

Sports

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Farmington roller skater 4th in world

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Steven Findlay of Farmington thought his first trip to the world championships in roller skating would be a get-the-feet-wet opportunity.

But it was much more than that. Findlay did far better than expected, finishing fourth in a field of 32 contestants in world class men's figures. The 20-year-old Findlay, a 1988 graduate of Farmington High School, actually tied for third during the late-October competition in Hanau, Germany, but lost a tie-breaker and just missed winning a medal.

"Generally, if it's your first year over, the politics are so heavy no matter how you skate you end up eighth," Findlay said.

It was very gratifying to be fourth, yet disappointing to be so close to breaking that barrier. It's parallel with ice skating, so it's not really any different. It's just to be expected.

BEING A first-time qualifier for the worlds and a lesser-known skater, Findlay was surprised to finish as high as he did.

"I knew I had a good chance to do well," he said, "but I didn't expect

the politics to work that well for me. I thought I could be in the top six. The politics worked for me to get fourth but not well enough to get third."

Making those kind of inroads in his first attempt bodes well for Findlay in the future, and his long-time coach, Bud Patton, believes he definitely has one.

The United States and newly crowned world champion, Justin Bates of Flint, also is coached by Patton. But, at age 25, his ability and career are more advanced than Findlay.

"He is probably the U.S. future in men's figures," said Patton of his younger pupil. "He's the heir apparent."

"Justin will probably skate one more year, and the Steve will take over. Obviously, it's not that cut and dried, but he's that strong. I expect he'll give the world champ a run for his money (next year)."

FINDLAY will compete in the Olympic Sports Festival in May and have another go at Bates and the national and world titles later in the year. The 1991 worlds will take place in Sydney, Australia.

"To break the political barrier the first year puts you in good position for the world championship the next



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— Steven Findlay
world-class roller skater

year," Findlay said. "For anybody in the top 4-5 places, if they've been there once, the judges really begin to take notice."

This is his third year in world class and first time at worlds. It was Justin's eighth year in world class and fourth at the worlds.

Findlay accomplished his original goal, the one he set for himself at the beginning of the year, when he finished third in national competition

last summer in Pensacola, Fla.

He lost another tiebreaker in that meet, too. He tied for second but ended up third, however, it was still good enough to earn a place on the U.S. world team.

First place went to Bates and second to Dick Bulck, but Findlay rebounded at the world meet to finish decisively ahead of the fifth-place Bulck. An Italian skater was second and a German third.

FINDLAY, WHO began skating when he was 14, made the national finals the previous two years, but he finished seventh in 1988 and tied for fifth but was sixth in 1989.

"This year was quite a jump to go from sixth to second," Findlay said. "People don't realize it was a culmination of the first two years. Though I wasn't as close to making the team, the first two years of practice were a part of it. You have to be persistent."

Patton has seen that persistence and encouraged that quality in Findlay during the seven years he has been his coach.

"He's a super young man," Patton said. "He works hard all the way around — in college, at his job and at skating. He'll practice three to four hours a day."

"When I started with him, he was just a little guy, and each year he keeps getting better and better. He's a winner."

"He's kinda like my son," he added. "I've been married that long. My wife (Lorraine) and I think a lot of him."

PATTON SAID Findlay will probably have to skate another two to three years to secure himself of a world title, and there's also the possibility of Olympic competition in the future.

Roller hockey, a popular sport in Europe, will be a demonstration sport at the '92 Games in Barcelona, Spain, but there's no timetable for including roller skating.

"The consensus is roller hockey will pave the way for other divisions in the sport," Findlay said.

Even if it eventually is included, Findlay, a third-year mechanical engineering student at Oakland University, doubts whether that will be possible for him.

"Quite honestly, the timing is unfortunate," he said. "It's so close to being in an Olympic sport, but my skating career coincides with my college career."

"I have three years left to get my degree — and who knows what will happen — but I'll probably attempt to skate until I'm done with school. I'll get a job offer, and that's probably when I'll have to retire and quit skating."

A key factor is whether or not the United States Olympic Committee continues its current level of funding. That might allow Findlay to delay career plans long enough to pursue the Olympics, too.

One thing is certain: Findlay is poised to make a big splash on the world scene.

Panthers hold off Falcons

By Neal Zipser
staff writer

Most basketball teams must play 32 minutes of solid basketball to win a game, but Redford Union proved that 24 minutes is good enough.

Despite not scoring in the first and the last four minutes of the game, the Panthers evened their record at 1-1 with a 60-53 victory Friday over host Farmington.

The Panthers also were able to offset their 45 percent free throw shooting (14-31), thanks mostly to the Falcons' horrendous field goal shooting in the first half (18 percent).

It was a matchup of two teams who knew each other well after playing one another during the summer league. Even though several of the players developed friendships, that relationship was forgotten at the tip-off as a total of 49 fouls were called in the game.

"We respect Farmington and were worried about them coming into the game because we knew how competitive they were by playing them in the summer league," RU coach Trip Smathers said. "Fortunately, we were taller and rebounded well."

"THIS GAME meant more because we have played them before," said senior guard Jon Fitzpatrick, who led the Falcons with a game-high 18 points. "We know their players, their plays — it's like a practice game. We have a problem with keeping our intensity up and need somebody to step up. I tried to be that person tonight."

Farmington coach Bob Kaump thought the Falcons would win. "We had two real good practices and I thought we'd be ready tonight," he said. "We gave a tremendous effort in the second half of the third quarter and the fourth quarter, but we had a tremendous amount of turnovers and awful shooting in the first half."

"We have to get ahead in a game and let the other team catch up. The team has come to the conclusion that we have to step up our intensity in practice and carry that into the games."

The game was not as close as the score indicated, as RU led by 20 points with six minutes left in regulation. A 17-4 Falcon run to end the



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

A rebound flies past the reach of Farmington player John Wilson (40) as well as that of an RU opponent Friday. The Falcons saw their record dip to 0-2 with the loss.

game cut the final margin to seven.

FARMINGTON (0-2) jumped out to a 4-0 lead behind two long jumpers by senior forward Jason Childress. After missing their first five shots and first three free throws, the Panthers scored their next five times down the court to take a 9-6 lead.

"We weren't ready to play at first," said senior forward Chris Mulka, who finished with 15 points to lead the Panthers.

The Falcons made only four of their 21 first quarter field goal attempts, and despite converting only one of five free throw attempts, RU escaped with a 13-8 lead entering the second quarter.

The Panthers opened the next quarter scoring 11 of the first 13 points. The highlight of the run was a seven-point swing on one possession. Junior Guard Bill Malecki scored on a breakaway layup to make it 19-10 in favor of RU.

Farmington's Jason Tucker

received a technical for hanging on the rim on the play and Malecki converted both free throw attempts. RU inbounded the ball and senior guard Steve Zimbalatti hit a high-arching three-pointer to give RU a commanding 24-10 advantage.

RU had a 37-24 halftime advantage as 9-of-12 free throw shooting kept the Falcons from getting further behind. Malecki scored seven of his 12 points in the second quarter.

BOTH TEAMS changed their defenses for the second half, but the shooting didn't get any better for Farmington in the third quarter, as the Falcons converted only 3-of-15 attempts to fall behind 51-34 entering the final quarter.

The Falcons trailed 56-35 with 5:59 remaining and were being thoroughly outplayed by a slightly taller Panther team, which on one possession, had five attempts to score. But that's when Farmington decided to start its comeback.

RU's lead was cut to 60-46 with

3:06 remaining. The rally was due in part mostly to the Panther's pathetic free throw shooting and 10 fourth-quarter turnovers.

"All we had to do was hold on to the ball and make some free throws," Smathers said, indicating that his team will work on free throws this week at practice.

Fitzpatrick drove down the lane and RU's Mark Ulmer was whistled for a blocking foul. Ulmer then got tagged for a technical and Fitzpatrick had the opportunity to shoot four free throws and cut the lead to eight. But after making only two, the Falcons missed three triple attempts and committed two turnovers on successive trips down the floor.

A THREE-POINTER by senior guard Bob Cook with 18 seconds left, sliced the score to 60-53, but the Falcons could get no closer.

"I never thought we were going to lose until the final buzzer," Fitzpatrick said.

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SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Jon Fitzpatrick (left) gets set to pass over Redford Union player Steve Zimbalatti. The Falcons lost the game 60-53.

Harrison cagers defeat Captains

Inside scoring and perimeter defense made the difference Friday as Farmington Hills Harrison took its first victory, 66-57, over Waterford Kettering.

Paul Gillyvay, a 6-foot-7 junior, scored 19 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and had three blocks for the Hawks. Senior forward Andy Smith contributed 17 points and eight rebounds.

The Hawks also got strong defense late in the game from guards Roy Granger and Dan Hight. Waterford Kettering's Tad Smith scored 23 points, but he was held to only one shot down the stretch when guarded by Hight.

Harrison led 10-5 after one quarter and pushed its lead to 24-18 at halftime. The Hawks clinched the outcome by outscoring the visitors 23-19 in the fourth quarter.

The Hawks enjoyed a 50-24 rebounding advantage. Forward Andy Fitzpatrick, who had nine points, also helped on the boards with nine rebounds.

"We're a young team and still feeling our way," Harrison coach Mike Teachman said. "We're getting a better job done from support players."

straight victory in a series dating back to 1979.

New heroes were crowned in a matter of seconds as overtime ended away Wednesday. Trailing 89-85, OU's Eric Taylor calmly let fly a three-point jumper that swished through the net with :17 left to knot the game.

But St. Mary's answered, with former Detroit Country Day star Jimmy Bolden sinking a 15-footer with just :02 left. The Panthers called an immediate timeout, but it was to no avail; they never got another shot off.

UNFORTUNATELY, the clutch perfor-

basketball

mances down the stretch by both Taylor — who finished with a game-high 35 points (five-of-10 threes), six rebounds and four assists — and Bolden (16 points) were overshadowed by clumsy work at the scorer's table and questionable officiating.

OU coach Greg Kampe was enraged after the loss, his team's fourth in five games. St. Mary's improved to 7-3.

"We're not coming back," said Kampe.

"We will never play here again. If that means we never play St. Mary's again, that's fine."

The trouble began at the scorer's table at halftime. St. Mary's coach Jim Bolden told Pioneer 10-4 in the last 2:13 to take the lead at the half.

Or was it a 10-2 run? The actual score was the argument. The scoreboard read 47-44 St. Mary's, but the book told another story. After Kampe complained, officials checked several sources and did, indeed, give OU two more points, making the halftime score 47-46.

THOSE POINTS came handy later, but

midway through the second half the scoring adjustment seemed unnecessary. The Eagles were in command, having built a 10-point bulge on two Brian Koscielski free throws with 10:13 left. Kampe called a timeout, and a different team emerged.

"We just ran our offense better (after that)," the Pioneer coach said. "I told them in the timeout that I don't care if we lose, but we have to run our offense better. We have to get the ball inside to (Anthony) Soule."

It wasn't Soule, however, who turned the game around for OU; he had just one free

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By C.J. Riska
staff writer

The game — pitting two teams with nothing in common save the county they are located in, and the game they play — has started to develop into a passionate rivalry. Too bad it may never get the chance to blossom further.

Then again, one can never tell. After all, controversy is the fuel of rivalries, isn't it?

Wednesday's basketball game between St. Mary's College of Orchard Lake and Oakland University of Rochester was controversial, to be sure. The end result was a 100-97 overtime win for St. Mary's, the second-