

# Field events key for North; Mercy hopes to retain title

BY DAN O'NEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Field events will play an important role in determining how well North Farmington does in girls track and field this year.

For one thing, the Raiders are quite talented in field events, with at least one outstanding performer in each of the four.

Further, North needs to do well there to offset shortcomings in some of the running events.

"I think the field events will be our strong suit," North coach Bill Pinnell said. "We're going into meets expecting to score 22 to 25 points in the field events, and we're going to have to score that many or more to win some meets."

The Raiders are especially strong in the throwing events, boasting what could be the best one-two combination in Overland.

Senior Alisha Gordon and junior Devonis Pinnell were first-team all-area in the shot put and discus, respectively. Gordon set a school record in the shot (37-2) and placed seventh in the state. She also threw the discus 117-11. Pinnell was second in Overland with a discus throw of 113-3 and placed 14th in the state.

"These are probably our top two events along with (Heather) Burcar in the 400," Pinnell said. "I believe Gordon can be putting the shot over 40 feet, and I'm hoping Devonis will throw consistently over 30. In the discus, I look for

## TRACK

both to throw over 120 feet." Carrie May went over 5 feet in the high jump, and Burcar had the second-best long jump in the area at 16-4 1/2. Both are juniors who qualified for state last year.

"I'm hoping (May) will be able to go higher than 5 feet and jump pretty consistent for us," Pinnell said. "I hope (Burcar) can jump in the upper 16s and even get into the low 17s."

Sophomores Tricia Traczay and Michelle Marces add depth in the high jump, junior Beth Purrell in the long jump and junior Marie Casadio in the shot put.

Burcar also earned all-area honors in the 400-meter dash with a school-record time of 58.8. She also will run the 200, possibly the 800 and sprint relays.

The Raiders, however, lost Shannon McCoy, their No. 2 quarter-miler who transferred to Rochester Adams.

Gordon also doubles as a hurdler and had a school-record time of 1:6.3 in the 100s, but North is inexperienced after that.

Sophomores Monica Czerwinski and Ava Lala and senior Allison Branton return as the top sprinters in addition to Burcar. Those three and Gordon formed the 400 relay team.

"(Czerwinski and Lala) had real good years for freshmen," Pinnell said. "Both ran cross country with a discus throw of 113-3 and placed 14th in the state."

In the half mile and distance runs, the Raiders are weaker for having lost Keegan Keefover to graduation and Jamie Brenner for health reasons.

Junior Amanda Hough had a good year in the 1,600 and 3,200.

Pinnell said.

North also returns seniors Elaine Wolff and Darcie Lehmann, junior Kerrie Simpson and sophomores Becky Naglik and Meg Wolff, who is still recovering from stress fractures in both legs.

Senior Tara Keefover, sophomore Jill Turner and freshman Katie Howle are promising distance runners, too.

The Raiders were 5-1 in dual meets, placed third in the Western Lakes Activities Association and won the city meet for the second straight year.

"If we had just lost Keegan to graduation, we'd probably have as strong a team as last year," Pinnell said. "But losing Shannon and Jamie, we won't be as strong until we find some people to step up."

"If we do, we'll be able to hold our own, but I believe a lot of other teams in the conference have improved, so we're going to have our hands full."

## Farmington Mercy

The Marlins will try to win a sixth consecutive Catholic League championship, but they face a growing challenge, according to coach Gary Servais.

Livonia Ladywood is greatly improved. Birmingham Marian always has good athletes and Dearborn Divine Child has 75 girls on its team.

"We're not going to give it away," Servais said. "They're going to have to fight for it. They still have to come to our place to get it, too."

"I'm sure these seniors don't want to be the ones to let the tradition go."

One of the seniors is among the top 500 runners in the state — Eileen O'Connell, an all-state runner in cross country and track.

She was third in the state and all-area in the 800 the last two years. She holds the school record in that event (2:15.6) and could break records in the 1,600 (5:13) and 3,200 (11:18).

"She's as good or better than ever," Servais said. "Her name could be up there (on the record board) in five events by the end of the year," including relays.

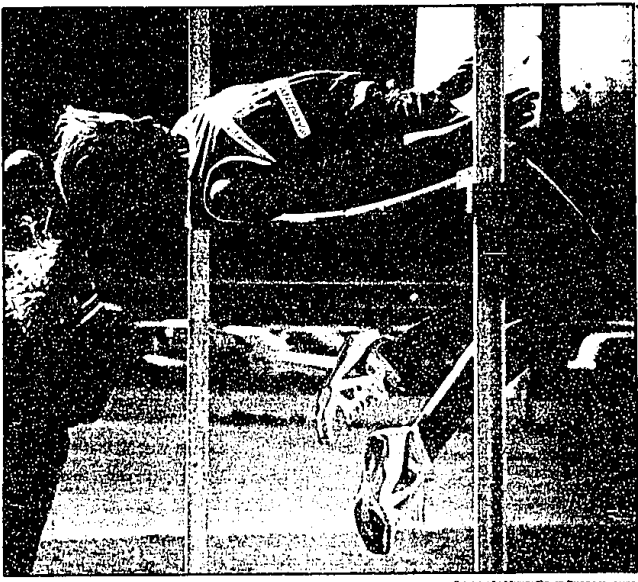
O'Connell was the runner-up in the Class A individual cross country meet and has been the most valuable member of the track team for two years.

Junior Amy Buhl returns after winning the Catholic League title in the 100 hurdles and placing fourth in the county.

"She's the best hurdler I've had," Servais said. "I'm hoping she can repeat in the 100 and improve big time in the 300."

Mercy lost throwers Renee Arco and Teana Coppre to graduation after they finished one-two in the shot and discus at the league meet. The top returnee is sophomore Kathryn Telford.

The top throwers in the league are so that's wide open and I look for (Telford) to help there," Servais said.



Upward mobility: Farmington senior Andrea Salyer is one of Overland's top returning high jumpers.

sprinter Laquette Freeman back, and senior Sommer Woods has decided to run track instead of play golf. Mercy lost third-team all-area Tarrin Smith when she transferred to Oak Park.

"That's going to hurt because (Smith) scored almost 100 points as a freshman last year," Servais said. "But, with all these new kids, we might be better in the spring than we have been in a long time."

Servais is encouraged by the addition of freshman Rashida Rudolph, junior Karen Benedict and sophomore Jamila Jackson.

Senior Brandy Johnson will help in the 400 and 800, and sophomore Betsy Gilmac, a cross country runner, passed on soccer to run track, too.

The Marlins lost Amy Freund, the school record holder in the 3,200, but return juniors Lisa Nobles, who was second in the league in the 800, and Melissa Tlucek. Freshmen Jackie Segue and Mandy Peville provide depth.

"We have 30 kids we're trying to work into the mix," Servais said. "We've never had that big a group of new people in a few years, and trying to find the right spots for them is the biggest challenge."

"But there's a lot of talent there. I like the attitude and I think it's going to pay off by the end of the year."

## Farmington High

The Falcons are strongest in the high jump with the return of senior Andrea Salyer and the distance races.

Salyer was among the best jumpers in the area with a height of 5-4, and coach Bruce Brown hopes she can continue performing like that.



Eileen O'Connell  
Farm. Mercy



Devonie Pinnell  
N. Farmington



Heather Burcar  
N. Farmington

ing like that.

"We've had her on a weight program, and I think that's going to pay off," he said. "I think she just needed to get a little stronger."

"We're trying not to overjump her, either. I think she got tired toward the end of last year and lost a little of her spring. We've been going slow with her."

Several girls from the state-qualifying cross country team are running track and should have a positive impact in the distance events.

Junior Annemarie Grimaldi was eighth in the 1,600 and 3,200 runs at the WLA meet, and senior Dana Goba is a veteran runner with plenty of experience.

"Annemarie had a good cross country season, and I'm hoping she can carry through and run the 800 to the 3,200 for us," Brown said.

"I think Dana is going to have a good year in the 3,200. I'm looking forward to her stepping up. Hopefully, this will be Dana's big year."

Senior Tracey Finlayson missed going to state by .20 of a

second in the 800, and Brown hopes she can get there this year.

Junior Alina Hentnik and sophomores Almes Cameron and Theresa Derwinski have cross country backgrounds and return to run middle and/or long distances.

Senior Colleen Weisling and junior Anne Brancalone are returning sprinters, but that remains an area of concern for Brown due to a lack of depth.

Junior Kim Washnock and sophomore Brittany Dixon help with the throwing events a team strength. The top hurdlers and seniors Stacey Blackford and Kelly Hartley.

"It will be an interesting year because we have a lot of new kids," Brown said. "We have good numbers — about 60 girls out — but a lot of young ones."

"A lot depends on the success of our sprinters. If we can pick up a sprinter or two, we could be a little better than last year."

"We're just trying to put together the best track team we can with what we've got."

# Stingrays capture state's age-group championship

The Michigan Stingray Swim Association won the state championship for combined age groups after placing second in the 13-and-over meet last month in Rockford.

Together with the results of the other age-group meets, the total points gave the Stingrays of Farmington Hills the overall title.

"What a great effort by all of the Stingrays," coach Jeff Cooper said. "This is by far our most successful team in quite some time."

"I am really proud of all the swimmers and the effort they put forth this year. The philosophy of the MSSA is that we win as a team."

One of several statistics was Kerl Pawlewicz in the 13-14 meet. The Birmingham Brother Rice freshman won six individual events and set records in three.

His time of 21:70 seconds in the 50-yard freestyle is a state record and reportedly the third-fastest time ever in the United States by a 13-14 swimmer.

## SWIMMING

this state's most outstanding male swimmers," Cooper said.

Hope Vandenberg, 18, and Erin Spiro, 13, were runners-up for the high-point award in the 15-and-over and 13-14 brackets, respectively.

Spiro, who just turned 13 and competed in her first 13-14 state meet, won the 100 butterfly (1:51.03) and 200 IM (2:15.48).

"To move up to the 13-14 age group is a large step for any athlete in any sport," Cooper said. "To achieve state championship points and finish as second high-point in your first senior state meet is a wonderful accomplishment."

Spiro also contributed to one of three relay victories by the Stingray girls.

The 13-14 team of Spiro, Julie Klinka, Neve Alver and Danielle Clayton won the 400 medley (4:19.72).

In the 15-18 meet, Corky Ribita, Heather Chastean, Wendy Berry and Betsy Vandenberg won the 400 medley, and Chastean and Berry combined with Melissa and Stacy Anzov to win the 800 freestyle (7:59.07).

Other notable performances included Dan Gabriel winning the

13-14 100 backstroke (58.97), Mike Pielia taking second in the 15-18 100 breaststroke (59.80) and Alver placing third in the 13-14 100 breaststroke (1:12.02).

Cheri Farber of Farmington Hills helped the Birmingham-Bloomfield Atlanta swim 13-14 short-course team to second place.

The North Farmington freshman tied for first in the 50 freestyle with a time of 25.36. She also placed second in the breaststroke and backstroke events.

The BBA won with 1,552 points, while the Michigan Stingrays placed second with 1,489.

CASTING CALL: The Stingrays practice Monday through Friday evenings at one of Farmington's three public high schools. Children between the ages of 8 and 18 are welcome and can call 306-6726 for information.

"There is no real skill level required to begin swimming with the Stingrays," Cooper said. "If a kid likes being in the water, we will teach him/her to swim and compete."

"The Stingrays also will host a spring tune-up for all area swimmers who want to get an early start on their conditioning for summer club swim programs. The dates are April 10 to May 31. Call the MSSA at (313) 545-7772.

The MSSA competes during the summer months in the state long-course events in 50-meter, Olympic-size pools. Applications are being processed by Cooper.

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