Davidson
two-time state champion

score, because I played well on some key points."

Davidson started her bid for a repeat by blanking Inlay City's Vesha Pollack 6-0, 6-0. She whipped Wendy Miller of St. Joseph 6-2, 6-0 and Mo Berisch of East Grand Rapids 6-1, 6-2 to reach the final.

"SHE'S AMAZING," Harrison coach Bernie Goldstein said. "She just played incredibly good tennis, and there was no competition for her. These other girls are good tennis players, too. She beat the Kingswood girl 6-1, 6-0, and she was the second-best player there."

Goldstein didn't hesitate in saying Davidson is the all-time best tennis player he's coached at Harrison — boy or girl.

"I used to think we had a couple boys in the past who could play with

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Falcons 6th in Class A

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Despite expectations of placing higher, Farmington finished a very respectable sixth Saturday at the Class A golf finals.

The Falcons, who were 23rd last year, shot a 331 team score and tied with Ann Arbor Pioneer and Troy in the 24-team tournament.

Birmingham Brother Rice won the team title with 314 strokes, and Chris Storm of Ypsilanti was the medalist with a three-over-par 74 at Forest Akers Golf Course on the Michigan State University campus.

"We were all disappointed," said Farmington coach Jim Miner of his players, who were regional champs. "I knew we were going to do better (than last year), and sixth is still good."

"I thought we might be in the top three and could even win it. That would have been sweet, but it was a tall order."

golf

"BUT THERE'S no reason for the boys to be embarrassed," he added. "It's just not as good as I thought we could have done. Anyone who scores in the top 10 is a good team. To score as well as we did reflects the depth and quality of the team."

Jason Buba shot 81 to lead Farmington but was seven strokes over his tournament average, according to Miner. Chris Zbanek shot 82, Adam Hibbs, averaging 76 in tournament play, and Brian Link 84.

Buba, the regional medalist at Brighton, shot 40 on the front nine and 41 on the back side.

"He steadily struggled all day," Miner said. "The puts weren't falling and the chips weren't getting close enough — that kind of stuff."

The weather was not ideal for

golf, either.

"On the last nine holes, the wind was pretty high, and I came to believe the kids don't play that well when the winds come up," Miner said.

"Unfortunately, the boys were not able to keep it together under those conditions. It was hard for the boys to adjust as consistently as I would have liked."

MINER SAID he had hoped the Falcons could cap a fine season in which they also won the Western Lakes Activities Association championship with a state title. That would have been a perfect sendoff for the seniors — Zbanek, Hibbs, Ling and Tim True.

"It would have been a nice last hurrah," Miner said. "Buba and Peter True will be around for two more years and, hopefully, have another shot at it."

"It's been a tremendous year, and it looks optimistic for next year."

Falcons ousted; Hawks advance

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Birmingham Groves earned its seventh straight berth in a boys district soccer final Wednesday with a 4-2 victory over host Farmington.

The Falcons (8-8-1) will play perennial power Livonia Stevenson at 1 p.m. Saturday at Northville High School.

"We've never played them before," Groves coach Phillip Douse said. "I hope it's a cold, muddy field. If it's a crappy day, it will be to our advantage."

Groves has won four district titles in the last six years. Farmington ends the season 4-7-2.

The home team took the lead on first-half goals by Mike Giese and Jason Childress, but the visitors rallied for a 3-2 halftime advantage.

Mike Fluegal scored the first of two goals to tie, tapping in Cutler Federation's throw-in, and Jeff O'Connor's goal came less than a minute later on a penalty kick.

"I was impressed with (O'Connor)," Farmington coach Cathy Cole said. "He's a quality player. They ran their attack from the backfield, and he's a good tough player. He's able to put the ball on the forward's foot."

Fluegal made it 4-2 early in the second half. Farmington failed to

soccer

protect the ball in its end, and Fluegal got behind the defense to fire a crossing shot into the opposite corner.

"We should have been more tenacious on the ball," Cole said. "We let them play the ball first, which dictated the outcome."

The visitors dominated the second half, staying on the attack most of the time and giving Farmington few chances.

Groves could have scored at least two more goals, but Steve Scharff's header hit the crossbar and Rob Blake just missed in front following a cross from Eric Hollis.

"I told them to put all the balls to the wing and put it in the air as much as possible because there was so much wind," Douse said. "The ball travels so far, and it's so hard to defend."

Dan Gross, a four-year starter like O'Connor, was in goal for the winners. Fluegal scored the game's first goal.

"Jeff O'Connor is an all-state runner, and that helps when you're

playing soccer," Douse said. "Fluegal has played well the last four games."

Cole thinks her team will be stronger next year.

"For a young team I'm real proud of them," she said. "We improved each game and showed promise for seasons to come."

HARRISON 4, CRESTWOOD 2: Ben Pinsky scored two first-half goals Wednesday to stake the Hawks to a 3-0 halftime lead in the Class B district game at Crestwood.

Harrison (6-7-2) will play tournament host Redford Thurston at 11 a.m. Saturday for the championship. The Chargers finish at 8-9.

Steve Blankenship scored Harrison's third goal with an assist from Mark Lebovitz, who got the fourth goal in the second half. Jay Boger and Vince Berg assisted on Pinsky's goals, and Derek Lenz assisted on the last goal.

"We played a very strong first half," Harrison coach Glenn Bruhan said. "I don't think they had a shot on goal the whole time."

"Here we are just below .500 in the Western Lakes, and going into the Class B tournament we had some good competition. It really prepared us."

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