

Rocks rally to win game, top Falcons

Farmington let a late lead slip away Monday at Plymouth Salem, and that sealed its fate in a girls volleyball match.

The Falcons lost in two games, 5-15, 11-15. A series of serve-receive errors proved to be Farmington's downfall after it had led throughout much of the second game.

The Falcons were ahead 10-7 when the Rocks rallied to tie, and the Falcons scored the next point for an 11-10 edge.

But that's when they ran into trouble.

"We just couldn't sidestep," Farmington coach Alex Perrin said. "We couldn't find a way to get the last sidestep. We were in control of the game until the last point."

Salem is one of the perennial powers in the Western Lakes Activities Association and has deserved credit for winning the match, Perrin added.

"What Salem does so well and the reason it's such a good team is it does all the little things," he said. "They do every little thing right, and other teams don't."

The Falcons were not terribly competitive in the first game, missing five of 12 serves, according to Perrin.

(Salem) hit the ball well, and it took a while for our blockers to adjust," he said. "In the second, we adjusted; we had a lot of blocks."

"We're a big team; they're a small team. We were giving them a lot of headaches."

Jessi Halliday and Julie Kimmel had three kills apiece for Farmington. Randall Brown had 11 assists. Kimmel also had five digs and Halliday two.

The Rocks were keying on 6-foot-1 middle hitter Lyndsy Howard, who was all but eliminated from the offense because of Farmington's struggle with serve receive.

"They really were not stopping our hitting; the problem was getting the ball to the hitters," Perrin said.

VOLLEYBALL

"There are times when you don't play well and the other teams does, and there are times when you just don't play well."

"If we play well in all aspects, then I think we win that second game."

Spartans stop Raiders

Livonia Stevenson stayed tied for first in the WLA with a 15-10, 15-5 triumph Monday at North Farmington.

The Spartans, 4-1 in the WLA and 17-7-4 overall, were led by Abbey Schrader, who finished with six aces, two kills and 11 digs.

"We struggled but it was a win," Stevenson coach Kelly Graham said. "We were able to make plays when we had to make them."

S'craft volleyball invite

Defending champion East Kentwood will be among 25 teams vying Saturday in the 28th annual Schoolcraft College High School Invitational girls volleyball tournament.

Pool play is scheduled on five courts beginning at 5 p.m. The two teams in the following pools will advance to championship round:

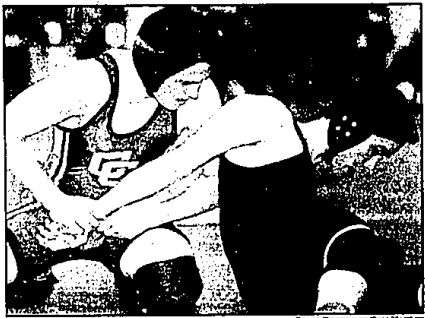
Court No. 1 (A) — Livonia Stevenson, Plymouth Salem (Blue), Temperance Bedford (last year's runner-up), Dearborn, Grand Rapids Northwest;

Court No. 2 (B) — Birmingham Seaholm, Farmington Hills Mercy, Walled Lake Western, Farmington, Grand Blanc;

Court No. 3 (C) — Fenton, Northville, Dearborn Divine Child, Livonia Churchill, Midland;

Court No. 4 (D) — Livonia Clarensville, Livonia Franklin, East Kentwood, Farmington Hills Harrison, Birmingham Marian;

Court No. 5 (E) — Walled Lake Central, Holly, Garden City, Novi and Salem.



Tournament action: Catholic Central's Jay Abshire (above, left) beat Lutheran Westland's Brandon Noble at 145. North Farmington's Ramis Bajrami (right) lost to Stevenson's Charlie Rabaut in overtime at 112.



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Peter Demick, John Pocock and Dave London — have worked at instilling all season.

Those efforts paid off. If ever there was a time when the groundwork for "messing up" had been laid, it was the week prior to the Observerland. The Chiefs were lethargic in the opening round of the Jackson Northwest Tournament on Jan. 20 and, despite a strong finish, placed fourth.

Then last Thursday, their quest for a Western Lakes Activities Association Western Division title was ambushed by Northville, which beat Canton by 14 points.

Those events could have cracked a more fragile team's confidence. "I don't think they hurt our confidence," said Demick. "I think they actually strengthened our resolve."

That was evident from the outset. In all but two weight divisions, Canton wrestlers won their opening match; they would be a repeat of the Jackson Northwest Tournament.

Of the four champions for the Chiefs, the two most notable came in the upper weight divisions. At 275, Derek McWatt earned the title and the tournament MVP for upper-weight divisions — by pinning all three of his opponents.

Just as impressive, Phil Rothwell, normally a standout for

Canton at 189, moved up to 215 to fill a void created by injuries to a pair of Chiefs who normally fill that spot. Demick was certain Rothwell could win the title at 189, but he would be pushed farmed out at 215.

He was — but he still won. Rothwell pinned his first two opponents, then dethroned Redford Union's Ollie Muscarella 9-4 in the semifinals and Churchill's Thom Vandenbosche 10-4 in the final.

Other Chief winners were Greg Musser, the top seed at 140, and Joe Farsoni at 162, who survived an overtime match against Westland John Glenn's Chris Wolfgang in the semis, then beat Churchill's Brian Jones 3-1 in the final.

The lower weight division MVP was Charger sophomore Brian Clement, who had a tough road indeed to the final at 119, beating North Farmington's Harry Leipnitz 5-3, then edging Plymouth Salem's Mike Goethe 4-3 in the semis. In the final, Clement and Canton's Kyle Pitt went double-overtime before Clement emerged with a 3-2 win.

The third-place finish was the best ever for the Chargers. CC ended with three champions: Jay Abshire at 145, Ryan Rogowski at 179, and Blaine Naysmith at 189. No other team had more than one champion.

As satisfied as Demick and his team were with winning a title that had eluded them for so long, he knew his season was far from over. "The truth is, everything is just a stepping stone to build these boys for the end of the season," he said.

That's every coach's goal. At present, the Chiefs seem to be the team with the sturdiest foundation.

A young and improving Churchill squad, which has only

one senior in its lineup, made its strongest showing ever at Observerland by placing in 10 of 14 weight classes.

Clement, a 3-2, double-overtime winner over Canton's top-seeded Kyle Pitt, was the catalyst at 119. He also scored wins over Salem's Mike Goethe, 4-3, and North Farmington's Harry Leipnitz, 5-3.

Pitt had beaten Clement twice this season. Clement was 1-1 against Goethe, while Leipnitz was fourth at the Oakland County Tournament.

"Those three were very tough matches, as tough as anybody in

this tournament had," Churchill coach Marty Altounian said.

Churchill's Brian Jones (182), Alex Murray (189) and Thom Vandenbosche were runners-up.

"I didn't think we'd be in the top three, but I thought we'd be in the top five," Altounian said. "Every tournament there's been some improvement. This team is beginning to understand what it takes to get to the next level and challenge the better teams, the ones in the upper echelon."

Fourth-place Stevenson got a first from 160-pounder Imad Kharbush, who pushed his record to 30-1.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

10TH ANNUAL OBSERVERLAND WRESTLING TOURNAMENT

Jan. 27 at Livonia Churchill
TEAM STANDINGS: 1. Plymouth Canton, 222 points; 2. Redford Catholic Central, 203.5; 3. Livonia Churchill, 168; 4. Livonia Stevenson, 151.5; 5. Plymouth Salem, 136.5; 6. Westland John Glenn, 123.5; 7. Wayne Memorial, 91.5; 8. Livonia Franklin, 85; 9. Garden City, 56; 10. (tie) North Farmington and Farmington, 54 each; 12. Lutheran Westland, 53; 13. Redford Union, 47.5; 14. Redford, Thurston, 20; 15. Livonia Clarensville, 14.

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

Heavyweight: Derek McWatt (C) pinned Aaron Parr (RCC), 5:55; consolation final: Kevin Peckard (LW) p. Tony Martinez (LF), 2:05; RHH placed: Mike Robinson (LS) dec. Carl Leland (R), 6-4.

103 pounds: Jacob Davis (C) dec. Nick Haber (WJG), 7-5 (OT); consolation: Danny Clement (C) dec. Brian Mervyn (PS), 7-5; RHH: Dan Canavasser (NF) p. Kayle McCant (LF), 0-32.

115: Chris Smith (WJG) dec. Charlie Rabaut (LS), 12-7; consolation: Ramis Bajrami (NF) dec. Gent Abdulai (C), 5-3; RHH: Pete Dolan (PS) p. Tim Hamner (WM), 4-35.

135: Brian Clement (C) dec. Kyle Pitt (C), 3-2 (OT); consolation: Mike Goethe (PS) dec. Kolesar Mandala (WJG), 4-3; RHH: Tim Mulroy (C) p. Harry Leipnitz (NF), 4-18.

155: Jesse Stevens (R) dec. Doy Demick (C), 11-5; consolation: Paul Goy (WM) dec. Nate Dillier (PS), 6-2; RHH: Steve Lanhardt (C) dec. Shawn Parker (WJG), 5-4.

175: Lee Warren (LF) dec. Brandon Sammut (PS), 11-0; consolation: Phil Perry (WJG) dec. Nick Smith (C), 5-1; RHH: Sean O'Halloran (LS) dec. Derek Robinson (C), 9-6.

138: Tony Kennard (PS) dec. Mike Werner (RCC), 5-0; consolation: Lev Merigan (C) won by injury default over Aaron Turk (P); RHH: Chris Hasey (C) p. Doug Novack (LS), 1-40.

140: Greg Musser (C) dec. Bryan Marsh (WM), 9-2; consolation: Brandon Templeton (C) dec. Matt Radley (LS), 6-4; RHH: Chris Peterson (RCC) won by injury default over Ben Schaefer (C).

148: Jay Abshire (RCC) dec. Chris Cooper (LS), 5-2; consolation: Adam Schaeffer (PS) dec. Mike Siegrist (C), 5-3; RHH: Brandon Noble (LW) dec. James Azzopardi (LF), 10-4.

162: Joe Farsoni (C) dec. Brian Jones (C), 3-1; consolation: Chris Cicciolo (RCC) dec. Chris Wolfgang (WJG), 5-3; RHH: Joe Jamieson (LS) dec. Mike Zurak (NF), 5-3.

182: Imad Kharbush (LS) dec. Steve Wallace (WM), 14-6; consolation: Mike Murland (P) p. Shawn Rieper (C), 4-17; RHH: Casey Hiltner (RCC) p. Nick Wroblewski (WJG), 2-23.

173: Ryan Rogowski (RCC) won by tech. fall over Scott McKee (C), 5:09; consolation: Matt Navarro (LF) dec. Jack Serio (WJG), 13-0; RHH: Phil Portolano (PS) p. Brett Brown (F), 3-55.

220: Blaine Naysmith (RCC) dec. Alex Murray (C), 10-5; consolation: Steve Rutenheber (Cville) dec. Tim McCarthy (LS), 7-2; RHH: Ron Guro (CC) dec. Matt Rae (LW), 7-4.

215: Phil Rothwell (C) dec. Thom Vandenbosche (C), 10-4; consolation: Matt Markowitz (RCC) p. Ollie Muscarella (RU), 1-10; RHH: Zack Jensen (PS) dec. Mick Renon (WM), 12-8.

Upper weights MVP: McWatt, heavyweight, Canton.

Lower weights MVP: Clement, 119, Churchill.

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- Sat., March 17 vs. Toronto Thunder-Hawks 7:05 pm (Compuware Sports Arena)
- Fri., March 23 vs. Milwaukee Wave 7:35 pm (Compuware Sports Arena)
- Sun., March 25 vs. Cleveland Crunch 12:05 pm (The Palace of Auburn Hills)