



## FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

### College grid recruits

A pair of Farmington High School football players signed with Wayne State University on Wednesday, the first day prep players could sign letters of intent.

Mike Griffie and Stephen Wayne were among 20 recruits — all of them from Michigan and all but four from the metro Detroit area — who signed with the Warriors.

Griffie is a 6-foot-9, 185-pound wide receiver and Wayne a 6-foot, 185-pound kicker. Wayne also was a defender on the Farmington soccer team, and Griffie plays a post position on the basketball team.

Other Observersland players signing with Wayne State are Livonia Franklin quarterback Joe Ruggiero and Westland John Glenn running back Dan Smitherman.

Farmington Harrison's Chris Roberson is one of 28 players who signed with Eastern Michigan University.

The 5-foot-10, 175-pound Roberson, who was going to start at tailback for the Hawks but missed his senior season due to an ankle injury, is slated to be a defensive back with the Eagles.

EMU also signed Plymouth Canton running back-defensive back Jerry Gaines, who will play defense, too.

### CC gridgers choose

Catholic Central senior Matt LoPiccolo signed a national letter of intent Wednesday to play football at Grand Valley State University in Allendale. "I felt more comfortable there," said LoPiccolo, who chose Grand Valley over Saginaw Valley. "Both schools were great; I liked both coaching staffs. But the business school, I thought, was a little bit better, and I liked the campus better."

LoPiccolo, an All-Observer offensive lineman, will play defensive line for the Lakers. He had 91 tackles for CC with five sacks and a fumble recovery.

CC teammate and kicker Mike Sgroi signed with Stanford. He was 24-of-24 on extra points, has nine field goals with a long of averaged 66.4 yards on kickoffs and 40.9 yards on punts. Stanford coach Tyrone Willingham will give him the chance to try both duties.

### CMU baseball news

Two Farmington athletes will be a part of the 2001 Central Michigan University baseball team — Nick Latra, a senior from Farmington High, and Matt Loridas, a freshman from Redford Catholic Central.

Latra is a veteran right-hander who will have a chance this spring to battle into the starting pitching rotation. Loridas is a first-base prospect who could be redshirted this season.

The Chippowas, who were 41-7 last year, open their season with three games Feb. 11-12 against Minnesota in the Minneapolis Metrodome.

### Adult softball signup

The City of Farmington Hills is accepting new adult team registration for men's, women's and coed softball.

Registration is based on a first-come, first-serve basis. Leagues will play one night per week.

For fees and nights of play call the recreation department at (248) 473-9670. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### Spring soccer signup

Spring registration ends Friday, Feb. 16, for the Farmington Soccer Club. Registration forms are available at the Farmington community libraries and Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Office.

The fee is \$45 for returning players and \$65 for new players. After the deadline, a \$25 late charge will be assessed.

To register visit the club Web site at [www.leaguesonline.com/fsc](http://www.leaguesonline.com/fsc) or call the club registrar at (248) 428-7146.

## Raiders do about-face on volleyball court



North Farmington reversed a negative trend that often led to defeat on the volleyball court Wednesday as the Raiders overcame a poor start to defeat Livonia Franklin in a Western Lakes Activities Association match.

BY DAN O'MEARA  
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It looked as if North Farmington was headed down the same path it had been in so many volleyball matches Wednesday.

The pattern was all too familiar to coach Deb Calanchi and her players. The Raiders start slowly and lose the first game decisively, only to play better in the next game but lose that one or the third game.

So, when they fell behind 4-0 in a match with visiting Livonia Franklin, it would've been understandable if anyone on the North bench thought "Here we go again!"

"We started flat; nobody was moving," Calanchi said. "I was fearing that, watching them warm up. We weren't real up, and this was not a game I wanted us to take for granted, by any means."

Calanchi knew the Raiders had a legitimate chance at winning, and her

team didn't disappoint her in the end.

North rallied to win the first game, 16-14, and kept the momentum going in the second game for a 15-7 victory.

But the situation would get worse before it got better. The Raiders let the deficit grow to 11-2 before making a comeback in the first game.

"I put Alyssa Stanbridge in the game, and she made a great dig," Calanchi said. "That was her only stat on the night, but after that we turned it around."

"She didn't see much court time Monday or last night (while she continues to recover from an ankle injury), but she's the kind of kid who does her job and makes a quiet impact."

With the Patriots at game point, leading 14-11, a cool-headed play by

North's Nicole LeClerc kept the Raiders in the game.

"Lisa St. Charles ran a back-set, so Nicole, and Nicole went after it like it wasn't a big deal," Calanchi said.

"It was a pressure sideout situation, but she went after it like she was going to get the kill. We got the kill on that, and it helped us to get the serve."

"(LeClerc) was awesome last night. She had a huge dig in the second game. She wasn't near the ball and made a great dive and dug it up. The girls responded to that."

Unlike the first game, the Raiders didn't waste any time getting started in the second and took it to the Patriots.

"It was nice to go into the second

Please see VOLLEYBALL, B5

## Farmington topples No. 3 Brighton

BY DAN O'MEARA  
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### GYMNASTICS

If the girls on the Farmington-unified high school gymnastics team have a motto, it's probably "We believe!"

Farmington's collective confidence has never been higher following a major victory in dual-meet competition Thursday.

Coach Jeff Dwyer's team, ranked No. 5 in the state, upset No. 3 Brighton in a Western Lakes Activities Association contest at the Farmington Training Center.

It took a team record score by Farmington to accomplish it, too. Farmington hit a 144.66 total, eclipsing the 144.45 it had Tuesday, while Brighton was close behind at 144.35.

It marked the fourth time this

season Farmington has broken the record for team scoring.

"This is a pretty good sign," Dwyer said. "This meet is going to give us some confidence. I know we haven't reached our potential. We're hitting good scores, but you always think you can pick up a few more points."

Farmington defeated another perennial WLA and state power Tuesday in host Hartland, which had a 142.95 score, and set the stage for a bigger win Thursday.

"After the meet, we discussed being one of the top five teams in the state," Dwyer said. "I told them to worry about what we do as a team and not watching other teams."

"We talked about believing in ourselves as a team. If we keep believing we're a good team, it works out that way, and tonight it worked out in our favor."

It was Farmington's biggest win in five years, Dwyer added.

"We broke a school record and beat a fantastic team, but we'll probably see them two or three more times — at the conference, regional and, hopefully, states," he said. "We'll have to dig it out if we hope to repeat what we did tonight."

"We did a good job concentrating on our events and not what Brighton was doing. If we continue to do that, we have a chance."

Farmington had three of the top four all-arounders. Sara Houchins was first, Clara Seymour second and Chelsea Keesling fourth.

Seymour was No. 1 on the balance beam and tied Brighton's Anna Hoyt for first place on bars. Houchins had the best floor exercise routine and was second on vault behind Jenn Dion of Brighton.

"A huge score for us was Sara Houchins on floor," Dwyer said, adding her 9.65 is likely a record. "She's starting to post very high scores. She had a 9.6

Please see GYMNASTICS, B3



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BERZIK

No. 1 overall: Farmington's Sara Houchins won the all-around competition Thursday to help her team beat Brighton in a battle of state-ranked teams.



Event winner: Farmington's Clara Seymour had the best score on the balance beam.

## Rocks pull even with 2nd-place Falcons

BY RICHARD L. SHOOK  
STAFF WRITER

### BOYS BASKETBALL

No way Bob Brodie would have believed one year ago that his Plymouth Salem basketball team would be 7-8 today — and he'd be glad of it.

But needing six straight wins to reach 7-8 has a way of changing your perspective.

The latest victory for suddenly sound and streaking Salem came Friday night with a little more than three seconds left on the clock on a layup by Jeff Haar that gave the Rocks a 63-52 victory over Farmington.

It was preserved when sophomore David Hoskins blocked a potential shot as time was running out in the Western Lakes Activities Association game.

So now it will be up to Farmington to take a page from Salem's comeback book and get back on the winning track Tuesday against Livonia Churchill.

"We couldn't get it done, but give them credit," Farmington coach Denny Mikel said. "Our guy was supposed to dribble to the basket and get a layup.

But he stopped short. He didn't go all the way."

Scott Discher drove the baseline for the Rocks as the clock ticked under five seconds. He had no shot but made an underhand flip to Haar on the right side and his shot went in.

Farmington (7-2, 11-4) called timeout but nobody at the scorer's table could see or hear, so the clock ran down to zero. Officials called for five seconds to be put on the clock, and the Falcons inbounded the ball from under the Rocks' basket.

Farmington was trying to get off a shot when

Please see BASKETBALL, B5

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