

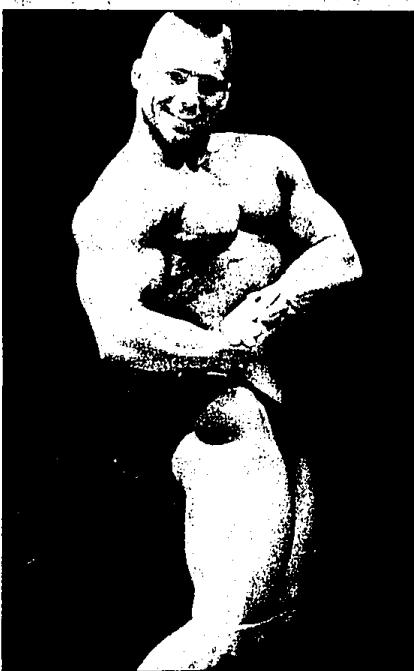
Sports

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(F1C)



Brad Gerard of Farmington Hills won the Mid-Michigan Natural Bodybuilding Contest, his first title in the sport.

Will to win

Dedication pays for bodybuilder

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Brad Gerard celebrated last week so it's back to business this week.

The Farmington Hills man achieved his first success as a bodybuilder when he won the Mid-Michigan Natural Bodybuilding Contest in Flint's Whiting Auditorium April 8.

That victory was the culmination of months, even years, of dedication and hard work on the part of the 21-year-old Gerard, a 1987 graduate of Harrison High School.

But even serious bodybuilders like Gerard allow for a brief respite from the daily regimen of training and dieting following a competition.

"For a week, I'll eat anything I have a desire for," he said. "Everyone craves pizza after a contest, and, of course, beer. But that only lasts a couple of days, and then you want to start dieting again."

BUT IT wasn't that kind of eating habit or attitude that got Gerard to where he is in his sport.

"Your contest is won in the gym," he said. "Whether it's won or lost is determined by the work you do in the gym and your faithfulness to your diet."

"I think my perseverance to my diet and knowledge I accumulated from other contests (paved the way for my triumph). There's a very precise science to getting ready on a particular day, or even for a few hours. To do that, it takes many attempts to learn what works for you and your physique."

Gerard, who trains at Powerhouse Gym in Farmington Hills, began working with weights seven years ago to enhance his wrestling career at Harrison and has been competing as a bodybuilder for two years.

The 5-foot-6 Gerard, who competes at 176½ pounds, was judged the best of eight men in the

middleweight class, and he then won the overall competition as the best among all bodybuilders, which included the winners of the bantam, light-weight, light heavyweight and heavyweight classes.

"That was the biggest thrill in the world, one of the happiest moments of my life," Gerard said. "As far as competing goes, it's the thrill of hearing the crowd when you go out there and pose, when you know you've dieted hard and look well. I think that's why we all do it."

HE ALSO has the satisfaction of knowing he did it the right way. Gerard said he has never used steroids, though they are prevalent in the sport, and is proud of his clean record.

A natural contest means the competitors are tested for drugs, and Gerard has been tested three times, including the latest show, The International Olympic Committee's drug testing in Flint.

"It's a natural contest, which means no one can compete against others who use steroids to get ahead. That's where Gerard's long-term commitment plays an important role.

"I've trained very hard for a long time (seven years) and, during that period of time, the longest break I've taken from working out was two weeks," he said. "I believe I can accomplish anything in this world if I put my mind to it."

"The secret to anything is perseverance. You can't quit if you don't accomplish something on the first try. People who work at it theirselves for contests aren't people who persevere. They want a championship body overnight, and those people aren't going to last in the sport. I'm a rarity, sad to say."

"Each year I've done better. I went from taking third and fifth in two natural contests last summer to fourth and fifth at two non-drug tested contests this year and winning the championship at a drug-tested contest."

THE TASK of preparing for a contest takes months and involves a scientific approach that balances diet and training to achieve a desired look.

In off-season training, done months before a contest, a bodybuilder eats a slightly more liberal diet than usual and works with weights to add bulk to areas of the body that need it and which can later be refined. Gerard begins serious dieting four months before a show and reduces the intensity of his workouts.

"When a bodybuilder works out, he tries to sculpt his body," he said. "You try to add mass to the weak areas and improve those areas, so when you diet down you have a physique as close to perfect as possible."

"You shouldn't have huge biceps and small shoulders. They should be in proportion. You can shape every muscle to look the way you want. You don't want to have developed areas or underdeveloped areas. The goal is to have a lot of muscle mass but be symmetrical."

The job is never done when a show is over, either. The bodybuilder follows a cyclical pattern of using the last performance to prepare for the next contest.

"After the contest, you analyze your body when it's stripped of body fat and try to pick out weaknesses," Gerard said. "Even if you win the contest like I did, it doesn't mean you're perfect. It just means I was the best one there. You cycle like that with contests until you think you've perfected your physique."

DIET IS just as important to the bodybuilder. Gerard will eat a diet that includes a slightly higher amount of calories and fat in the off-season. He'll restrict fat and sodium leading up to a contest.

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HARRISON

SHARON LEMIEUX/Star photographer

Joe Miller was one of three double winners for the Farmington boys, winning the high and low hurdles.

City champs

Falcons retain girls, boys crowns

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington High School will keep the city championship trophies in track and field and another year.

The Falcons captured their fifth consecutive title in the girls meet Thursday, accumulating 72½ points and finishing 19 points ahead of runner-up host Harrison.

The Farmington boys have a more modest, two-year victory streak after repeating as city champs with a 90-point total and 31-point advantage over second-place Harrison.

"That's OK, we'll take it," Farmington boys coach Jerry Young said.

The Falcons' victory was all the more impressive, because the Falcons did it without their top trackperson, senior Shellie Gaul, who was ill and couldn't compete.

"I'M NOT happy Shellie is sick, but I'm happy we had enough strength to do it without her," Farmington girls coach Bruce Brown said. "Hopefully, it will give the other girls confidence and show them we are more than a one-person team."

Brown also attributed the consecutive triumphs in part to the perseverance and dedication of the team's nine seniors: Gretchen Clappison, Kristin Urevig, Susan Davidson, Jennifer Derwinski, Kristi Bodary, Kerri Oweczarzak, Cheryl Casarroll and Deanna Curcio in addition to Gaul.

"Obviously, you don't do it without talent. This senior group had never lost it, and they wanted to stay after it. We have nine seniors who've stuck with it for four years and, in this day and age, that's pretty impressive."

— Bruce Brown
Farmington girls track coach

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Farmington's Tammy Allen won the high jump, and Farmington's Sue Gable, Sheri Yitlalo and Maya Sardary finished 2-3-4 in the long jump, an event won by Colleen Heimann of Harrison.

Casarroll anchored the winning 400 relay, ran on two others and was third in the 200 dash, and Rogers was first in the 100 and 200 dashes.

The latter's performance was especially welcome since the Falcons lost sprinters Carrie Maiher and Amy Trull from last year's 800 relay team.

"She is really exciting," Brown said. "She ran 13.2 in the 100 and 28.2 in the 200, which are pretty respectable times."

FARMINGTON DID well in the field events and established a lead early in the meet.

Curcio won the discus and Washnock the shot put as the Falcons went 1-2-3 and 1-2 in those events, respectively. Oweczarzak was second in both, and Washnock was third in the discus.

"I DIDN'T think we would be high in the points," Harrison girls coach Mark Babcock said. "We're young, but the kids have shown a great attitude."

Harrisonman, who won two events and scored in four, also won the high hurdles, was second in the 300 hurdles and fourth in the high jump.

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North Farmington's Emily Shively was a double winner with first places in the 1,600 and 3,200 runs, and teammate Jenny Web won the 800. The Raiders also won the 3,200 and 1,600 relays.

Farmington was led by a trio of double winners — Joe Miller, Ben Goba and Jason Tucker — in the boys competition. Miller captured first in the high and low hurdles, Goba the long-distance runs and Tucker the high jump and long jump.

Miller also ran on the winning 400 relay, Tucker the successful 1,600 relay and Goba the championship 3,200 run.

"We were real pleased with our performance," Young said. "We thought it would be a lot closer. Being a city meet, you have to assume it will be close, and they usually are."

"To win it by this kind of margin is certainly a surprise and maybe an indication we are a little better than we thought we were."

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Harrison also had a pair of double winners in Tony Shaleb, who captured first in the discus and shot put, and Roy Granger, who won the 100 and 200 dashes. Teammate Dave Glaesner won the pole vault, and Tony Catchings had North's only first place in the 400 dash.

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