

Sports

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INSIDE:
Street Scene, page 7B

(F)18

Returnees boost Farmington mat hopes in 1992

By Dan O'Meara
and Steve Kowalski
staff writers

Farmington had a good wrestling team last year, and the Falcons have most of those wrestlers back again.

So naturally coach Al Beyer and his charges expect to do well in 1991-92. Farmington has 16 seniors on its team, 14 of whom have wrestled for at least three years.

"We've got the experience," Beyer said. "With 10 to 12 seniors in the lineup, we should be a real solid team. We should have several seniors work their way to the state meet."

The Falcons were third in the Lakes Division of the Western Lakes Activities Association, fifth in the WLA and 12th in Oakland County.

The only notable losses from that team were district champion Chris Kresl (152), Brian Link (135) and Steve Walter (160). Kresl was second in the league, Walter third and Link fourth. They had a combined record of 100-38 last year.

The returning seniors with the most experience include Mike Palo, Jon Duff, Matt Siskosky, Steve Lemieux, David Link, Rob Sutton, Brian Beattie and Rob Cavagnol.

Palo (27-11-1) was third in the league at 171, and Duff (25-16) moves up a weight to 125 this year. Siskosky (20-11) missed the WLA meet because of a knee injury but has recovered and will wrestle in the heavyweight slot. The 215-pound Siskosky was an all-area linebacker in football.

Lemieux (22-18) placed fifth in the league at 135, Link (14-6) sixth at 140, Sutton fifth at 112, Beattie (17-12) sixth at 103 and Cavagnol sixth at 145. Beattie will wrestle at 112 this year, Cavagnol at either 171 or 189.

"As a dual-meet team, we should be real strong," Beyer said. "I don't think we're going to have any weak spots in our lineup. But they have to prove themselves as individuals and as a team on the mats."

Walled Lake Western also has most of its team back. Plymouth Salem is a three-time defending champion, and Westland John Glenn always has a good team.

"We should be right up there with them," Beyer said.

Seniors Dave Monge (152), Ryan Adams (160), Jason Holliday (140), Craig Dillon (140), Paul Ander-

wrestling

son (112), Dave Burgess (171-89), Matt Smith (125-30) and Tony Phelps (152-40) also return with varsity experience and make an already-strong senior class that much better. Junior John Lang (119) is another veteran of varsity competition.

"The only place I don't see a senior fitting in is 103," Beyer said.

Freshman Pablo Cervi should fill that slot. Freshman Johnny Economy (112) and sophomore Mike Prough (135-40) are expected to challenge for time on the mats, also.

The Falcons, who were 13-8 in duals last year, began the season Saturday with a triangular meet against host Mount Clemens Clintondale and Milford Lakeland. The Oakland County meet will take place Friday and Saturday.

NORTH FARMINGTON

First-year Raiders coach Jeff Fagan has an impressive returnees returning to go with several potentially-good wrestlers in hopes of improving on a 5-8 dual meet record in 1990-91.

Graduated from last year's team is Aaron Lawrence, a 160-pounder who was 22-14 overall and a second-place WLA performer. The leading returnee is 140-pound senior Marcus Brown, who also took second in the WLA, was a regional qualifier and finished 25-11-1 overall.

Others back include senior Dan Cassidy, a 119-pounder who was 17-17 a year ago and sixth in the league; Bob Chicks, a senior heavyweight who was 17-12 and fourth in the WLA; and Jared Lawrence, a 116-pound junior, who took fifth in the league and was 21-13 overall.

"Since this is my first year at North Farmington it's hard to make predictions," Fagan said. "I have been very impressed with the work ethic of our team. My goal is to improve all year and get some people to the state meet."

Among those who didn't have such promising records a year ago, but have improved, are: Mark McDonald, a 112-pound junior (8-16).

Please turn to Page 2



Steve Gallagher (with ball) looks for an opening in the Redford Union defense Friday night. Gallagher scored a game-high 20 points but it wasn't enough as the Falcons lost in overtime.

OT heartbreak

Falcons fall to 1-1 with non-league loss at RU

Tip Smathers didn't really know what to expect.

His Redford Union boys basketball team was coming off a humiliating 94-49 season-opening, homecourt loss to Walled Lake Central. "That was very embarrassing, and I didn't know if the guys I started would come to play (Friday)," Smathers said.

He got his answer. The Panthers battled back to tie the game in the closing seconds of regulation, then won in overtime 60-57 over visiting Farmington.

"We played much better team defense," noted Smathers. "It was a nice team effort. Paul Nowak played pretty good defense on their hotshot, (Steve) Gallagher. He got 20 but he really had to work for them."

Nowak scored only six points, but most of them came at critical moments. He scored his biggest basket with less than 10 seconds left in regulation and RU trailing by three. Nowak popped in a three-pointer, tying it at 53. Farmington got off a shot for the win before the buzzer, but missed.

The Panthers, who led through most of three quarters (it was 26-22 at the half), regained control in OT. Jason Gagnon got their only bas-

basketball

ket, but they connected on 5-of-8 free throws — including two by Nowak and two more by Bill Malecki that tied the victory with 1.7 seconds left.

Malecki's 18 points paced RU. Gagnon had 13 and nine rebounds, and Thels scored 11 and grabbed seven boards. Gallagher's 20 points was best for Farmington; Brian Farr finished with 18.

Both teams are now 1-1.

HARRISON 67, OAK PARK 62: Two minutes into the second half, Farmington Harrison's six-point halftime lead was gone. Oak Park had rallied to score the first seven points of the second half; entering the final quarter, the homecourt Redskins were clinging to their one-point lead.

But the Hawks' bench came through. Ryan Cahill, Greg Piscopink and Jeremy Teachman combined for 19 fourth-quarter points to push Harrison's record to 2-0. Piscopink and Cahill each finished

with seven for the game; Teachman had six.

Paul Gilydis and Andy Fitzpatrick carried the Hawks to their 35-29 halftime lead. Gilydis scored 15 of his game-high 17 points in the first two quarters, and Fitzpatrick had nine of his 10 points. Balance was the difference: Eight Hawks scored six or more points.

Dan Hight contributed eight points and six assists; Gilydis grabbed 14 rebounds, Fitzpatrick hauled down nine. Free throws aided the Hawks' cause, too — they converted 19-of-25 to Oak Park's 9-of-18.

Richard Jenkins had 15 points and Alan Card 14 for the Redskins (0-2).

REDFORD CC 77, WAYNE 61: Chad Varga must have felt like he was back at Dearborn Fairlane Christian.

Varga, who averaged 27 points per game as a sophomore at Fairlane Christian, poured in 41 Friday

to lead Redford Catholic Central past Wayne Memorial, 77-61, in a non-league game.

The 6-foot-6 senior center, who transferred last year to CC, had three dunks, eight rebounds and several blocked shots. His 41 points were six shy of the all-time CC single-game record set in by Rob Gonzalez in the late 1970s.

"He was the difference in the game," Wayne coach Chuck Henry said. "The thing about playing a good team is it exposes your Achilles heel, your weaknesses. And our weakness is inside. We're very, very weak inside and it showed."

Varga's best moment came in the second quarter with CC ahead 18-13. CC point guard Bob Kummer (21 points) stole a Wayne pass near halfcourt and fed the ball to Varga who raced in for a 180 degree two-handed slam dunk. Instead of celebrating the dunk, Varga raced to the other end of the court and blocked an attempted dunk by Wayne's Greg Hartman.

CC fans weren't sure what was more impressive, the dunk or the block.

Hartman led Wayne, 1-1 overall, with 16 points before fouling out. CC is 2-0 overall.

Mustangs dunk Falcons

Farmington had three first places in its first dual meet of the boys swim season Tuesday, but Northville scored the most points and defeated the Falcons 54-41.

Mark Scario, Dave Kant, Craig Mathie and Mike Martin combined to win the 200-yard freestyle relay for Farmington in 1:39.81.

Brandon Richardson had the most points in diving with a 223.75 total, and Kevin Yoder gave the Falcons first place in the breaststroke with a 1:09.34 finish.

Farmington's Steve Scario had three second places, including one relay. He swam 2:21.91 in the individual medley and 1:04.39 in the butterfly. Scott Frump, Mark Scario,

Chris Frump and Steve Scario completed the medley relay in 1:50.65.

Scott Frump also was second in the 500 freestyle at 24:54 and third in the backstroke at 1:01.89.

The Falcons got second-place swims from Don Boyer in the 100 freestyle (5:47.00), Jon Reed in the 500 freestyle (5:25.18) and Scott Brown in the 200 freestyle (2:01.26).

Farmington's 400 freestyle relay also finished second with Boyer, Mathie, Mario Nordini and Mike Enburg combining efforts for a 3:46.80 time.

The Falcons have three sets of relay swimmers on their team — Scott and Chris Frump, Steve and Mark Scario, Jeff and John James.

Harwell shows why he's always a hit with fans

WHILE DOING SOME Christmas shopping Friday morning at Westland Mall, Virginia Robbins came across a Christmas present for herself.

Robbins, a Canton resident, unexpectedly met beloved former Tigers' announcer, Ernie Harwell — and it was probably the best surprise she'll receive this holiday season.

Robbins was there to meet Harwell, but she couldn't help but run over to the legendary announcer after hearing what she'd heard his voice from a distance. Harwell was on hand at B. Dalton Bookstore to autograph copies of his new book, "Diamond Gems."

After spotting Harwell, Robbins couldn't resist purchasing a couple of books, although "I won't say for whom. That wouldn't be fair."

"I heard his voice (from a distance), and I thought, 'Oh God, that's Ernie Harwell,'" Robbins said. "You can't mistake that voice. It'll always be there."

Harwell began autographing books at about 11 a.m. and by 12:30 p.m. it had already been a long day for the ball of fame announcer. Earlier that morning he was on the air at WCAR, AM 1090, in Livonia, accepting the station's first-ever Michigan "Senior of the Year" honor.



Steve Kowalski

talk show program exclusively for senior citizens, entitled "Senior Spotlight" and hosted by Larry Denman. The show airs every Friday morning at 9 a.m. and producer/account executive Mary Lou Janiga said to end its fifth season, the station decided to honor Harwell as "Senior of the Year" recipient.

Harwell and his wife, Lulu, make their home in Farmington Hills and plan on keeping the residence even if he accepts another play-by-play job in the American League.

He ruled out taking over the play-by-play duties in Baltimore and New York, however, and might even end up in television with ESPN or one of the networks.

"In the next month I'll make up my mind," he said. "I'm as much in the dark right now as you are."

Harwell is well deserving of the honor of "Senior of the Year" — having overcome several setbacks in the

last 12 months.

We all remember a year ago at this time when the Tigers and WJR radio unexpectedly and so insensitively fired Harwell after 31 years as the team's play-by-play man, allowing him to serve only one more year.

A month later, in January, his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. The cancer is in remission and Lulu's health has improved greatly — "she's quite healthy right now," Harwell said — but then in August the couple got some more bad news when lightning struck their Farmington Hills home, causing major damage.

Fortunately neither one was in the house at the time. "I think Lulu was shopping at the time and I was at Tiger Stadium," said Harwell, who can laugh about the experience now. "I didn't know about the lightning hitting my house until an announcer from Toronto, Tom Check, said 'Hey Ernie, your house is on TV.'"

"We just had to keep our faith in God and keep on keeping on. I can't look back. I've got to look forward."

IN TYPICAL Harwell fashion, he said he wasn't sure why he deserved the award from WCAR.

This is fantastic, but I don't know why they picked me," he said. "I guess they've got to have somebody."

Janiga was convinced Harwell was something special about a month ago when he came in to the WCAR studio

to be interviewed by another local radio personality. This was the first time the two met and Janiga asked Harwell for an autograph for her father, who has cancer.

Harwell not only gave out his autograph, but visited Janiga's father at his home in Garden City.

"Ernie asked me, 'Where does your father live?' I said Garden City and he said 'Let's go see him,'" recalls Janiga. "That's the kind of guy Ernie is. My dad was overwhelmed, it was the thrill of a lifetime. What Ernie did was have us all hold hands, me, my dad and mom and he said a prayer, which was a nice gesture."

We all know Ernie mostly for his voice and generosity but he's also quite a talent with the pen. "Diamond Gems" isn't the first book Harwell has authored.

Back in 1985, Harwell, upon the prodding of friend and publisher Bill Haney, wrote a book called "Tune to Baseball."

"I enjoy writing, but I like it better when it's done (gone to press)," he said.

Harwell also is an accomplished song writer, recalling "Move over Babe" and "I don't know any better" as his finest pieces. B.J. Thomas recorded the latter of the two songs on one of his records.

Please turn to Page 2

WCAR IS the only radio station in Michigan with a