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Farmington rules Observerland mats

Team effort delivers win for Falcons

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Other teams had more individual champions, but nobody could match the overall depth of the Farmington wrestling team Saturday in the first Observerland Invitational.

The Falcons overwhelmed their area opponents as 11 of 12 wrestlers earned medals (finishing fifth or better) and enabled Farmington to amass 194 1/2 points at Garden City High School.

"Maybe we can get ranked on top now," Farmington coach Al Beyar said, referring to the fact that Redford Catholic Central and Plymouth Salem had been rated ahead of the Falcons in Observerland.

"Everybody won it for us. That's the way it's been all year. We placed everyone but one kid, and he won two matches for us. So it was a total team effort."

CC and Salem finished lower than expected, in fifth and sixth place, respectively, and the most offered a consolation match with Plymouth Canton, Westland John Glenn and Lutheran Westland taking the Nos. 2-4 positions.

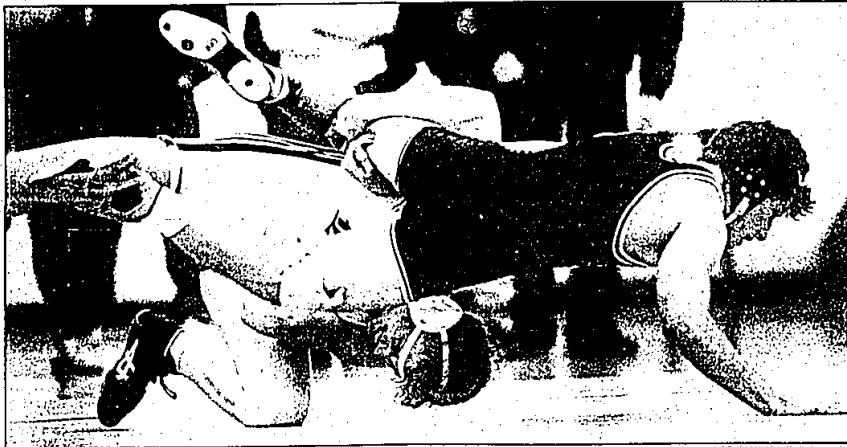
SALEM'S DAN Bonnett and CC's Dan Kelly were named the most outstanding wrestlers.

Both were the top seeds in their weight classes and defeated the No. 2 seeds in the final. Bonnett placed two opponents in 30 seconds or less before winning 13-0 over Jon Duff of Farmington at 125 pounds. Kelly also had two pins at 171 and defeated Canton's George Young 13-7 in one of the best matches.

"You get warmed up and get your confidence in the first match," Bonnett (26-1) said. "In the second, you find out what you're doing wrong and correct these things. By the final match, you've got what's working for you that day."

Farmington, which won its third tournament title, had one champion in Rob Cavagnol at 189.

In addition to Duff, the Falcons got third-place finishes from Matt Siskosky, Ryan Adams, Mike Palio, Dave Munge and Jason Holliday.



PAUL HUISCHMANN/staff photographer

Rob Cavagnol of Farmington gives up a takedown in the 189-pound final, but those were the only points Phil Haynes scored. Cavagnol won a 5-2 decision and was the only Farmington

wrestlers, including Joe Hunter, who won the 152 title on an injury default over Lutheran Westland's Mike Kallner. In addition to Young, Andy Strahan was second, with Nick Spano and Jerry Flynn getting thirds.

Glenn had a pair of champions in Tom Pace (103) and Mike Manoli (112), and Matt Graca (130) and Shane Hall (145) captured second-place spots.

"WE'RE JUST a real strong, well-balanced, dual-meet team, and we can place just about everyone in a tournament. That's been our strong point all year."

The tournament not only provided a venue for area wrestlers to demonstrate their talents, but also for the Observer to showcase one of its employees, Salem's Scott Martin, who won the 119 championship, delivers the Observer newspaper.

"I was Carrier Of The Month, too," he said. "It's a good job. The Observer is a good paper. I'm glad to deliver the paper, wrestle in the tournament and be associated with the paper."

Canton also made an impressive showing. The Chiefs placed nine

champion, but he had plenty of support and the Falcons won the tournament.

"IF YOU continue in that same vein there are other things that can happen, so I chose to pull him," Hill said, adding the Rockets lost more than 30 points by the move. "He's such a good boy. It leaves a bad taste. I know the parents are not happy but it bothered me, too."

Lutheran Westland capitalized on its opportunity to go head-to-head with the Class A powers in the area. Tony Horvath won the 130 championship, and six others also placed, including Kallner, Mace Mattison, Doug Johnson, Craig Shafer and Jamie Hardy.

"It's about time they start getting respect in the area," Garden City coach Phil Freeman said. "People say they have a weak schedule, they're a Class C school, and they don't wrestle in tough tournaments. They showed a lot today."

"Lutheran Westland sure woke up a lot of people," Beyar said. "A lot of people have been taking them lightly for years but not any more."

Salem had the most champions with Jeff Shumate capturing the 145

crown. CC and Garden City also had two winners. Jason Kraeger, who won a decision over Jared Lawrence of North Farmington in the 160 final, upheld the CC reputation by winning the title as expected.

"Coach (Mike) Rodriguez tells us everyone is shooting for us, so it's there no matter where you go," Kraeger said. "I was a little tense, I had never seen the guy before and I heard he was a good wrestler. I started off slow and got my shots at the end."

Garden City's Chris Gorak and Jason Peterson took first-place medals at 135 and heavyweight, respectively. Peterson beat Siskosky in the semis and got an escape in the final seconds to edge Hardy 5-4. North Farmington's Marcus Brown won the 145 title and boosted his record to 23-5.

"We got our fair share of champions," Freeman said. "Peterson wrestled great all day, and Gorak was Gorak. He always wrestles tough at tournament time. He's a real spark plug for our team."

FIRST OBSERVERLAND WRESTLING INVITATIONAL (Saturday at Garden City)

TEAM STANDINGS

1 Farmington, 194 1/2 points; 2 Plymouth Canton, 157; 3 Westland John Glenn, 150 1/2; 4 Lutheran Westland, 142 1/2; 5 Redford Catholic Central, 137 1/2; 6 Plymouth Salem, 132; 7 North Farmington, 102; 8 Garden City, 92; 9 Redford Union, 58 1/2; 10 Farmington Hills Harrison, 56; 11 Lutheran Stevenson, 49 1/2; 12 Redford Thurston, 39 1/2.

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

Heavyweight, Jason Peterson (CC) defeated Mike Hardy (LW) 3-4, third place; Matt Siskosky (F) def. Todd Lacey (CC), 5-2; Matt Mark Bennett (LJ) def. Ryan Gorak (F), 11-3.

103 pounds: Tom Pace (CG) pinned Andy Strahan (PC), 3-0, third place; Cavagner (LW) def. Glenn Economy (F), 11-4; fifth place: Phil Lamb (CC) def. Mike Manoli (F), 14-5.

115: Mike Martin (CG) def. Doug Johnson (LW), 7-0, third place; Matt Bennett (CC) def. Tony Horvath (F), 11-5; fifth place: Dan Cassidy (HF) def. Chris Darnell (F), 11-1.

125: Scott Martin (PS) def. Jon Hawthorne (RU), 11-2, third place; Byron Lewis (LS) pinned Mark McDonald (HF), 0-45; fifth place: Ron Sutton (F) pinned Derek Jinger (F), 0-43.

130: Tony Horvath (LW) def. Matt Graca (CG), 8-6, third place; Nick Spano (FC) def. David Pucoski (F), 6-1; fifth place: Matt Smith (F) def. Phil Bache (CC), technical.

135: Chris Gorak (CG) def. Wayne Krause (LS), 7-3, third place; Jerry Flynn (PC) def. Steve Lemmer (F), 4-1; fifth place: Eric Aris (RU) def. Tom James (HF), 7-5.

140: Marcus Brown (HF) pinned Mace Mattison (LW), 1-22, third place; Mike Madden (CC) pinned Mike Prough (F), 1-55; fifth place: Kevin Pavo (PC) pinned Mike Busard (CC), 1-15.

145: Jeff Shumate (PS) pinned Shane Hall (LW), 1-19, third place; Mike Holliday (F) pinned Eric Grant (HF), 0-11; fifth place: Bob Busepp (PC) def. Steve Faith (LW), 5-8.

152: Joe Hunter (FC) def. Mike Kallner (LW), heavy default, third place; Dave Monroe (F) pinned Peter Forlivese (PS), 1-0; fifth place: Dan Rennie (CC) def. Matt Reeves (CC), technical.

160: Jason Kraeger (CC) def. Jared Lawrence (NF), 6-1, third place; Mike Palio (F) def. Chris Christensen (CC), 7-1; fifth place: Vaughn Oukis (F) def. Kevin Hanson (RU), default.

171: Matt Graca (CC) def. George Young (PC), 13-7, third place; Ryan Adams (F) pinned Eric Schell (LW), 0-49; fifth place: Wes Reard (CG) pinned Tony Sny (PS), 1-45.

189: Rob Cavagnol (F) def. Phil Haynes (PS), 11-0, third place; Jerry Westland (CC) def. Ray Glass (CC), 20-13; fifth place: David Gionter (F) def. Jason Troy (RU), 15-6.

Hawks reign as city champions

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

On the way to the annual Observer Volleyball Tournament "The Hawks" of North Farmington coach Sandy Lubienicki recalled what Harrison coach Ron Shortt said to her in 1987.

"A few years ago we had won four in a row, and Ron Shortt said 'I'll let you have it four times, but I'm not going to let you win it five,'" Lubienicki said.

"They didn't win it. So we won it four more times, and here he is again."

The Hawks backed up Shortt's firm stand five years ago — the last time Harrison won the championship until history repeated itself last week.

Host Harrison reclaimed the traveling trophy and terminated another North four-year victory cycle with wins over the Raiders (15-5, 15-10) and Farmington (15-13, 15-10).

"HOPEFULLY, WE'RE going to be able to maintain it for a year or two," Shortt said. "We only have three seniors on the team."

"I thought as long as we had a good game we would win. I thought we had a little more spiking, and we started to dig up the ball."

The tournament championship is another indication of the improvement Harrison has made in just the last year.

Shortt assessed the gains as "big time. Last year we had two wins and this year we have 11. I'm really surprised how fast some of these kids have developed and gotten into it."

(Senior) Jodie (Whitehead), (sophomore) Amanda (Ault) and (junior) Julie (Hest) were the only kids returning with varsity experience. We got one player from the JV, another

volleyball

moved in and we added a couple freshmen. To turn it (around) like we have, I'm real happy.

As the scores indicated, however, the Hawks were challenged by North and Farmington, needing comeback efforts to win both games with the Falcons.

FAIRMINGTON SHOT in front 6-1 in the first behind the serving of Sue Gibson, who had fired three straight sets at the Hawks and just missed a double.

A Debbi Schroeder ace made it 8-1 before Harrison rallied, scoring six consecutive points off Hest serves to take its first lead, 9-8. But Farmington asserted itself again as Amy Sosnowski served four straight points (two aces) to put the Falcons on top 12-9.

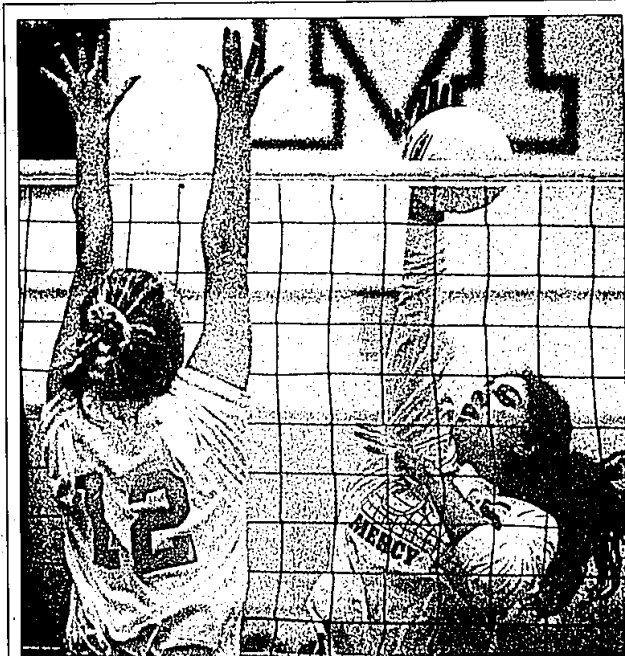
Through a combined 15 sideouts and 19 service rotations, the Hawks finally prevailed. Hest served three points to tie (13-13) and Jill Mineweaser two to win.

The second game was less dramatic but just as drawn out with neither team able to sustain a run of points and put the other away.

Schroeder served six points (two aces) and Rebekah King had three kills to give Farmington a 7-2 lead, but the Hawks got within 7-6 on Hest's serving and doubled the lead when Kelley West served four points (two aces) to make it 14-7.

"I've had teams with more experience that would have fallen apart," Shortt said. "It doesn't phase them."

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SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Volleyball victors

Angola Assad spikes the ball Thursday during Mercy's return match with rival Livonia Ladywood. The Marlins owned the season

series with a two-game victory. See story on Page 3B.

Falcons respond with win

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington High adjusted its starting lineup, emphasized team unity and pulled off a major coup on the basketball court Friday night.

The Falcons stunned Western Lakes Activities Association contender Livonia Stevenson by taking a 58-57 victory in double overtime at Farmington.

"I didn't know how we were going to play tonight," coach Denny Mikkel said, considering the Falcons had suffered a disappointing loss Tuesday to Livonia Churchill. "We just put it all together. My kids played super. I don't know if I could ask them to do any more."

Farmington is 1-4 in the Western Lakes Activities Association and 3-7 overall. The Spartans are 2-3 and 6-4.

Mikkel tinkered with his starting lineup in practice last week and decided to go with his five seniors — Jay Jensen, Brian Afferbaugh, Jason Tucker, Steve Gallagher and Matt Fitzpatrick — for the first time as a unit and stayed with them for much of the game.

"On a hunch, I put my five seniors together, and they really worked well tonight," Mikkel said.

"I think I saw more togetherness and unity from that group than I have seen all year long. I think that was a key to us hanging in there and not giving up. We tried something, and it worked out for us."

Afferbaugh scored 16 points to lead Farmington, including baskets late in regulation play and the first overtime to keep the game going. Jensen followed with 14 points.

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