

Sports & Recreation

The Farmington
Observer
Inside

Outdoors, B
Bowling, B

Page 1, Section

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FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

MHSFCA grid awards

John Herrington of Farmington Harrison was named Division 3 Coach of the Year by the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association.

Herrington coached the Hawks to the Division 3 state championship in November. He has a career record of 271-63-1 in 30 years at Harrison.

His teams have won a record-tying 10 state titles, which includes three in a row (1997-99) and six in the last decade.

Farmington's John Bechtel was one of two coaches recognized by the MHSFCA in Division 2 Region 3. The other was Scott Merchant of the University of Detroit-Jesuit.

Herrington and Flint Powers' Jack Pratt shared Coach of the Year honors in Division 3 Region 4.

Farmington High and North Farmington received Division 2 honorable mentions as MHSFCA all-state academic teams. The winners were Forest Hills Northern, Brother Rice, Okemos and Waterford Mott.

Brian Lafer of North Farmington and Farmington's Grant Weber are MHSFCA honorable mention all-state academic players. Both are seniors.

Gaines stars on court

Former Farmington High star Trevor Gaines continues to play well and is among the top players on the University of Vermont men's basketball team.

The 6-foot-7 Gaines is the leading rebounder for the Catamounts with 8.6 per game, and he is third in scoring with 11.8 points per game.

He also leads Vermont in field goal percentage (.542) and blocked shots (12). Gaines has made 45 of 83 shots, including two of four three-point attempts, and 20 of 31 free throws.

Gaines' statistics are current through nine games. The Catamounts are 5-5 overall following a 69-67 win Tuesday over Hartford, Vermont was sent to New Hampshire on Saturday afternoon.

The Catamounts, who were 1-1 in the America East Conference, had won their last three games, including non-league wins over Holy Cross (78-69) and Harvard (78-71).

Fletcher leads OCC

Mahogany Fletcher scored a game-high 21 points Wednesday to help Oakland Community College rally in the second half and defeat visiting Alpena CC, 62-46.

The Lady Raiders trailed at halftime, 30-24, but outscored the Lumberjacks in the second half at the Highland Lakes Campus gym, 28-16.

Fletcher made eight of 21 field goals and was perfect at the free throw line (4-4). She also had 10 rebounds, seven defensive.

Sara Wesa scored 15 points for OCC; Nicole Schulte added 12 points and led the team with 11 rebounds.

Alpena had 18 points from Melissa VanStedam and 15 from Pam Rich.

The OCC men's team was not as successful, losing to Alpena, 72-62. The Raiders were down by nine at halftime but tried to make it close in the second half, coming up another point shy, 34-33.

Edward Wallace scored 17 points, Darnell Bobo 13 and Lawrence Hall 11 for the Raiders, 5-7 overall and 0-2 in the conference.

Gary Greenwood netted 27 points and 13 rebounds for the Lumberjacks, 6-6 and 1-1. He made eight of 12 field goals and 11 of 14 free throws.

Soccer club signup

Spring registration is under way in the Farmington Soccer Club. Registration forms are available at Farmington public libraries, the Farmington YMCA and Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation office.

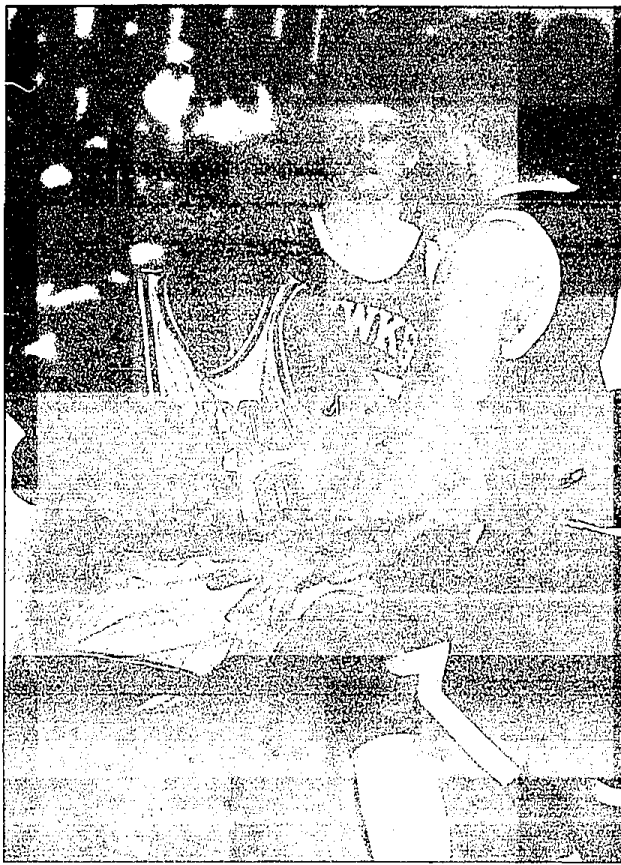
The fee is \$45 for returning players and \$95 for new players. An additional late charge of \$25 will be assessed after Feb. 18.

Please call the FSC registrar at (248) 426-7146 or visit the website at www.leaguesonline.com/fsc/

NFWB registration

North Farmington-West Bloomfield basketball and softball registration is 8:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 12, in the West Bloomfield High School cafeteria. For more information call (248) 885-6392 or visit the NFWB website at <http://www.nfwb.com>.

Falcons win battle of unbeatens



Three's a crowd: Farmington's Mike McDuffie protects the basketball as he is surrounded by Dave Condeni and Brad Tucker of Harrison. The Falcons won, 54-40.



Farmington High remained undefeated in boys basketball Friday with a 54-40 win over crosstown rival Farmington Harrison. The Falcons are 8-0.

BY DAN O'MEARA
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Anyone wondering just how good Farmington High is in boys basketball got his answer Friday night. That includes the Falcons themselves, who rolled over their first five non-league opponents and were undefeated heading into their first game of 2000.

Farmington's record is still perfect after opening Western Lakes Activities Association play with a 54-40 victory over visiting Farmington Harrison in a battle of unbeaten teams.

"We were 6-0 but nobody really knew how good we were, because we hadn't played top competition yet," Farmington coach Denny Mikel said.

"I told (the Farmington players) I thought this would be a big step toward people believing Farmington has a good basketball team, and I think a win over Harrison will help us get some recognition the kids have been looking for."

"It'll be a dogfight from now on. In the WLA, you have to be ready every night."

The Falcons were certainly ready Friday, playing excellent defense and benefitting from a big game by 6-foot-5 senior Brian Davies.

Before the game, Mikel wrote 40 points on the board and told his players he thought Farmington would win if it held Harrison to that number.

"We told the kids defense was going to win the ballgame," Mikel said. "I know we're going to score some points; I'm not even concerned about that."

"But, if we can focus on the defensive end of the game and hold teams to 40 points or less, I think we're going to get a lot of wins."

The Falcons spread the floor with their defense and neutralized Harrison's big man, 6-foot-6 Joe Hundley, preventing the Hawks from setting up and pounding the ball to him in the post.

"They took Joe out of the game, not with their big guys, but with their little guys," Harrison coach Dave Turnquist said. "They went to a full-court defense and dropped back into a zone."

"It was the quick, perimeter guys who changed the tempo of the game. Once the tempo changed, our decision making began to change. We didn't get the opportunities we would've liked to see."

The Falcons alternated between man-to-man and zone defenses, a box press and a half-court trap to keep the Hawks out of sync offensively, Mikel said.

"If we changed our defenses, we thought we could confuse them and keep us focused as to what we were trying to do," he said.

Davies scored 14 of his game-high 18 points in the first half, including 10 in the second quarter, to propel Farmington to a 32-23 halftime lead. He also had 12 of his team's 43 rebounds.

"He's an improved player as they have, and they have a

Please see BASKETBALL, B5

2000 could be Mercy's time to shine

Marlins have experienced, talented volleyball squad

BY DAN O'MEARA
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Potentially, this could be a really big year for Farmington Hills Mercy in the sport of volleyball.

The Marlins returned a veteran team with 10 experienced players, nine of whom are seniors, and they have a lot of talent based in those numbers.

Mercy had some huge successes last year, including its first win over rival Livonia Ladywood in a decade, but it also had some big letdowns.

Therefore, consistency and a daily commitment are priorities for the 2000 Marlins, according to coach Ed Moeller.

"It's been really interesting seeing the attitude of these girls," he said. "They had some success last year, but it was kind of an up-and-down season. That toughened the kids up. They learned they have to come to practice and work hard every day."

"Since May, they've been telling me how they're looking forward to this season and asking what they can do."

"That's without me pushing them. This group is really committed and focused to have a good year. They have a great attitude, but they still have to go on the floor and prove it."

The Marlins are led by 5-foot-7 1/2 outside hitter Carrie Brankiewicz, who earned first-team All-Observers honors.

"She stands out," Moeller said. "I think she's going to have an exceptional season. She wants it badly this year and has improved her game. She's a great leader, too."

Brankiewicz will definitely play at the college level, according to Moeller, as will several other Marlins.

Senior Kristy Raxway, a 5-10 left-headed hitter, has received a commit-

PREVIEW

ment from Western Michigan, and Cornell is recruiting Alexis Jones, a 5-9 senior hitter.

Liz Cash, who missed most of last season with a knee injury, is healthy and playing volleyball again. The 5-9 senior is a possible Division III college player, Moeller said.

Moeller is fearful his best back-row player, 5-5 senior Nickie Downing, could be out for the season with a back injury. More will be known about her status following the outcome of tests later this week.

"We're holding our breath on her," Moeller said. "Nickie is a real tough kid who knows the game well. She's another one who worked all summer to improve her game."

Mercy has a veteran setter in 5-6 1/2 senior Amy Miller, who spent last summer working on her vertical jump and improved her quickness, according to Moeller.

Senior Kelly Blunden is another outside hitter who played a lot of AAU volleyball in the past year and is a better player, too.

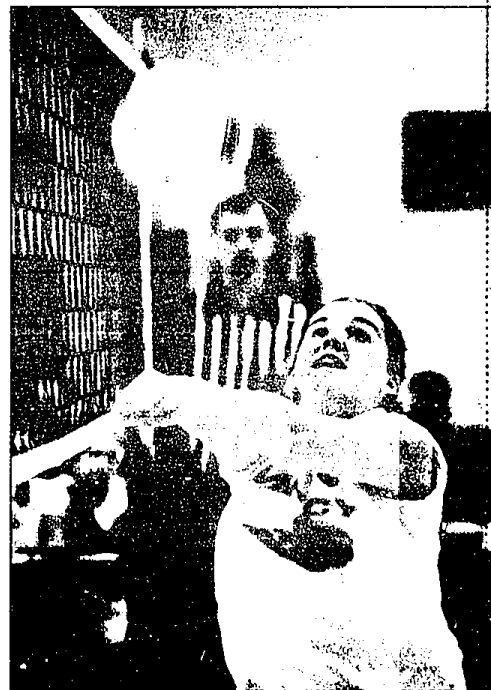
"Kelly (who stands 5-7) and Carrie play bigger than their size," Moeller said. "Both jump very well."

The other seniors are 5-9 Lindsay Machacek, a back-row specialist who can play in the front row if needed, and Meghan O'Connor, a 5-6 setter.

The varsity roster includes juniors Colleen Murie, Lara Polteraitis, Katie Dinamore and Melissa Nelson and 6-1 sophomore Caitlin James.

Murie, Polteraitis and Dinamore play

Please see MARLINS, B5



Mercy playmaker: Amy Miller returns to run the offense from the setter position. The Marlins are optimistic about the 2000 season.