

Sports

Dan O'Meara, Brad Emons editors/591-2312



Monday, March 6, 1989 O&E

(P.6)10

Rocks repeat as WLAA champions

Salem edges Canton

By C.J. Risk
staff writer

After 27 heats in 10 swimming events, after 18 divers, the outcome of Friday's Western Lakes Activities Association boys meet came down to the last man in the last heat of the last relay.

Which gave meet host Plymouth Salem a distinct advantage. Because the Rocks' last man was Ron Orris.

Through 10 previous events, Salem and Plymouth Canton had engaged in a dual-meet like war, with first one team, then the other surging into the lead. With only the 400-yard freestyle relay remaining, Canton had the edge: 416 points to Salem's 414. North Farmington was a distant third with 295.

The Chiefs, dual-meet winners in the Western Division, were seeded fifth entering the finals with a preliminary time of 3:24.33. Salem was No. 1; the Rocks had gone 3:23.09 in Wednesday's prelims.

THE ROCKS were never better than fifth during the first three legs of the relay, swum by Chris Caloia, Rick Steshetz and Eric Bunch. They kept their team close, however.

Jeff Schwinn, Jim Hartnett and Steve Geddes — Canton's first three relay swimmers — were as



JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer

Fred Seidelman captured third place in the 100-yard butterfly Friday, assisting in Plymouth Salem's repeat victory in the Western Lakes Activities Association swimming champion-

ships. The meet came down to a duel between the Rocks and Plymouth Canton, with Salem winning by eight points, 462-454.

lay, and the meet. Orris touched in 3:20.71. North was second in 3:21.58, with Northville third in 3:22.39 and Canton fourth in 3:23.45.

Salem claimed its second-straight WLAA title with 462 points. Canton was second with 454, followed by North (337), Northville (312), Livonia Stevenson (230) and Westland John Glenn (207).

ASKED WHETHER he was worried with his team trailing by two points with one event left, Salem coach Chuck Olson responded, "I was hoping (the meet) would come down to that. I hoped we'd be that close. I figured we could win the last event. I felt pretty good about that."

But Orris could not claim the outstanding swim of the meet. That belonged to Canton's Jeff Homan, who took first in the 100 breaststroke even though he lost his goggles early in the race. He finished with them around his neck — and still tied the league record of 1:01.67 he had set in the prelims. The previous record was also Homan's: 1:02.18, last year. He was also second in the 200 IM to Orris in 2:02.14.

swimming

Who wouldn't, with Orris anchoring. The junior won both his individual events, setting WLAA records in each. He was easily the best swimmer in the meet.

"And to think," Canton coach Hooker Wellman contemplated. "We had a 50-50 chance of getting him."

But Orris was dealt a blue chip, sending him to bolster Olson's program for four years instead of Wellman's. He made it look almost easy Friday, particularly in the 500 free, which he won in a leisurely 4:53.97. Northville's Eric Newton was a distant second (4:56.75).

IN THE 500 free prelims, Orris set a new WLAA record of 4:44.23, breaking the mark set by Mike Tumey of North in 1986 (4:46.74). He got his first record earlier in Wednesday's prelims, going 1:57.34 in the 200 individual medley to bust another Tumey mark (1:59.36, in '87). Orris won the 200 IM in 1:59.45.

The meet produced one other double-winner in individual events, Salem's Mike Hill. Hill got firsts in both the 200 (1:48.52) and 100 (48.91) free.

Please turn to Page 3

Cage collapse

Rocks victims of Stevenson rally

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The reason for Livonia Stevenson's basketball success this season is its ability to win the close games, according to coach Bob McIntyre.

That was never more true than it was Friday night when Stevenson presented the veteran coach with his first district championship at Plymouth Canton High School.

The Spartans rallied from a 20-point deficit early in the second half to overcome favored Plymouth Salem in a wild, emotional and controversial finish, 71-70.

"This year's group of kids have found ways to cover for each other and come up with a victory," McIntyre said. "I couldn't be more happy and prouder of the kids."

Stevenson, 16-6, will play Woodhaven, 21-0, at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the regional tournament at Willow Run High School. The final is slated for 7 p.m. Thursday.

FOR SALEM, the Western Lakes Activities Association champion which ends with a 20-3 record, the defeat was a crushing experience, especially since it appeared the Rocks had the game under control, leading 50-30 in third quarter.

"I think we had a great season, and no matter when you lose, it's tough to take," Salem coach Bob Brodie said. "It just hurts when it happens."

"It's tough to have a game in hand and let it slip away. I guess it's like Yogi (Berra) says, it isn't over until it's over."

Stevenson's amazing comeback was sparked by

basketball

Chris Nazelli, who scored 18 of his game-high 24 points in the second half.

Ron Baran scored 12 points, Scott Kosikowski 11 and Eric Schwedt, who scored the game-winning basket with 47 seconds remaining, 10. Baran (3), Kosikowski (2) and Laven (2) combined for seven 3-point field goals, also.

"The thing I'm most happy about is that we knew what we had to do at the right time," Nazelli said amidst the euphoria in the Stevenson locker room. "If we needed the ball at a certain place, we got it there. It was a great team victory."

SALEM GOT 22 points from sophomore center Jake Baker, who was the key to the Rocks extending their 41-30 halftime lead in the third period. Jeff Elliott and Jeff Gold scored 12 points apiece and Craig Marshall eight.

Elliott, who had a chance to win the game with :02 on the clock, was at the center of the controversy.

While he was at the free-throw line to shoot a two-shot foul, Stevenson sent Mike Vrooman into the game. The horn sounded at the same time the official was giving Elliott the ball.

In a matter of seconds, Elliott, thinking play was stopped, tossed the ball back to the on-court official, who ignored the horn and, in so doing,

ruled the ball was in play. The same thing happened earlier, with Stevenson leading 69-66 and 1:41 to play, when Baran was shooting a 1-and-1.

As a result, Elliott lost the opportunity for the first free throw. He missed the second one that would have forced overtime, and Steve Szeman rebounded for the Spartans.

The officials, Bill Rubin and Dave Dean, refused to answer questions about the call after the game. Bob Blohm, athletic manager at Canton, spoke to the officials and relayed their comments.

"Their explanation is once the ball has been administered, the shooter should shoot," Blohm said. "Both times the player threw the ball to the official."

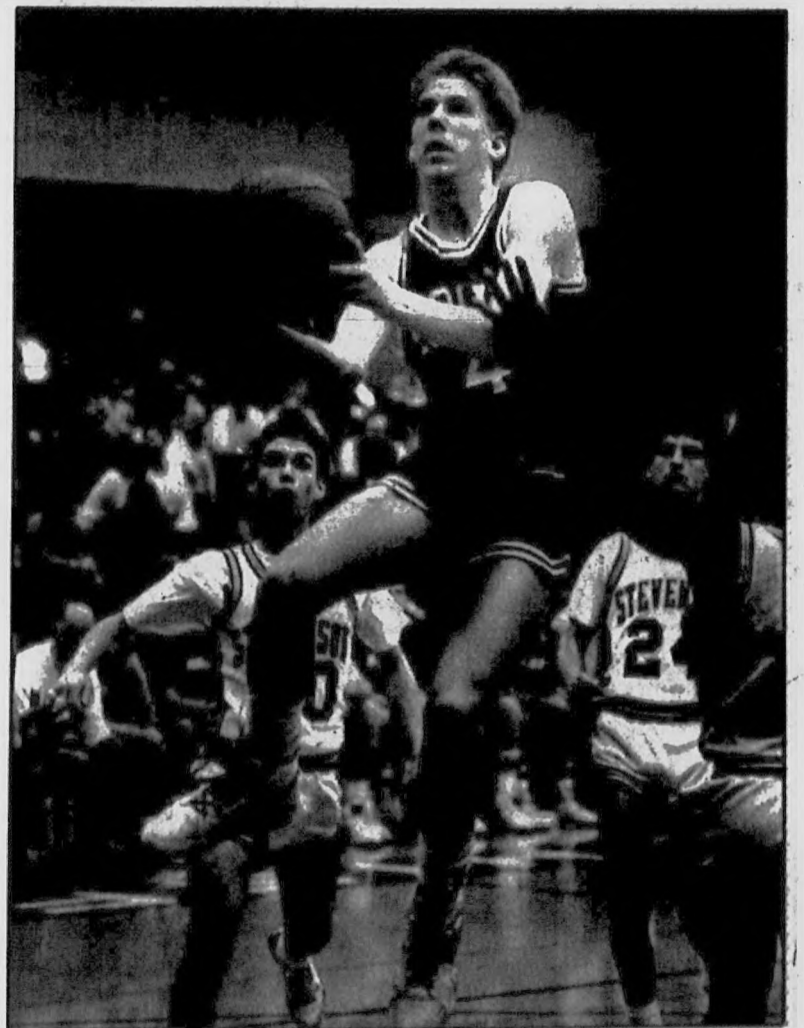
"THE OFFICIALS said if they were in the process of handing the ball, they would have taken it back. But they had administered the ball and stepped back."

Bob Richardson, the scorekeeper at Canton, said he was certain the officials were still in the process of giving the ball to the players when timekeeper Sandy Downs sounded the horn.

He said Rubin and Dean told him after the game they should not buzz a player into the game while the officials are beginning to administer the ball, which is contrary to routine practice, according to Richardson.

"That didn't lose the game," Brodie said. "We tried to caution the kids in the huddle. We told them we had to keep playing, but we stopped attacking the basket (in the final quarter)."

Please turn to Page 3



BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Jeff Elliott files past Eric Schwedt (left), Ron Baran and Bob Sonie to attempt a layup. Salem squandered a 20-point lead and lost 71-70 in the district final.

Winning tradition continues for North

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

A long-standing tradition was extended and another may have been started Thursday at the Western Lakes Activities Association gymnastics meet.

North Farmington continued its dominance in the sport by winning its 13th consecutive league championship, including the last five in the WLAA.

On an individual level, Westland John Glenn sophomore Wendy Minch won every event and captured the all-around title. With two years of high school competition still ahead, she has the potential to dominate the WLAA for some time.

North had all but wrapped up the championship by the time it completed the four events, making the eighth and final rotation of teams a mere formality.

Up to that point, it was a close meet between the Raiders, Glenn and Northville, and North needed a strong showing in its last event, the bars, to secure a safe lead.

THE RAIDERS, with their second-best score of the season at 137.45, finished ahead of Minch and the Rockets (134.55) and host Northville (132.95). Plymouth Canton was fourth with Plymouth Salem, Farmington, Farmington Hills Harrison and Walled Lake Western following in that order.

"We haven't had a lot of meets like this, but it makes it a lot more fun," North coach Jeff Dwyer said. "Any of three teams could have won it. Fortunately, we came out on top."

Because the competition was so keen and the meet close, North's latest championship was especially meaningful to Dwyer, who has now coached the Raiders to three straight titles.

gymnastics

"I was a nervous wreck," he said. "This is what competition is all about. Even though you feel pressure, it's a lot of fun, I think."

Going into the seventh team rotation and the last one for North, the Raiders had accumulated 103.55 points, Glenn 101.75 and the Mustangs 100.50.

North scored 33.90 on the uneven bars to strengthen its lead, but the Raiders needed some solid performances from Heather Kahn, Kim Heller and Kristin Szutarski after a slow start in that event.

KAHN AND HELLER had their season-best scores on bars with 9.25 and 8.95, re-

spectively, and Szutarski was around her average with an 8.60. Kahn was runner-up to Minch, Heller placed fourth and Szutarski was eighth.

"The first two (gymnasts) were below their average, and that put a lot of pressure on the last three," Dwyer said. "We needed those scores. When you can hit under that pressure, that's a credit to those three."

The strong finish on bars meant Glenn had to score 35.70 on the bars, its last event, to catch the Raiders. That would have meant getting the highest single-event score by any team.

"I think that would have been very tough," Glenn coach Pam Yockey said. "We had a bad floor set (of scores), and we had too many falls on beam. Had the girls stuck their beam routines, we would have been more solid going into the last event."

"In the first two events (33.60 on beam

and 33.40 on floor exercise), we were took shaky but still hit the average we've been scoring all year."

North had the best team scores on vault (35.55) and floor (34.60), was second to Northville (35.05) on bars and third behind Canton (33.90) and Glenn on beam. Rita Dunn, Jameelah Gater and Ellen Wesselman were important to North's team scoring, too.

"WHEN YOU have to count four scores, it doesn't matter if you have one or two superstars," Dwyer said. "It's the third and fourth scores that make or break it for the team. It was all four (in each event), and the girls deserve this meet."

Minch gave a spectacular performance, scoring 9.60 on vault, 9.15 on floor, 9.45 on bars and 9.55 on beam for an all-around total of 37.75. Heller and Kahn tied for second at 35.80.

Please turn to Page 2