

Olympic hopeful remains positive

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Sheila Taormina may be Down Under but not down and out just yet.

Despite an uncharacteristic and sub-par performance which left her a bit bruised and battered in Sunday's first Olympic triathlon trials in Sydney, Australia, Taormina plans to forge ahead in her quest for one of the two remaining spots on the U.S. team.

That final test will come Saturday, May 27, in Irving, Texas.

"It's not too pretty, but I'm smiling," said the former Olympic gold medal swimmer (women's 800-meter freestyle relay at the 1996 Atlanta Games). "I have no regrets about how things went. It just wasn't meant to be. I did everything I could have with the time I had to prepare."

The Livonia Stevenson grad and former All-American at the University of Georgia has made a meteoric rise in her new sport in just 18 months of training. She was one of nine Americans invited to compete at the trials on the Olympic course, which consists of a 1,600-meter swim, 24.8-mile bike and 6.2-mile run.

Usually, the first out of the water in most of the International Triathlon Union races she has participated in, Taormina experienced her first onerous signs of things to come when she found herself 40 seconds behind American Barb Lindquist (17:50) and 26 seconds back of Australian Nicole Bishop (18:08.6).

"I just had a horrible swim and had no feel for the water," she said. "The bike pack I was in, however, worked great together."

"We caught Barb and Nickie on the second of six bike laps."

On a tight course with a series of sharp turns, Taormina and her fellow competitors were thrown another curve.

"The rain started pouring down, making for very slick conditions," she said. "Our lead pack was putting time on the chase pack every lap, so it was a pleasure to be part of that."

Olympic rules allow drafting on the bike, causing tight packs of riders.

Disaster struck on the fourth lap just under the famed Sydney Opera House.

"There was a crash in our pack and I went down," Taormina said. "The good news — I slid along the pavement and my bike was kind enough to slide right next to me. I got up quickly with Magali Meissner (of Switzerland), and we decided to pedal hard to try to catch the pack again. We did. I was feeling like the race might go perfectly from that point on."

It didn't go according to plan as Taormina began to experience leg cramps while putting on her running shoes in the transition area.

"I didn't know, however, that my body was in pretty bad shape and things started seizing up on me," Taormina said. "The run was the ugly part. The impact from the crash caused a lot of cramps and seizing."

Taormina ran almost 10 minutes slower than her best 10K time (37 minutes).

Michellie Jones of Australia, considered the best in the world, won the race in 2 hours, 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Gutierrez was the top U.S. finisher and earned the first-ever Olympic triathlon berth by placing seventh in 2:04:46... just ahead of Bartholomew, who was in eighth overall in 2:04:58. Taormina's time — 2:14:24.

Marlins capture invitational crown

Farmington Hills Mercy rallied from a 2-0 deficit to win its own softball invitational Saturday with a 3-2 win over Farmington.

After scoring twice in the fourth inning to tie, the Marlins won it with Lauren Monterey's RBI single in the fifth.

Molly O'Malley, who was pinch running for Alex Duda, stole second, was sacrificed to third by Theresa Lawrence and scored on Monterey's hit.

In the fourth inning, Mercy's Erin Carson put down a bunt with Dana Falvo on first base, earning a leadoff single.

Two errors on the play — an overthrow at first base got past the right fielder — allowed both girls to score.

"We were very happy to win the tournament, and it's a great start to our season," Mercy coach Jack Falvo said. "The Mercy parents did an exceptional job of organizing and running it."

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SOFTBALL

scored two runs and had one RBI; Carrie Brankiewicz and Duda had two hits each.

The Marlins routed Allen Park in their next game, 9-2. O'Malley, a sophomore up from the JV, earned her first varsity pitching win.

Matty, who pitched all four games, had 32 strikeouts on the day.

Danielle Lewis went 3-for-3 with two doubles and two RBI in a 11-1 rout of Westford Mott. Julie Rotenheber's two hits included a double, and she also had two RBI.

To reach the championship game, the Falcons scored three runs in the fourth in the fifth inning to beat Troy, 3-2.

Laura and Rotenheber hit safely, Krantz drove in a run with a single, and Livingston followed with a two-run single.

Another balanced hitting attack had Carson, Brankiewicz and Lawrence with two each. Carson and Brankiewicz also scored two runs; Lawrence had an RBI.

FARMINGTON HIGH

Amy Pequett and Myty had RBI singles in the championship game against Mercy. Becky DePotter and Kim Livingston had two hits each to lead Farmington's offense.

"We hit the ball but didn't have much to show for it," coach Jerry Osborne said. "We had 10 hits; we just couldn't string them together."

It was a typical Farmington-Mercy game where each team puts pressure on the other's defense. They made a

couple outstanding plays that helped them win the title game.

"You could tell it was the end of the tournament. Both teams were a little tired, and we didn't make the plays we had been all day."

The Falcons opened with a 6-2 win over Orono-Brandon. Tricia Kreutz had two hits and two RBI. DePotter had an RBI single and Meghan O'Rear an RBI sacrifice.

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"We were really happy with our defensive performance for the first game. It was a great defensive effort," Osborne said. "The girls played well. I was proud of their effort all day. They played with a lot of enthusiasm and heart."

FARMINGTON HARRISON

The Hawks lost their first two games, 5-0 to Novi and 4-3 to Adams. Harrison scored twice in the top of the seventh to tie Adams, 3-3, but the Highlanders won it with a run in the bottom of the seventh.

Again Schrock went the distance on the mound against Novi, as did Lindsey Emmett in the Adams game.

Harrison had five hits in the opener, which included doubles by Sarah Tobie and Schrock. Katina Vitulski went 2-for-4 with a double versus Adams; Kelly Taylor and Tobie had one RBI each.

Schrock earned the pitching victory in Game 3 in which the Hawks defeated Allen Park in a 3-1 win.

The final game was 2-for-3 with a triple and three RBI. Vitulski, Kim Spaulding, Jenelle Welling and Goyle Terres drove in one run apiece.

The last game ended in a 3-3 draw with Riverview, which scored twice in the bottom of the sixth to tie.

Emmett pitched seven innings, allowed five hits, struck out eight and walked one. Vitulski and Terres had two hits each; Taylor had a double, and Vitulski had one RBI.

NORTH FARMINGTON

Samantha McComb went 3-for-4 with a pair of triples and five RBI in the final game as the Raiders bombed Berkley, 12-1, and finished with a four-game split. McComb also scored two runs.

Christina Colombo (triple), Chisly King (double) and Beth Danilewicz had two hits each. Colombo also had the winning hit. Danilewicz scored three runs and had two RBI. Jessica Tupper got her first varsity hit and scored two runs.

North lost its first game to Troy, 5-4. Stacy Russell was 2-for-3 and had one RBI. Colombo was the losing pitcher.

The Raiders blanked Riverview in their next game, 9-0. Danilewicz threw a three-hitter. Colombo was 3-for-3 with two RBI and scored two runs. Russell, McComb and Kelly McKeon had two hits each.

Danilewicz allowed only four hits by Orono-Brandon, but North had just three itself and made four errors in a 3-1 loss in the third game.

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It was a four-hitter, striking out nine and walking three. Losing pitcher Kristy Mansuetti allowed nine hits.

The Vikings earned a 3-0 deficit and tied the game with two runs in the top of the fifth. The Falcons answered with six runs in the bottom of the inning, highlighted by O'Teara's slam.

"It was all over from there, and it carried over through today," Osborne said. "I'm very happy with where we're at this early in the season."

"We hit the ball hard again (Monday). If we keep doing that," Farmington will be good shape, "because the defense is finally coming around."

HARRISON 7, W.L. WESTERN 3: The Hawks scored three runs in each of the first two innings and gave winning pitcher Lindsey Emmett a 6-1 lead to work with Monday.

Emmett scattered six hits, fanned five and walked two for Harrison, which leads the W.L.A. Western Division and is 5-0.

Katina Vitulski went 3-for-4 and scored two runs. Kelly Taylor and Jenelle Welling were 2-for-3 with three and one RBI, respectively.

Harrison rallied with two outs in the third inning. Sarah Tobie beat out a bunt for a hit; Vitulski hit a liner to center field, and Kim Spaulding had an infield single to load the bases for Taylor, who drove in the winning run on the pitcher's third two runs.

The Hawks had 11 hits off sophomore hurler Laura Bell, who didn't walk anyone and struck out three.

Western's Lori Burgess went 3-for-4 with a double and a triple, The Warriors are 2-2 in the division and 4-8 overall.

N. FARMINGTON 10, GLENN 0: Both teams had 10 hits apiece. Anna Colombo combined for a no-hitter Monday as North Farmington blanked host Westland John Glenn in six innings.

The Raiders improved their record in the Lakes Division to 2-1 and evened their season record at 4-4.

Danilewicz pitched the first four innings and Colombo the last two. Danilewicz struck out nine and walked

two; Colombo had two and zero, respectively.

Samantha McComb and Colombo went 2-for-3; each had a double. Colombo also scored four runs and had one RBI. McComb batted in three runs and scored twice.

Danilewicz chipped in one hit and two runs. Natalie Handrich got her first varsity hit — a double. Katie Walk also had a double and scored a run.

The Raiders drove Glenn starter Ruth Kiletyka from the mound in the second inning after which they led 6-0.

Kiletyka walked seven. North had seven hits off her and reliever Stephanie Feduchak. The Rockets committed six errors and the Raiders three.

McComb, which went unbeaten during the brief stretch, is 4-0 in the Catholic League's Central Division.

"We're really happy with what we can do, to be in the position of the turn, by spring break," coach Jack Falvo said. "We've done a super job, playing all these games."

"I can't compliment the senior leadership on this team enough. In the first game, Marian kept coming back, and I kept going to the team, saying 'We have to answer that,' and they did."

The Marlins outhit the Mustangs in

the first game, 19-13, and were led by Lauren Monterey, who was 4-for-5. Nuviera Naomi was 3-for-4 with three RBI.

Dana Falvo, Erin Carson, Theresa Lawrence, Marissa Lawrence and Carrie Brankiewicz were 2-for-4.

Carrie also had three RBI; Monterey, both Lawrence and Brankiewicz had one each. Hazel Fehan and Theresa Lawrence scored two runs apiece.

Erin Howard was the winning pitcher. She struck out nine and once again didn't walk anybody.

Megan Feduk had the same numbers in the second game while holding Marin on to four hits. Jen Simpson was the losing pitcher in both games.

Monroe improved to 3-1 with a double, a home run and two RBI in the nightcap. Kristy Shina and Naomi had two hits and one RBI apiece; Dana Falvo scored two runs.

The Marlins also swept a doubleheader Monday from host Pontiac Notre Dame Prep, 7-3 and 4-1.

Howard was the winning pitcher in the first game and in her first turn at bat, she hit her first home run, a go-ahead 2-for-2.

Brankiewicz was 3-for-3 and scored twice; Alex Duda and Marissa Lawrence had two hits and two RBI apiece.

Sophomore Rachel DelCava pitched in the second game and earned her first varsity win. Duda hit a two-run double, and Jackie Shilmy was 2-for-3, scored a run and had an RBI.

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