

# Ladywood's reward is top seed in league tourney

BY BRAD MATONS  
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The top seed in the upcoming Catholic League Central-AA Division girls volleyball playoffs is of no surprise. Livonia Ladywood, gunning for its 10th Catholic League championship in a row, secured the first-place tiebreaker with co-leader Birmingham Marian on Thursday by outlasting visiting Farmington Hills Mercy, 15-11, 11-15, 15-3. The Blazers, 18-13-6 overall and 7-1 in the Central Division, open defense of their crown beginning at noon Saturday at Madison Heights Bishop Foley. They will face the first-round winner between Mercy and the AA Division's No. 2 seed. The finals will be Thursday, Feb. 14, at Madonna University.

"Because of our youth, we can sometimes hit nine to 10 balls out any game," Ladywood coach Larry Wyatt said. "God's defense and ball control have to be there, but I'm confident we can get the job done."  
Mercy, taking Ladywood to three games in a Jan. 23 meeting before falling, appeared to have momentum on its side after winning the second game. But Ladywood senior Desiree Betts opened the third game by serving six straight points, including two of her four aces on the night.  
Mercy coach Ed Ruhl then called a timeout, but couldn't stem the tide against the host Blazers.  
"At that point you just can't interrupt the flow because we were making bad mistakes," the first-year Mercy coach

**VOLLEYBALL**  
said. "With only two timeouts you have to learn at that point to put the anchor down yourself and stop the bleeding."  
Ladywood never let the Marlin's back into the third and decisive game as sophomore Kristen Bachor registered four kills, one ace and one solo block. Meanwhile, while sophomore Rachael Malenfant came off the bench to contribute three kills.  
Bachor finished with five kills and five aces, while senior Erin Bartee added eight kills and three solo blocks. Setter Melissa Buckshaw, a senior, had 22 assists and four kills.  
Betts and Megan Lantto, both seniors, combined for 14 digs. Sopho-

more Laura Sirgedas contributed three kills and one ace.  
"When our seniors hit and find the open spots, that makes a difference," Wyatt said. "They (Mercy) are bigger and more athletic. When they're on target they're tough to stop."  
"We're also a young team, but at least we have some experienced seniors in key spots. We've won two-thirds of our matches with good ball control and serve reception."  
Mercy, 41-22 overall (games) and 2-6 in the Central Division, was led by junior Kristin Lorida, who averages 7.4 kills per game. She finished with 11 kills, two blocks and an ace. Sophomore Anne Roosevelt chipped in seven kills and a block.  
"We played scared the third game,"

Ruhl said. "Serve reception was not only a problem, but our serves went directly to the person we didn't want to. We must have served 16 balls to (Erin) Bartee."  
Other contributions for Mercy came from Katie Dinsmore and Lara Pelteraitis, two aces each; and Tessa Kuykendall, three kills and a block.  
"When we run our offense, it's difficult to stop us," Ruhl said. "The second game they (Ladywood) had no answer we took too long to set, it where we needed it. A lot of that is because of youth."  
The two teams could meet again in the Catholic League semifinals.  
"Mercy gets better each time we play them," Wyatt said. "Lorida is a good player. She just bombs the ball."

# Team's performance pleases coach, though Central downs Farmington

BY DAN O'MEARA  
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**VOLLEYBALL**  
Coach Alex Perrin said he slept well Wednesday night, content in the knowledge his Farmington High volleyball team played well despite losing a match earlier in the evening.  
That wasn't the case Monday after the Falcons lost to Plymouth Salem, 5-15, 11-15. The scores were similar, but the overall performance was better when visiting Walled Lake Central claimed a 15-8, 15-13 victory Wednesday.  
"We played horribly against Salem but turned around and played well against Central," Perrin said.  
"It's when a team plays well I can live with winning and losing. It's when a team doesn't play well and loses it drives me nuts."  
Farmington spotted Central a 10-3 lead in the first game before closing the gap to 11-8. The Vikings closed out the game with six more rotations.  
"It was high-level, power volleyball," Perrin said. "As a team,

we had 12 kills in that game, and that's quite a few for one game."  
The second game was close all the way and was tied at 13 when Central scored the deciding points.  
"We felt we had the upper hand most of the game, and they managed to win," Perrin said.  
With the score knotted at 13, a defensive mistake proved costly for the Falcons.  
"Our best passer tried to hit the ball before she passed it," Perrin said, comparing the play to a baseball player preparing to make a throw before he completes the catch.  
"As a result, we had an over-pass right to one of Central's best players, and that point was terminated in a hurry."  
"I think that rattled our team. On the next point, we didn't get the ball over the net. We had a decent pass but mishandled the set and badly mishit the third ball."

The loss dropped Farmington to 3-3 in the Western Lakes Activities Association and 12-10-3 overall.  
"It was a hard way to end a match, because we had played well up to that point," Perrin said. "I felt it was our game and we snatched defeat from the jaws of victory, so to speak."  
"It came down to a team that was a little more battle-tested than we were."  
Julie Kimmel had seven kills and Lyndsy Howard six kills to lead the Falcons. Howard also had four digs and two solo blocks.  
Jocelyn Atkins was 6-for-6 hitting with four kills in the first game. Randin Brown had a total of 19 kill assists.  
**Chiefs down Raiders**  
Plymouth Canton overcame a comeback attempt by visiting North Farmington to take a 15-3, 15-10 volleyball victory Wednesday. The Chiefs also won the exhibition third game, 15-12. In the first game, "We had some girls playing different posi-

tions due to a coaching decision," North coach Deb Calanchi said. "The Chiefs didn't have much of anything to do but serve. (Canton had 11 aces.) The girls who were out there worked hard, but it was an awkward position for some of them."  
The Raiders fell behind by five points early in the second game, and that has become a trend, Calanchi hopes to see end.  
"We worked our way back, but... it's that first four or five points that seem to be coming back to haunt us toward the end of every game," she said.  
"From a coaching perspective, we're hanging around in a lot of games and losing, 15-10, 15-9, with out a 110-percent effort."  
Calanchi had a meeting with her players and said they need to increase their level of effort to compete in the W.L.A.A.  
"We need that 110-percent effort every game," she said. "If we can be in it and be close with a mediocre amount of effort, if we step it up and give ourselves a chance, we can win."  
"If we play, we're hustling, moving and making big plays. We just have to be tougher when it comes to passing the ball to our setters."  
The Raiders, who dropped to 1-4 in the league, are often their own worst enemy, according to Calanchi.  
"I don't know if many teams have beaten us as much as we've beaten ourselves," she said.  
The only positive stat for North was a .9375 serving percentage (30-of-32) Wednesday, according to Calanchi.  
"That's a great percentage, but obviously we're not scoring off a lot of those serves," she said. "The two we miss always seem to come at a key point in the game."  
"We just have to get over the hump. There's nothing better than playing an intra-city rivalry on Monday to do it."  
The Raiders are at Farmington Harrison for a match Monday night.  
**Spartans defeat Hawks**  
Livonia Stevenson improved to 13-7-4 overall and 5-1 in the W.L.A.A. with a 15-10, 15-5 victory Wednesday over visiting Farmington Harrison. The Spartans are tied for first in the W.L.A.A.  
Stevenson individual leaders were Dana White, 12 digs and 10-for-10 serving; Katie Drews, five aces; and Kelley Hutchins, seven assists.  
Harrison's Maggie Condoni was 7-of-9 hitting with seven kills, Jill Maxey 16-of-21 with five kills, Latoya Burrell 10-of-11 with four kills, Kelly Taylor 6-of-10 with two kills and Marlene DeMeyer 14-of-16 with two kills.  
DeMeyer served two aces. Amber Bahr and Taylor one apiece. Gayle Ternes had 17 kill assists and five digs. Alex Cleary had six digs, Bahr and Taylor, three each.  
"I thought we played a tough first game," Harrison coach Kevin Lashbrook said. "We had trouble receiving No. 7s (Drews) serves. She ran off the majority of their points."  
It will be Parents Night at Harrison when the Hawks, who are 1-5 in the W.L.A.A. entertain rival North Farmington Monday.  
"The girls are pretty excited about that," Lashbrook said. "We know they serve well; that's the key to their game."  
"We played them in our tournament and scrimmaged them once, and we were able to beat them both times. Hopefully, we can continue that on Monday, but you never know."

## GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

### Foursome lifts Rocks to win over Chargers

Four players had double figures in kills Wednesday as Plymouth Salem defeated host Livonia Churchill in a Western Lakes Activities Association girls volleyball showdown, 4-15, 15-12, 15-3. Salem is 15-5 overall and 5-1 in the W.L.A.A.; Churchill drops to 15-5-2 and 4-2.  
"Salem played superb defense, they were very aggressive and they made some athletic plays, especially number 21 (Kelly Farkas)," Churchill coach Mike Hughes said.  
Jaskot, a junior, finished with 12 kills, while Katie Good added 11. MaryLou Liebau and Jill Dombrowski contributed 10 each.  
Good and Jaskot had 18 and

15 digs, respectively, while Dombrowski finished with 36 assists.  
Beth Bushey led Churchill with 11 kills and was successful on 19 of 20 serves. Sarah Phillips added 10 kills in 18 attempts, while Sallie Kurako chipped in five kills. Ashley Farkas also made good on all of her serves.  
**Rockets top Mustangs**  
Westland John Glenn earned its first W.L.A.A. win of the season Wednesday, with a 17-15, 13-15, 15-7 victory over visiting Northville. Glenn is 5-10-2 overall, 1-5 in the W.L.A.A.  
Lacey Catalano led Glenn with six aces; 13 digs and seven kills. Setter Sarah Fack had 25 assists.

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By: TERRY HOLLAND, Chairman

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