

Mercy wins tourney trophy but stumbles in dual defeat

Farmington Hills Mercy offered a major breakthrough on the editorial court Tuesday as Birmingham Marlin happened the host Marlin a stunning defeat, 15-2, 16-2.

"We absolutely didn't play the girls right," Mercy coach Ed Mueller said. "We literally gave them no competition."

The Marlin fall to 2-3 in the Catholic League Central Division and 3-4 in all dual matches.

Mercy is 24-10 overall after winning the Silver Bracket in the East Kentwood Invitational Saturday.

The Marlin started in pool play losing to Fortage Northern (5-15, 9-15) and defeating Muskegon Reeds-Purcell (15-9, 14-12).

In power-pool play, Mercy lost to Zeeland (1-15, 9-15) and Kalamazoo Central (10-8, 7-15, 7-15).

That determined which teams went into the Gold or Silver brackets.

In the Silver playoffs, the Marlin won quarterfinal, semifinal and final matches over Lansing Sexton (15-0, 15-1), Spring Lake (10-14, 15-1) and Grand Rapids South Christian (15-9, 15-13), respectively.

Mercy rallied from a 12-6 deficit to win the second game against South Christian.

Schoolcraft tourney
East Kentwood, ranked No.

WOLLENDAM

2 in the state. Will be the defending champion at the 27th annual Scholastic Volleyball National, which starts at 8:45 a.m. Saturday at the University of Illinois in Champaign.

East Kentwood's record in last year's state tournament was 1-1. The team lost to Farmington Hills Marlin in the first round.

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the previous spring, but he hurt it again when he went up for a pass and an opposing player landed on the foot.

"It was pretty disappointing, because you can't show your full ability when you're injured most of the year," Milus said. "Maybe some colleges do shy away from that, but I kinda thought I'd get something from either a Division I or II."

"Both (injuries) have cleared up now. They're looking for a backup long snapper, so I might be able to travel with the team my freshman year."

Milus played tight end and defensive end at Farmington. WMU plans to put him at tackle or down end in its 4-3 defense. He's a five-star recruit, which Milus played as a sophomore, is a possibility, too.

"He's going to be up to 280 or 290 with that frame," Bechtel said. "With his ability to run, he's going to get in quarterbacks' faces, and that's what they're looking for."

CMU also wanted Milus, who received a recruiting pitch from Ferris State, Saginaw Valley and Grand Valley, too.

"If I wasn't going to play football or basketball, I was going there (WMU) for school," Milus said. "I've been up there a couple times, and I like the whole atmosphere there."

"Compared with Central and Eastern, it seems (WMU) is heading up the right way. They had a great season; coach (Gary) Darnell seems to win wherever he goes."

Brinsden starred at outside linebacker for the Falcons and anchored the other side of the defensive line opposite Milus.



Kevin Woods
Northern Illinois



Justin Milus
Western Michigan



Brian Brinsden
Ferris State

The 6-2, 240-pound Brinsden also played fullback a little bit, but he was limited in that regard due to a high ankle sprain.

But he was tough on defense and earned first-team All-Observer honors, as well as other post-season accolades.

"I told the coach from Ferris, 'When you watch him play in the (coaches' high school) all-star game, you're going to be real happy, because I'm not sure you even know what you have yet,'" Bechtel said.

Brinsden also is slated for defensive duty and a change of positions.

"They're going to use him the same way Western is going to use Milus," Bechtel said. "He's going to move to a down inside tackle, and that's a great position for him."

"He'll do just fine in there. He'll play head-up on the guard, and all the keys will be the same. He played that position with us in our goal-line package."

"Brian is great in close quarters. He's a great hand-to-hand-combat-type kid."

Brinsden also considered Saginaw Valley and Eastern Michigan and the possibility of walking on at Michigan State.

"Brian is 6-2 and I'm guessing they'll get him up to 265 or 270, and my guess is he's going to be a player," Bechtel added.

Woods, who earned a place on the All-Observer team after helping the Huskies win the Division 3 state championship, chose NIU over Bowling Green and Toledo.

The Huskies had been recruiting Woods since his junior year. CMU entered the picture after making a coaching change last year, but Woods had already made up his mind.

"(NIU) was my first visit, but I didn't commit right on the spot," he said. "When I went to Bowling Green, it didn't even compare. I decided I wasn't going to waste time and lose an opportunity at (NIU)."

The 5-9, 180-pound tailback rushed for 1,519 yards and 23 touchdowns last fall, averaging more than six yards per carry.

Woods tied a state-finals record in November with four rushing touchdowns and 24 points in Harrison's 42-35 win over Grand Rapids Creston.

"I think he'll do real well; (NIU) needed a tailback," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "He might be able to redshirt his first year, which will be good for him and give him time to gain strength."

Woods is the first Harrison player to sign with NIU, which is located in northwest Illinois and is about an hour west of Chicago. "(NIU assistant coach) Sid McNarry has worked real hard

at our school for the last five or six years, and he was real happy to get one of our players," Herrington said.

"They think Kevin has potential with his speed and strength to be a good runner in the MAC. It'll be a challenge for him, because they have excellent backs in that league."

Woods' roommate will be Orchard Lake St. Mary's receiver David McDermott, another freshman recruit whom Woods has known since grade school.

The Huskies recruited two other running backs from Illinois, but Woods said he was told he'll remain a tailback and will return punts, too.

"They said they have two ahead of me who might not make it academically," Woods said. "They have two seniors who take most of the snaps, and they're going to graduate."

"They'll probably redshirt me. That just gives me an extra year to get ready."

Harrison's Nick Hall (6-2, 200), an All-Observer defensive back, will attend Central Michigan as a preferred walk-on.

"He wants to go to school there," Herrington said. "He wants to play Division I, and he figures that's his best chance. They were very interested in him, and I think they'll give him a good shot as a walk-on."

Herrington thinks Hall, like Milus, could be a sleeper in this year's recruiting class.

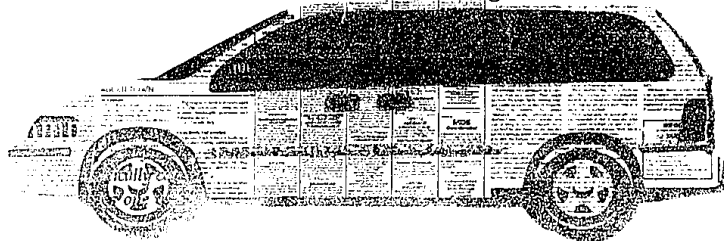
"Once they get him up there and see how fast he is, he'll have a good chance of making it and getting a scholarship his sophomore year," Herrington said.

Harrison's Brad Person has received a partial scholarship to Michigan Tech, which plans to make him a defensive end.

Kent Taylor, an All-Observer defensive tackle and fullback for Harrison, has partial offers from Ferris State and Michigan Tech and will decide between the two.

Harrison linebacker Ryan Lukas will attend Ferris State as a preferred walk-on. Lukas and Person were second-team, all-area players.

Farmington's Grant Weber, the All-Observer quarterback, is going to the University of Michigan and will concentrate on his studies.



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