

Marlins like '98 scenario better

What a difference a year can make. In the case of Farmington Hills Mercy's softball program, it has meant a successful turnaround in the postseason.

Mercy's 1997 tournament stay didn't last beyond the pre-district round, but the Marlins can't afford those disappointing memories Saturday by capturing the Division I district championship at Birmingham Groves.

Led by senior right-hander Terri Schroeder's sparkling, complete-game effort, Mercy edged Redford Union, 2-0, to earn a berth in the regional tournament Saturday at Groves. The Marlins (26-10) will take on Detroit Martin Luther King at 10 a.m.

"I know (the Crusaders) have a lot of speed and dedicated players that work at the game, so we'll prepare for them," Mercy coach Jack Falvo said.

"I think the No. 1 thing is we have to be prepared to get some

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timely hits and to play seven innings.

Livonia Ladywood and Detroit Mumford will also be at the Groves regional. That game is scheduled to start approximately 30 minutes after the Mercy-King matchup ends.

Falvo said winning a district championship was one of Mercy's primary goals, especially after last year's pre-district loss to Farmington.

"We didn't play very well against Farmington last year," he said. "We made a lot of errors and we weren't prepared to play, but this year the senior class has just exemplified everything you would want in leadership and commitment."

"Considering we had six seniors on the field (Katie Homant, Shayla O'Mara, Kelly

Moug, Beth Ann Nowak, Paige Even and Schroeder) in the championship game who graduated (Friday) and had their all-night party, they did a super job of playing. They were tired, but they did what they had to do."

Mercy, which needed just three innings to dispose of Southfield-Lathrup in the district semifinals, 28-0, relied on Schroeder's pitching and two first-inning runs to defeat Redford Union.

"Redford Union came to play today," Falvo said. "Their pitcher (Debbie Christensen) did a super job. Our hitters had a tough time against her, and Redford Union was well prepared."

The Marlins collected four of their eight hits in the pivotal first inning. Homant and O'Mara led off with singles, advanced on Erin Carson's sacrifice and came home on Moug's two-run double.

Mercy's only other scoring

threat came in the fourth inning when Lauren Monterey, who had two hits and reached base three times, tripled with no outs but was left stranded at third.

"We were working really hard to make something happen," Falvo said. "We were trying to get bunts down and hit and run, but we couldn't get anything going. I expected to score more than two, first-inning runs, but we'll take it."

Schroeder allowed just two hits and struck out 10. RU's Laura Hillson singled in the first inning and doubled in the seventh.

The Panthers reached the championship game with a 13-8, complete win over Southfield.

RU overcame an early 8-2 deficit with three runs in the third, five in the fourth and three in the sixth. For the Blue Jays, Leah Dexter went 3-for-3 and scored twice.



Winning pitcher: Senior Terri Schroeder allowed just two Redford Union hits in the district championship game Saturday. Mercy won, 2-0.

Falcons just miss upset of Chiefs

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down the right field line, it seemed the roof would fall in.

But Canton right-fielder Becky Mize pounced on the ball and fired it to first baseman Liz Elmer, retiring O'Rear and holding the base-runner at third. Hudson ended the threat by striking out Angie Luttman with the tying run at third and the winning run at second, preserving the Chiefs' 2-1 victory and sending them to the district championship game.

Farmington, meanwhile, finishes its season with a final record of 15-14.

"That play there is the play of the game," said Canton coach Jim Arnold. "The ball gets by (Mize) and we're going home — game's over."

"But Becky's been making

those plays for us all year."

And those are the kind of plays that have made the Chiefs winners all year. Indeed, it wasn't hitting that won this match-up; in fact, the Falcons had two hits to Canton's one in the game. Defense made the difference.

The Chiefs scored a run in the second inning without benefit of a hit. Erica Hancz and Mize both drew one-out walks; stolen bases moved them up, and a passed ball delivered the game's first run.

Canton's only hit resulted in a ground run, scored in the fifth inning. Again, Mytty — she issued six walks in the game and hit a batter, while Hudson hit one batter but walked none — suffered through a bit of wildness.

walking Carrie Kovachevich and Christina Kiesel with one out. Paula McKernan then got the Chiefs only hit,

a solid single to right that scored Mize after Becky Depotter's throw home bounced past O'Rear, the catcher.

"They had one base hit," Farmington coach Jerry Oborne said. "That ball (hit by O'Rear in the seventh) gets down the right field line and the game's over. But (Mize) made an excellent play."

"They're solid. They always play solid defense. I always say, the team that makes the mistakes normally loses."

"Mytty threw well enough to win the game. But it was a pitcher's duel, and Hudson's one of the best around."

And the further a team progresses in the state tournament, the more evident it becomes: pitching, defense and making all those little plays are what wins.

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"We lost so many close games (12) this year by one run that I thought the tide might change," Senaholm coach Mike Heasing said.

"It's been one of those seasons. But the girls are achievers; they practice and play hard every day. It's just very heart-breaking."

After pinch-runner Kim Spaulding was out at the plate in a close play in the Harrison fourth, the Hawks tied the score on Emmett's double that scored Katrina Vitiana.

Harrison had taken a 2-0 lead in the third with only one of its

12 hits. Ari Ault drew a bases-loaded single and Maxey followed with an RBI single.

All Ault was the winning pitcher, scattering eight hits while walking two and striking out a pair. Holston had 11 strikeouts and issued four walks. Both hit one batter each. Senaholm made two errors.

Harrison's Vitiana was 3-for-5 and scored two runs. Jamie Swartz was 2-for-3, Maxey 2-for-4 and Emmett 2-for-5. Andrea Silechka and Townsend had two hits apiece for Senaholm.

Teachman also cited the defensive play of Vitiana (shortstop),

Maxey (second base) and first baseman Leslie Schrock in both games.

"It's definitely a team game when you put in a whole day like this," he said. "And the seniors got to do some more high school stuff, and this has been a wonderful senior class. To keep on working with them will be a lot of fun."

HARRISON 5, COUNTRY DAY 2: The Hawks fell behind 2-0 in the first inning after making two costly errors.

But they rallied with a four-run third. After a hit by Swartz and walks to Vitiana and Emmett, Vosler hit a two-run sin-

gle and Ari Ault followed with a two-run double.

Harrison added another run in the sixth. Swartz singled and pinch-runner Kim Spaulding advanced on a sacrifice by Vitiana and scored on a Vosler single. All Ault pitched a complete game, allowing five hits and two walks. Swartz was 2-for-3 and Vosler 2-for-2.

SEAHOLM 20, OAK PARK 0: Stephanie Levine pitched a perfect game for three innings, which is how long this first-round district contest lasted. She even struck out all nine batters she faced.

January Halner had three hits, including a home run and a double, and six RBIs. Levine helped her cause with three hits, and Carrie Gonzales added two.

REGIONAL PAIRINGS

REGIONAL BASEBALL PAIRINGS

(all Saturday, June 6)

DIVISION I

at SOUTHGATE ANDERSON

Semifinals: Taylor Kennedy vs. Lincoln Park, 9:30 a.m.; Westland John Glenn vs. Belleville, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at Carleton Airport, at Brighton regional champion.)

at BRIGHTON

Semifinals: Brighton vs. Birmingham Brother Rice, 10 a.m.; Walled Lake Western vs. North Farmington, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at Carleton Airport, at Southgate Anderson regional champion.)

at BIRMINGHAM GROVES

Semifinals: Redford Catholic Central vs. University of Detroit-Jesuit, 10 a.m.; Redford Union vs. Detroit Western, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at St. Clair Shores Lakeview vs. Grosse Pointe South regional champion.)

DIVISION II

at RIVERVIEW

Semifinals: Garden City vs. Ann Arbor Pior

Semifinals: Redford Thornton vs. Detroit Renaissance, 10 a.m.; Allen Park vs. Farmington Hills Harrison, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at Southgate Anderson vs. St. Clair Shores Lakeview regional champion.)

DIVISION III

at OAKLAND

Semifinals: Lathrup Westland vs. Monroe St. Mary's, 10 a.m.; Onsted vs. Riverview Gabriel Richard, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at Saline, vs. Lake Fenton regional champion.)

DIVISION IV

at WHITMORE LAKE

Semifinals: Southgate Aquinas vs. Plymouth Christian Academy, 9:30 a.m.; Deerfield Jackson-Vandercook Lake vs. Farmington Hills Harrison, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at Saline, vs. Lake Fenton regional champion.)

REGIONAL GIRLS SOFTBALL PAIRINGS

DIVISION I

at SOUTHGATE ANDERSON

Semifinals: Garden City vs. Ann Arbor Pior

neer, 9:30 a.m.; Lincoln Park vs. Taylor Truman, 12:30 p.m.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at Carleton Airport, at Brighton regional champion.)

at BRIGHTON

Semifinals: Plymouth-Canton vs. Walled Lake Western, 10 a.m.; West Bloomfield vs. Brighton, noon.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at St. Clair Shores Lakeview regional champion.)

at BIRMINGHAM GROVES

Semifinals: Detroit King vs. Farmington Hills Mercy, 10 a.m.; Livonia Ladywood vs. Detroit Mumford, noon.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at St. Clair Shores Lakeview vs. Grosse Pointe South regional champion.)

DIVISION II

at RIVERVIEW

Semifinals: Farmington Hills Harrison vs. Allen Park, 10 a.m.; Detroit Renaissance vs. Dearborn Divine Child, noon.

Championship final: Approximately 2:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state quarterfinals, Tuesday, June 9, at St. Clair Shores Lakeview vs. Grosse Pointe South regional champion.)

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"Overall, I think the girls played really well," Kowalski said, considering the tees were moved back to make the holes even longer.

"Forest Akers West is the toughest course we played all year. They took a course that has an extreme slope (degree of difficulty) to begin with and made it even harder."

With the lone exception of Smith, the Marlins will return their entire team next season and should have an even better shot at winning the state title.

"Obviously, we're looking at a bright future," Kowalski said. "We only graduate one senior, and all the teams close to us graduate two, three or four seniors."

"I believe the girls will set a

team goal to try to win the state championship next year. Grandville has four seniors; they're gone, good-bye."

"By no means will it be a cakewalk, however. There will be a lot of spots, and then there's the unknown. You don't know about incoming freshmen."

Sophomore Cassie Jamieson, representing the Farmington unified team, qualified individually for the state meet as a regional champion.

Placed in the same foursome with the other regional winners, Jamieson shot 89 the first day and failed to make the cut to play on Saturday.

"The pressure of the state meet is something she wasn't used to," Farmington coach Ann Marie

Sopha said, "but she gained a wealth of experience. She's looking forward to next year and will go into the match with some experience."

TOURNEY STATS: Snider was 4-under par on Friday (68) and one over Saturday (73) for a 141 total. Others in the top 10 were Kim Benedict, Rochester Adams, 155; Stephanie Bellia, Grandville, 158; Leanne Wicks, Brighton, 158; Jessica Hartman, Clio, 158; Momoko Sone, Saline, 155; Amanda Pettit, Harper Woods Regins, 160; Melissa Sneller, Zeeland, 161; and Carolyn Klunzinger, East Lansing, 162.

The other team scores were Adams 699, East Lansing 703, Saline 704, Grand Blanc 710, Brighton 728, Ann Arbor Huron 755, Forest Hills Central 765, Coldwater 759 and Grand Ledge 767.

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