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Well, adhere to that path and the question that follows is: How important is the Observerland Tournament?

The answer: Don't underestimate it.

"It's our last tune-up," Krueger said. "After this weekend, we have a week off, then we come right back with the (Western Lakes Activities Association) tournament. We just have to keep ourselves together."

That's something the Rocks have done quite well all season. Their lineup has few weak spots.

"They're real solid, all the way through," said CC coach Mike Rodriguez of the Rocks. His Shamrocks placed fourth last year, but he believes Salem's lineup is too complete for his team to challenge.

What Rodriguez will have in his lineup are two returning Observerland champs in Mitch Hancock, who won in 1997 at 112 but has wrestled up to 135 this year, and Casey Rogowski, now a heavyweight who is unbeaten this season.

"We're young," said Rodriguez. "We only have two seniors."

Stevenson, which had just one Observerland champion last year (Nick Petryk, who graduated), still has plenty of firepower in Katsuhiko Sueda, Chris Goins, Dan Seder, Jeff Brach, Brian Barker and Joe Moreau. Goins and Barker placed third at the '97 tournament, while Sueda, Seder, Brach and Moreau all lost in the finals.

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weeks with no skiing."

Above-freezing temperatures Tuesday made the snow great for building forts and throwing heavy snowballs, but bad for skiing.

"It was very soft," Gable said. "But the courses held up well."

"We were concerned because it got so warm. The snow was soft, but we didn't break down to any dirt. The conditions stayed fairly fast."

Brighton's Matt Hickey won the boys side of the meet with a

combined time of 27.02 seconds.

CC's highest finisher was freshman Matt Gable, whose combined time of 28.16 landed him in a tie for fifth.

Jason Anderson was ninth with a time of 29.06 for the Shamrocks while Matt Kessler's 29.13 put him in 13th place.

Brian Goebel and junior Brad Turowski finished 20th and 21st, respectively, with combined times of 29.58 and 29.79. Right behind them was co-captain John Robison at 29.98.

Marlins triumph on court

Farmington Hills Mercy wasted no time putting away host Harper Woods Regina in a Catholic League volleyball match Tuesday.

The Marlins needed less than half an hour to whip the Saddledles for a second time this season, 15-1, 15-1. Mercy beat Regina earlier by 15-9 scores.

Krista Kelley had seven blocks to lead Mercy, 3-2 in the Central Division and 19-18 overall.

VOLLEYBALL

Erin Fitzgerald led a balanced attack with three kills. Angela Harbar served three aces and continued to play excellent defense, according to coach Ed Moeller.

The Marlins were perfect on the service line with no errors.

Mercy was without starting setter Amy Miller, who was sidelined with an injury, and lost middle hitter Kaitlyn Jarzembowski to an ankle injury during the match Tuesday.

The Marlins used a 5-1 offense with Shayla O'Mara as the only setter, and Carey Czech replaced Jarzembowski on the front line.

Moore also played well Saturday against some outstanding teams in the East Kentwood Invitational, Moeller said.

"We're starting to push some teams," he said. "The kids are still enthused. If you can hold their focus all season, you have a chance to do well."

Canton edges Farmington

It was close — right down to the final rotation.

In fact, the outcome of Monday's dual meet between Plymouth Canton and Farmington seemed to be leaning toward Farmington after three events. Canton was ahead by nearly two points, but Farmington's final event would be the floor exercise while the Chiefs were on the balance beam.

And anyone who's familiar with gymnastics knows more points are usually scored in floor than beam.

Unless, of course, your team happens to be Canton.

"Canton's always been a beam team," Canton coach John Cunningham said. His gymnasts proved it by scoring 35.15 points on beam to Farmington's 34.85 on floor.

GYMNASTICS

That gave the Chiefs a 138.05-135.00 victory at the Farmington Training Center.

Canton improved to 6-3 overall in duals, 2-2 in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

"They've just got a very good team," Farmington coach Jeff Dwyer said of the Chiefs.

Canton gymnasts posted the best scores in three of the four events, with Liz Fitzgerald getting two of those. Fitzgerald won the vault (8.9) and uneven parallel bars (9.15); she was also second in the beam (8.9).

Fitzgerald's all-around total of 35.45 was highest in the meet.

Amy Driscoll had Canton's other first-place finish, winning

the beam (8.95).

While the Chiefs dominated the beam, claiming the top four positions to outscore Farmington 35.15-33.1 in the event, Farmington got the better of Canton in floor exercise, posting the top three scores to outpoint the Chiefs 34.85-34.05.

Brook Rubin, whose all-around total of 35.0 was second to Fitzgerald, was first in floor (9.0). Kelly Barone was second (8.85) and Marie Law was third (8.75) for Farmington.

Rubin was also second in the bars (8.8) and fourth in vault (8.7).

Marci Emorick, who had a second in vault (8.85), a third in bars (8.65), and fourth in both beam (8.6) and floor (8.65), had the third-best all-around total (34.65).

Trojans miss star player's points

By NEAL ZIPPER
STAFF WRITER

Life without Albert has not been fun for Livonia Clarenceville.

The Trojans have had to play without junior Albert Deljosevic and his 25-point per game average the past two games. The guard was forced to miss Friday's game against University of Detroit-Liggett and Tuesday's game against Lutheran Westland after being suspended from school.

Clarenceville didn't play as poorly as it did against Liggett (an 80-63 defeat), but couldn't overcome Deljosevic's loss against the visiting Warriors in a 62-54 loss.

The good news for the Trojans is that Deljosevic returns Friday for a game at Hamtramck, the Metro Conference leader.

Clarenceville trailed for most of the game but was able to close what was a 10-point deficit to 54-52 with 2:13 remaining. But the Warriors scored eight of the final 10 points of the game (all from the free throw line) to win.

The hero for Westland was

BASKETBALL

senior guard Scott Randall who hit seven of nine foul shots in the fourth quarter. He finished with 13 points.

For Westland, the victory keeps the team's slim hopes for a league title alive. The Warriors snapped a two-game losing streak and improved to 4-5 overall and 4-3 in the league.

"We'll take any win we can, especially on the road," Lutheran Westland coach Dan Ramthun said. "We had Clarenceville today and Harper Woods Friday, and I considered these must wins if we want to get back into it."

The Trojans, who are heading in the other direction, slipped to 3-6 overall and 1-6 in the Metro.

"We've hit some rocky roads and it doesn't get any easier with Hamtramck on Friday," Clarenceville coach Rick Larson said. "Getting Albert back in practice will give us a boost and get our chemistry back. I did see some good things from players who received extended minutes in his absence."

Senior forward Justin Villanueva, who has had to carry the load in Deljosevic's absence, finished with a game-high 23 points and 12 rebounds.

Senior center Brad Woolhke was stellar underneath for Westland, collecting 16 points and 10 boards. Tom Habits and Jake Hatten chipped in with 10 and nine points, respectively.

With Deljosevic out, the Clarenceville backcourt struggled, recording only 15 points against the Westland zone.

With Deljosevic out, Ramthun's strategy was to stop Villanueva.

"Our plan was to double him, but he's so strong; he's a bull," the Westland coach said. "We knew we had to box out against them and their big bodies."

A bright spot for Clarenceville was the play of sophomore forward Rick Burack, a sophomore center, who had 10 points and eight rebounds. "I hope tonight is his coming out party," Larson said. "I told him during a timeout 'welcome to a basketball game.' He's quick for a big man and has good range."

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