

Sports

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Grid pick
 O&E sports writers make
 their final prediction of the
 2002 season. D5

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Sidelines

Lady Raiders win

Meagan Thornsberry's game-high 25 points paced Oakland Community College to a 52-32 victory over visiting Owens (Ohio) CC in women's basketball Saturday.

The Lady Raiders rallied from a 40-38 halftime deficit and outscored the Lady Express in the second half, 54-42.

Thornsberry made 11 of 15 field goals, including one of two from three-point range, and was 2-of-2 shooting free throws. She also led OCC with 10 rebounds for her first career double-double.

Ashlee Larsen scored 20 points for the Lady Raiders (3-2). Dana Millard 16 and Leah Antilla 14.

Larsen also had six assists and four steals. Tiffany Buti five assists and six steals.

Michelle Vorst was one of five Owens (4-2) players in double figures with 18 points. Tonia Willis netted 11, and three others had 10 apiece.

The win was OCC's first over Owens since Jan. 31, 1995.

Twisters in final

The Michigan Twisters will face the Illinois Force for the championship of the Mid-States tournament at 7 p.m. Saturday at Willow Run's Devlin Field.

The Mid-States tournament involved 19 teams from seven states: Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Previously, Michigan had been knocked out of the Midwest tournament by the Jackson Bombers, 13-7.

After the loss, the director of the National Football Events offered the team an invitation to play in the Mid-States tournament.

The Twisters (15-1) knocked off the Detroit Downriver Diesel, 10-0, and the heavily-favored South Bend Stampede, 25-0, to earn the right to play for the championship.

Defensively, Michigan has shut down its opponents all season allowing just 111 points and posting a team-record eight shutouts.

Hoop tryouts

Tryouts for the Oakland Titans AAU girls basketball team (ages 12-13) will be 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10, and Friday, Dec. 13, at Kensington Academy in Beverly Hills.

The fee is \$15 for two sessions. For more information call (248) 471-5491 after 5:30 p.m. or email Oaklandtitans@hotmail.com.

Sticks and Pucks

There will be two sessions of the Sticks and Pucks hockey program at Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills on Saturday, Nov. 30.

The times are noon to 1:50 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. at a cost of \$8 per session. No pick-up games will be allowed. All ages are welcome; full equipment is required.

There is no pre-registration; however, each session is limited to 26 participants. Skaters must check in at the front office prior to getting on the ice.

Unbeaten Flyers take tournament trophy

BY DAN O'MEARA
 STAFF WRITER

The first week of the prep hockey season went exactly right for Farmington Unified, which won the Metro High School Invitational and finished unbeaten with a 3-0 record.

The Flyers whitewashed the host Wildcats in the tournament championship game Saturday night at Novi Ice Arena, 5-0.

"After the way we started Friday night

HOCKEY

In the first period, I think the guys knew they had to come out and play better for all three periods, and that's what they did Saturday," Farmington coach Mark Vellucci said.

"I keep telling the guys, 'Don't get a big head this early in the season. We have to stay on an even keel. We have to work hard every day and go from there.'"

"I think the guys realize how good a

team we have, and we have to play together as a team."

Farmington outshot Novi in the first period, 16-2, but had just one goal to show for it. Mike Singer scored the first of his two goals with an assist by Chris Clark with 1:41 remaining.

"We pretty much controlled the play for the whole game," Vellucci said. "We threw a lot of shots at their goalie, Adam Morrison, and he came up big in the first period."

The shots were more even in the sec-

ond, 12-10, in favor of the Flyers, who put the puck past Morrison two more times for a three-goal lead.

Brett Laird scored at 12:26 from Jon Noble and Ian Chornoby, and David Lajcnj scored with 14 seconds left in the period from Louie Powell.

Noble made a breakout pass to Chornoby, who sent it ahead to Laird, who beat Morrison on the short side.

Powell won a faceoff in the Novi end, drew the puck back to Lajcnj, who ripped

PLEASE SEE HOCKEY, D3



BILL BRUESLER/OBSERVER

Mersey senior Elizabeth Garlow scored in two individual events and helped the Marlins to third-place finishes in two relays Saturday at the Division I state swimming and diving championships. Garlow was third in the 100-yard breaststroke and seventh in the 200 individual medley.

Marlins are state meet runners-up

BY DAN O'MEARA
 STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Mercy did better than anyone expected, even the Marlins themselves, in the Division I swimming and diving state championship meet Saturday.

The Marlins, who were shooting for a fourth-place finish at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, ended up in second place as the winner of the best-of-the-rest contest.

Ann Arbor Pioneer was the runaway team champion, compiling twice as many points as runner-up Mercy with 476. The Marlins had 201 to easily outdistance third-place Zeeland, which had 165.5.

"We appreciated the awesome talent Pioneer had, but our whole focus was on the runner-up trophy between us and two or three other teams," Mercy coach Jim Downs said. "Our parents were just as vocal and energized as anybody else."

The Marlins, who were fifth last year and just shy of fourth place, were

PLEASE SEE SWIMMING, D2

Clarkston dominates O&E team

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
 STAFF WRITER

Two-thousand-two will be remembered as another season in which Oakland County girls cross country runners left their mark.

Shannon Stanley, a senior at Rochester Adams, broke 18 minutes at the state finals as the Observer &

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

Eccentric-area's top runner.

Rochester Hills Lutheran Northwest sophomore Laura Rolf won the Division IV individual state championship.

And the Clarkston runners may not have won a state title, but it was a great year for the Wolves nonetheless with second-place finishes at the Division I state finals and Springfield Oaks regional.

The Wolves won the Oakland Activities Association Division I league meet, the Oakland County meet and several invitationals. Clarkston also was undefeated in dual meets, often winning with reserve runners.

So it is of no surprise that the Wolves lead the way on the talented Observer & Eccentric All-Area Girls Cross Country Team.

Clarkston placed four runners on the first team and two on the second,

PLEASE SEE CROSS COUNTRY, D3

Warriors to battle Red Arrows for title

BY CHRIS WYMER
 STAFF WRITER

The long playoff road traveled this month by the Birmingham Brother Rice football team has resulted in another stop at the Pontiac Silverdome.

The Warriors (11-2) go in search of a sixth state championship Friday afternoon as Al Fracassa, the state's all-time winningest coach, leads Brother Rice into the Division II final against the Lowell Red Arrows (12-1) from the Grand Rapids area. Kickoff is 1 p.m.

This will be Brother Rice's eighth trip to the state finals and third appearance

FOOTBALL

in a Division II final. The Warriors were runners-up to Saginaw in 1999, the first year in which the playoffs were expanded to 256 teams in eight divisions, and winners over Hudsonville in 2000.

"We're going to the big game and it's wonderful," Fracassa said after Saturday's 24-7 semifinal victory over Allen Park. "We don't know what's going to happen, but it's just nice to go there."

Lowell brings a 10-game winning streak into its first championship game. Head coach Noel Dean's squad overcame

four turnovers and 10 penalties to defeat Davison, 31-14, Saturday.

Quarterback Mark Gatlin accounted for 237 total yards and four touchdowns - two on the ground and two through the air - as the Red Arrows snapped Davison's 11-game winning streak.

The Red Arrows, whose only loss was to Division III finalist East Grand Rapids, 95-32, are in the state playoffs for the fifth time. They qualified in Class A in 1997 and Division III the past three years.

Lowell, which finished second in the

PLEASE SEE RICE, D5

Falcons like to run, just like Shamrocks

BY PAUL BEAUDRY
 STAFF WRITER

On game days, Redford-Detroit Catholic Central rarely sees a football team like East Kentwood.

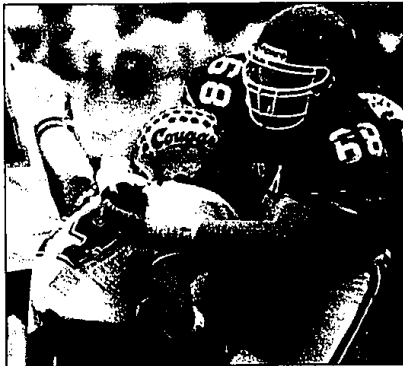
On practice days, the Shamrocks see that team all the time.

As the cartoon character "Foggy" once said, "We have met the enemy and they are us."

Both CC and East Kentwood are run-dominated, ball-control teams. And because both teams' offense is predicated by the run, CC's Tom Mach and East Kentwood's John Shillito are very worried about what they might see at the Pontiac Silverdome on Saturday when the teams square off in the 1 p.m. Division I state final.

"We're getting a taste of our own medicine," laughed Mach, whose team beat Macomb Dakota, 17-10, in a semifinal Saturday. "The scary thing is they do what we do - run 98 percent of the time, control the ball, then hit you with play action."

Actually, no team does what the Falcons do. East



MIYAN MITCHELL/OBSERVER

CC's Ryan Ash (68) tackles Macomb Dakota's Steve Osowski for a loss in a Division I state semifinal football game Saturday.

PLEASE SEE CC, D2

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