

SPORTS

D1

Basketball D2
Wrestling D6

Thursday, December 6, 2001

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Volleyball tournaments

Farmington and Farmington Hills high schools will co-host girls varsity and JV volleyball tournaments Saturday.

The 12-team varsity event will be played at Farmington Hills High. Competition begins at 8 a.m. The playoffs are projected to begin about 2 p.m. and the final at approximately 5 p.m.

The teams will be divided into the following four-team pools:

Pool A: Harrison, Westland John Glenn, Birmingham Groves, Birmingham Marian JV.

Pool B: Farmington, Beverly Hills, Detroit Country Day, Hartland, Ann Arbor Pioneer.

Pool C: North Farmington, Northville, Redford Union, Pontiac Notre Dame Prep.

The top eight teams will advance to the single-elimination Gold Division playoffs in the main gym. The bottom four will be in the Silver Division in the auxiliary gym. Admission is \$1.

The 10-team JV tournament will take place at Harrison, beginning at 8:30 a.m. There will be two five-team pools. The top two in each bracket go to the semifinals.

Whalers tie Rangers

Twice in the last three weeks the Plymouth Whalers' former coach, Pete DeBoer, has brought his new team, the Kitchener Rangers, to town to face the Ontario Hockey Leaguers. And twice, on the Whalers' home ice, DeBoer's Rangers have delivered a message.

On Nov. 10, that message was a 4-2 Ranger win. Last Saturday, the Whalers needed a third-period goal from Stephen Weiss to tie Kitchener at Compuware Arena, 3-3.

Considering the Whalers have lost just four times all season (including Friday's 4-1 win over Brampton, Plymouth was 20-4-1) while Kitchener has been playing .500 hockey, DeBoer's success against his former squad is a bit surprising.

On Saturday, the Whalers had the early lead, thanks to a first-period power-play goal by Kris Vermasky. But a strong second period by the Rangers overturned that.

Kitchener tied it at 4:21 of the second with a short-handed goal by Matt Gronnier. The Whalers regained the lead 39 seconds later with a power-play goal by Greg Campbell, but that lead didn't last.

A power-play goal by the Rangers' Jeff Szwez at 10:24 of the second knotted it at 2-all, and an even-strength goal by Peter Hemsky at 16:48 of the second gave them a 3-2 lead entering the third period.

Weiss' tying goal came at 6:32 of the third. Jason Bacashihua had 22 saves in goal for the Whalers.

Fireballs AAU tryouts

The Farmington Fireballs will have tryouts for their 15- and 16-and-under girls AAU basketball teams 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15, at Power Middle School in Farmington.

The school is located off Gill Road, south of Nine Mile. There is a \$20 tryout fee (includes AAU membership card). For more information call Steve or Carol Palaina at (248) 478-1241.

FPS seeks coaches

Farmington Public Schools has need for coaches in the following areas: girls track, girls soccer and boys diving. Anyone interested in the positions should contact Athletic Director Brian Swinehart's office at (248) 489-3352.

Adult hockey players

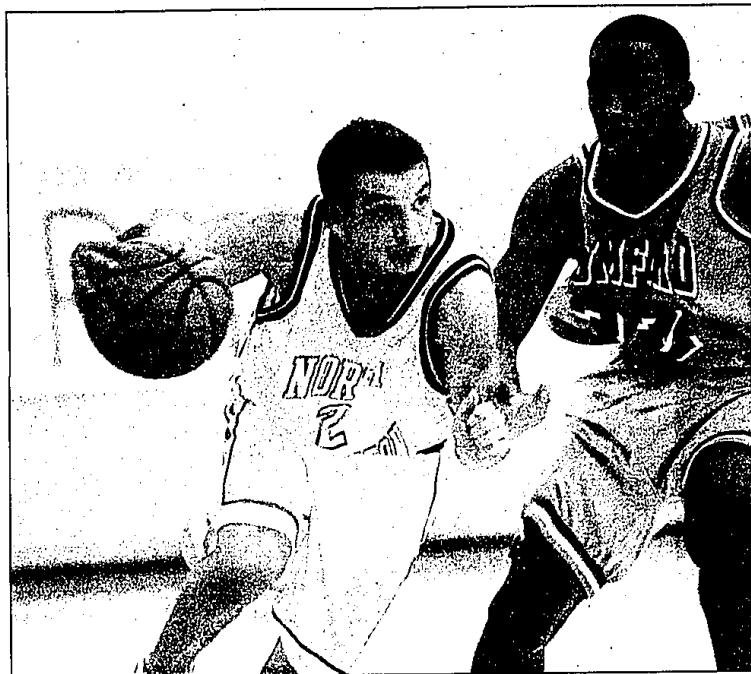
The Farmington Hills Adult Hockey Association needs additional players for the current season in the over-30 and over-40 age groups. Players of all skill levels are needed; however, the association has a sufficient number of goalies. To inquire about playing, call the FHAHA at (248) 471-6004 and leave a voice-mail message.

Holiday skating show

The Farmington Hills Figure Skating Club will have its Third Annual Holiday Skating Show 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena.

The club will have 30 members performing figure skating routines to various Christmas-themed songs.

The cost of admission is a can of food to be donated to charity.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER

Focus, focus: North Farmington point guard Marcus McComb is zeroed in on his objective as he advances the basketball past Mumford's Christopher Johnson in the season opener Tuesday.

Raiders play well in loss

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER
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Despite a loss in the season opener Tuesday, it appears North Farmington can look forward to a good season in boys basketball.

The Raiders played well against a good team from the Detroit Public School League but eventually succumbed to visiting Mumford, 76-68.

North's overall performance was probably good enough to win a lot of games, and that's why coach Tom Negoshian was "pretty happy with effort." He knows it's a game that will serve his team well down the road.

"Our philosophy about non-league games is that we want to play the best schedule we can, so we know the things we need to work on," Negoshian said.

"We want to win the game; yes, we're competitive. But the bottom line is we want to get better."

For the most part, the Raiders handled pressure well and were able to play an up-tempo game with the Mustangs, who had a little more athleti-

cism and scoring in the end.

Much of the scoring came from guards Stevie Moore and Alger Walker, who pumped in 24 and 22 points, respectively.

But neither one could top North senior Mike Leach, who scored a game-high 29 points, nearly half of that coming in the third quarter as the Raiders matched the Mustangs point for point.

"He's a helluva player for 6-foot-1," Negoshian said. "He's very difficult to guard, because he has that great slide move on the baseline."

North had a balanced contribution from a handful of other players.

Earl Higgins and Sean Mackler had eight points apiece in their first varsity games; Andy Zak tossed in seven, and Jason Neal and Greg Stitt added six apiece.

"We have two post players who never played a minute of varsity ball (Hig-

gins and Mackler).

Please see RAIDERS, D2



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER

Nice fake: Jason Neal makes a no-look dish pass in front of Mumford's Enrique Hope.

Falcons stumble at start

Farmington's young and inexperienced basketball team had a rough introduction to the varsity game Tuesday, losing the season opener at Waterford Kettering, 68-31.

The host Captains raced to a 21-1 lead after one quarter, and the Falcons, who lost their top six players from a year ago, found it difficult to make up the difference.

Kettering held a 32-14 lead at halftime and was ahead 48-23 at the end of three quarters.

BASKETBALL

"We still have a lot to learn and a long way to go, because we don't have a ton of varsity experience right now," new Farmington coach Steve Korpusik said.

"For everybody on the team, it's the first time being thrown into the heat of a real varsity battle. That explains our first quarter because after that they only had us by seven the last three."

Brandon Tucker scored seven points and Jeff McCollough six for the Falcons. Jerry Shinken is had seven rebounds, and Ryan Kosinski played a solid floor game at point guard, according to Korpusik.

"We just need to express more confidence and be more aggressive out there," he said. "I think it will come with time, but for now those are the main issues for us."

"We came out too tentative and that was our downfall. Being down 21-1 in the first quarter put us in a hole we couldn't get out of."

Korpusik saw the Falcons make progress during the course of the game and is confident they will mature as varsity players as the season moves forward.

"I was pleased with our overall effort," he said. "We had more dives (on the floor for loose balls) in the fourth quarter than we did the first three combined."

"It's a matter of us trying to get to the point where a lot of other varsity teams are. Since we only have one game in the next three weeks, I'm hoping that gives us some time to make up some of the gap."

"The kids do work hard; there's no question about it. They took the loss hard. But scrimmages are kind of casual. I think they found out how far they have to go and what they have to do."

"My focus is to get them to the point where they can have a lot more confidence in how they play and their abilities."

Brent Donk scored 15 points and Bo St. Denis nine for the Captains.

By staff writer Dan O'Meara

All-Observer Team

Farmington coach, 3 standouts earn area honors

BY BRAD EMMONS, DAN O'MEARA,
PAUL BEAUDRY AND C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITERS

Livonia Stevenson's Lars Richters and Farmington's Luke Juncar have few regrets following the 2001 boys soccer season.

If the coaches have one, however, it's that a state title eluded each of their teams.



Matt Konopinski
Farmington



Mike Leach
North Farmington



Nick Ramirez
Farmington

BOYS SOCCER

"The only thing missing was walking away with a state title," Richters said. "But it's a team I won't forget because of all the accomplishments they had all the thrill and all the lessons they taught me along the way. It was a very talented group."

The 32-year-old Richters is used to winning. The 1987 Stevenson grad played on back-to-back state championship teams (1985-86) and helped the Spartans to a run-up finish in 1984.

The all-state went on to play and graduate from Yale University (1991). He also spent seven years in the National Professional Soccer League with the Detroit Rockers before going into club and high school coaching.

In four years at Stevenson, Richters is an impressive 69-10-4.

"We have a lot of kids back next year, but we have several who will be sorely missed," Richters said. "We need several to step up and fill spots with some hard off-season work."

Juncar, who has a career record of 118-79-19 through 11 seasons, earned the Observer coaching



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER
All-area player: Farmington's Nick Ramirez was a four-year starter and defensive standout.

Please see ALL-OBSERVER, D4