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Judges acknowledged that. They said we grew up in the last year, as far as pulling for each other instead of having individual goals."

Farmington's performance on beam was the difference between going to state and not qualifying, according to Dwyer.

Going into the last event, four teams were in the running for third place. Farmington was tied with Freehold at 106.5, and Holt and Grand Ledge were within 1 1/2 points.

Farmington, with nine girls competing on beam, earned its highest score on the season (36.70).

"I could tell when we started they looked really steady and confident, fairly loose for a big meet," Dwyer said. "Meets are won or lost on the balance beam, and I think that's what won it for us."

Freshman Chelsea Keesling, who qualified for state in every event but bars, was fourth in Division I and led the way with a 9.5 on beam.

Junior Jamie Militello was

fifth on beam (9.2) in Division II and qualified individually for the second year in a row. The top eight in each event qualify for state.

Freshman Kristin Ulewicz also will compete at state after finishing seventh (9.05). Senior Anna Clark scored 8.85 and sophomore Lauren Ouellette 8.65.

Farmington also had its best score on vault (35.80) as Keesling, the lone individual qualifier, scored 9.1, senior Brook Rubin and Ouellette 8.75 and Militello 8.65. Clark, Ulewicz and junior Jenny Galbraith, who had her best score of the season, were tied at 8.6.

Farmington started on bars, scoring 33.70, "which is a little low for us," Dwyer said, "but it turned out they were judging pretty tough on bars and, actually, we had some of the higher scores."

Keesling, who missed qualifying as an all-arounder by .05, scored 8.7 on bars. Rubin and Ouellette qualified on bars in Division II, placing second (8.65) and seventh (8.25), respectively.

Clark just missed at 8.1.

"Anna was close on everything," Dwyer said. "She missed on a couple events, but she had a real solid meet. We couldn't have done it without her."

"In her last few meets, she's had her highest scores on beam, and that's when we needed them most. She's definitely peaking at the right time."

Keesling was among the top eight in floor exercise with a 9.3, but Farmington had no other qualifiers. Rubin scored 9.05, Militello 9.0, Ulewicz 8.85 and Ouellette 8.75.

"(Militello) had a great meet," Dwyer said, adding she scored nine on her two strongest events and had her highest score on vault. "She's always been a vocal leader, but she's emerging as one of our top girls."

(Ulewicz) had her highest scores on floor and beam. She was one of the top four on two key events. She's an extremely hard worker in the gym, and I think it paid off for her."

Freshman Annie Lieberman's 8.45 on floor exercise represented her highest score of the season.

"She didn't get recognized a lot during the season because of how good our team was," Dwyer said, "but I definitely see her coming up through the years. It's good to have girls like her and Kristin who are hard workers and have a lot of potential."

While she was in the top eight in just one event, Rubin still scored high enough overall (34.70) to finish among the top six and qualify as a Division II all-arounder.

Ouellette had her best all-around score (34.40) but missed qualifying by a fraction of a point.

The state meet takes place this weekend at Hartland. The team competition will be Friday and individual competition Saturday.



Floor exercise: Senior Anna Clark performs a routine as Jamie Militello (left) and Lauren Ouellette look on.

"What happens now, with only five girls in each event at state, it gives the teams ranked fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh a better chance to move up, because there's less room for error," Dwyer said. "Our goal is to place in the top five."

"(Qualifying) was definitely the highlight of our season. There's no pressure now. We're just going to go in and have fun. I'm just ecstatic that we made it. I'm real proud of the girls."

STATE QUALIFIERS: Rochester, Rochester Adams and Troy enter this year's team finals coming off impressive performances at Saturday's regional in Rochester. The Kimmy DeGrandchamps Falcons placed first with 144.45 points; the Highlanders followed in second with 143, and Troy earned the third and final qualifying spot with 141.65.

DeGrandchamps, who captured a regional title in uneven bars, Mary Lukeschewski, Julie Najera and Krista Vogt placed among the top 10 in the Division I all-around, while Andrea Oles took fifth in the Division II all-around.

P-C teams end season in regional

For the first time since the 1980s, the Plymouth-Canton school district will not be represented by a team at the state gymnastics meet.

Although both teams performed capably at Saturday's regional, hosted by Canton, their scores left them short of qualifying in what proved to be a very tight race — after the top two teams, anyway.

Defending state champion Northville-Novi was a relatively easy winner, scoring 140.25 points. The next best was Saline with 137.60.

That left 10 teams to compete for the third and last berth at the state meet in what proved to be a comparably low-scoring region (at Hartland).

Hilledale captured the final spot a 134 total. The difference between third and ninth, where Canton finished, was 2.55 points.

"It was probably one of our best meets of the year," Canton coach John Cunningham said. "I have absolutely no complaints."

Canton scored 131.45. Plymouth Saline was even closer to qualifying, finishing fifth with 132.50. Westland John Glenn was the only other area school competing; the Rockets took seventh with 132.00.

"It was a pretty good score for us, considering the last two events were bars and beam," said Saline coach Melissa Hapon, who helped the Rockets win a state championship in 1993. "I think the pressure got to them, and not in a positive way."

Both Canton and Saline will be represented at state in the individual competition. Canton's Liz Fitzgerald qualified in three Division II events.

Maggie Bott was fourth in the Division II vault. Saline had two qualifiers in all-around competition: Melissa Drake and April Aquino.

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