

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 6.

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 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 his 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 175-pound, 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, lightweight, 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 did the testing in Flint.

A skeptic might wonder how anyone 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 look at steroids for success 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, said 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 any overdeveloped 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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Brad Gerard of Farmington Hills won the Mid-Michigan Natural Bodybuilding Contest, his first title in the sport.

City champs Falcons retain girls, boys crowns

By Dan O'Meara
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Farmington High School will keep the city championship trophies in track and field for 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 and 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 Farmington girls success was all the more impressive, because the Falcons did it without their top trackperson, senior Shelli Gaul, who was ill and couldn't compete.

"I'M NOT happy Shelli 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 Owczarzak, Cheryl Casaroli and Deanna Curcio in addition to Gaul.

"Obviously, you don't do it without talent," he said. "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

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Farmington's Tammy Allen won the high jump, an event Gaul had been counted on to win, and Brown also cited the contributions of Casaroli and freshman Kay Rogers.

Casaroli 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 Maier and Amy Trunk from last year's team.

"This 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. Owczarzak was second in both, and Washnock was third in the discus.

Clappison got second place in the high jump, and Farmington's Sue Olsen, Sheri Villalobos and Maya Sady finished 2-3-4 in the long jump, an event won by Colleen Heinemann of Harrison.

"We really came through in the shot and discus," Brown said. "We had to come out of the field events in good shape, because I knew we'd be in trouble in some of those other things. I knew Shelli would win the (high hurdles) for sure."

Other than Rogers winning the dashes, Farmington's only other win after the field events was supplied by Derwinski, who was first in the 400 dash.

Heinemann, 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. Teammate Kristi Cornwell was the third in the hurdles.

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

willingness to work hard. We're only going to get better as we race more."

North Farmington's Emily Shively was a double winner with first place in the 1,600 and 3,200 runs, and teammate Jenny Weh 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 800 relay and Goba the championship 3,200 relay. Ryan Adams had Farmington's only other first place in the 500 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."

WITH JASON Tucker, Joe Miller and Ben Goba, we have three pretty good performers, and if somebody else comes along we should be OK. Hopefully, this means we're going to be pretty good."

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 Gloetner won the pole vault, and Tony Catchings had North's only first place in the 400 dash.



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

Nice beginning for Farmington, North

The North Farmington and Farmington girls softball teams opened their 1991 seasons on the road Thursday, and both came away with victories.

The Falcons left behind 2-1 after two innings in their game with host Livonia Churchill, but they scored the final six runs and defeated the Chargers 7-2.

Farmington pulled away with a four-run fifth inning, which was aided by walks and Churchill errors.

Freshman Jenny Sever drove in two runs, had one hit, stole three bases and scored a run to lead the Falcons. Jill Troia had a hit and scored twice, and Kerri Finlayson, Nicole

Noch and Danielle Salyer got one hit apiece. Noch and Salyer also scored one run each, and Finlayson was credited with an RBI.

Cory Wojcik recorded the victory, pitching the entire game for Farmington, striking out three and walking two. Karen Jose took the loss for Churchill, which dropped its season opener.

NORTH JUMPED to a 4-0 lead in the first inning on route to its 8-6 victory over Wall Lake Western.

Each team only had three hits, but the Raiders were aided by 11 walks.

softball

Jennifer Lydon struck out seven Warriors while recording the win. Jenny Gross had eight strikeouts in a losing cause.

Terri Gruca's steal of home plate in the second inning provided the offensive highlight for North.

The Warriors trailed 4-2 in the second inning and 6-4 in the seventh. Western scored twice in its half of the second but fell two

runs short.

"We still have a lot of bugs to work out, but whenever you win it's satisfying," Raiders coach Dave Brubaker said.

FARMINGTON RODE the strong arms of its two senior pitchers to sweep a doubleheader from Bloomfield Hills Lasher Friday and improve to 3-0.

The visiting Falcons routed the Knights 15-2 in the first game and completed the sweep with a 5-3 win in the nightcap.

Wojcik allowed only three hits in the first game, while striking out seven Knights, including the final four of the game.

Farmington jumped all over Lasher with six first-inning runs. The 12-hit attack was led by senior Patty Hansen, who had three hits and three RBIs. Finlayson added two hits and two RBIs, and junior Nicole Noch had two hits. Vanessa Tuttle took the loss for Lasher (0-3).

Hansen allowed only one hit in the second game, while striking out five and walking only one batter.

Sever hit a home run and knocked in two runs for the Falcons, and scored once in each of the first three innings and twice in the fourth.