Familiar finish sidelines Marian spikers

BY JIM TOTH
STAFF WRITER

VOLLEYBALL

Could it be Birmingham Marian's effectiveness against highly-touted Fraser during the regular season in girls volleyball cost the Mustangs a shot at scoring a quarterfinal victory?

Could be after listening to coach Anne Vondracek's assessment of her team's 15-4, 15-9 hammering at the hands of the Ramblers Tuesday at Troy Athens.

"We just didn't come to play tonight," Vondracek said Marian lost to Fraser at the same stage of the tournament for the third straight year. "Maybe we expected to play well, but at this level you can't expect to play well; you have to go out and do it.

"We were extremely competitive when we played them earlier. We may have had too much confidence."

What confidence the Mustangs did have entering the match quickly dissolved as the Ramblers, who advanced to the Class A final last season where they fell to Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern, jumped in front comfortably in game one.

Juniors Angie McGinnis and Katie Price provided the power, while teammates Adrienne Leone and Elizabeth Jankowski supplied stellar back row play to build a 12-2 lead and coast to the 11-point win.

"We knew they could come back at us, so we knew we had to come out strong and keep the pressure on them," said Fraser coach Kim Argiri, who leads her spikers into semifinal play tonight at Western Michigan University.

Both teams had a different mind-set in the second game as a sense of urgency from the Mustangs helped them build a 6-1 advantage. From that point on, however, Fraser regained the momentum and held the upper hand as McGinnis and Price led a rally that drew the Ramblers even at 7-7 and sent them into a lead they would not relinquish.

"When we serve and receive well, we're tough," Vondracek said. "Tonight, we didn't do either."

The loss put an end to another outstanding season for Marian, which posted a 43-8-4 record.

"It's going to be hard, but I told the girls this does not encompass our season," Vondracek said. "We had a fabulous season. We won 43 games; we won tournaments; we won districts; we won the regional; we had a great year."

MARIAN 16-15, CENTRAL 14-10: Birmingham Marian's trip into the state quarterfinals was made possible by its hard-fought victory Saturday over Walled Lake Central in regional final play at Troy High.

The Mustangs were pushed to the limit in both games by the Vikings before escaping and claiming a third consecutive regional crown.

In the opener, senior Erin Pogitts sparked the Mustangs' early advantages of 4-1 and 6-3 and teammate Christine Cubbin helped build the margin to 12-3 with some strong serving. But the Vikings eventually tied the game at 14-14.

That set the stage for Marian senior Sarah Kreher to again answer the call and respond with a key serve and a key slam to salvage the game one victory.

The Mustangs' attention seemed a little scattered again at the start of game two as they fell behind 5-4.

This time senior Kendall Abber stepped up and served her teammates back into an 8-8 deadlock and eventual three-point lead. Pogitts sealed the victory by serving the final three points.

Kreher finished with 15 kills and Pogitts collected 24 assists.

CC's wrestlers earn 2 state titles

BY PAUL BEAUDRY
STAFF WRITER

One has been wrestling most of his life; the other took up the sport a few years ago.

And while there is a difference in the amount of time Matt Steintrager and Trevor Stewart have spent in their sport, the result was the same Saturday as both Redford-Detroit Catholic Central wrestlers won Division 1 state titles at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

"It was pretty awesome," said Steintrager, who won the 112-pound crown with a 21-15 win. "It was one of the happiest days of my life. I wrestle and practice wrestling all year round – five days a week, two or three hours a day in the off-season just to win the finals at that meet. And when I did it, I could hardly believe it."

Steintrager was joined by teammate Trevor Stewart on the podium as Stewart was the 160-pound champ, taking the final over Dearborn's Hassan Berri for his third win of the year over Berri. CC's Sean Dong came in third at 103 pounds, stopping Jon Adgate of Ann Arbor Pioneer in the consolation final, 4-3.

"It was a good time at the Palace," said Stewart, a sophomore who finished his season at 43-1 – the lone loss coming to Clarkston's Clint DeGain, who was second at 171. "I had a few tough matches, but I got through them."

For Steintrager, the path to the finals was relatively easy, as he won his first three matches by forfeit, technical fall and by a 31-second pin over Utica Ford's Mike Colonna in the semifinals.

He was a little nervous before facing Temperance Bedford's Deno Monnett in the finals.

"I have a motivational tape that I watch to get my head in the right place and that helped calm me down," said Steintrager, a junior who has only been wrestling since eighth grade. "I really wanted to beat him. He beat me in the regionals but I was sick. And I was worried about endurance. I didn't go the full six minutes on the weekend so I didn't know what I was going to do under pressure."

He grabbed an 8-2 lead after the first period, but gave a lot of that back in the second period when he was penalized a few points for stalling. By the third period, Steintrager was nursing a 16-15 lead and Monnett was coming after him.

Losing was not something Steintrager, who finished with a 52-2 record, had in mind.

"I thought about all the time I've put into wrestling, every day, every week shooting for this," said Steintrager. "Most people would have been happy to take second if they didn't make the finals the year before. I'd have been destroyed if I took second."

As for Stewart, he had no intention of losing either.

"Last year, I got hurt heading into the regional and lost two matches," said Stewart. "I felt I had something to prove. I wanted to prove that I could have been a state champ last year, too."

Stewart's matches got progressively tougher – winning his first match by pin, then technical fall, then a 3-1 win over Lansing Sexton's Jake Wyatt in overtime.

When he found out he was to wrestle Berri in the final, he was cautious but prepared. It paid off with a 9-3 win and the state title he'd been working for since he was 5.

"I was excited just to be there," said Stewart. "There were a lot of people cheering for me and it was a real fun time. I worked hard to get there and prove I could win it. Hopefully, I'll be able to repeat the next two years."

Both plan to keep wrestling over the off-season, although Steintrager is taking no time off preparing for next year.

"Last year, you couldn't stop me from crying after I lost in the regional," said Steintrager. "I was under the bleachers for an hour crying. I cried this year, too, but it was from joy."

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HomeTown Heroes™
OF OAKLAND COUNTY

Do You Want to Honor a HomeTown Hero?

Your Observer & Eccentric, Mirror and HomeTown Newspapers, in conjunction with the United Way Volunteer Center of Oakland, are calling for nominations for the HomeTown Heroes™ Awards, which recognizes, encourages and rewards outstanding volunteers who have given selflessly of themselves to support non-profit organizations in Oakland County. Nominees and awardees will be recognized at the Fourth Annual HomeTown Heroes™ Luncheon that will take place on June 4, 2003 at Marriott Pontiac at Centerpoint in Pontiac, Michigan. For a complete description of the nominating categories, please visit www.unitedwayoakland.org.

NAME OF NOMINATOR: _____ IF GROUP, CONTACT PERSON: _____

ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NOMINATING CATEGORY: __ DIRECT SERVICE __ SENIOR __ YOUTH __ GOVERNANCE __ FAITH-BASED __ BUSINESS

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____ AGE: _____
(Must volunteer for an Oakland County non profit organization)

ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

SCHOOL ATTENDING (if appropriate) _____

PLACE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE: _____

YEARS OF SERVICE: _____ AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKS PER MONTH: _____

TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED: _____

On a separate sheet, in 200 words or less, tell why you have nominated this individual, group or business. Describe the nominee's major accomplishments, commitment, self-motivation, problem-solving skills, and measurable impact upon the community. Entries must be typewritten. Do not staple pages. Include a photo (no larger than 5" x 7") of the nomirated person or group, or for Business nominees, include a photo of persons participating in the volunteer activity.

Entries must be received by Wednesday, April 16, 2003.

Mail or fax forms to: HomeTown Heroes™ Awards • c/o United Way Volunteer Center
50 Wayne Street • Pontiac, MI 48342 • Fax: 248-456-8809
For questions, further information, or more applications go to www.unitedwayoakland.org or call 248-874-1633.

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Third-Annual Kohl's Kids Who Care™ Program Recognizes Youth Who Contribute to Communities

Menomonee Falls, Wis., – More children would volunteer if more opportunities were created for them and they were asked, according to a groundbreaking youth volunteerism survey that is the first to poll both volunteering and non-volunteering youth on the subject.

Nearly half of children who do not currently volunteer cited the same reason for not doing so; no one asked. Almost seven out of 10 youth who currently do not volunteer would likely do so if opportunities were created for them by schools or other organizations, according to the survey, which was conducted on behalf of Kohl's Department Stores by Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU), one of the country's leading research firms specializing in youth.

"The findings of the study demonstrate the importance of creating opportunities and inviting young people to get involved," said Steven A. Culbertson, president and CEO of Washington D.C.-based Youth Service America, a resource center committed to making youth service the common experience for all youth in America.

"Today's youth recognize the benefits of volunteering for their communities as well as themselves, and we can help plant the seeds of lifelong community service by introducing them to volunteer opportunities when they are young," said Culbertson.

According to the survey, 70 percent of the youth who volunteered began doing so before the age of 12, prior to their schedules filling up with other activities. Having the time to volunteer becomes much more of a factor among 15 to 18 year olds than it is among 10 to 14 year olds who do not volunteer.

The survey findings come as Kohl's Department Stores announces its third annual Kohl's Kids Who Care™ volunteer recognition program. The program recognizes youth, ages 6-18, for outstanding service to the community with national finalists receiving $5,000 for their post-secondary education. This is the first year that Kids Who Care™ commissioned a survey that polled young people directly.

"The Kids Who Care™ program provides the kind of recognition that encourages even more young people to make a difference in the community," Culbertson said.

Julie Gardner, senior vice president of marketing at Kohl's said, "We know that kids volunteer because they want to help someone. Kids Who Care™ is about encouraging young people to make a difference and have doing it."

The survey also found that 81 percent of young volunteers started with an activity organized by their school, a club or religious organization. Through their experience, these young volunteers felt they really helped someone else while having fun. They felt better about themselves and planned to continue in volunteer activities. In fact, 85 percent of this year's young volunteers plan to volunteer next year.

"Creating opportunities for kids to volunteer is key to raising the levels of youth service and spreading the benefits of volunteering," Culbertson said. "The Kohl's study quantifies the benefits of creating volunteer opportunities, which is that more kids will volunteer."

Kids Who Care™ recognizes and rewards kids who volunteer in their communities. Nominees must be between the ages of 6 and 18. Nominees will be judged in two age groups: 6-11 and 12-18. Nominations forms can be obtained at Kohl's stores and at www.kohlscorporation.com. The deadline for entries is March 15, 2003. Kohl's California stores, which open in March, will accept nominations between March 23 and May 3. National winners will be announced in August.

Two winners will be selected at each store — one from each age range — to receive a $50 gift card. Those winners will go on to compete for one of 94 regional scholarships worth $1,000 each. Regional winners will compete for one of the 10 national scholarships worth $5,000 each. In addition, Kohl's will contribute $1,000 to a non-profit organization on behalf of each national winner.

The Kids Who Care™ volunteer recognition program is part of the Kohl's Cares for Kids program, which raises funds for children's hospitals, features fundraising gift cards for local schools and non-profit youth groups and provides an employee volunteer program to encourage volunteerism to benefit local non-profit organizations.

Kohl's commissioned Northbrook, Ill.-based TRU to conduct the survey. TRU is the first marketing research firm to specialize in the teenage market. TRU boasts the world's most widely subscribed-to syndicated teen study and remains the only full-service marketing research firm solely dedicated to understanding teens. Kohl's survey has an error rate of plus or minus three percent.

Based in Menomonee Falls, Wis., Kohl's is a family-focused, value oriented specialty department store offering moderately priced national brand apparel, shoes, accessories and home products. The company operates 457 stores in 33 states. For a list of store locations, or for additional information, visit Kohl's Web site at www.kohls.com.