

Sports

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Stingrays relinquish state swim crown

The Michigan Stingrays Swim Club of Farmington Hills had its string of three consecutive championships broken in the United States Swimming 13-18 Short Course state meet last weekend.

The Stingrays, however, continued their long tradition of excelling in competitive swimming by placing second at Michigan State University. They scored 1,297 1/2 points while Birmingham-Bloomfield-Ann Arbor took the title with 1,379.

The Stingrays were led by 14-year-old James Leslie, who placed second in the 13-14 age group with 91 individual points, including a state record in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 55.22.

"James had the meet of his swim career," Stingrays coach Peter Leonhardt said. "Stingrays coach Peter Leonhardt said."

Leslie's other times included 4:18.34 and 2:00.6 in the 400 and 800 freestyle, respectively, and 10:00.94 in the 1,600.

THE MEET — The final appearances for several Stingray seniors who have been among the top area swimmers for the past eight to 10 years. Competing in their final short-course state meet were Julianne Markey, Tam Holdridge, Kerry Duran, Alan Attari, Eric Newton, Troy Shumate, Brad Cook, Brian Dynda, Dave Natarious, Scott Mayotte, Mike Carlini and Mike Hoffman.

"As I made out the relay cards for the final relays on Sunday," Leonhardt said, "I had one of those happy-sad feelings. Happy that our sport had attracted such a dedicated group of fine young men and ladies as these seniors, but sad that this was their final short-course state meet. They will all be missed."

Selected times included Shumate's 52.78 in the 100 butterfly, Mayotte's 53.50 and 22.40 in the 100 butterfly and 50 freestyle, Newton's 4:15.11 and 1:45.46 in the 400 IM and 200 freestyle, Markey's 55.39 in the 100 freestyle and Holdridge's 2:14.18 in the 200 butterfly.

The sprint 50 freestyle was a strong event for Mike Carlini, who won the event in 21.50. Carlini and Matt Karapetian of BHA also treated the crowd of swimmers and spectators to a great race in the final event of the meet, the boys 400 freestyle relay.

Each swam the final 100 yards of the race with Karapetian hitting the water first. Carlini was a second behind as he chased Karapetian stroke for stroke to the finish. BHA was clocked at 3:09 with the Stingrays second at 3:05.

Both swimmers plan to compete next month at the USS Senior Nationals in Seattle.

NON GRADUATING — Stingrays also competed in various events to help the club to its solid second-place finish.

Ken Knipper swam 1:09 and 2:32 in the 100 and 200 breaststroke events, Carrie Worthen 1:09 and 2:31 in the same events. Sisters Kelly and Barb Burns placed in the 1,000- and 1,500-yard distance events.

Ken Ehlen won the 100 breaststroke in 1:01.09. Colleen Shaw was strong in the 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:09.5 for sixth place.

Nicole Tallarom showed strength in the 100 and 200 backstroke with times of 1:01 and 2:12. The Sealhorn junior also scored in the 400 IM with a time of 4:49.42 as did Anna Palmer in the same event (4:43.75). Jon Ker-

Farmington swimmer achieves All-American

Katie Hohl of Farmington earned All-American honors in three events at the National Junior College Swimming Championships March 6-9 in Orlando, Fla.

Hohl, a graduate of Farmington High who competes for Grand Rapids Junior College, helped the Raiders earn All-America recognition as a member of three relays.

The top four relays are considered All-America teams, and Grand Rapids was fourth in all three events.

Hohl, a freshman freestyler, had split times of 2:00.10 in the 800-yard freestyle, 53.86 in the 400 medley and 54.20 in the 400 freestyle. The Raiders finished the 800 freestyle in 8:22, the medley in 4:19 and the 400 freestyle in 3:48.

Hohl also set a school record with her time of 54.56 in the 100 freestyle.

"She definitely has a future, not only in junior college swimming but after junior college," GRJC coach Tracy Maurer said. "Some other coaches are going to recruit her quite heavily."

Maurer added he already has been contacted by coaches at four-year schools interested in having Hohl on their teams, but rules stipulate a JC athlete must complete two years at the present school or sit out a year after transferring.

GRJC, the only junior college in Michigan with a swimming program, was fourth out of 14 women's teams. Perennial power Indian River Community College of Port St. John, Fla., won the championship.

shaw went 2:03 in the backstroke.

Leonhardt was impressed with the showing of his younger swimmers in the 13-14 age group. Dana Dizon, Sherry Richardson, Andrea Hoefflein and Cory Truesdall scored in the breaststroke. Dizon's 2:37.54 in the 200 breaststroke was a lifetime best, and Truesdall finished at 1:08.26 in the 100 breaststroke.

Michael Plezia, competing in his first major competition, went 1:08 in the 100 breaststroke and had a lifetime best of 53.54 in the 100 freestyle.

THE 100 AND 200 butterfly event were paced by Becky Weary with



Katie Hohl, former Farmington High swimmer, earned All-American honors as a member of three Grand Rapids Junior College relays.

times of 1:02 and 2:17.95.

"Becky had a five-second time drop from her seed time in the 200 and, with continued hard work, could easily be top six in the state next year," Leonhardt said.

Mike Drelles and Chris Knoche, both of whom played a role along with Kershaw in North Farmington having a successful season, had good races. Drelles went 2:05.59 in the 200 butterfly, and Knoche had a 47-second time on his 100-yard split on the

15-18 400 freestyle relay

Devon Fekete went 2:21 in the 200 breaststroke. Other Stingray competitors were Amy Machacek, Brad Cook, John Chodski and Irai Zohar.

The Stingrays are idle until mid April when the club begins practice for the outdoor long-course summer season. The club is planning a membership drive in April. Interested swimmers can call 661-8519 for information.



Carrie Walton of Mercy High School will play girls basketball team in the AAU tournament for the Western Wayne Wildcats 18-and-under this weekend.

Girls teams get involved in March Madness, too

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

This must be the definition of March Madness.

Two AAU girls basketball championships will be crowned this weekend when 39 teams from around the state gather for a three-day tournament at Plymouth Salem, Canton and Northville High Schools.

Nineteen teams will battle for the 16-under title, while the 18-under championship will be decided among 20 teams. The winner in each age group qualifies for the national tournament, held June 28-July 6 in Johnson City, Tenn.

The double-elimination tournament gets underway Friday at 6 p.m. and will continue Saturday from 8 a.m. until 11 p.m. at all three sites. The championship round will start at noon Sunday at Salem for the 16-under and at 12:45 p.m. Sunday for the 18-under at Canton.

Last year's championships were held near Sandusky, Mich., a town which was short on hotel accommo-

basketball

tions and had great distances between gyms.

Fred Thomann, the Salem coach who also will guide the Western Wayne Wildcats teams this weekend, says that isn't the case in metro Detroit.

"Sandusky did an excellent job but you had to drive 45-50 minutes to some gyms to play," he said. "A lot of people are coming to the communities for these games and you'll see a ton of great basketball players."

AMONG THOSE PLAYING will be last fall's "Miss Basketball," Markita Aldridge (Detroit Martin Luther King), who will play in the 16-under division for Roma Greenberg's Metro-Defenders. Greenberg, who also coaches West Bloomfield during the season, has a loaded lineup that includes North Farmington's

Eve Claar, Livonia Ladywood's Rebecca Willey, Birmingham Marian's Trina Gowan and West Bloomfield's Lamee Baudas. Also on the roster is the state's best junior guard, Tanisha Stevens of Mount Clemens.

"We've got a tremendous amount of talent but the title won't be handed to us," Greenberg said. "There happens to be a lot of Richmond out there," she added, referring to Richmond's upset win over Syracuse in the NCAA tournament.

Amira Danforth, West Bloomfield's talented senior guard who signed with the University of Detroit, is expected to dress for the Metro-Defenders after missing all of last season because of a career-threatening knee injury.

Danforth pulled a major surprise Tuesday when she showed up at practice wearing a knee brace and ready to participate in drills. If Danforth plays at all this weekend and the 16-under will be eligible to play at the nationals.

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Chargers state champs

By Marly Budnor
staff writer

As Livonia Churchill volleyball coach Mike Hughes walked up to accept the Class A state championship trophy, he saluted Charger fans with a hearty "thumbs-up" signal. In reply, the ecstatic fans chanted loudly in unison "We're No. 1! We're No. 1!"

Yes, the Churchill Chargers are the 1990-91 queens of volleyball. Churchill, the smallest of the eight squads which had qualified for the state quarterfinals, proved a defensive-type team lacking height is indeed capable of winning state championships.

Hughes' 1979 team — similar in style to this year's squad — made it to the finals only to lose to Warren Cousino in three tough games. The Chargers finally compensated for that loss with a straight-set decision over Temperance-Bedford Saturday evening at Kalamazoo Central High.

The Chargers soared to their first volleyball championship in school history with a 15-12, 15-8 victory over a stunned Maules squad which also hoped to secure its initial state title.

But it was the Chargers who whooped it up at center court when Alyssa Belaire's final shot slammed to the Bedford side of the net for the game-winning point.

It was a moment the Chargers players and fans will remember forever.

volleyball

"IT'S AN absolutely superb feeling — one we've been waiting a long time for," said Hughes, whose teams have won 72 percent of its games in his 15 years as head coach. "It couldn't have happened to a group of nicer kids. And that was the best part of it."

"Of course it was a disappointing feeling when we lost in 1979. Anyone who tells you differently is just blowing hot air," he said. "Obviously we'll have a much better feeling going back home this year. We've enjoyed the youngsters all year long, and I think probably the parents have had as much fun as the kids."

Churchill did not win with flash or flair. The Chargers did not dominate their three foes — Grosse Pointe South, Bay City Central or Bedford — with a power game.

Instead, they simply played a smart, consistent brand of volleyball which included solid serving, determined digging, eloquent execution and the superior poise one would expect from a veteran team loaded with five senior starters.

"We were 35-2 last year with 11 juniors and three seniors," said Hughes. "We knew we were going to have an excellent battle. But we

also knew our biggest player was going to be 5-foot-8."

"Everybody keeps telling you in this game that height wins," said Hughes. "All the college coaches won't even recruit players, like the ones we have. I think they're foolish. I'm glad we were able to show them."

JUST LIKE any championship team, the Chargers, along with their hustling play, also took advantage of a few breaks along the way.

One of the biggest occurred in the final game when Bedford was forced to play without its talented middle blocker Jill Flessner who injured an ankle in a big semifinal victory over top-ranked Holland West Ottawa.

Without Flessner as a starter, the Chargers relentlessly exploited the middle Senior Christina Garry and Belaire — set-up nicely by Amy Baron — combined for 30 of Churchill's 35 kills and 60 of the team's 96 total attacks.

The strategy worked nearly perfect as Churchill held the lead for the majority of the two championship games.

Bedford took an early 4-0 lead in the first game, but Churchill stormed back behind Garry's crisp serving. Garry registered seven straight service points and her team never trailed after that. But that's not to say it didn't get close.

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