

Thursday, March 29, 1984 O&E

(F1C)



Kattie Macintosh
Farmington



Linda Beale (capt.)
Plymouth Canton



Pam Modson
Our Lady of Mercy



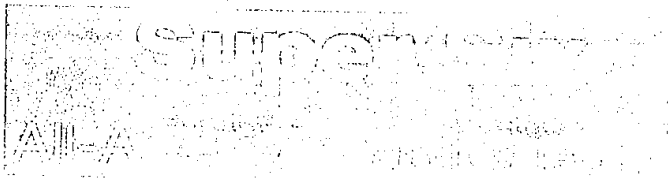
Dona Kebrdle
N. Farmington



Sharon Shiffrs
N. Farmington



Beth Raffell
Plymouth Salem



Beale leads 1st area gym team

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

OBSEVERLAND gymnastics has existed in relative anonymity in recent years. In the past, when one thought of high school gymnastics it was schools such as Bloomfield Hills Lahser, Troy and North Farmington that came to mind. Observerland gymnastics has long been overshadowed by its sisters in Oakland County.

The shadow is now beginning to move away. Until this year, Observerland gymnastics only included four teams: Plymouth Canton, Plymouth Salem, Westland John Glenn and Livonia Clarenceville — the latter two not belonging to a league structure.

This year, the Farmington Public School District (which includes North Farmington, Farmington Harrison and Farmington high schools) and Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy have joined Observerland — giving this area a much broader gymnastics base.

Because of this broader base, and because of the talent that has always existed coupled with the talent in the Farmington schools, Observerland gymnastics has arrived.

To honor this "stepping out," the Observer Newspapers proudly presents its first All-Area Gymnastics Team.

SUPER SIX

Linda Beale, Plymouth Canton: What better way to inaugurate the area's first all-star contingent than with the person many feel is the best gymnast this area has ever produced.

Beale, a National High School Gymnastics Coaches Association All-American, is the captain (or most valuable performer) on this first Super Six group.

"Linda is the best all-around gymnast I have ever coached," said Canton coach John Cunningham, who has coached a good number of outstanding performers. "She has eclipsed every record set at Canton, and several of those will be around for a long time. Her All-American honors are the first by any Canton gymnast."

The NHSCA honored Beale for scores of 8.9 on vault, 8.55 on balance beam, 8.7 on floor exercise and a 33.95 average all-around score. Her high scores this past season included a 9.0 on vault, an

8.4 on uneven parallel bars, an 8.75 on beam and an 8.8 on floor. Her top all-around score was 34.35.

Beale's list of seasonal highlights is most impressive. She placed sixth in the state on beam and 11th in the state all around. She was a regional champion on vault, and the Western Lakes conference all-around champion. She was also named the league's Most Consistent Gymnast.

Beale will not pursue gymnastics after high school, but she certainly has made her mark in the sport at Canton High School and throughout the state.

Pam Modson, Our Lady of Mercy: Within this multi-talented performer's repertoire is a most beautiful floor exercise. Her floor-exercise routine, which scored an average of 8.805 and as high as 8.9, earned Modson NHSCA All-American honors.

Modson's high-school gymnastics career is quite a story. A native of Plymouth, Modson chose to attend private Mercy High School. Mercy, however, didn't sponsor a gymnastics team. So, with the help of her longtime coach, Canton's John Cunningham, Modson became a one-woman team for Mercy, competing along with the Canton team.

Modson's top scores this past year were an 8.75 on vault, 8.3 on bars, 8.45 on beam and 8.9 on floor. Her all-around score was 33.2.

Modson, who is planning on attending the University of Michigan next fall, qualified for the state meet in both the vault and floor-exercise events. It was her second-straight appearance at the state meet. She qualified by placing sixth on vault and eighth on floor at the regional meet.

"Pam is the most coachable gymnast I've ever worked with," Cunningham said. "Her success, hopefully, will continue as she continues her gymnastics at U-M. Her potential has still not been realized."

Mercy has yet to win a gymnastics meet. But, with Modson, it has won some statewide recognition.

Dona Kebrdle, North Farmington: Coach Mary Johnstone-Glitz builds powerhouse "teams" at North. Because of that, sometimes Raider individuals get overlooked. This All-Area team, however, did not overlook the Raiders' two team leaders.

No. 1 team leader was Kebrdle. The senior captain was the Raiders' only competitor at the state meet this season and has been a four-year standout at North.

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