

Observer Sports

The Farmington Observer
INSIDE:
Boys swimming, C2
More basketball, C3
Page 1, Section C
Thursday, May 9, 2008

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

District crown gives Marlins lift



Team leader: Senior hitter Carrie Brankiewicz led the Marlins in hills and digs in the district tourney. Mercy won its 11th in row.

Farmington Hills Mercy needed some success to boost its confidence, and the Marlins got it Saturday. Mercy won its 11th straight Class A district tournament championship, defeating Farmington and Berkley en route to the title.

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER
domeara@oe.homecomm.net

When they're feeling down, the Farmington Hills Mercy volleyball players and coaches can count on a postseason championship to raise their spirits.

After a disappointing regular season, the Marlins had reason to celebrate Saturday by winning their 11th consecutive district tournament title.

Mercy defeated Farmington in the semifinals, 15-10, 15-7, and cruised past Berkley in the final at Southfield-Lathrup High School, 15-5, 15-3.

"It's time to smile again," Mercy coach Ed Moeller said. "In our minds, we had to win this."

"We've been working a lot on attitude, because we thought we were unbeatable early in the year. We lost that belief and have been trying to get back on track."

The Marlins had high hopes in early January and planned to contend for the Catholic League title, but the results didn't match their expectations.

"We had to know we could win to help our confidence," said senior setter Amy Miller, who missed three weeks during a crucial part of the season with a broken finger.

"You can tell a good team by the way it bounces back off adversity, and today we bounced back," said senior Carrie Brankiewicz, who led the Marlins with 19 kills and 22 digs in four games Saturday.

In the district opener, Farmington defeated Southfield, 15-4, 15-8, and Berkley eliminated Southfield-Lathrup in the other semifinal, 15-7, 15-2.

"Give credit to Mercy," Berkley coach Theresa Stanichuk-Cabulum said. "They came ready to play. This is the ninth year I've coached variety, and this is the ninth year Mercy has won it. It's frustrating to end the season this way."

"I hope (to have a shot at beating Mercy) every year. Last year we had 26 wins going into the district, and Mercy walked all over us."

In the first game, Mercy scored most of its points one or two at a time. The Bears (11-12-4) were able to stop the Marlins from gaining momentum by forcing sideouts, but they were unable to score points themselves.

Conversely, Mercy dominated the second game. Brankiewicz served four points in a row, senior Lindsey Machacek five and senior Kelley Blunden six, which included three aces.



Tourney action: Senior Tricia Krause makes a defensive play for Farmington in the district.

"They just caught the momentum, and we couldn't stop them," Stanichuk-Cabulum said. "They just have more depth than we do. They have more big guns than I can handle."

Moeller played a lot of players with good results. Senior Liz Cash, who was next with 12 kills, and Blunden excelled on the attack.

Senior Kristy Ramsey and sophomore Kristin Loridas also had some big hits, and senior Alexis Jones led the team with 14 blocks.

"Liz Cash is very smart but also intimidating," Brankiewicz said. "Her quick hits in the middle were awesome," Miller said. "She was so quick they weren't even trying to block them."

"The nice thing is how people really please each other," Moeller said.

Gymnasts make grade

Farmington Public Schools unified gymnastics team qualified three gymnasts — one from each of its three high schools — for the state finals Friday and Saturday at Hartland High School.

In the regional at Hartland, Farmington was fourth and just missed qualifying as a team despite scoring in excess of 140 points. Brighton (145.60), Hartland (145.675) and Holt (143.35) captured the top three spots.

Sophomore Chelsea Keeseling of Harrison High and freshman Clara Seymour of Farmington qualified as Division I all-arounders. They will compete individually on vault, bars and beam, too. Sophomore Kristin Ulewicz of North Farmington is headed to state as a Division II gymnast.

Club gymnastics meet

Three members of the Farmington Gymnastics Center team competed in the "Salute to Michigan" meet at Birmingham Groves Saturday.

Andrea Bentley of Farmington Hills took third place on beam in Level 9 competition. She scored 8.05 on vault, 7.65 on bars, 8.675 on beam and 8.75 on floor for an all-around total of 33.10.

Jennifer Sturgis of Novi was third overall (34.775) in Level 10 and Michelle Wasielewski (Northville) fourth (34.30).

More than 20 Michigan teams competed in the warm-up meet for the state meet to be held later this month in Lansing.

Bentley and Sturgis attend Livonia Ladywood High School; Wasielewski is enrolled at Northville.

Blues baseball tryouts

Tryouts are planned for the South Farmington Blues 13-year-old baseball team 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 25 and 26, at Drake Park, field No. 1.

The Little Caesars Federation team has all new players and managers this year. For information call coach Ed Laaba at (248) 478-3393 or assistant Len Clapp at (248) 476-1028.

Learn to Check clinic

Suburban Hockey Schools will conduct its "Learn to Check" clinics at arena sites in the upcoming weeks.

Classes are offered 8:30-9:20 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, and 5:30-7:20 p.m. Wednesday, March 29, at Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills; 6:7-8:50 p.m. Tuesday, March 21, at Devon-Aire Arena in Livonia; 8:30-7:20 p.m. and 7:30-9:20 p.m. Monday, March 20, at Novi Ice Arena.

The cost for the clinic is \$40 per player. For more information call (248) 476-1600.

Adult softball signup

The City of Farmington Hills is accepting new team registrations for men's, women's and adult coed softball. For fees and nights of play call the recreation office at (248) 473-9970 between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

CC defeats Churchill in q'finals

BY PAUL BEAUDRY
pbeaudry@oe.homecomm.net

After winning the Division I hockey title in 1999, some might think Catholic Central might not be as hungry this year.

Don't sell that meal to the Shamrocks.

CC clamped down on defense in the third period and skated past Livonia Churchill in quarterfinal play on Wednesday night at Redford Ice Arena, 4-2, to earn their third trip to the semifinals in four years.

HOCKEY

"We knew we had a lot of returnees from last year and when we started working out in June, our goal was to get back to Flint and the finals," said CC junior forward Jim Spiewak, who scored two goals on the night. "We worked hard to get back there — and we're in the semifinals at least."

The Shamrocks (24-2) will play Troy — a 2-1 winner over Waterford Mitt — at 8:30 p.m. Friday night in the Division I semifinal at Flint's IMA Arena.

But as far as Churchill (16-10-2) was concerned, this was for the state championship.

"This was the state final right here — I'll say that to anyone," said Chargers' coach Jeff Hatley. "We would have

Falcons eliminate Raiders



Rivals meet in tourney: Farmington's Garlin Gilchrist looks for a teammate in the district game with North Farmington.

BY DAN O'MEARA
domeara@oe.homecomm.net

Matt Mikel and his teammates on the Farmington High basketball team had all the right ingredients Wednesday, including rival North Farmington.

The Falcons, who play in only Western Lakes Athletic Association team to beat the Raiders in the regular season, did it again in the Class A district tournament at West Bloomfield.

Mikel, a junior guard, scored a game-high 18 points, including four three-point shots, to lead Farmington to a 39-28 victory in overtime.

BASKETBALL

"(Mikel) told me he was going to do something to win the game," said his dad and Farmington coach Denny Mikel, explaining No. 11 is his son's lucky number. "It's also his jersey number."

"Today is March 6 and that adds up to 11. He thought he was going to have a lucky day. I said 'OK, go do it.'"

Farmington will play Bloomfield Hills' LeBar, which defeated Farmington Harrison, 36-33, in the first game of a doubleheader Wednesday for the district championship at 7 p.m. Friday. Both teams are 15-6.

And Friday's date? March 11. That could be a good omen for Mikel and the Falcons, who topped the reigning WLA and defending district champion.