

WLAA RELAY RESULTS

WLAA SWIM RELAYS
 Saturday, Dec. 19 at Salem HS
 Team results: 1. Plymouth Salem, 244; 2. Livonia Stevenson, 233; 3. Plymouth Canton, 224; 4. North Farmington, 177; 5. Walled Lake, 138; 7. Westland John Glenn, 115; 9. Livonia Churchill, 112; 9. Farmington, 94; 10. Livonia Franklin, 89; 11. Farmington Hills, 52.

400-yard medley relay: 1. Plymouth Canton (Aaron Reeder, Jon Heiss, Kurtis Hornick, Dan LeClair), 3:55.43; 2. Northville, 3:57.77; 3. Livonia Stevenson, 4:00.13; 4. Plymouth Salem, 4:00.96; 5. North Farmington, 4:02.20; 6. Westland John Glenn, 4:10.82; 7. Livonia Franklin, 4:39.98; 8. Walled Lake, 4:42.84; 9. Farmington, 4:52.76; Farmington Hills, DQ.

400-yard freestyle relay: 1. Plymouth Salem (Andrew Locke, Brian Mertens, Jim Peacock, Dan Jones), 3:32.75; 2. Livonia Stevenson, 3:33.00; 3. Livonia Churchill, 3:45.25; 4. Plymouth Canton, 3:49.00; 5. North Farmington, 3:51.63; 7. Farmington, 3:54.59; 8. Walled Lake, 4:03.05; 9. Livonia Franklin, 4:29.37; 10. Westland John Glenn, 4:51.01; Farmington Hills, DQ.

200-yard breaststroke relay: 1. Northville (Mark Kunkel, Jason Ballou, Matt Schlesier, Brett Johnson), 2:02.21; 2. Livonia Stevenson, 2:03.97; 3. Plymouth Canton, 2:04.21; 4. Plymouth Salem, 2:04.60; 5. Walled Lake, 2:13.67; 6. Westland John Glenn, 2:15.34; 7. Walled Lake, 2:16.87; 8. Farmington, 2:18.57; 9. Livonia Churchill, 2:31.83; 10. Farmington Hills, 2:32.42; 11. Livonia Franklin, 2:38.93.

200-yard backstroke relay: 1. Plymouth Canton (Justin Allen, Aaron Reeder, Trey Gereck, Dan LeClair), 1:45.59 (most recent); 2. Plymouth Salem, 1:56.05; 3. North Farmington, 1:58.36; 4. Livonia Stevenson, 2:00.60; 5. Livonia Churchill, 2:13.36; 6. Westland John Glenn, 2:21.32; 7. Northville, 2:32.88; 8. Walled Lake, 2:36.04; 9. Livonia Franklin, 2:53.01; Farmington Hills, DQ.

200-yard butterfly relay: 1. North Farmington (Brandon Dugan, Adam Farber, Aaron Rycroft, Mark Wachtberg),

Rocks learn from past mistakes

BY C.J. RISAK
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As veteran Plymouth Salem swim coach Chuck Olson said, "That's why we have this meet — so you can learn from it."

Olson was talking about the Western Lakes Activities Association Relays, the annual league meet-togethers that Salem hosts. While it may provide a look at what each team has to offer, it usually has little bearing on the WLAA meet at the end of the season.

Example: Livonia Stevenson won last year's relay, and Plymouth Canton won the two previous years. The WLAA champion at season's end each time, however, was Salem.

What the Rocks learned during those relays meets was that mistakes can kill a team's chances. Certainly Salem had the firepower and depth to win the relays the past three years, but didn't why?

Disqualifications, usually for leaving the starting blocks early. If a team has a first- or second-place finisher DQ'd and scores no points, in a meet that totals just 10 races, it's chances of winning are mortally wounded.

The Rocks didn't make that kind of mistake last Saturday and the result was a good one — for them. They won three relays and captured the first-place trophy.

"We were just a bit stronger at the end than anyone else," said Olson. "And no one got DQ'd."

Any explanation for that? "We didn't really do anything different," the Salem coach replied, adding in jest, "This year we decided not to emphasize starts and it worked out well."

But, Buckler noted: "Chuck Olson is still the team to beat. (Salem's) won it six times in a row. But we've got four teams, along with Northville, that will be right in there for the league title."

Salem won the 400-yard freestyle, the 400 individual medley and the 200 medley relays, and finished second in the 200 backstroke, 500 freestyle and 200 free relays.

One relay meet record was set: Canton's Justin Allen, Aaron Reeder, Trey Gereck and Dan LeClair won the 200 back relay

SWIMMING

in 1:45.69, shattering the previous mark of 1:47.32 set by Livonia Churchill in 1994.

Andrew Locke, Brian Mertens, Jim Peacock and Dan Jones combined to win the 400 free relay for Salem (3:32.76), and Eric Lynn, Aaron Shelton, Kevin Crabb and Paul Perez teamed for a first in the 400 individual medley relay (4:02.90).

Matt Casillas, Jason Rebarchik, Mike Witthoff and Locke were winners for the Rocks in the 200 medley relay (1:47.05). Point of interest: Locke was the only swimmer on two winning relays for Salem, a tribute to the team's depth, which has always been the difference between Salem and the rest of the WLAA.

Stevenson, which was without two swimmers who were involved in an auto accident last Thursday (neither was seriously injured), won the 500 freestyle in 5:04.20.

Canton had one other win, to go with its record-setter, taking first in the 400 medley.

Walled Lake had two wins, too, in diving and the 200 free (4:37.64). North had one win in the 200 butterfly, and Northville, won the 200 breaststroke.

Whalers face difficult road-trip challenge

And so it begins.

If the Plymouth Whalers are going to make a run at the best record in the Ontario Hockey League, this is the time they'll have to come through.

Six of their next seven games will be on the road, a tough enough obstacle. But there are other hurdles adding to the difficulty.

The Whalers will play six games in an eight-day stretch, beginning Dec. 27 at Brampton. And they will do it with five of their top players — forwards Harold Drucken, David Legwand and Tomek Valtonen, and defensemen Nikos Tasoulos and Paul Mara — on leave. All five are playing at the World Junior Hockey Tournament in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and likely

won't be available to the Whalers until Jan. 8.

Their absence was felt last weekend, when Plymouth struggled to a 4-2 win over OHL newcomer Mississauga. Friday at Mississauga, then lost 4-2 at Sarnia Saturday.

Against the Ice Dogs Friday, Plymouth certainly missed the offensive capabilities of Drucken and Legwand, who have combined to score 56 goals. The power play suffered in particular without Tasoulos and Mara at the blue line.

Adrian Colagiacomo did his share for the Whalers, scoring one goal (his 19th) and assisting

on the other three. Rick Smith scored twice, bringing his season total to 11, and Randy Fitzgerald had a goal and an assist.

Plymouth led 2-0 after one period and 3-1 after two, but Mississauga pulled to within one with a power play score by Adam Nitel at 9:39 of the third period. Smith's second goal, with 2:05 remaining, clinched it for Plymouth — which isn't saying a whole lot, considering the Ice Dogs are the OHL's worst team, with a single victory to their credit this season.

Rob Zupp was in goal for the victory; he made 28 stops. Josh Evans made 38 saves for Mississauga.

Saturday's game at Sarnia was a far bigger challenge. The Whalers opened the scoring, get-

HOCKEY

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ting a power-play goal from Fitzgerald early in the second period. But the Sting answered with scores by Ryan VanBuskirk and Peter Cava against Plymouth goalie Robert Holsinger, making it 2-1 heading into the third period.

Greg Willers clinched it for Sarnia with an empty-net goal with 47 seconds remaining.

Holsinger made 26 saves for the Whalers; Greg Hewitt had 32 saves for the Sting.

Plymouth (25-5-2) plays at Brampton Sunday before returning for a 3 p.m. game Tuesday against London.

Area players in GLI event

The 34th Annual Great Lakes Invitational, featuring Michigan, Michigan State, Northern Michigan and Michigan Tech, comes to Joe Louis Arena Saturday and Sunday.

Defending NCAA hockey national champion U-M plays Michigan Tech at 7:30 p.m. Saturday following a 4 p.m. contest featuring defending GLI champion on MSU against NMU.

The consolation game is at 1:30 p.m. Sunday followed by the championship game at 5 p.m.

Tickets cost \$22.50, \$16, \$12 and \$8 per day and are on sale at the Joe Louis Arena Box Office and all TicketMaster locations or by calling TicketMaster at (248) 645-6666. The Joe Louis Box Office is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Area players to watch include senior Jeff Kozakowski of Garden City, one of the top defensemen for MSU, and senior Bobby Hayes of Westland John Glenn, one of the Wolverines' top forwards and an assistant captain. Senior right-winger Dale Romin斯基 (Farmington/Birmingham Brother Rice) is also one of the Wolverines' assistant captains.

Redford St. Agatha graduate Jarrett Weinberger is a sophomore center with Tech and Bill Trainor (Canton/Dearborn Divine Child) is a sophomore left winger for the Wolverines.

Game from C1

17 shots on goal.

Mustangs down Flyers

Northville scored a pair of late goals Friday to clinch a 6-2 victory over visiting Farmington in a high school hockey game.

The Mustangs had just a one-goal lead with three minutes remaining, but the Flyers were assessed a two-minute penalty for checking from behind and a 10-minute misconduct.

"We were really booming the net and hitting them with a lot of shots," Farmington coach Glenn Breuhaus said, "and the penalties kinda took the wind out of our sail."

Matt Lee scored a goal and had an assist for the Flyers, 0-10. Chris Hone scored the other goal.

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