

Sunday, February 10, 2002

FARMINGTON —  
FARMINGTON HILLS  
SPORTS  
SCENE

## Athletes of the Month

Farmington Public Schools has selected junior gymnast Clara Seymour and senior wrestler Ramis Bajrami as its Athletes of the Month for January.

Seymour, who attends Farmington High School and has a 3.46 grade-point average, leads the Tri-Farmington gymnastics team in all-around scoring.

She had a season best of 9.45 on the balance beam.

Bajrami, who wrestles at 112 pounds for North Farmington, won Oakland County and Observerland championships, and he was second in tournaments at Berkley and Wyandotte.

## CLARA SEYMOUR

**Favorite class:** advanced placement language and composition; **favorite athlete:** Kristen Maloney; **future plans:** sports medicine; **role model:** coach Kim Riley.

**Quote from the athlete:** "You're not tired until you tell yourself you're tired."

**Quote from the coach:** "She is a tough, tough competitor who never quits," Jeff Dwyer said. "She's a leader by example. She is determined to try to win the state championship."

## RAMIS BAJRAMI

**Favorite class:** pre-calculus with Mr. (Bill) Pinnell; **favorite athlete:** Steve Yerman; **future plans:** hopes to continue his education and wrestling career at Eastern Michigan University; **role model:** Zalm Cunniff, former North Farmington athlete, East Carolina football player and North Farmington wrestling coach.

**Quote from the athlete:** "Wrestling has taught me about the self-discipline necessary to be as successful as possible in life. Just prior to high school, my father passed away. I wrestle for him and hope my dad is proud of my efforts. My father's memory motivates me on a daily basis. I wish he could be here to watch me wrestle in person, but I know he's watching from above."

## College sports update

■ Farmington High graduate Kato Adams has been named Women's Hockey Player of the Week by the Eastern College Athletic Conference.

Adams, a senior defenseman on the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute team in Troy, N.Y., led the Engineers to a sweep of two weekend games.

She scored the winning goal and had an assist in a 2-1 victory over Salve Regina, and she tallied a pair of assists in a 10-0 rout of Holy Cross.

Adams is RPI's leading scorer with seven goals and 19 assists for 26 points in 21 games.

She ranks second in the ECAC East in defenseman scoring and 10th among all players.

Adams, who also runs cross country and track at Rensselaer, has led the Engineers to a 12-8-1 record overall and a 9-6 league mark. RPI is fourth in the ECAC.

■ Albion College sophomore Erin Spiro of Farmington (Birmingham Marian) won the 100-yard butterfly (1:01.98) in a double-dual swim meet Feb. 2.

Albion freshman Jennifer Bendick of Farmington Hills (North Farmington) was second in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:13.37.

The Britons edged St. Mary's College for a 122-118 victory but lost to Hope College, 161-61.

## Prep coaches needed

■ Farmington Public Schools is searching for a boys tennis coach at Harrison High School.

To apply contact FPS Athletic Director Brian Swinehart at (248) 489-3352 or fax a resume to (248) 474-3802.

■ Mercy High School is looking for coaches to fill the following positions: freshman softball coach and JV soccer coach.

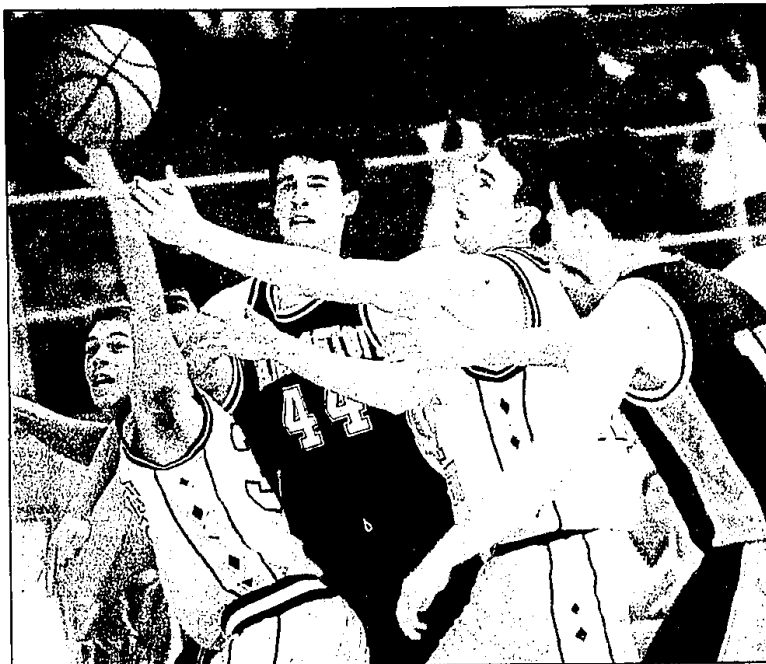
To apply call the Mercy athletic office at (248) 476-2836.

## Suburban hockey clinics

Suburban Hockey will have one-day, mid-winter workshops at Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills on Thursday, Feb. 14.

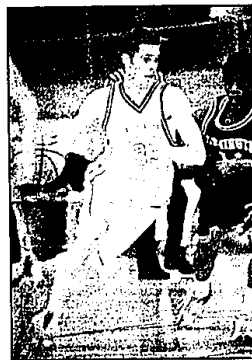
The Defense, Quick 'N' Fast and Shoot To Score workshops are for players age 6 and up. The workshops will be two hours, and each one is \$45 per player.

For more information or to enroll, call Suburban Hockey at (248) 478-1600 or see the Web site at [www.suburbanhockey.com](http://www.suburbanhockey.com).



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGES

**Project outreach:** North Farmington's Brian Shulman (left) and David Grant (middle) battle with Farmington's Robert Nagy (44) and Chad Moore (15) for a loose ball Friday night. The Raiders won the game, 62-30.



**Hoop action:** Andy Zah (33) advances the ball while being pursued by Farmington's Jeff McCullough.

Raiders chalking  
up hoop victories  
North tops Farmington

BY DAN O'MEARA

STAFF WRITER  
[domeara@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:domeara@oe.homecomm.net)

North Farmington is on track to finish the Western Lakes Activities Association round-robin schedule with a five-game winning streak in boys basketball.

Farmington was unable to derail its crosstown rival Friday as host North coasted to a 62-30 victory, its third in a row.

The Raiders are 5-4 in the WLAA and tied with Plymouth Canton and Northville for sixth place with two

## BASKETBALL

league games remaining. The top eight make the WLA playoffs.

"We hope we're peaking at the right time," North coach Tom Mogoshian said. "We have everything in front of us — the division, league and tournament."

"We want to get in the tournament, get as high a seed as we can and make sure we play well next Friday, because we have a chance to be co-champions of our division."

Please see HOOPS, C3

Harrison's Shabaj stays  
with MSU commitment

BY DAN O'MEARA

STAFF WRITER  
[domeara@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:domeara@oe.homecomm.net)

When it came time to make up his mind, Agim Shabaj relied on a little advice from his trusted high school coach, John Herrington.

"He told me I should be a man of my word," Shabaj said after he signed a national letter of intent to play football at Michigan State University.

"He's always there trying to help me out. He's a great coach and I have great respect for him. He was glad it was MSU, because he can come and watch me play."

Shabaj, a wide receiver and one of the top prospects in the Midwest, committed to MSU last summer but also was considering Georgia as signing day approached.

"There was a period of time I was very confused where I wanted to go," he said. "Georgia kinda came out of nowhere. I committed in August and never looked around."

"After I got that chance, I wondered if MSU was right for me. I thought I should think it through before I stick with MSU."

"In the end, Michigan State was the best place for me."

When it was crunch time Wednesday, Shabaj opted to remain in state and honor his original commitment to the Spartans.

"They pretty much gave me every-

thing Georgia could, and I can be closer to home," Shabaj said. "Family is important to me, and I wanted them to be there a lot. That was a big part of my decision."

Shabaj had to call and inform the Georgia coaches of his decision, too.

"They very cool about it," he said. "They just wished me the best of luck."

Shabaj will join Harrison teammate and quarterback Drew Stanton and boyhood buddy Gordon Niebylski, who is a first-year lineman at MSU and former Brother Rice player, in East Lansing.

"At first, (Niebylski) said, 'You can't leave!' Afterward, he realized I liked Georgia a lot, and he said to go where I want to go and he'd support me," Shabaj said.

"Since high school, he and I joked around, talking about what it would be like to be on the same team. I'm just happy he's on my side, because he can do a lot of damage; he's a big kid."

Shabaj will have some competition since MSU also signed two other receivers, Kyle Brown of West Bloomfield and Matt Trannon of Flint North.

"Those are two great players, and I think it's great the three of us are going there to compete, because the more you compete the better you get," he said.

It seems the Spartans will utilize Shabaj's speed and talent next season

Please see SHABAJ, C2

Mercy  
repeat  
champ

BY DAN O'MEARA

STAFF WRITER  
[domeara@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:domeara@oe.homecomm.net)

Farmington Hills Mercy left no doubt which girls team is No. 1 in the Mount Brighton Ski League, repeating as champion Thursday.

The Marlinas won the slalom and giant slalom events at Mount Brighton and, combined with the regular-season results, captured the overall title.

Mercy had 33 slalom points and 37 in the giant slalom Thursday to finish ahead of Brighton (47) and South Lyon (43), respectively.

## SKIING

After a slow start in early January, the Marlinas have dominated the league, winning the last four events.

Since the return of Liz Kujala, who missed the first two meets due to a back injury, Mercy has been on a roll.

"The ladies started at mid season and never looked back," coach Tom Gable said. "They stayed strong all the way through, including today. They never fell out of first place."

"When she came back, they all started skiing strong, and they followed it right through. Every one of their victories was impressive. Again today, they just outskied and outscored the opponents."

The Marlinas face another challenge this week when they try to defend their regional title Thursday at Alpine Valley.

"One of our preseason goals was to defend the (league) championship," Gable said. "The first step is done. The next one will be a little more difficult."

"The girls at (Birmingham) Marian, who are state ranked, will probably have something to say about that. I'm sure they'll be the main competition over there. We had quite a battle last year."

The top three teams in the regional will advance to the state finals Monday, Feb. 25, at Boyne Mountain in Boyne Falls.

"The girls, because of the results, are very positive," Gable said. "Liz Kujala is definitely skiing strong, and Nicole Zaleski is right there, also."

"Those two girls will lead the push and, with some decent results from the other girls, we have an excellent shot."

In the slalom Thursday, Kujala was the overall winner with a combined, two-run time of 33.85.

Please see SKIING, C2

## Gridiron recruit



STAFF PHOTO BY TIM HAWLEY

**College bound:** Catholic Central quarterback Tom Jakacki of Farmington Hills is headed to the University of Dayton along with teammate Ryan Wroblewski. See story in today's sports section.