

Mercy's Marshall betters her record in 400 at state meet

Farmington Hills Mercy sophomore Alexandria Marshall had the best performance by a Farmington female athlete Saturday in the state track-and-field finals.

Marshall finished fourth in the 400-meter dash at the Division I meet in Rockford, breaking her own school record with a time of 1:17.4. That was four 10ths faster than her previous best.

"We were conservative at the state finals, but it paid off," Mercy coach Gary Servais said, adding Marshall also was qualified to compete in the 100 and 200 dashes, as well as the 1,600 relay.

"We could've run her in everything but, with the way the weather was, that would've been eight races. That would've been a long day, from 10 a.m. to 6:15.

The best shot for her to do best was going with the 400 and 1,600 relay. A lot of people had trouble in the blocks; there were a lot of pulled muscles. The other races were just too questionable.

"If it had been 75 and a beautiful day, we might have tried it. Hopefully, she'll have a better shot next year in all four events."

Fourth place in the state was a good accomplishment for Marshall, he added, considering she didn't get out of the regional last year because Southfield had such a strong team.

GIRLS TRACK

"She had a four-gold performance at the league meet and qualified in four events for the state finals. I don't think I've ever had a kid do that."

Mercy's Anne Roosevelt made the finals in the discus and finished ninth, one place shy of a medal. Whitney Johnson just missed the finals in the 100 hurdles.

The 1,600 relay team of John-

son, Marshall, Deirdre Jones and Sharifa Crawford ran a season- and area-best time of 4:08.8 but didn't score.

North Farmington sophomore Susan Barrows also ran a season- and area-best time of 11:23.6 in the 3,200 run and was just 1.3 seconds from eighth place and a medal.

DIVISION II MEETS: At first glance, it seems Farmington Harrison had a bad state meet, considering the Hawks won a regional championship but failed to score a point Saturday at Grand Rapids.

Forest Hills Northern.

But that's not really the case, according to Harrison coach Mark Babcock.

"The things we could score in, we ran well in," he said. "It wasn't a lack of anything or something we didn't do well."

Ironically, the team that was runner-up to Harrison in the regional, Detroit Renaissance, ended up winning the state title.

"They have kids who are going to win those events at the state meet," Babcock said. "That didn't surprise me; it's a different meet."

"At the regional, we had a better chance; it was more balanced. (Renaissance winning) made us look good. To beat a state champion, you must be doing something right."

"We would have liked to score, but we can't say we didn't do well. At the regional, we had a nice balance, and that's how we won the meet."

Harrison's Laura Glynn ran her best time in the 400 dash by almost a second and had to be hundreds of a second out of eighth place, according to Babcock.

"I felt bad for Laura Glynn," he said, adding Glynn won her preliminary heat. "She's only a sophomore, so she'll have more chances."

Harrison's 800 relay team set a

school record at 1:48.3. The 400 relay team went 51.2 — its best time by nearly a second and which would have been the top-seeded time going into the meet.

"The two-mile relay had its best time by three or four seconds, but you had to run 9:43 for eighth place," Babcock said.

"You hope to go there and have your best performances of the year and, for the most part, we did that."

The outlook for next year is positive since the Hawks will return all but one of the 14 girls who competed at the state meet. Ris Hill was the only senior in the group.

Hawks from D1

"On the backside, Agim thought about letting the DC guy come up on him and outkicking him in the last 110 meters," Reed said.

Agim said "Forget about it; I'm going to go now." With 140 left, he took off and won by a second and a half, which is quite a bit.

Harrison was scoreless after failing to place in the 800 relay — one of its best events and one in which it expected to do well if not win.

The Hawks had a commanding lead but dropped the baton on the third exchange.

"That was a wake-up call," Reed said. "They had 10 minutes to get it back together mentally."

He added the Hawks faded last year when one of their best athletes, Nick Hall, fell in the high hurdles and failed to score.

"The kids lost focus," he said. "It looked like the same thing was happening again. But the kids regrouped. That wasn't going to happen to us this year."

Harrison rallied to win the 400 relay with the team of Shabaz, Charles Pickett, Chris Robertson and Marcus Woods setting a meet record at 42.66, breaking the one set last year by Detroit Renaissance of 43.28.

"That was a great sign of overcoming adversity, because we came back and won," Reed said.

The Hawks had their first 10 points, and they earned eight more with Mayberry's second-place finish in the 400 dash in which he set a school record at 49.6, breaking his own from earlier this year of 49.8.

Woods picked up another point with eighth place in the 100 dash (11.59) and Shabaz five points for fourth place in the 200 (22.62), giving Harrison 24 with its last event being the final relay.

"To come back from dropping the baton is a big tribute to our kids," Reed said. "To maintain their focus at that level is hard to do."

"Make one mistake at the state meet and you're pretty much done. They showed tremendous poise as a team to continue on and do well, and we're really happy about that."

Seven of the nine Harrison athletes who competed in the meet earned all-state honors, and seven will return next season. From that group, the Hawks lose Robertson and pole vaulter Kurk Laird.

Reed also recognized longtime assistant and former Harrison head coach John Schumacher for his contribution to the championship effort.

"It was nice for him to be there and to experience that," Reed said. "We've always said attitude is everything, and that's what John Schumacher has preached for 33 years."

"That's what did it for us, because the kids really believed that."

DIVISION I MEET: North Farmington scored 24 points in the Division I boys meet with Dan Persch's sixth-place tie in the pole vault. He and Brian Beach of Hudsonville vaulted 13.6.



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