

North, Falcons, 2-3 at Relays

By C.J. RISK
STAFF WRITER

A defending league champion whose strength is depth figure to do well in a relay meet.

Which Plymouth Salem did. The Rocks opened their swim season with a victory in the Western Lakes Activities Association Relay Meet, which they hosted Saturday.

Salem finished with 248 points. North Farmington took second with 216 and 1993 relay champion Farmington finished third with 202. Next was Northville (189), followed by Livonia Stevenson (164), Livonia Churchill (161), Plymouth Canton (125), Livonia Franklin (104), Farmington Harrison (86), Walled Lake (82) and Westland John Glenn (56).

The Rocks did finish first in three of the meet's 10 events, but it was their overall depth that ensured the championship. "We were no lower than fourth in any event," said Salem coach Chuck Olson, whose team is seeking its third-straight WLAA title this season.

The Relays win gets them off to a good start. The Rocks' wins came in the 400-yard freestyle relay, with the team of Eric Seidelman, Matt Martin, Joe Ervin and Dave Bracht (3:25.35); the 400 in-dividual medley relay, with Seidelman, Tim Buchanan, John

McLanaghan and Ervin (3:56.41); and the 200 free relay, with Pat Morgan, Phil Werman, Marc Levitt and Bracht (1:36.05).

The win that most impressed Olson came in the 400 IM relay. The Rocks' time broke the Relays' long-standing meet record of 3:56.83, set by Livonia Stevenson in 1988.

"I knew we'd do well in the IM relay, but I didn't think we'd set a record," said Olson.

One other meet record was busted, in the 200 backstroke relay. Livonia Churchill's foursome of Mark Campbell, Rob Grant, Matt Sorkac and Jon Carlson took first in 1:47.32, breaking the meet mark of 1:47.55, set by John Glenn in '92.

If there was a surprise in the meet, it was North Farmington. The Raiders, who lost Jon Kernshaw and Karl Kosicki (both state-meet scorers) to graduation, had the lead going into the 400 IM relay.

"I thought we were swimming real well," said Olson, "but we were behind (North)."

Salem's win in the 400 IM relay, combined with the Raiders' lack of depth, which prevented them from even entering a team in that event, turned the tide toward the Rocks. They never trailed again.

North did have two firsts: the 200 breaststroke relay, with Ryan

McKallay, Drew Sopha, Matt Swartz and Jason Speer (1:58.76); and the 200 butterfly relay, with Charlie Jacobs, Chris Randa, Sopha and Speer (1:47.49).

Churchill was the only other team with two firsts. The Chargers' other win came in the cross-country relay (legs of 50, 100, 150 and 200 free), with Todd Setloch, Campbell, Grant and Carlson (4:25.48).

The relay meet's design, with swimmers limited to two events, hurt both North and Churchill. "It makes it more of a team event, than just individuals," said Olson. "And it gets more people involved."

Other wins went to defending champ Farmington in the 400 medley relay, with Scott Brown, Chris Owen, Dan Belanger and Todd Neliverna (3:57.90); Walled Lake in diving, with Casey Buntzville and Joe Guzio (452.85 points combined); and Stevenson in the 200 medley relay, with Eric Sorkac, Ted Burnelater, Chris Teeters and Jeff Buckler (1:45.46).

Walled Lakes' win in diving was a major surprise. But Canton's pair of Daryl Ballios and Jason Fowler, defending Relays' champions, turned in a score more than 50 points lower than last year's record-setting performance and finished a distant second.

SWIMMING

WLAA RELAYS MEET RESULTS Dec. 17 at Salem HS

Team standings: 1. Plymouth Salem, 248 points; 2. North Farmington, 216; 3. Farmington, 202; 4. Northville, 189; 5. Livonia Stevenson, 164; 6. Livonia Churchill, 161; 7. Plymouth Canton, 125; 8. Livonia Franklin, 104; 9. Farmington Harrison, 86; 10. Walled Lake, 82; 11. Westland John Glenn, 56.

400-yard medley relay: 1. Farmington (Scott Brown, Chris Owen, Dan Belanger, Todd Neliverna), 3:57.90; 2. North Farmington, 4:00.00; 3. Farmington, 4:05.00; 4. Northville, 4:10.00; 5. Livonia Stevenson, 4:15.00; 6. Livonia Churchill, 4:20.00; 7. Plymouth Canton, 4:25.00; 8. Livonia Franklin, 4:30.00; 9. Farmington Harrison, 4:35.00; 10. Walled Lake, 4:40.00; 11. Westland John Glenn, 4:45.00.

200-yard breaststroke relay: 1. North Farmington (Ryan McKallay, Drew Sopha, Matt Swartz, Jason Speer), 1:47.49; 2. Farmington, 1:50.00; 3. Northville, 1:55.00; 4. Livonia Stevenson, 1:58.00; 5. Livonia Churchill, 2:00.00; 6. Plymouth Canton, 2:05.00; 7. Livonia Franklin, 2:10.00; 8. Farmington Harrison, 2:15.00; 9. Walled Lake, 2:20.00; 10. Westland John Glenn, 2:25.00.

200-yard butterfly relay: 1. North Farmington (Charlie Jacobs, Chris Randa, Drew Sopha, Jason Speer), 1:47.49; 2. Farmington, 1:50.00; 3. Northville, 1:55.00; 4. Livonia Stevenson, 1:58.00; 5. Livonia Churchill, 2:00.00; 6. Plymouth Canton, 2:05.00; 7. Livonia Franklin, 2:10.00; 8. Farmington Harrison, 2:15.00; 9. Walled Lake, 2:20.00; 10. Westland John Glenn, 2:25.00.

200-yard medley relay: 1. North Farmington (Daryl Ballios, Jason Fowler, Eric Sorkac, Ted Burnelater, Chris Teeters, Jeff Buckler), 1:45.46; 2. Farmington, 1:50.00; 3. Northville, 1:55.00; 4. Livonia Stevenson, 1:58.00; 5. Livonia Churchill, 2:00.00; 6. Plymouth Canton, 2:05.00; 7. Livonia Franklin, 2:10.00; 8. Farmington Harrison, 2:15.00; 9. Walled Lake, 2:20.00; 10. Westland John Glenn, 2:25.00.

200-yard freestyle relay: 1. North Farmington (Eric Seidelman, Matt Martin, Joe Ervin, Dave Bracht), 3:25.35; 2. Farmington, 3:30.00; 3. Northville, 3:35.00; 4. Livonia Stevenson, 3:40.00; 5. Livonia Churchill, 3:45.00; 6. Plymouth Canton, 3:50.00; 7. Livonia Franklin, 3:55.00; 8. Farmington Harrison, 4:00.00; 9. Walled Lake, 4:05.00; 10. Westland John Glenn, 4:10.00.

THE WEEK AHEAD

BOYS BASKETBALL
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Friday, Dec. 23
O.L. St. Mary at Fordham CC, 7:30 p.m.

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Swim from page 1C

their senior seasons, well, he knew them that last year's glory was over.

"Last year was special, for me and for everybody involved," said Bandy, Observerland's Coach of the Year last season. "But this group has the potential to be good. It is just in the young stages."

Senior state qualifiers Scott Brown (backstroke, sprint free) and Steven Scario (all strokes, distance free) will be the team leaders. Other top scorers will be juniors Danny Belanger (IM, breaststroke, butterfly) and Matt Crawford (distance free, breaststroke). Junior freestyler Ken Kropf, whose improvement Bandy has been most impressed with, will also contribute.

Bandy is counting on a strong sophomore class: Chris Owen (breaststroke), John Hawkins (freestyle), Tom Seley (butterfly, sprint free) and diver Jeff Thomas.

"There are no naturally talented swimmers in this group; nobody like a Don Boyer who was good the minute he stepped in the pool," Bandy said. "But this group works very hard. They listen and they do what we tell them. A group like this will keep getting better."



Hawk hopeful: Senior Mike Schaner will be counted on to provide leadership for a freshmen-laden Hawks swim team. He will swim both the butterfly and breast stroke.

Farmington Harrison

Of the 16 swimmers in Collins' camp, five are freshmen. And, strange though it sounds, that is good news.

"This is a really strong class," Collins said of his freshmen. "I think they can provide a nice foundation for the future of this program."

Two of the ninth graders are expected to carry a large scoring

load immediately. Justin Barringer will handle the butterfly and IM and Matt Walker will swim the breaststroke.

The leading returning swimmers are seniors Mike Schaner (butterfly, breaststroke) and Mark Springer (sprint free) and junior Chris Baley (backstroke) and sophomore Mike Glasson (breaststroke).

The Hawks also got a boost from Brazil. Foreign exchange

student Gustavo Brancante, a junior, has looked solid in the sprint freestyle events.

Gone are divers John Hovey and Mark Strohmaier who placed 3-4 at the league meet a year ago.

"We are still building this program," said Collins, whose team was 3-6 last year and ninth at the league meet. "And I think we will be more competitive this year than we were a year ago."

Basketball from page 1C

"They believe this will turn around."

On Saturday the Hawks were pummeled by Rochester, 65-42. On Tuesday, the Hawks led a seven-point third-quarter lead slip away and still were shooting a triple to tie with four seconds left. The shot missed and Mott sealed victory with two free throws with two seconds left.

"It was a combination of us not crashing the boards, letting Waterford Mott get too many second chances, and of us tossing the ball away," Teachman said.

The rebounding problem is most serious. Against Rochester, the Hawks were out rebounded 43-24, 21-5 on the offensive glass.

"What are you going to do when you are young and your tallest guy is 6-2?" Teachman said. "They need to learn how to block out."

Sophomore Wayne Langdon led Mott with 16 points. Senior Mike Mladenoff added 14.

For the Hawks, junior Alfonso Porter scored 21 points. Kevin Bambenek, the "veteran" sophomore who started 18 games last year, added 17 points. Doug Dowd contributed 10.

On the bright side, the Hawks hit 25 of 33 free-throw shots.

"There are a lot of things we do well," Teachman said. "We have a lot of enthusiasm, and the guys are working real hard. Right now, we just aren't playing smart. And that is kind of unjust — they just

haven't been in these types of situations before."

Novi 42, N. Farmington 36: Tim Dolan's 16 points wasn't enough for North in the first round of the Novi Holiday Tournament Tuesday.

Novi's Shawn Kelly and Chad Dickens trumped him with 12 points each.

The loss drops the Raiders to 1-3.

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