Ladywood ends Mercy's run as champion

BY NEAL ZIPSER

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The streak is over.
Livonia Ladywood put an end to Farmington Hills Mercy's dominance of the Catholic League AB Division girls track uncet by winning Tursday's championship at Mercy.

The Blazers finished with 116 points — just five shead of five-time defending champion Mercy.

It was Ladywood's first Catholic League title in 11 years, and the first for thrid-year coach Bod O'Drien.

Thought we'll be the favorite coming in, but I really wasn't confortable until Stacie (Johnson) won the high jump, 'O'Brien said. "That's when I got some relist".

said. times which list? —Johnson cleared 5 feet, 2 inches main the high jump and give the Plazers a three-point lead with only the 1,600-meter relay re-

TRACK

Shannon Swish got Ladywood off to a quick start in the 1,600 relay and the Blazers led from start to finish. Nicole Clausen, Stephanie Mussat and Lindsay Soter followed Swish as the four-some finished with a season-best time of 4,002 — more than nine seconds ahead of the runner-up Martins.

seconds ahead of the runner-up Marlins.

"We beat Mercy in duals so we figured we'd do well today," Soter said. "It feels awesome to be champions. We should have won it last year. It's been too long since our last title."

The Marlins competed without senior Elleen O'Connell — the area's beat middle distance runner. O'Connell was diagnosed last Tuesday with a streas fracture in her hip and was told she would be sidelined at least a month.

"I kind of expected (losing to Ladywood)," Mercy coach Gary Servais said. "But it's a credit to the kids how close it was. Losing Eileen cost us, conservatively, 30 points. Losing her was a big let-down for us, but the girls dug down and many of them ran their best ever."

down and many of them ran their beat ever."

One Marlin who shined was sophemore Elizabeth Gignac, who won the 1,600 run (63.17) and the 3200 run (12.02.1).

"We knew it would be really tough to win the title without Eli-leen, but I also think the other teams were more pumped up to been our sixth title in a row." Gig-nac said.

Mercy also received a first in the 100 burdles from Amy Buhl (13.5) and in the 3,200 relay from Gignac, Jacqueline Segue, Lisa Nobles and Amanda Phelps (10.05.2).

"Tm excited about our future,"

Servais said. "For us to score 111 points without Elleen is something, And just about everyone is coming back."

O'Brien admitted the Marlins' performance may have been affected without O'Connell, but that didn't tarnish Ladywood's title.

that didn't tarnish Ladywood is title.
"It hurt Mercy not to have her but her absence takes nothing away from what we accomplished out here," O'Brien sald.

The Blazers scored in every event and picked up important points from Beth Kummer, who was second in the shot put, Jamie VanBuehler, who was tied for third in the high jump, and Stacie Johnson, who scored a total of 23 points.

oints. Birmingham Marian's Atiya Birmingham Marians Atiya Bussey had a strong meet, as she won the 100 dash (12.3), the 400 (59.1) and was second to her teammate Brandi Bentley in the 200.

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CATHOLIC LEAGUE
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Inonia Ladywood, 116; 2. Farmington Has Mercy, 111; 3. Dearborn Devine Child, 80; 4. Bernington Mansin, 77; 5. Harpor Woods Regms, 50; 6. Revenee 'destrell Bichard, 34; 7. Madison heights Bishop Foley, 26.

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Shamrocks produce winning effort in league meet BY NEAL ZIPSER **BOYS MEET**

For Tay, Magni, winning Tuesday's Catholic League A-B Division track championship at Farmington Hills Mercy meant more than any of his first four as Shamrocks' coach.

"This title was much more special," Magni said. "No one gave us a shot to win this at the beginning of the year. We didn't have a file of kids come out for the team carly in the year, but the ones that did gave 110 percent. What makes this special is the kids seanted it and the kids won it." CC, which came in third last season, finished with 106 points. U.D Jesuit, was a close second with 95 points, followed by last year's champion, Birmingham Brother Rice (73). CC led for the entire first half of

CC led for the entire first hail of the meet, thanks in part to strong field performances by John Spol-ski, who won the shot put (5) feet, 8 inches) and Joe Washnock, who took the discus (153-8). But behind Kareem Dillard, the Cubs mounted a comeback

and took the lead. Dillard won four events — the long jump. 100-meter dash, 200 run and 400 run. "Kareem is a great athlete, but it just waan't him, he had a great supporting cast," Magni said. "I waan't too worried about losing the lead because we have a strong 1,500 relay team and good two-milers."

The rain began falling hard as the 3,200 run began. CC junior Joe Leo broke away early and led by 40 meters throughout the race. CC sophomore John Griffin took second.

second.
"Joe won, but Griffin really

came through for us with a second." Magni said. "We knew if we
could finish one-two, it would be
hard for them."

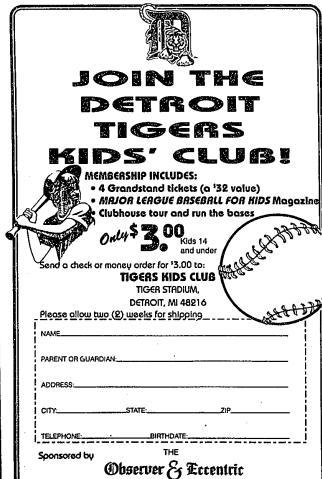
"I realized that the meet could
turn on my nun," Leo said. "But I
knew we have a great distance
program and would finish the
meet strong."

The Shamrocks needed at least
a second place finish in the 1,500
relay to clinich the victory. CC did
better than a second, as the foursome of Kevin Quay, Brian Priock, Brian Teefey said hough, felliy-Powell won the near bit the
provel won the race to the vinning rel tester, holding off the
Britoner Rice usem despite runsing with an Injured left hamstring and shin.









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