

Sports

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Raiders reload

North survives graduation losses

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

North Farmington gymnastics coach Jeff Dwyer doesn't know the meaning of the word *rebuild*. At North, the gymnastics team reloads from year to year.

The Raiders won the Western Lakes Activities Association last year, finished third at regionals and 11th at the Class A meet. Nicki Yuskowicz and Tina Hauptman, the most consistent performers on that team, have graduated.

Dwyer is not terribly alarmed, however, knowing girls like Rita Dunn, Kristin Szutarski and Ellen Wesselmann remained behind. The list of newcomers is equally impressive and includes Junior Kim Heller, sophomore Heather Kahn and freshman Jameelah Gater.

The Raiders already are 4-0 and again will contend for the WLAA crown. Don't feel sorry for Dwyer. His cupboard is almost as full as last year. "We've got potential," he said. "It depends on how hard they want to work. If they get serious, they'll be a respectable team. If we want to go the extra step, we've got to work at it."

The most pleasant surprise among the newcomers has been the performance of Gater, only a freshman. In North's most recent dual meet win over Ann Arbor Pioneer on Dec. 21, Gater scored 8.5 on the vault and 8.1 on the bars.

"She's strong," Dwyer said. "She's going to do real well this year. She's the ideal gymnast you want on your team. She's a real hard worker."

Dwyer's other new gymnasts, Heller and Kahn, came to Dwyer under different circumstances. Heller competed for North in 1986-87 as a freshman but transferred to Detroit Country Day as a sophomore. She transferred back to North and will be eligible at the start of the second semester.

This is Kahn's first year of high school competition after performing last winter for the Farmington Gymnastics Club. Kahn won three of the four individual events against Pioneer, scoring a

gymnastics

9.05 on the floor exercise.

"If the club girls decide to come out, they can make a difference," Dwyer said.

Szutarski, Dunn and Wesselmann have provided consistent scores and valuable leadership as returnees.

"They can hit eights when they hit," Dwyer said. "I can't say that one stands out more than the other. This is a pretty good group. Rita's the captain and she's doing a pretty good job."

FARMINGTON

Even before the season began, Farmington coach Mary Beth Schornhorst received bad news. Jackie Daly, a senior who last year finished 10th in Class A in the floor exercise, tore ligaments in her ankle and was lost for the 1988-89 season.

Daly also won the beam and vault at the last WLAA meet, so Schornhorst knows coaching without her leader won't be the same.

"Her loss is a real disappointment," Schornhorst said. "Who's to say what we'd do with her but we'll be fine. We're still strong. We have a good crew of freshmen."

Heading the list of freshmen is Christine Oates, an all-around performer. In Farmington's only meet of the season last month against Grosse Pointe North, Oates won three events and tied for first in all-around.

Oates is a transfer student from Ohio, and it didn't take Schornhorst long to hear she enrolled at Farmington. "I don't teach in the building, but they keep me informed about new students," Schornhorst said. "Oates has had some club background. She's going

to hold her own. I expect her to go to regionals." Other freshmen expected to score are Sheri Vitale and Nicole Gerasowski, both all-around performers.

Farmington's senior class is strong, even without Daly. Julie Lawton returns for her final campaign, with beam being her best event. Also back are seniors Debbie Ford and Amber Arbuckle, who excel on the bars and beam, respectively.

Another senior, Jennifer Reed, transferred to Farmington from Massachusetts and this is her first year of competition in the sport. But she was a state champion cheerleader in Massachusetts, Schornhorst said.

Also on Farmington's roster is Junior Michelle Fenner and sophomore Meredith Stumpo. The Falcons have depth and ready to compete for the WLAA title.

"We're very positive," Schornhorst said. "We were down a little bit when we lost Jackie, but everyone pulled together. I'm real excited about the year."

FARMINGTON HARRISON

There might not be any room left on Harrison's already long roster, but there's certainly room for improvement, record-wise.

The Hawks have 18 gymnasts on the team, which is 11 more than a year ago.

Harrison was 3-11 last year and finished seventh among eight teams at the WLAA meet. But if numbers mean anything, the Hawks are headed in the right direction.

"The future is so much brighter," second-year coach Jackie Huff said. "The attitude and the whole program is so much more positive than last year."

"We'll be better than last year, but I don't know if our record will be any better. I don't see any teams in the league being any weaker, but I think the scores will be a little closer."

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Amy Solomon, a regional qualifier on the balance beam as a sophomore, is one of Harrison's top gymnastic hopes this season.

Auto buffs persevere

in try for speed mark

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Karl Staggemeier and Gary Eaker were too determined to let failure stand in their way.

The General Motors engineers saw their first attempt to set a land speed record end in frustration and futility last August.

But the duo returned to the Bonneville Salt Flats two months later and achieved their goal of traveling the fastest anyone has in a production-class automobile.

The old record of 217.549 was set by Tom Monroe of Phoenix, Ariz., and had stood since 1981.

Staggemeier, who lives in Farmington Hills, was behind the wheel when the 1988 Pontiac Trans Am, powered by a 358-cubic inch, normally aspirated engine, shattered the existing record Sunday, Oct. 2.

The car, which remained a likeness of the original street model but had an engine beefed up to 660 horsepower, reached a peak of 231.681 mph during the "flying mile" on the five-mile course.

It is between the fourth and fifth miles, after the car has reached maximum speed, that records are established.

STAGGEMEIER and Eaker, who resides in Utica and works with Staggemeier at the Warren Tech Center where they specialize in aerodynamics, had been through the ringer emotionally by that time. They weren't in the celebrating mood.

"Actually, by the time it was all over, there was an overwhelming sense of relief," Staggemeier said. "The joy of the moment was long gone."

"It was like getting a big weight off your shoulders, because we had a lot of hard luck leading up to that."

THE FIRST trip to the unusual natural preserve, near the Utah-Nevada border, was a disaster. The 110-degree heat did little help.

The car averaged 127 mph between third and fourth miles on the second attempt, but the clock malfunctioned on the last mile.

On the next run, the driveshaft failed, twisting the differential locating arm and destroying the gear box. There was a two-day delay while the damaged parts were replaced.

The engine experienced oiling problems when they tried again, and they worked until 6 a.m. the following day putting a different engine in the car.



Karl Staggemeier
Farmington Hills engineer

'From an engineer's standpoint, you do all the figuring and working with numbers, and you go out there and see if you're right or not.'

— Karl Staggemeier
world-record holder

But that engine had oil trouble, too, and Staggemeier and Eaker tried to have a replacement engine sent by air freight for a final attempt Friday. The engine never arrived — the victim of an airline scheduling fluke.

"It was an exasperating week," Staggemeier said. "We busted a lot of dollars in equipment."

BUT THE pair remained undaunted and, having worked out all the gremlins, set out again in October to try once more.

Staggemeier knew they had the record by looking at the tachometer and seeing the engine was approaching the rpm it should for such a feat. But, with that kind of power at his fingertips, he couldn't relax or think about what had transpired just yet.

"The level of concentration that is required is over and above anything you see on the highway," Staggemeier said. "And the salt is pretty slippery. It's like something between hard-packed dirt and ice."

"The car will move laterally 20

people in sports

feet before you can catch it. And you have to catch it gradually, because the car will spin easily.

"You can't be sitting in there thinking 'This is fun,'" he said. "You have to be paying attention to what you're doing."

STAGGEMEIER ESTIMATES he and Eaker spent a total \$175,000 on the project, most of it by sponsors but \$10,000 of which came from their own pockets.

"We dropped a few dollars," he said.

Despite the cost and effort that went into realizing the goal, Staggemeier said the personal satisfaction derived from the accomplishment was worth it.

"What did we get out of it?" he said. "A \$10 wooden plaque and a picture."

"Some things you treasure more are worth the least, like getting a trophy in softball."

FOR THE engineers, the sense of achievement is gratifying for reasons other than the mere feat. Staggemeier and Eaker spent a lot of their own time conducting experiments to determine if and how it might be possible for them to set the record.

"From an engineer's standpoint, you do all the figuring and working with numbers, and you go out there and see if you're right or not," Staggemeier said.

"It's neat to see the engineering and hardware side all come together, to predict what's going to happen and back it up."

"We wouldn't have gone if we hadn't run all the engineering scenarios up front that said we could do it. We were very confident; otherwise, we wouldn't have gotten all the help (from sponsors) that we did."

Staggemeier and Eaker are probably not through, however. They're already talking with an engine builder about the prospect of using a nitro oxide system to create an engine capacity of 1200 horsepower.

"The computer says 310 (mph) is doable, so we think 500 is marginal," Staggemeier said.

"Everything would have to go right, but if it was easy there'd be a lot more doing it."



STEVE JONES/staff photographer

Bishop Burgess High School's Carl Woods (left) tries to go up and over Calvin Bransford of Flint Central. Woods scored 11 points in the

Spartans' 69-62 defeat against the perennial state-ranked power.

Junior ace leads Indians to victory over Spartans

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

Jay Greene might be the best basketball player Redford Bishop Bulldogs players see this year. Unless they attend a game at The Palace.

Greene and teammate Al Fisher scored 35 points each Thursday, powering Flint Central to a 69-62 non-conference win at Burgess.

As good as Greene is, remember, he's only a junior.

The 6-foot-5 Greene, whose brother Terrence plays at DePaul, is one of 10 juniors on Central's 12-man roster. Fisher is the Indians' 12th senior, but Greene is the player they turn to in tight games.

"Jay is a junior but he's played three years on the varsity," Gooch said. "That's more than a lot of seniors play."

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"MOST OF THE time Jay makes good judgments. He's an Oscar Robertson type. Unless a guy is big and a good defensive player, Jay's going to get his shot off."

Central's record improved to 5-2 overall and Burgess slipped to 2-3. Greene scored 10 points in the fourth quarter, including four from the free throw line in the last 2 1/2 minutes. Central led most of the second half, but the Spartans trailed by two, 64-62, with 1:19 left when forward Kareem Carpenter scored in the lane.

Greene made a layup on Central's

most possession, however, and then nailed two free throws, giving the Indians a more comfortable 69-62 lead with 10 seconds left. The Spartans weren't able to score on several possessions in the last minute.

"We have a good team," Greene said. "We're young and it takes us a while for us to pull together. When things get tight I feel I'm the one who should take over. The whole team played hard, though. I shouldn't take all the credit."

BURGESS PLAYED its third straight game without junior starting guard Shawn Respert, who remained out with 14 stitches in his face because of a car accident.

Carpenter played a strong inside game, leading Burgess with 21 points and grabbing six rebounds. Charles North scored 17 points and Carl Woods added 11, but they weren't

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