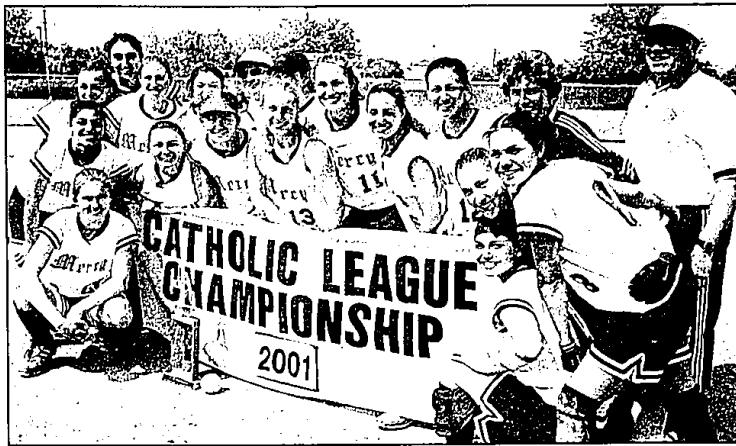


Champions:
Farmington Hills Mercy softball players and coaches pose for a team photo after winning the Catholic League title Wednesday by defeating Livonia Ladywood in a five-inning mercy, 10-0.



Marlins from page B1

without getting an out.

"It's not that it was her fault," Blazers coach Bob Lulek said. "I could see we needed a change. The defense made a couple errors. When those things start happening, you want the batters to see something a little different."

Smart held the Marlins in check until they scored six runs off her. Coryn Sandowicz pitched to three batters before Shawn Fallon took over and got Ladywood (24-11) out of the fourth inning.

"One of the little things we did in preparation was to pitch five pitchers in batting practice," Falvo said. "So, as they were changing pitchers, we were waiting for that and trying to put the ball in play aggressively."

Mercy's first three batters — Molly O'Malley, Carly Tracy and Anna Schneider — reached base in the first inning and scored.

An error on Schneider's bunt enabled O'Malley to score. Kryta Shina put a bad-hop single through the infield, and Schneider beat the throw to the plate on Rachel Del Corvo's fielder's choice.

"What got us going was Molly O'Malley in the first inning," Falvo said. "We had been hiding from Ladywood the fact Molly is a pretty good slapp hitter."

"They were defending her by moving everybody in. I think they thought the only thing she can do is bunt. She showed she can slug pretty well by hitting the ball through the infield."

The Blazers made two more errors in the fourth when the Marlins sent 12 batters to the plate.

Mercy had four of its six hits in that inning, as well as two

walks. Schneider hit a two-run single. O'Malley and Shina knocked in one run each with base hits, and Lindsey Feduk had an RBI on a fielder's choice.

"We did bobble the ball a little bit early," Lulek said. "You can't do that against them. If we make those plays, it might have been 0-0 going into the fourth."

"Defensively, we're usually very sound. If we make one error in a game, that's the max. That's not to take anything away from Mercy. They hit the ball and made us field it."

Both coaches agreed the score is not indicative of the quality team Ladywood has. Lulek added the Blazers still have the state tournament ahead for them, as do the Marlins.

"I told the kids to hold their heads up," Lulek said, adding the Blazers play Dearborn Divine Child in a Division II district game. "If we hold our heads down, they'll clobber us like Mercy did."

Falvo said the championship for Mercy is the result of dedicated efforts by a lot of people involved with the program.

"For the JV and freshman coaches and the dads who take the summer program, it's a reflection on them more than me," Falvo said. "As well as the parents who support the program conscientiously and consistently."

KETTERING 4, N. FARMINGTON 0: Jessica Brubaker earned softball bragging rights of the Brubaker household Wednesday.

She pitched her Waterford Kettering team to a 4-0 victory over host North Farmington, which is coached by her father, Dave Brubaker.

The younger Brubaker, a senior who will play for her dad at Madonna University, allowed four hits and struck out five.

The win was Brubaker's 133rd of her career against 15 losses and put her in second place on the list for all-time prep victories.

Beth Danielewicz started for North but left the game after being hit on her pitching shoulder while batting in the bottom of the first inning.

Christina Colombo finished the game for the Raiders, allowing 10 of 11 hits while striking out three and walking one.

Lindsey Taub, Colombo, Staci Russell and Jehan Hindo had one hit apiece for North (23-11).



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