

CC, Mercy's Anderson qualify for state finals

Pressure isn't always a bad thing.

Redford Catholic Central's ski team knew the pressure was on going into Thursday's regional — and the Shamrocks came through with flying skis.

Catholic Central took third in the giant slalom, its strength, then was sensational in the slalom during the morning to take first in that event and first overall in the state Regional 3 ski meet.

"The team knew going in that the competition was going to be tough," coach Tom Gable said. "Each racer just needed to turn it up a notch in individual flights."

Then, right off in the morning (giant slalom), a couple of top tens by (junior Matt) Gable and junior Scott Zaleski, the team found itself in third place.

"That was a little scary for me as coach, because that's been our strong point all season. But the guys held on; didn't fall too far behind."

The giant slalom was a little flatter than we expected.

But in the afternoon, the slalom course was a slightly steeper and more challenging hill. There's no question the folks responded with a team effort. They were solid.

Now it's on to Marquette for the state championships Monday, Feb. 28.

Catholic Central scored 71 points in the morning giant slalom, trailing Birmingham Brother Rice, which had 83, and Lakeland, which scored 65. West Bloomfield was fourth with 82 points.

Gable finished second overall

SKIING

In the GS with two runs totaling 1:01.39. Zaleski was ninth less than three seconds behind at 1:04.13.

Mark Gursky took 27th with a combined time of 1:07.22 and the fourth Catholic Central scorer was Joe Murray, who clocked 1:08.77 to finish 33rd.

Ryan Boudreau was 43rd at 1:10.66 and Aaron McCabe 60th at 1:14.82.

In the afternoon runs, Catholic Central's score of 49 easily outdistanced Lakeland's 62, West Bloomfield's 75 and Brother Rice's 92.

CC's total of 120 points was seven better than Lakeland's. Brother Rice was third overall at 145.

Gable finished first among the slalom skiers with a time of 41.12 while Zaleski placed eighth with a clocking of 44.14 and John Gabel scored 45.68, good for 13th.

Gursky was the Shamrocks' fourth skier, finishing 22nd with a time of 49.35.

Joe Murray didn't score but he did place 30th with a combined time of 50.86 and Boudreau wound up 36th at 61.52.

"They knew the pressure that rides with being top seed," Coach Gable said. "Now, moving up to the mountains of Marquette is a formidable challenge on its own."

"But our team has accepted all challenges faced all season and handled them well. I expect them to head north and show what they're made of."

Mercy takes 5th place

Farmington Hills Mercy placed fifth on the girls side of the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Region 3 ski meet at Lakeland.

The Marlins did not qualify for the state finals; however, junior Nikki Anderson will be going individually for finishing seventh in both the slalom and giant slalom.

"Nikki Anderson just skied superbly," Gable said. "I expect she'll ski well up north. She's dabbled with up-north territory before. I don't think anything is going to catch her unexpected."

Mercy finished fifth in both the morning giant slalom and the afternoon slalom.

It scored 116 points in the GS, well behind Walled Lake Central's low score of 34, and its 112 in the slalom was well back of Birmingham Marquette's 29.

"We were not quite as strong as we would have liked," Gable said. "I think the inexperience of the younger team finally caught up with us."

"They all skied hard, but they didn't have any room for error in a real competitive meet like this."

Juniors Laura Burek and Marcy Godlew both showed great improvement, and that's a real positive note.

"The attitude of the team was very positive. They have a very bright future ahead."

Both teams will travel to Boyne next weekend and will go to Marquette the last weekend of February to get in some free time on the slopes where the meet will be held.

Ladywood claims 9th straight league crown

BY RALPH RUCKER

Sports Writer

Observer & Eccentric Staff

The T-shirts had already been printed up commemorating another Lopsida Ladywood volleyball title in the Catholic League's A-B Division.

Who could blame them? Nothing changed to start the new millennium despite a brilliant effort by Birmingham Marian.

The Mustangs put up quite a battle, but it wasn't enough as the Blazers won their ninth consecutive championship with a hard-fought 16-11, 6-15, 15-11 triumph Thursday at Madonna University.

Ladywood, 36-16-2 overall, rallied from deficits of 5-0 and 10-7 to win the third and decisive game.

"This is always our No. 1 goal going into the season," second-year Ladywood coach Larry Wyatt said. "The seniors don't want it to end. They want to keep the streak alive and next year the new seniors will feel the same way."

Marian, 25-22 overall, proved to be a worthy opponent despite losing to the Blazers for the third time this season.

"This Ladywood team has composure and experience," Marian coach Stephanie Storen said. "When things don't go their way, they regroup."

"We kind of backed off in the third game and didn't attack with that killer instinct. Our passing to our outside hitters kind of went out the door."

FOOTBALL

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off the beach to contribute three kills and two blocks. Among other, Melissa Buckner provided steady passing.

"We were resilient to go out and make the plays when we needed them," Wyatt said. "We also made a couple of substitutions and it kind of settled our kids down."

"We went with what we do best — move the ball around and play a fast game against Marian because they have a big block."

Erin Cashen, a 6-foot-1 junior, had 12 kills to pace Marian along with two aces and two blocks. Senior Lauren Lamb had seven kills and two blocks, while junior Katie Wach added three kills, two blocks and one ace. Freshman setter Erin Foglite had two blocks and two kills.

"Our team is coming around right now," Storon said. "They playing together as a team and they're taking the offense and defense to another level."

"And another big reason for our improvement is that our freshman setter gets more confidence each time out."