

# Falcons earn silver in district tourney

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Give some credit to the Falcons.

The Farmington volleyball team entered Tuesday's Class A district volleyball tournament at Walled Lake Central with just one victory to brag about.

The Falcons returned home with another win and a little more confidence in their stride after finishing as runners-up in the tournament to the host and No. 5-ranked Vikings.

Farmington ruffled some feathers on the other side of town when it knocked off rival North Farmington, 15-1, 15-10, in the semifinals. The Falcons pushed the Vikings to the brink in game two of the finals before falling, 15-17. Central had won the first game, 15-3.

Coch Ann Badnyne was elated with her team's overall performance on the day.

"To end on a note like this is really great," she said. "I can't ask for anything else. We've played as a team all year, but we struggled. The last couple of weeks we seemed to be coming together."

After dropping the first game of the championship match, the Falcons could have crumbled. Instead, they put a little fear in the Vikings.

A kill by senior Emilie Villemonte and back-to-back aces by junior Tricia Krause helped the Falcons jump out to an early 3-1 lead. The score was tied seven times, and neither team led by more than two points.

Central finally led the win as junior Colleen Saldana served the final two points of the game.

"It's a nice feeling going into next season, coming off something like this," Badnyne said. "It's probably one of the happiest losses I've ever had."

Farmington will lose four seniors in Kristen Brown, Brynn Maki and starters Villemonte and Jamie Jakacki, but the rest of the team will return.

Walled Lake Western defeated Farmington Harrison in the opening round of the tourna-

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ment, 17-15, 15-6. Central beat Western in the other semifinal match, 15-3, 15-5.

### 8th title in row for Vikes

Walled Lake Central might have been a little stilted following a two-day snow delay in the Class A district volleyball tournament it hosted Monday. But not stale enough to miss the opportunity to win its eighth straight district title.

Central rolled past rival Walled Lake Western in the semifinals, 15-1, 15-10, then disposed of pesky Farmington in the finals.

"Considering the schedule got switched around like it did, I thought we played pretty well," Central coach Mike Lindstrom said. "We were really ready to play Saturday, but the snow came."

The district championship gives the No. 6-ranked Vikings a berth in Saturday's Class A regional tournament at Walled Lake Western.

After taking care of Western in the semis, the Vikings (46-8-1) thumped Farmington in the opening game of the finals. Farmington took a quick 3-0 lead before senior Becen Saldana answered for Central by serving 15 straight points.

Seniors Amanda Mendenhall and Leah Douglas sparked the run with three kills each, and the Vikings benefited from six Farmington errors.

As the Vikings strolled confidently into the second game, the Falcons regrouped. Farmington again took an early lead, but this time the Falcons didn't crumble.

"In the second game, we kind of lost our focus," Saldana said. "We had to change the momentum."

Saldana finished with 33 assists, five kills and three aces for the day. Douglas had 16 kills, six blocks and five digs. She also served 13 times with no errors. Mendenhall added 18 kills and three blocks.



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMEYER

On the attack: Farmington's Emilie Villemonte delivers a spike at the Central defense in the district final.

The Vikings hope to get past the regional tournament, something they haven't done since advancing to the state quarterfinals in 1996. The Viking lost to Birmingham Marian in the regional final last year and were upset by Lapeer East in 1997.

"Because of the high expectations, sometimes it makes it tough on you," Saldana said. "I think this team is just as talented as past teams. The thing this

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Marian have helped the Marlins to believe in themselves, according to Moeller.

"The difference is last year I think we were satisfied winning the district, and I'm not sure we believed in our hearts we could go out and beat the big teams," he said.

"Whether or not we will remain to be seen, but they've done it enough now I think the belief is there they can do it. They know they'll have to have a great day to beat (Central), but they've had great days."

Junior Carrie Brackiewicz led the Marlins with 16 kills in the district, and seniors Carey Czech and Kaitlyn Jarzembowski contributed seven each. Jarzembowski also had nine blocks and junior Nikie Downing five aces.

"That's significant," said Moeller of the kill totals by Czech and Jarzembowski, "because we felt we were getting too much out of our power positions and weren't mixing the ball enough."

Marley was slow getting started against Lathrup, which defeated Southfield in a semifinal match, 15-0, 15-4, but reeled off seven straight points on its fourth rotation with junior Meghan O'Connor on the service line for a 9-2 lead. Downing served the next two and junior Amy Miller the final four.

In the second game, the Chargers scored four consecutive points behind the serving of junior Michelle Goe to take a 4-3

lead. Lathrup was ahead 6-4 and 7-5 before Mercy made a comeback.

"We were giving it a good fight, trying to stay in the game," Lathrup coach Lisa Moore said. "We were looking forward to a third game, but we couldn't pass the ball, we couldn't get the ball to the setter."

Downing served seven straight points, including a pair of aces, as the Marlins roared from behind to take the lead. It took Mercy two more rotations to finish the game and match.

"I thought we let down a shadow for three or four points; we backed off just a touch," Moeller said.

"Before, we would have been too complacent. I didn't think it would happen (this time). We had 10 great practices in a row. That tells me something; they've stepped up a level."

"The more pressure we put on them in practice the less likely they are to cave in a game situation. The good news they understand and don't complain."

In the match with Henry Ford, Mercy junior Liz Cash played for the first time this season, serving once. She injured a knee in basketball and required surgery and she has been rehabilitating ever since.

"I told her to make the serve," Moeller said. "and step out of bounds — 'Don't even make a play.' I saw a chance, because we were way up; I said 'Liz, go serve,' and she did it!"

## Warriors best in district

Lutheran Westland captured its first district title in school history Tuesday with wins over host Detroit Communication Media Arts (15-6, 15-4) and Detroit Benedictine (15-8, 15-1).

The Lady Warriors, Metro Conference tournament champions, advanced to Saturday's Class C regional to play host Almont.

The first semifinal match pits Southfield Christian against Grosse Pointe Liggett at 5 p.m. Lutheran Westland plays the host team at 6:30 p.m.

### Clarencville ousted

Livonia Clarencville made it to the finals of the Class C district Saturday at Southfield Christian before losing to the host Eagles, 15-10, 15-4.

Clarencville blasted Bishop Borgess, 15-1, 15-0, in the semis as Danielle Slez served all 15 points of the second game, notching 10 aces.

The Trojans (33-14-3) were hurt against the host Eagles when middle hitter Kristina Skrela re-aggravated a hyperextended knee and had limited mobility.

Rachael Koerke had 15 digs against the host team while Slez had four kills. Setter Nicole Kasparian had 19 assists.

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