

O'Connell 2nd at state meet

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Eileen O'Connell led a fine performance by Farmington runners Saturday in the state cross country championships.

The Farmington Hills Mercy senior finished second in the Class A girls individual race at Sakatoon Golf Course in Grand Rapids.

She ran 18:48, a time topped only by Portage Northern's Sharon Vantuly (18:18).

O'Connell was fifth overall, including results of the team race, and earned all-state honors for the second time.

"She had an incredible and amazing season — the best of any runner I've ever coached," Mercy coach Gary Servais said. "She never finished lower than second in any race."

"She's the first girl to be all-state in cross country and track for me. I'll need about three people to fill her shoes."

Farmington High senior Tom May performed well in the Class A boys individual race, placing

X-COUNTRY

seventh with an excellent time of 18:21.

"I think Tom is starting to believe in himself a lot more," Farmington coach Chip Bridges said. "With continued hard work, he can be as good as we've been telling him the last few years."

"Tom ran an intelligent race. He was 80 something at the half mile and 30 something at the mile mark. He knows it's not where you start but finish, and if you run your race you're going to pass people."

"It should be a great stepping stone for track season."

The Farmington girls competed in the team race and placed 14th among 23 teams with 396 points.

"We're real happy with that and the season overall," Farmington coach Liz Zynda said, "considering we were the youngest team in the top 15 and third youngest there."

Freshman Kate Adams paced the Falcons, finishing 54th (20:11). Senior Dana Goba was

68th (20:17), junior Anne Grimaldi 69th (20:17), freshman Natalie Dawson 80th (20:25) and sophomore Theresa Derwinski 125th (21:08).

"We compared ourselves to the 1986 and '89 teams, and we're right up there with them on average," Zynda said. "The Falcons are sixth and fifth in the state those years, respectively."

"To qualify for state and say we were 14th is a nice honor, and we're looking forward to next year. We're losing two (Goba and Kerri Lowry), and two who are coming up from Power Middle School are promising."

The North Farmington boys finished 19th in the team race with 491 points.

The Raiders were led by senior Tom Stamboulis, who ended a fine prep career by placing 21st with a superb 21:09 time.

"It was the nicest thing to finally see Tom have an outstanding big race," North coach Paul Welch said. "He's run well season after season, but when it came to the big meets he just missed the boat."

"This year he was fortunate to have a pretty good regional meet. That got him there and then he ran an unbelievable state meet. It was a great day to end his high school career."

Brian Rajdl was 44th (16:30), Steve Chen 90th (17:07), Niraj Naik 148th (17:59) and Jon Perry, substituting for Brian Kristall, 184th (19:13).

Welch figured Kristall, who became ill last week, might have run 17:30 and the Raiders finished 14th with him in the lineup.

"Rajdl had a slow start this year," Welch said. "He didn't put in enough miles over the summer. He knows that now, but when it came to the big races he was always there."

"He knows he has to get out there and put in the miles like everybody else if he wants to be there with the elite."

Harrison senior Allison Noy finished 17th (19:39) in the individual race but fell short of her expectations after placing 16th last year.



Falcon flyer: Farmington freshman Kate Adams finished 54th at the state cross country meet Saturday, one of many impressive performers from Observer-land.

"That was good in itself, but she had hoped to place higher," Harrison coach Mark Babcock said. "She felt she didn't accomplish what she wanted to at the state meet, but I don't think that will take away from what she's done all season."

"She's been a solid performer the last two years. She never missed a meet in three years. She's very dedicated."

Harrison senior Chad Koonce was 42nd in the boys individual race with a 17:11 time.

"His first goal was to make it to state," coach John Reed said. "His second goal was to run his best race, and he did that."

"He ran a good last mile and moved up quite a bit. He ran 17:08 when the conditions were perfect, but it was wet and soggy at the state meet."

Salem, Vikes clash for WLAA title

BY NEAL ZIPPER
STAFF WRITER

The Stone Age and the Ice Age both lasted for eons.

On Tuesday, Plymouth Canton coach Bob Blohm experienced the Brick Age.

"It seemed like forever," Blohm said after his Chiefs lost to visiting Plymouth Salem 39-29 in the semifinals of the Western Lakes Activities Association playoffs.

Canton managed only one point in a span of 10:49 beginning with 2:17 left in the second quarter and lasting until early in the fourth. In 14 possessions, the Chiefs settled for a Jackie Nicastri free throw, as Salem converted a 18-15 deficit into a 26-19 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Even with the dry spell, Canton still found itself in the game. A 7-2 run by the Chiefs narrowed the margin to 28

BASKETBALL

converted 21 of their 27 attempts (78 percent). Canton made only five of 19 at the line (27 percent).

"I told the team that whoever wins at the free-throw line, usually wins the game and that was true tonight," Blohm said.

Salem advanced to Friday's finals to play Walled Lake Central, who were 55-51 victors over Northville Tuesday. Tip-off Friday at Northville is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. The Vikings beat the Rocks 50-38 in the teams' only meeting this season.

"Walled Lake Central was the best team in our conference this season and the problem playing them is that they have no weak links," Thomann said. "They have a great interior game and four good perimeter players. For us to win, we'll have to be on the top of our game."

It was Salem's second consecutive victory over Canton, after

the Chiefs beat the Rocks 57-45 in the Mercy Hoops Tournament earlier this season. The two rivals, who are both 14-5, will probably meet in the second round of the districts Wednesday at Livonia Ledywood.

"I've been playing on varsity since 10th grade," Lukasic said. "Back then, Canton was considered the better team. I think we've proven ourselves now."

Nicastri led Canton with eight points. Junior center Sarah Warnke added five points and pulled down 15 rebounds.

Nicole Van Hees and Amanda Abraham netted eight apiece for the Rocks, who actually made three less shots from the floor than Canton.

The Chiefs have their chance to enter the districts on a better note when they play at Northville Friday in the WLAA consolation game. The game will start at 6 p.m.

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Hawks trip Raiders, tune-up for districts

There was something missing from Farmington Harrison's 63-44 victory over rival North Farmington Tuesday.

It wasn't North's Kathie Collins and Liz Webber. Both returned to action after missing games with injuries. It wasn't Harrison's Krista Snow or the La-Cosse twins; they were there and played well.

"The first time we played them, the city championship was on the line and it was a real emotion-filled game," said Harrison coach Pete Mantyla. "This one was kind of quiet."

About the only thing on the line was pride and the chance to build up a little steam entering the district tournament.

"We're disappointed that we aren't playing for the Western Lakes championship," said Mantyla. "But we've had a good year. And we want to make it a great year. We are trying to make that happen."

Behind Snow's 14 points and 11 rebounds, Harrison built a nine point lead midway through the final quarter. But North rallied to cut the margin to three with four minutes left.

Erin LaCosse hit a 3-pointer to quiet the Raiders rally. Monique Anderson and LaCosse nailed free throws down the stretch to keep North at bay.

"This North team isn't even close to the North we might face in the districts," said Mantyla, whose team will play in the district tournament at Bloomfield Hills Lahser, along with North, Farmington and Farmington Hills Mercy. "We have to keep working to become a better defensive team."

Anderson and Erika Greene scored 10 points each for the Hawks (15-4). Kelly LaCosse scored nine points and Erin LaCosse finished with seven.

For North (11-8), Allaha Gordon scored 14 and Carrie May, 11. Webber, who missed a couple of games with a back injury, chipped in 10. Collins, who missed a

month with an ankle injury, didn't score.

Franklin 44, Farmington 37: Junior guard Tracy Rynkiewicz scored 18 points, including six of six from the free-throw line in the fourth quarter. Tuesday, leading host Livonia Franklin past the visiting Falcons.

Franklin outscored Farmington 12-5 in the decisive fourth quarter.

Ann Bszaginski, who grabbed seven rebounds, made the final two free throws for the victorious Patriots, now 9-10 overall.

Junior forward Kellie Main contributed 13 points.

Andrea Salyer and Amanda Porter tallied 14 and 12, respectively, for Farmington, now 6-13 overall.

W.L. Western 43, Stevenson 42: On Tuesday, host Walled Lake Western (10-9 overall) held off Livonia Stevenson (9-10) down the stretch for the Western Lakes Activities Association consolation victory.

Senior guard Erin Vicary led the winners with 11 points. Senior forwards Stacey Neirnyck and Gina Brooke each contributed 10.

Jenny Dulz notched a game-high 13 points for the Spartans.

John Glenn 81, Church 45: Sophomore guard Rochelle Harris scored 13 of her game-high 25 points in the third quarter Tuesday, lifting Westland John Glenn Church (12-17).

Harris led a 23-11 Glenn uprising in the third period after the Rockets led by only three at intermission, 19-16.

Teammate Katy Duncan added 15 points, including five three-pointers.

Jamie Clark and Patti Maldonado each tallied 10 for the Chargers, who made only 12 of 28 free throws (42.8 percent).

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Luth. Westland claims Metro

Get out the cake and light the candles because Lutheran High Westland is celebrating its first ever Metro Conference girls basketball championship.

On Tuesday, the Lady Warriors walked into Macomb Lutheran North's gym and pulled out a stirring 46-43 victory.

Both teams finish 13-1 in the Metro. North won an earlier meeting at Westland, 44-36.

"The first is always the sweetest," said Lutheran High Westland coach Ron Gents, whose team is 17-2 overall. "We really wanted it for the senior girls."

Senior forward Lauren Horton came up big in the victory, scoring a game-high 17 points.

With 27 seconds left, the Warriors trailed now 43-42, but Horton hit the front end of a one-and-one free throw to even the count.

Jenny Twietmeyer then added two more free throws and guard Katie Ollinger (11 points) sealed the co-title by making a foul shot in the final five seconds.

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