

Marlins begin with league win

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Even if coach Tim DeBeliso believes Farmington Hills Mercy was rated too high in the first Class A volleyball poll, the Marlins made a case to support their No. 4 ranking Monday.

Mercy began Catholic League play by beating Central Division contender and rival Birmingham Marian, winning its first three-game match, 15-5, 9-15, 15-9.

The Marlins, defending division and league champions, are 11-0 and the Mustangs 7-1.

"It was a good test of how we're going to handle pressure," DeBeliso said, adding the large crowd that packed the Mercy gymnasium created a playoff atmosphere.

"It's a good start. We have a lot of things to improve on, but I told the kids we have to be 1-0 before we're 2-0."

MERCY LED 9-3 in the second game and was in position to wrap up the match victory, but Marian, winner of the Walled Lake tournament Saturday, outscored the Marlins 12-9 to force a third game. Mercy overcame a 3-0 deficit in the finale and built a 14-8 lead.

"It seemed we were stuck on 14 until we finally put the game away," DeBeliso said.

Mercy faced a taller Marian team but overcame the height disadvantage with a persistent attack.

"We were moving our hits around," DeBeliso said, "and we did a good job of making them move

from side to side, which is what you have to do when they've got big blockers.

"They did some solid blocking on us, but we kept hitting the ball at them. They got a hand on quite a few balls to take the speed off the ball, but we got enough points on their hitting errors."

Karen Pinkerton had 12 kills, including the match winner in the third hitting percentage. Gail Marie (4.66) recorded seven kills. Maureen Paulin six and Laure DeMattia three. Sophomore Stephanie Storen had nine kills and senior Trina Govan six for the Mustangs.

"WE HAD pretty effective hitting overall," DeBeliso said. "When you have that many attacks, it indicates the other team kept the ball alive on you."

DeBeliso said setters Suzie Atchinson and Jill Eveleth did a good job supplying the hitters with the ball in the middle.

"They're starting to learn what they have to do to attack a defense," DeBeliso said. "When they get that sense of the game, then we're on our way."

The Marlins made only three serving errors, and Shannon Goff recorded five aces. DeMattia registered five blocks for points. Nora Hand served three aces and had six defensive digs.

Storen slammed six aces and Govan two for Marian, and senior Karen Dubsay played a good defensive game.



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer
Laure DeMattia spikes the ball past Marian blocker Kristy Kozlowski in Mercy's first dual meet Monday.

CC skiers win debut

With five finishers among the top eight, Redford Catholic Central's ski team opened its season successfully Tuesday with a win in a seven-team slalom race at Mount Brighton.

East Lansing placed second to CC, with Brighton third, Howell fourth, Birmingham Groves fifth, Hartland sixth and Birmingham Seaholm seventh.

In the girls' meet, Farmington Hills Mercy skiers placed second and third, but no others cracked the top 15, leaving the Marlins to a third-place team finish. Brighton won, with Seaholm second. Hartland was fourth, Groves placed fifth, Howell took sixth and East Lansing placed seventh.

CC's top finisher was Steve Witek, who took third. Jason Worley was fourth, followed by teammates Mark Tomas in fifth, Peter Lombardi in sixth and Matt McIntosh in eighth. East Lansing's Brian Waldron was the top finisher in the meet, followed by Brighton's Peter Kent.

For the girls, Mercy's Nicole Sinclair placed second and Megan Lombardi was third. The next Marlin was Jenny Busser in 17th, Allison Vigi came in 25th. Groves' Gretchen Kuhn took first.

The second half of this meet, the grand slalom race, will be Thursday at Mount Brighton.

Tired of losing, CC routs South

Redford Catholic Central was sick — in more ways than one Tuesday night.

The Shamrock swimmers were sick of losing to Grosse Pointe South, which had beaten them the past four years. Yet, their biggest assets — Randy Teeters and All-Stater Troy Shumate — were physically sick.

With all of this in mind, CC still defeated South 51-35.

"We were without Troy Shumate, and Randy Teeters had been sick for five days but decided to stick it out," coach Peter Leonhardt said. "It was a total team effort and it came down to the wire. They came through for us and we won the meet."

Mike Hoeflin won the 200-yard freestyle (1:45.60) and the 500 freestyle (4:48.60) to lead the Shamrocks. Both wins were state qualifying times.

"Mike Hoeflin's times were the key," Leonhardt said. "The times he swam today would place at the state championships in March."

ANOTHER KEY was freshman Karl Kozicki's second-place finish in the 100 butterfly to South's best swimmer, Ted Steden. Kozicki was only .07 behind Steden.

Other firsts for CC were: James Leslie, 100 backstroke (57.81); Devon Fekete, 100 breaststroke (1:06.32).

swimming

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— Peter Leonhardt
CC swimming coach

Teeters, Fekete, John Brogan and Brian Dwyda, 200 medley relay (1:44.30); and Alan Afsari, Hoeflin, Brogan and Fekete, 200 free relay (1:32.41).

"This is my first year as coach at CC and they've been talking about this meet for weeks," Leonhardt said. "This could be one of the best teams that Catholic Central has ever had. Certainly, they'll place in the top five in the state at the end of the year."

Stingrays make cuts

The Michigan Stingrays made an impressive showing Saturday in the Winter Classic swim meet at Eastern Michigan University.

"In our history, this may have been the largest meet we ever hosted," Stingray coach Pete Leonhardt said. "We could not have pulled it off without the help of the EMU people and all our Stingray parents."

More than 500 swimmers from 30 clubs in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois were entered.

Matthew Zald, Danny Gabriel, Melissa Axner, Kellee Fournier, David Stegman, Chris Leland, Philip Zald, Miriam Schreiber, Stacey Axner and Lisa Richardson made one or more state meet cuts.

Gabriel finished first in the 10-and-under individual medley, while Richardson, Schreiber, Patti Dizon and Axner took second in the 200 freestyle relay in 2:10.2.

OTHER STINGRAYS with outstanding times were Kirk Moudros,

Jessica Canosa, Annie Jacobs, Jay Rands, Joel Harpoathian, Andrea Apol, Dana Dzeikan, Sheryl Wolf, Dizon and Amy Finkel.

"Others with lifetime-best swims were Darren Wheat, Matt Nichols, Robbie Sallter, Jonathan Zald, Joey Watts, Justin Hawkins, Kristin Brown, Julie Kluka, Lauren Turner and Kellie Schwagie.

Leonhardt said the club's decision to improve the younger swimmers is starting to pay off.

"Our age group coaches, Rob Carman and Laurie Hubbard, are due a lot of credit for developing these younger swimmers," he said.

Many of the Stingray Senior and National swimmers were not entered because the boys in the midst of their high school season and the girls are retraining following the high school season.

The Stingrays' next meet will be Jan. 25-27 at the Circle City Classic meet in Indianapolis.

Farmington in playoffs

Farmington reached the quarterfinals for the second time in two volleyball tournaments Saturday.

The Falcons were eliminated from the West Bloomfield tournament by Dearborn Fordson in three games, 15-6, 11-15, 10-15.

Farmington Hills Mercy won the tournament, and the host Lakers were runners-up.

In pool play, Farmington split with Troy (15-11, 14-16), Warren Couino (14-16, 15-7) and Fordson (13-15, 15-10). The Falcons defeated Mount Clemens L'Anse Creuse North in their last match, 15-7, 15-4.

In the Troy match, Farmington scored 16 points off 19 serves by Debbie Schroeder, who also had four aces. Sue Gibson was 14-of-15 passing in that game, and Michelle

Lorenz had a good game as the setter.

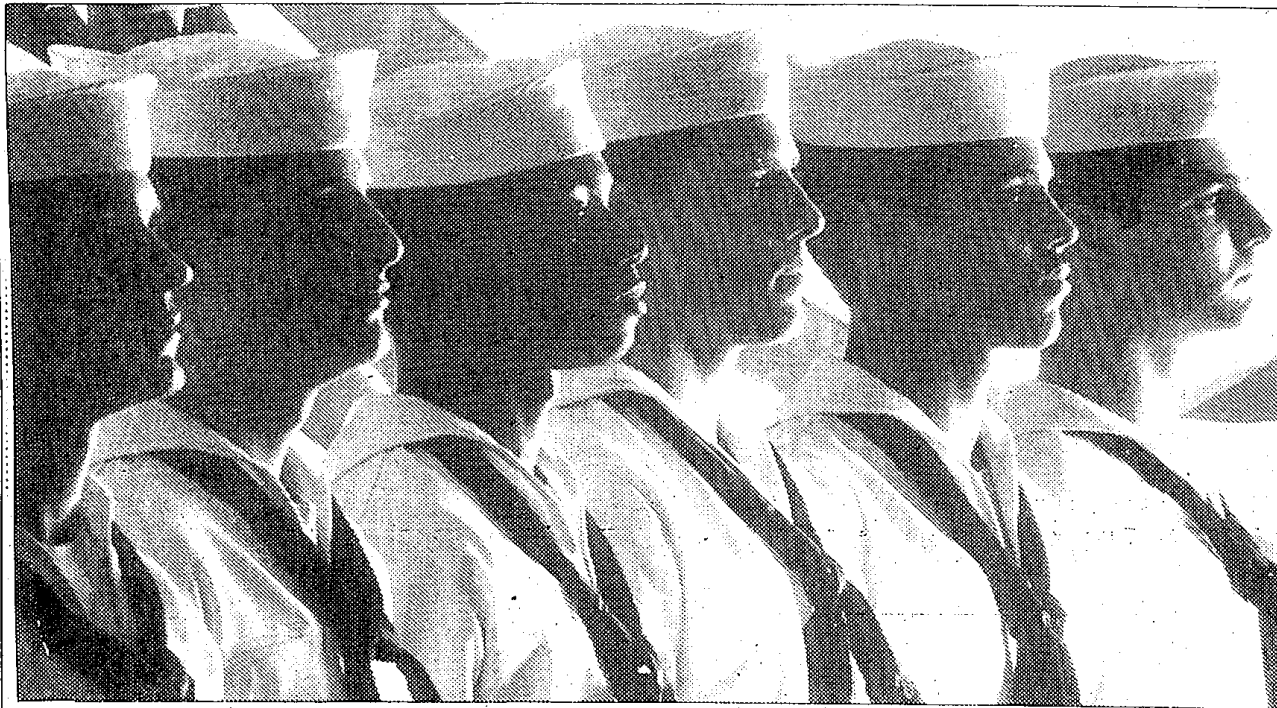
The Falcons had good floor leadership from Kim Owezarski, according to coach Julie Ingalls.

"I asked Kim to be the quarterback, and that's starting to happen," she said. "When she takes charge and leads the team, good things start to happen."

Farmington was 1-33 last year but has shown itself to be competitive this year.

"One player said it's so much nicer this year to know we have the potential to win," Ingalls said. "I told them they can go farther and reach for bigger and better things. So that's where we are now."

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