

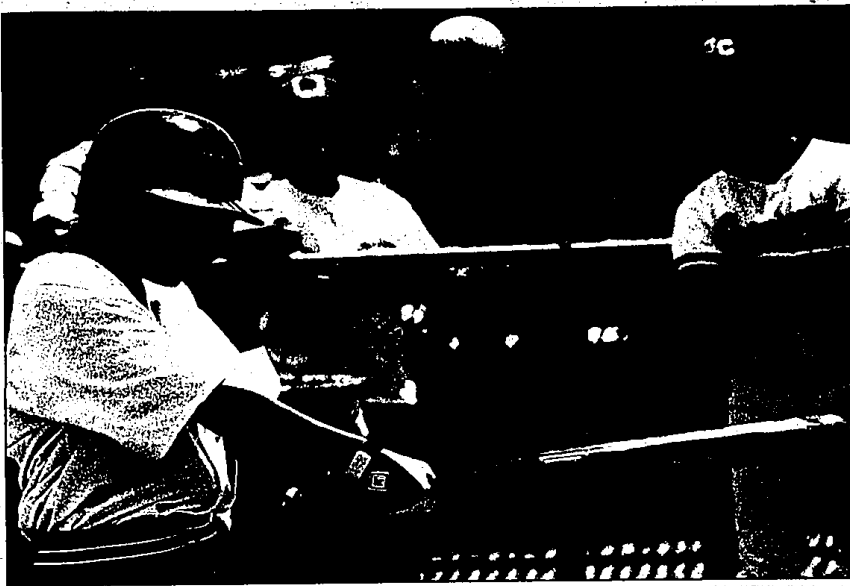
Sports

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SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Angela Mastrolonni makes contact during an at-bat Saturday in the Class A regional softball tournament at Wyandotte, Mass.

trionni and her Mercy teammates fared well against Garden City but lost 3-2 to the top-ranked Cougars in the first game.

Clarenceville eliminated in regional final

By Neal Zipser
staff writer

Livonia Clarenceville played the role of Cinderella this season, but at Saturday's Class C regional softball final at Blissfield, the glass slipper didn't fit.

Like in the fairy tale, the Trojans were the team not expected to make the big ball or live happily ever after with the prince. But after unexpectedly finishing second in the Metro Conference, the 11-member squad won its district championship — a feat it hasn't accomplished in 12 years.

The dream continued Saturday when the Trojans upset Michigan Center 14-12 in a thrilling come-from-behind victory in the round of 16. Clarenceville woke up from its dream, not from a kiss by a prince, but by being thrashed by regional champion Riverview. Gabriel Richard, 19-0.

One of the problems the Trojans encountered was fatigue, not from the queen's ball, but from Clarenceville's senior all-night party Friday, which several players attended. Mix that with a long, boring bus ride to the rural city of Blissfield and it produced several tired Trojans.

"I WAS worried all week about how we would come out," Clarenceville coach Wendy Kellehan said. "The girls had a senior all-night party and the long bus ride here made it worse. We were tired and we needed some time to get used to being out on the field. I had to tell them that the party was over."

"We were the Cinderella team this year and it's nice to know that you were one of only eight teams in the state left playing softball."

There will not be another 12-year wait until we are here again. I don't predict any league championships next season, but I didn't expect a 17-4 season this year. I'm proud of the entire team and they did the school proud."

Clarenceville proved to be no match for Richard, which easily defeated Morenci, 12-1, to reach the finals. The mighty Pioneers (36-9) used a no-hitter from Junior Carolyn Muszynski in their first win of the day. It was her seventh no-hitter of the season.

Senior Rhonda Saunders ripped a single off Muszynski's leg to begin the championship game, but that proved to be the only hit against the Pioneer pitching staff. Muszynski buried the first three innings and struck out seven batters. Senior Car-

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'There will not be another 12-year wait until we are here again. I don't predict any league championships next season, but I didn't expect a 17-4 season this year.'

— Wendy Kellehan
Clarenceville coach

lie Glizicki pitched the final two innings of hitless ball and struck out four.

WHILE CLARENCEVILLE struggled, Richard had no trouble finding the bases. It took an early 1-0 lead after a Beth Wisniewski double knocked in Theresa Lafrete, who had singled.

The Pioneers put the game out of reach with a seven-run second inning. Karrie Trimmer hit her first of three doubles to start the inning. Saunders, who pitched the entire game in Clarenceville's regional opener, began having trouble finding home plate. After an error, she walked three consecutive batters. After two more errors and two hits, the Pioneers were ahead 8-0.

"Clarenceville was a one-pitcher team and when you play as long as they did in their game, then you're going to get tired," Richard coach Bob Wilkerson said. "You could tell that they lost some steam. Clarenceville was a better team than they showed."

Richard scored six more times in the third inning and five times in the fourth inning to open a 19-0 lead and put the mercy rule in effect.

"This won't take away from our season at all," Kellehan said. "I hope by the time we get back (to Livonia) some of the sting will be gone. You can't complain about a 17-4 season. You can't ask for anything more than that."

CLARENCEVILLE didn't look like it would get by Michigan Center in the first game, as the Cardinals

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Marlins fall to No. 1 team

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Even nerves couldn't throw Garden City curves in its quest for a regional Class A softball championship.

The Cougars arrived at Wyandotte's Memorial Park a little uptight, but after a 3-2 semifinal win over Catholic League champion Farmington Hills Mercy, followed by Tracy Thompson's no-hitter in a 9-0 triumph over Belleville in the title game, GC is relaxed and Final Four-bound.

GC (35-2 overall) will be making its first trip to the state semifinals since 1987 when it taken on Birmingham Marlian (18-15). (Game time is 10:30 a.m. Friday at Battle Creek's Bailey Park.)

"We knew if we could get past that Mercy game it could be a stepping stone," said Thompson, a senior right-hander. "It was kind of scary. I was very nervous because I meant so much."

The Cougars were determined not to have a repeat of last year's extra-inning regional semifinal loss to Trenton.

GC, however, fell behind 1-0 in the top of the second inning when Maura Pheneys singled, advanced to second on a sacrifice by Kim Reichard, and scored on successive passed balls.

"THE KIDS were very nervous going in, but that's OK, it's natural," GC coach Barry Patterson said. "We also felt a sense of urgency to get out on top."

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Mercy, fresh from 1-0 district championship win last week over state-ranked Livonia Franklin, received a sterling performance from pitcher Maureen Paulin.

But an uncharacteristic four errors on the day led to the Marlins' undoing, enabling the Cougars to get a run back quickly in the bottom half of the second.

Jennifer Horosko singled, took second on an infield error, advanced to third on a sacrifice by Gwen Tittensor, and scored on a passed ball. The Cougars then scratched across two runs in the fourth.

Horosko and Kelly O'Neill both reached base on errors, ultimately coming around on an RBI groundout by Tittensor, followed by an RBI single by Carolyn Shanks, the outstanding senior shortstop who went 4-for-6 on the day.

Mercy cut the deficit to 3-2 in the top of the fifth.

Erin Wiehe got things rolling by singling in her second consecutive at-bat. Pinch runner Carrie Quint was sacrificed to second by Marcy Eastman, advanced to third on a groundout and scored on a wild pitch.

THOMPSON SET THE Marlins down in order in the sixth.

Reichard then punched a single down the right field line with one-out in the seventh, but the GC hurler got tough, recording a pair of groundouts to end the game and dashing Mercy's state tourney run.

"I thought they were nervous, and we felt we could come in and capitalize on that," Mercy coach Suzanne Brown said. "We're a pretty good defensive team, but if we have a weakness defensively, we sometimes let the little ones (fly balls) drop. I wish, that on a couple of those opportunities we could have made the plays to get out of the inning. But things like that happen."

Mercy out-hit the Cougars, 4-3. "Maureen struggled a little and didn't pitch her best game," said Brown, whose team bowed out with a 28-9 record. "But if that is how she struggles, I'll take it. She pretty much kept them (the Cougars) quiet."

Patterson, meanwhile, felt a big sigh of relief after the semifinal win.

"We felt this game (Mercy) was the biggest stumbling block," Patterson said. "We played a little tentative, maybe not going up to the plate and free swinging the way we're capable of. "But to come out on top is a great feeling. We felt we could win the second game by scoring only a few runs."

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Cardinals end North's tourney streak

By Jim Toth
staff writer

Sixteen innings, six runs, 10 hits — not exactly an offensive explosion, but good enough to advance the Rochester baseball team into the Michigan High School Athletic Association Class A state semifinal round.

The Falcons, now two wins away from claiming the school's first state title in baseball, combined stellar pitching with solid defense Saturday to turn back Chippewa Valley, 3-1, and Davidson, 3-2, in state regional play at Flushing High School. North Farmington, which rounded out the four-team field, was ousted in the opener, dropping a 5-1 decision to Davidson.

The results send the Falcons (27-5 overall) to Battle Creek's Bailey Park Friday for a semifinal clash against Midland Dow, 3-1 regional-final winners over Grand Rapids Christian. With a victory, the Falcons would play for the Class A crown Saturday against the winner of the Plymouth Salem-Grosse Pointe North semifinal. All games will begin at 1 p.m.

"IT'S A GREAT feeling," beamed Rochester baseball coach Bob Dieters after the Falcons' come-from-behind, nine-inning final victory over Davidson. "You never know what's going to happen when you get this far. I just want the guys to keep playing hard."

As has been the case much of the season, Dieters made all the right calls with his pitching staff.

Rochester advances to Final 4

Junior right-hander John Pikur took the ball in the first game and methodically mowed down the Big Reds to raise his record to 9-1 on the season. He held his opponents to five hits and one walk while striking out four in seven innings of work.

Game two saw junior Darren Brady get the call, and like a week ago in district play, give way to junior Pat Hachenski early in the game. Hachenski, for the second week in a row, responded by being in complete control of Davidson batters. The Rochester right-hander entered the game with two on and nobody out in the second inning and didn't allow a hit the rest of the way. He struck out 12 and walked only two in raising his record to 6-1 overall.

"The pitching gets better the farther you go," Dieters said. "We experienced that today, but we also had some hot pitchers going. Pikur pitched a great game in the first game and then Pat came on and did a great job in the second game."

son's Jason King drove in the first run with a single and Marty Houser knocked in the other with a fielder's choice.

Rochester, which left 11 runners stranded in the extra-inning affair, cut the deficit in half by pushing across one run in the third inning: Walks to Hachenski, Chris LaPortest and Pikur by starter Ryan McClellan loaded the bases and senior catcher Geoff Damman laid down a perfect suicide squeeze to bring home the run.

In the fourth, the Falcons drew even on a single by Jim Peters, sacrifice bunt by Brady and RBI single off the bat of Hachenski.

The game stayed that way until the ninth, when with two out, Tim Hachenski drew a walk, moved to second on a passed ball and raced around to score on a single to left by Pikur.

Hachenski made the run stand up by setting the side down in order in the bottom of the inning.

SENIOR ANDY Johnson, who came on in relief of junior Dan Garman — forced out of the game after pitching the maximum amount of innings allowed by the MHSAA for one day — suffered the loss.

Against Chippewa Valley, the Falcons did all their scoring in the first inning, combining singles by Tim Hachenski, Pikur and LaPortest to produce three runs. They would manage just one hit the rest of the way.

The lone run off Pikur came in the



JIM RIDER/staff photographer

Mike Jehle makes a diving attempt to reach a ground ball from his second base position Saturday in regional play. North was beaten by runner-up Davidson, 5-1.

fourth when Ed D'Ignoffi cracked a single to drive in John Osner.

Chippewa Valley mounted a threat in the seventh, but a base-running error proved costly, sending the Falcons on their way to the regional crown.

In the day's first game, the Raiders were quietly against the Big Reds, scratching only two hits off Garman. The Big Reds right-hander

walked three and struck out five in tossing seven strong innings.

DAVIDSON scored two runs in the first, one in the second and two more in the third off starter and loser Andrew Margolick.

The Raiders lone tally came in the third, without the benefit of a hit. Jason Horwitz and Mike Jehle drew walks and moved up one base on a double steal. A ground out by Mar-

golick brought in Horwitz.

"We looked like a little league team out there at times," North Farmington coach Irv Horwitz said after watching his team conclude its season with a 15-10 mark. "We had some opportunities, but we couldn't get the big hit."

"But this has been a fantastic season and a great group of kids," Horwitz went on. "They never quit."