

FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

State swim finals

North Farmington will send three individuals and three relay teams to compete this weekend in the Class A boys swimming and diving championships.

The meet will take place at Oakland University in Rochester. Ticket prices are \$3 for the prelims Friday and \$4 for the finals Saturday.

North senior Matt Zald will compete in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle, junior Brandon Digia in the 200 and 100 freestyle and sophomore Adam Farber in the breaststroke.

Junior Jim Gabriel just missed qualifying in the backstroke, but coach Pat Duthie said the Raiders can better use him in three relays.

"To have a good 200 freestyle relay at state, we're going to need Jim Gabriel," he said. "It would be hard to have him swim the 200 free and the backstroke."

"I think he'll contribute a lot more in the relay. I think we're one of less than six schools that have been under 1:30 in the 200 free relay. I think that's the spot we really need to try to do well. I think our chances to score are pretty decent."

Farmington High will be represented by senior Devin Hopper, who qualified in the backstroke.

"Devin has always been a clutch swimmer," Farmington coach Ross Bandy said. "He did very well at the league meet, dropping more time going into the finals."

"If Devin has a good swim and puts it all together, he could be in there. He seems to be faster than he was at the league meet. Every indication is he's falling into place where he needs to be as far as his taper."

Prep matmen at JLA

The individual wrestling state tournament for all four classes takes place Thursday through Saturday at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit.

This is the largest high school wrestling tournament in America with 14 weight classes in each of the divisions, totaling 800 qualifiers. There will be five sessions, including two on Friday and Saturday.

A limited number of reserved seat tickets are still available through the JLA Box Office and TicketMaster.

All-session reserved tickets are \$30 each; single-session reserved tickets are \$6 each.

General admission tickets for the upper portion of the upper deck are available on a session-by-session basis for \$5 each.

General admission tickets may only be purchased on the day of the event.

Approximately 10,000 to 12,000 fans are expected per session. The arena has approximately 17,000 seats for this event.

The first session Saturday starts at 9 a.m. The finals begin at 5 p.m. Saturday. Parking is \$3 per session at the arena parking structure.

The phone number to the JLA Box Office is (313) 983-6606. TicketMaster can be reached at (248) 645-6666.

Wolverine winners

The Wolverine Sports Club did very well at the recent Michigan Short Track Speedskating Championships at the Bay County Civic Arena.

The Wolverines took 13 skaters, and six of them won their respective divisions.

The Wolverine winners included Birmingham's Alan Hicks (Novice Division), a 9-year-old student at Pembroke Elementary; Trenton's Alexis Affholter (Tiny Tot Division), who set a state record of 58.47 in the 333-meter race; Trenton's Amber Affholter (Midget Girls); Royal Oak's Sara Bell (Junior Women), who set state records in the 1,500-meter race (2:42.56), 1,000 (5:39.82), and the 3,000 (5:39.82); Royal Oak's Carla Langenthal (Senior Women); and Huntington Woods' Dave Rendet (Master Men).

Farmington Hills resident Elyse Sklar was second overall in the Junior Women's Division with a state-record time of 51.82 in the 500-meter race. Andrew Hicks of Birmingham raced in the Midget Boys Division.

The Wolverine Sports Club skates at the Lindell Arena in Royal Oak, and now skaters are welcome to join.

Practices are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 5:30-7 a.m. through the end of this month. Call the Wolverine Hotline for further information (548-5580).



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN O'MEARA

Shamrocks roll on: Keith Rowe fires a slapshot during Catholic Central's 8-2 quarterfinal hockey victory Wednesday in Ann Arbor. The top-ranked Shamrocks will play a semifinal game Friday.

Shamrocks headed to Flint for Class A semifinal game



Top-ranked Redford Catholic Central continued its pursuit of the Class A state hockey title Wednesday with an 8-2 victory over Ann Arbor Pioneer in a quarterfinal game. CC's semifinal opponent will be Marquette.

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
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Flint isn't a candidate for tourist capital of Michigan, but the Detroit Catholic Central hockey team sure makes a habit of visiting there.

CC earned its fourth trip in the last seven years to the site of the Final Four with an 8-2 win over Ann Arbor

Pioneer Wednesday in a Class A quarterfinal game before a near sellout crowd at Ann Arbor's Ice Cube.

No. 1-ranked CC will play Marquette in a semifinal at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Flint IMA. Marquette beat Midland Dow in double overtime, 3-2, in another quarterfinal Wednesday night.

This is the third trip for CC to the Final Four in coach Gordie St. John's six seasons. The Shamrocks won state

titles 1994 and '97. CC lost in the 1993 Class A final under former coach Jack Gumbleton.

CC senior forward Keith Rowe, who had a goal and an assist, is one of only three current Shamrocks who played on the last state champion team. The others are Matt VanHeest and Pat O'Dea.

Grosse Pointe South ended CC's season in last year's regional final. "Whoever it is (in the semifinal) is going to be tough," said Rowe, who had a goal and two assists. "I think we're ready though. After last year, I've been on both ends of the situation."

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PHOTO BY JENNIFER CLARK

State qualifier: Farmington senior Brook Rubin will compete as a Division II all-around gymnast at the state meet this weekend.

Marlins district tourney champs

BY DAN O'MEARA
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Playing three consecutive volleyball matches was no problem for host Farmington Hills Mercy as the Marlins breezed to their 10th straight district tournament championship Saturday.

"We didn't get a great draw, but I think that was good for us, honestly," Mercy coach Ed Moeller said after his team defeated Southfield-Lathrup in the title match, 15-2, 15-7. "This team needs that pressure and to be in competition a lot."

"The last two weeks of practice have been the best back-to-back two weeks

VOLLEYBALL

of practice we've had all year, so I suspected this might happen."

In the first two rounds, the Marlins played Berkley (15-8, 15-3) and Detroit Henry Ford (15-4, 15-5)—one of which they usually see in the finals—and had no trouble getting past either of those teams.

"We just knew we had to come out strong and not have any lulls at the beginning," said Mercy senior Mary Gignac, who served eight aces and had 16 kills on the day.

"We played as a team; we got everyone involved, and the defense was really good. Because of that, we were able to win a lot of difficult plays."

"I think we had really good day. We were trying all day to keep our level of play high going into the regional."

The Marlins, who have won 11 district championships since 1988, advance to the Class A regional at Walled Lake Western to face Walled Lake Central on Saturday.

Central was ranked sixth in the state in the final coaches poll and is the Western Lakes Activities Association champion.

"We face the bear in Walled Lake Central," Moeller said. "I don't think we're afraid of them. I think we can go head-to-head with them if we do what we have to do."

Moeller will have to miss the regional due to a business commitment, "but the team knows what it needs to do," he said. Assistant coach Karen Dyrda will be the person in charge Saturday.

Big wins earlier in the season over such teams as Temperance Bedford, Livonia Ladywood and Birmingham

Please see VOLLEYBALL, C5

Farmington secures berth in state meet

BY DAN O'MEARA
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After years of near-miss frustration and months of anticipation, Farmington's gymnastics team was equal to the task this time.

Farmington achieved its season-long goal Saturday when it qualified for the state championships by finishing among the top three teams in the Hartland regional.

"You would've thought we won the meet by the reaction (of the Farmington girls) to coming in third," coach Jeff Dwyer said. "It's something we've been fighting for the last three years."

Farmington had been fourth in the regional, just missing a berth in the state meet, each of the last three years. Brighton edged Farmington by nine tenths of a point for third place a year ago.

"With that situation occurring three years in a row, for the girls who've been on the team that long," Dwyer said, "that was their goal every year—'OK, we're going to get back there and make it to state.'"

"That was a lot of pressure to put on a team. But to have a long-term goal like that and to achieve it is just a great feeling."

Furthermore, Farmington accomplished the feat while competing in

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what was arguably the most difficult of the four regionals. Some first-place teams in other regions would not have qualified based on their scores if they had been at Hartland.

Finishing ahead of Farmington were the state's top two teams, one of which is favored to win the state championship.

Brighton edged Hartland to win the regional title, 145.25 to 145.20. Farmington earned the highest score ever for a Farmington team (141.8) while narrowly getting the nod this time over Holt (141.3).

"After the bus ride home the last three years, I don't know if I could have taken another one," Dwyer said. "When you just miss out, it can be pretty heartbreaking."

"It was kinda neat to hear some of the girls, when they were announcing the individual medalists, say even if they qualified individually but not as a team, they weren't going to go."

"That means the team thing is so much more important. It's harder to go as a team than as individuals."

"One of the reasons we did it this year is we are a good team. Even the

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