

## FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

### All-tournament duo

Kalamazoo College junior Kelly LaCrosse (Farmington Hills/Harrison) and freshman MaryJane Valade (Farmington Hills/Mercy) made the all-tournament team in women's basketball at Anderson University Jan. 2-3.

LaCrosse averaged 19.5 points in two tournament games, pulled 14 points and 3.5 rebounds.

It's the second time the duo has been named to an all-tournament team this season. LaCrosse was MVP of the DePauw University Invitational, and Valade also made the all-tournament team at DePauw.

Kalamazoo defeated Lincoln Christian, 79-59, in its tournament opener Saturday but lost a close game Sunday to host Anderson, 67-63, despite a 21-point effort by LaCrosse.

The Hornets were 3-8 overall heading into their Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association opener Wednesday at Alma College.

### Shamrocks host invite

The Detroit Catholic Central Wrestling Invitational is Saturday, starting at 10:30 a.m. with the finals scheduled for 7 p.m.

Sixteen teams are expected to compete, including defending champion Holt. Temperance Bedford is the favorite, according to CC coach Mike Rodriguez.

The others teams are CC, Livonia Stevenson, Westland John Glenn, Garden City, Birmingham Brother Rice, Anchor Bay, Clarkston, Davison, Fowlerville, Fruitport, Howell, Warren Lincoln, Oxford and Romeo.

Admission is \$4. CC hasn't won its own invitational since 1988 but has challenged for the title in recent years.

"I think we can have three guys that can win it (individually)," Rodriguez said. "I think the team effort is between Bedford and Holt. Fowlerville will be right there with Clarkston."

"I'm realistic. I just hope to get through the first round. We'll be real lucky to be fourth or fifth."

### Mercy softball camps

A series of softball camps for girls between the ages of 10 and 15 will take place 9 a.m. to noon on six Saturday mornings in January and February at Mercy High School.

The camp dates are Jan. 10, 17, 24 and 31, Feb. 14 and 21. Camp instruction will cover hitting, fielding, throwing and baserunning. The cost is \$2 per session.

For more information call either Jack Falvo at (248) 471-1748 or Fred Marinucci at (313) 531-5819.

### Caesars travel tryouts

Tryouts are planned for the 1998 Little Caesars travel baseball teams in the 10-, 12-, 14- and 16-and-under age groups. Teams will play a 40- to 50-game schedule.

For tryout dates and times please call the Little Caesars baseball office at (313) 562-4697.

Tryouts for the 10-year-old North Farmington-West Bloomfield Cobras travel baseball team will be 4-6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17. For more information call Alan Borsen at (248) 932-0040.

### LYSC girls are No. 1

The under-19 LYSC United Girls soccer team will receive first-place trophies from the Little Caesars Premier Soccer League after a successful fall season.

The LYSC team allowed just four goals all year while playing in a competitive 10-team division. Team members include Christine Broda; Nicole DeDominicus; Lindsey Erickson; Kristina Esparza; Meg Goralino; Shannon Konarski; Liz Krawczyk; Jenine Lawson; Claire Lockhart; Cheryl Luther; Tracy McIntyre; Tracy Moore; Abby Maysenberg; Olivia Nellums; Lisa Reissowebor; Colleen Scanlon; Luba Slezak; and Pam West.

The squad is coached by Mike Esparza. Malcolm Pledge is the main team trainer; Larry Moore is the goalkeeper trainer and Bill Erickson is team manager.

The team is looking for new players since it has 10 graduating seniors. Any player interested in playing next season, call (313) 484-0114. Players must have a birthdate between Aug. 1, 1979, and July 31, 1983.

## Niskanen resigns at Farmington

Farmington High School is looking for a new head football coach following the resignation of Lauri Niskanen on Monday. The Falcons were 3-6 last fall and had their best season under Niskanen in 1994 when they were 6-3.

By DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

After five seasons as varsity football coach at Farmington High School, Lauri Niskanen has decided to step down from the position.

The 53-year-old Niskanen, under whom the Falcons compiled an 18-27 record, submitted his letter of resignation to Farmington Public Schools Athletic Director Ken Holland Monday.

Niskanen's decision leaves vacant two of the three head coaching jobs in Farmington. North Farmington's Jim O'Leary previously announced his intention to retire, though Holland has-

n't been officially notified in writing of his decision.

"I just think it's time," Niskanen said. "You always say in coaching you know when it's time to get out."

"When we came back from the lake last summer for conditioning, I told my wife 'Each year it gets tougher coming back.' I had a good five years; I had my opportunity."

Niskanen compared his stay in the Farmington post to the timetable implemented by a college coach with a five-year plan.

"Most guys who take over a college program figure they can do it in five

years," he said. "I've laid the ground work. I think I've done as much as you can with the cosmetic things you have to do."

"The booster club has been terrific. They raised money and I spent it. I asked for 56 pair of white pants, and they got them for me."

The Falcons also have a football class like many schools do today and a weight-lifting program. Volunteers such as Paul "Pops" Fintar, who takes care of all the equipment, are crucial to making a program operate smoothly and ultimately successful, Niskanen added.

"But the bottom line is you still have to win," he said. "People want to know if you won or not."

Niskanen quoted former University of Minnesota coach Murray Warmath, who said: "The scoreboard is the best public relations tool. In the end, people don't care about your coaching style or

what kind of football you play; they just want you to win."

The Falcons had their best season under Niskanen in 1994 with a 6-3 record.

Farmington started with four straight victories that year over Waterford Mott, Walled Lake Western, Plymouth Salem and North Farmington.

The Falcons lost three of their next four, but all three losses were close. Farmington lost to Westland John Glenn in overtime, 20-17; Livonia Stevenson, 7-0; and Plymouth Canton, again in overtime, 28-21.

Farmington rebounded from the Glenn defeat with a 28-21 victory over Walled Lake Central and completed its best season in a decade by beating Lakeland in the season finale, 28-3.

"What helped that team was some experienced offensive linemen with the

Please see NISKANEN, C4



STAFF PHOTO BY JEFF KIDWELL

Defensive effort: Farmington Hills Mercy junior Mary Gignac keeps the ball alive with a serve reception Tuesday in a Catholic League victory over Harper Woods Regina.

## New Year starts right for Marlins

Coach Ed Moeller was more than pleased with the energy and effort his Farmington Hills Mercy volleyball team put forth in its first Catholic League match Tuesday night.

The result was a 15-9, 15-9 victory for the Marlins over visiting Harper Woods Regina.

The Marlins had a lackluster performance Saturday in tournament play at Portage Northern, according to Moeller, and focused their Monday practice on being more competitive.

"I thought we played with great intensity and passion tonight," said Moeller following the win over Regina.

"Emotionally, we dominated the whole night and, in volleyball, emotion has a lot to do with it."

### VOLLEYBALL

"(The Mercy players) were determined to go out and communicate well and support each other."

Senior hitter Krista Kelley led a balanced effort for the Marlins with five kills and four blocks. Senior captain Erin Fitzgerald contributed four kills.

Sophomore Kelley Blunden and senior Shayla O'Mara served seven points apiece.

Until the final point of the game, the Marlins didn't have a service error. The Mercy server stepped over the line on a foot fault before getting the final point.

"I don't think we had a player on the team who didn't get a kill or at least one point," Moeller said, adding the offense was spread around.

The Marlins face big challenges the next two Tuesdays when they play at Catholic League powers Birmingham Marian (Jan. 13) and Livonia Ladywood (Jan. 20).

Mercy will have final exams during that time, too.

"How we do in those matches will have a lot to say about where we are as a team," Moeller said, adding the Marlins hope to take the Mustangs and Blazers "to the wall. If we can do that, whether we win or lose, it will be a step in the right direction."

North Farmington got the jump on No. 1 Dundee but failed to sustain its momentum Saturday in the playoffs of the West Bloomfield Invitational.

The Raiders raced to a 9-0 lead in the first

Please see VOLLEYBALL, C4

## Hoop winners

### Raiders, Hawks begin 1998 with court victories

#### BOYS BASKETBALL

North Farmington and Farmington Harrison returned to boys basketball action in the New Year with non-conference victories Tuesday.

Unbeaten Harrison drilled winless visiting South Lyon, 60-33, while host North Farmington cruised past Milford Lakeland, 48-39, to earn its third victory in four tries.

"The thing I was proud of," Raiders coach Brian Swinehart said, "is that we could grind it out. It wasn't pretty, so it was good to win a decent struggle."

"We had 13 players score," Harrison coach Mike Teachman said, "11 of them in the first half. We played tremendous man-help defense."

North Farmington trailed, 21-16, at the half and Lakeland added the first point of the second before the Raiders roiled off a dozen in a row to take command.

Carter Campbell scored five of his eight points in the 12-0 run, while Ray Lousin scored four and Al

Pennala hit a triple. North Farmington outscored Lakeland 16-9 in the third quarter.

"After that," Swinehart said, "we did a good job of playing ball with the lead, taking care of the ball and taking good shots."

Amir Medunjanin led the Raiders with 12 points and was awesome in the middle with 10 blocked shots and seven rebounds.

Don Singer nearly had a triple-double with 10 points, 10 steals and eight assists. Campbell added nine rebounds to his point total.

Chris Martin led Lakeland (2-4) with 14 points. North was 9-for-15 from the free throw line while Lakeland made 10 of 12.

"We didn't shoot that well," Swinehart said. "We

were 1-for-17 from the three-point arc. Prior to that, we were shooting 36 percent."

Harrison roared to a 17-8 lead over South Lyon and added a 14-8 second quarter to remain undefeated. It plays another winless team Friday night, Livonia Stevenson.

Matt Derocher was the lone Hawk in double figures, scoring 15 points. Brian Lewis, Zach Burton and Andrew Burt had six points each, while Lamar Wilson and Jared Hopkins scored five apiece.

Kareem Smartt played slightly more than half the game and had six assists for Harrison. Junior Gary Neighbors paced South Lyon with 16.

Harrison's Ricky Bryant had to come off of the game in the second quarter due to a stiff knee, the result of a player landing on it.

"If there was a negative note," Teachman said, "it was that we were just 4-of-12 from the free throw line. We'll have to work on that."