

SPORTS



FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Marlins fall short in finals

■ Farmington Hills Mercy reached the Class A regional volleyball finals at Ferndale before losing to Catholic League foe Livonia Ladywood in three games.

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER



Livonia Ladywood is headed to the state Class A volleyball finals again — coach Tom Teeters' seventh trip to Kalamazoo with the

Blazers in 10 years. But during Saturday's regional tournament at Ferndale, the Blazers were left wondering at times whether their season would come to an abrupt end.

Ladywood pulled off a Houdini-like comeback in the semifinals against Plymouth Salem, sealing off 12 unanswered points to close out the third and decisive game in a 15-9, 15-17, 15-12 triumph.

In the championship final, Ladywood met an all-too-familiar opponent, Catholic League rival Farmington Hills Mercy. And the Marlins, who had not taken a game off their Central Division foe in two years, put up a fight before falling 15-13, 13-15, 15-7.

"I've seen some comebacks like that, but never in a (state) playoff game," Teeters said of the Salem match. "I'd say it was the best and worst we've ever played. We were running a different lineup, moving our middle man up and back. And we used some different defenses. We kept switching things up."

Ladywood takes its 48-8 mark against nemesis Temperance Bedford in a 5:30 p.m. quarterfinal match, Friday at Portage Central, Bedford, rated No. 3 in Class A, has beaten No. 4 Ladywood twice this season.

Meanwhile, it was Mercy's fourth straight trip to the regional final. But the Marlins, who finished the season 38-16 overall, have come up short each time out.

The championship match, however, was almost anticlimactic to the emotionally-charged semifinal between Salem and the Blazers.

The Rocks were riding the sensational all-around play of 6-foot senior Shelly Sills, who finished with 16 kills and four blocks.

After losing the first game, Salem rallied to take the second as sophomore Jenny Troit came off the bench to give her team a lift with two kills, two aces and a block.

Salem then started fast in the third game, building a 12-3 advantage. Ladywood, meanwhile, was dazed, but the Blazers got a break when the Rocks missed a serve.

With the side-out, Ladywood senior Stacy Judd (10 kills) got on a roll from the service line. She reeled off eight straight points, including four aces, to pull the Blazers to within one, 12-11.

Salem couldn't stem the onslaught as Jessica Oracz served out the match. Senior Erin LeSage got the game-winning kill.



TOM HANLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Steady passer: Sheyenne Mooter of Farmington Hills Mercy bumps the ball during Saturday's Class A regional semifinal match against Ferndale. The Marlins beat the host Eagles before losing to Ladywood.

Ladywood also received a huge lift from 6-1 sophomore Sarah Poglis, a lefty who finished with match with 12 kills.

"The last three weeks she's been starting and we've altered our defense to get her more hits," Teeters said. "We tried to get her in a lot of single block situations because Salem is one of the best blocking teams we face. She just hit great."

The Blazers also received steady digging from Shannon Swish, pinpoint passing from setter Nicole Vondracek and timely hitting from LeSage (seven kills) and Cathy Hermann (five kills). LeSage and Hermann also contributed three blocks apiece.

But the performance of Sills on the other side of the net was heroic, even in defeat.

"Whenever she touched the ball, good things would happen," Teeters said. "She had the magic touch — passing, serving, you name it. She just played great."

While Ladywood struggled with its serving the first two games, the Rocks fell apart in the third because of serve reception and passing.

"The kids were able to pick up their left-side attacking better after the first game," Salem coach Brian Gilles said. "And our serve reception was better until it was 12-3 (in the third). There's really not much I can say other than that we had an awesome season. And Shelly played like a Division I player. She played awesome and stepped up big-time."

Mercy, behind seven kills each from Gail Agecinski and Beth Janes, along with six from Jameson Emerson, dispensed of host Ferndale in the other semifinal, 15-6, 15-7.

In opening game of the final, Mercy went down quickly, but regrouped in the second, erasing a 12-9 deficit to even up the match. Heidi Wahl came up with a big dig when it was 13-11.

"This is the first time they've taken a game off us in awhile," Teeters said. "They made some good serve, they

were connecting on their passes and making good hits."

But the Marlins couldn't sustain their momentum in the final game as Vondracek served four aces and Judd led with nine kills, giving her 28 on the day.

"This is something to build on for next year," said Mercy coach Peggy Spengler, who loses four seniors. "Anytime you come out of a first game as slow as we did, and able to put it back together shows the character of my team."

"We were able to get to a higher level at the end of the year. We were running more plays and quick-attacks."

"But Ladywood is a good team and I wish them well the rest of the way."

Mercy's outgoing seniors include Emerson, who is considering offers from Middle Tennessee State and Alabama, along with Janes, Wahl and sister Sheyenne Mooter.

Buha paces Duke effort

Jason Buha of Farmington, a junior at Duke University, fired a final-round 72 for a 139 total and second-place tie in the Matlock Collegiate Golf Classic March 3 in Mulberry, Fla.

Buha, a former standout at Farmington High School and Class A individual state champion, led Duke to a three-team tie for fourth place.

The Rolex Tour event was shortened to 36 holes at Imperial Lakes Golf Course due to inclement weather.

Mark Slawter of North Carolina State shot 68 in the final round and was one stroke better than Buha overall at 138. Columbus College was the team winner.

The tour and the Rolex collegiate rankings are administered by the College Golf Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by Rolex Watch U.S.A. and dedicated to the growth and promotion of collegiate golf.

Holowicki recovering

After a tense week, the news regarding Bernis Holowicki is good.

The Madonna University basketball coach, who lives in Livonia, is recovering at home following a quadruple bypass heart operation he underwent Feb. 27.

"Every day is beautiful," Holowicki said in a brief phone conversation Wednesday. "Just to brush your teeth... every little thing is a plus."

Holowicki, 64, started feeling chest pains on his team's bus trip home from their final game of the season, Feb. 24 at Berea College in Berea, Ky. His wife, Barbara, took him to Providence Hospital when the bus arrived early the following morning.

Holowicki was released from the hospital Monday. "Right now, he's just taking life easy," Barbara Holowicki said.

"He's on his feet and walking a bit," said Bernis. "I'm starting to walk, starting to recuperate. I feel like I was hit by a train."

"I'll tell you, you sure do appreciate things differently. There have been so many calls, and cards and flowers from so many. I'll tell you what, that's so important."

Before taking over Madonna's team this season, Holowicki coached at Bedford Catholic Central for 22 years. He guided Madonna to an NAIA playoff berth and an 8-22 record in his first season.

Finals at Total Soccer

The North American Indoor Soccer Championships will take place March 23-24 at three of four Total Soccer facilities in the metro area, including the Farmington Hills location.

Round-robin games will be played Saturday, March 23, from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m. Playoff games are slated for Sunday, March 24, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The age groups involved will be under-8, 9, 11, 12 and 14 boys. Teams will come from 15 states and Canada.

The Total Soccer in Farmington Hills is located at 23996 Freeway Park, off Ten Mile Road near Grand River, behind the Holiday Inn.

All championship games will be played at the Fraser site, 34300 Utica Rd., on Sunday evening. For more information call (810) 638-9942.

Windsor Classic Games

The 16th Annual Windsor Classic Indoor Games for athletes who are physically challenged will be March 22-24.

The event is open to athletes from across North America as well as Europe, Asia and South America. The games are co-sponsored by the Windsor and Detroit Recreation Departments.

Eight hundred athletes will compete in track, field, alalom, sled hockey, bocca, powerlifting, swimming and tennis. Many of the athletes will also represent their countries at the Paralympics this summer in Atlanta.

The competition is divided into four classifications for adults and juniors: cerebral palsy, wheelchair, blind and amputee. In each class, there are divisions based on degree of physical ability.

The registration fee for one event is \$25, with a fee of \$5 per additional event up to a maximum of five events.

To register contact Celia Southward at 2450 McDougall Street, Windsor, Ontario, N6X-3N6. For information call the Windsor (519-255-8270) or Detroit (313-877-3077) recreation departments.

Spring hitting camp

The Sports Academy, 22515 Heallip In Novi, will have a spring break baseball/softball hitting camp, directed by Henry Ford Community College baseball assistant coach Lee Eberth from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday, April 8-11.

The camp is open to boys and girls ages 6-14. The cost is \$55 per person (limited to the first 50 registrants).

The camp features T-shirt, whistle ball, home run derby, snacks, pitching and hitting drills, base running, smack bar, video games and batting cages (all speeds). For information call (810) 890-0800.

Shamrocks top Trojans in district

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

BASKETBALL

Detroit Catholic Central senior Chris Misiak was a state qualifier in golf, but his reputation as an Iron Man isn't limited to that sport.

Misiak's endurance on the basketball court makes it tough for coach Rick Coratti to consider resting him.

"The point guard, who played the entire way in Class A district wins over Southfield and Livonia Stevenson, finally took a seat Friday in the closing seconds of a 60-61 finals victory over visiting Detroit Henry Ford.

CC, 12-4 overall and the winner of six straight district championships, will play state-ranked Detroit Cooley in a regional semifinal 6 p.m. Tuesday at Dearborn High School.

Misiak played another steady floor game and finished with 17 points on 8-of-16 shooting.

Even when he's on the bench, Coratti has a hard time keeping him there.

"He and (senior guard Justin) Hoener are a pain to sit next to; they always want 'in,'" Coratti laughed. "Chris has really turned into a good leader, not only on the floor."

Junior guard Marc McDonald made two triples and led the Shamrocks with 20 points on 6-of-19 shooting. Hoener had 14 (4-of-11 from the floor) and center Eric Gilbo 10 (5-of-10).

The Shamrocks made six triples in the first half and finished with seven.

Ford finished 6-18.

"I thought we'd be able to shut them down from the outside a little earlier, but they hit those three and that can break your back," Ford coach William Carter said. "Misiak's a heady little player."

Misiak laughed when it was suggested his walking on the golf course in the fall gets him in shape for the basketball season.

"Coming out (during games) doesn't even cross my mind," he said. "At the beginning of games, I get tired, but I get my second wind. Usually, I'm not tired in the second half."

Johnson, limited to four first-half points, scored 12 in the second half to help keep it close.

Johnson finished 8-of-12 on an impressive array of hooks, baseline jumpers and a dunk.

Derrick Jefferson led the Trojans with 17 and junior Joe Jones had 13 before leaving the game with 3:10 left in the third quarter with an ankle injury.

CC led 62-41 after three quarters. A 9-4 run by the Trojans cut the deficit to six with 38 seconds remaining.

McDonald made four straight free throws and Hoener one to ice the victory.

"We got a little careless late, but you don't want to quit attacking early," Coratti said.

The Trojans ran a curious offense in the first half, having Johnson sometimes coming out on the perimeter to get the ball. "That might have been because of his teammates' refusal to look for him."

"He's a player and he came to play today," Carter said. "I told our players (at halftime) to look for him more."

Misiak, who lit up the Cooley guards in a summer-league game, thinks the Shamrocks have a chance Tuesday.

"When they (CC's frontline players) rebound, Mark and I are shooting well and Justin is penetrating, we're hard to beat," Misiak said. "If we play our game, I know we can beat them."