Serena Williams cruises in opener

NEW YORK (AP) — Showing little sign of her injury-induced layoff, two-time U.S. Open champion Serena Williams advanced to the second round with ease, overwhelming Sandra Kleinova of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-3.

Jennifer Capriati, Roger Federer and Carlos Moya had shaky victories earlier on Day 1. At night, 1999 Open runner-up Todd Martin lost the final match of his career, announcing his retirement after being beaten by No. 31 Fabrice Santoro 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5.

■ Auto Racing

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — NASCAR driver Rusty Wallace will retire after the 2005 season, saying he is concerned about getting hurt and wants to leave at the top of his game. His decision was influenced by the death of rival Dale Earnhardt in a Daytona 500 crash in 2001.

The 48-year-old Wallace has won 55 races. He made his NASCAR debut in 1980 and has won almost every major race except the Daytona 500.

Wallace, who drives for Penske Racing South, intends to stay in racing as a team owner and mentor for younger drivers after he retires. Brothers Mike and Kenny and 17-year-old son Stephen are drivers.

■ Olympics

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The International Olympic Committee's decision to award Erin Mirabella a bronze medal gave the United States its biggest cycling medal haul since the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

Mirabella was named the medalist Sunday for the women's points race, a decision that gave USA Cycling four medals in Athens. American riders took three medals away from both Atlanta and Sydney.

Mirabella finished behind Colombia's Maria Luisa Calle Williams in Wednesday's race. Williams, though, tested positive for Heptaminol, a prohibited stimulant that she denied taking. The Colombian Olympic Committee also said she tested negative in its post-race exam.

Still, the IOC stripped the Colombian of her medal and diploma and ordered them immediately returned.

■ ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Brazilian sports officials blamed inadequate course security for a defrocked priest's bizarre attack on the Olympic marathon leader, and said they will appeal to world track authorities for a duplicate gold medal.

The criticism of Athens Olympic organizers, who have been praised for their overall security, came as former priest Cornelius Horan was given a one-year suspended sentence. Horan also was fined $3,600 and warned to stay out of trouble in Greece for the next three years.

Numbers could bode well for Edison's boys team

CROSS COUNTRY

MILAN — Coach Dean Stanfield has numbers on his side for Edison's boys' team.

The Chargers, who placed ninth in the state, third in the regional and first in the district meets last season, return seven of 23 on the roster.

The returners are seniors Jeff Meinert, Pete Hill, Cameron Ground and Travis Schaeffer, junior Tyler Johns and sophomores Bryant Strayer and Josh Dow.

Meinert placed 21st in the state meet.

Meinert and Hill were both first-team all-league selections.

"Our strengths are experience, summer running and numbers," said Stanfield, who enters his seventh season as coach. "We have a great deal of depth, which increases the competition for varsity positions."

In addition, Edison, 5-1 overall, 1-1 in the Sandusky Bay Conference, took first in the league meet.

"Perkins and Huron are teams to watch," Stanfield said. "We need to stay healthy."

The girls' team has five letter-winners, including senior Mandi Wurmser, junior Sarah Foster and sophomores Caitlin Smith, Jessica Pulaski and Carrie Shover.

Foster was a second-team all-SBC choice and regional qualifier. Edison claimed eighth in the regional.

The Lady Chargers finished fifth in the league and went 3-4 overall, 0-3 in the SBC.

"Keys are staying healthy," Stanfield said. "Our strengths are working together as a team."

Likewise, the coach said Perkins and Huron are teams to watch out for in the SBC.

Stanfield is assisted by Randy Foster.

■ Monroeville

MONROEVILLE — Monroeville has some holes to fill in on the boys' side, but the girls' team brings back experience.

Seniors Charlene Downing, Jenna Poths and Nikki Shorette and sophomores Lynsey Schaffer and Megan Schaffer headline the Lady Eagles. All are returners.

Downing captured first in the Firelands Conference league meet, while Lynsey Schaffer was a regional qualifier.

Monroeville finished sixth at both the Ontario Invitational and in the league meet.

On the boys' side, senior Jon Wilhelm and sophomore Jared Simon are returners.

The Eagles placed third in the FC meet.

"We graduated a lot of runners, so this is a rebuilding year for us," fifth-year coach Wayne Chasney said. "Our goal is to have fun and help each other reach our full potential."

■ New London

NEW LONDON — New London put up impressive numbers last season with top finishes in the Firelands Conference, along with district and regional appearances.

On the girls' side, the Ladycats finished as league champions. They took third in the district meet and placed seventh in the regional.

Key returners for Dan Olien's team include Gabrielle Wuensch, Danielle Wuensch, Megan Shepherd, Holly Perkins, Tiffany Trimble, Jennifer Bottomlee, Jennifer Suvar, Cari Wegner and Heather Chase.

"As a team, we are working very hard," said Olien, the seventh-year coach for both the girls and boys. "Hopefully we stay injury free and can enjoy some success in the postseason."

The Ladycats hope to repeat as league champions and qualify for the state meet as a team.

"I expect the Firelands Conference meet to be very competitive as always," Olien said. "Last year, our girls escaped with the win by a narrow margin of two points over Mapleton."

For the boys' squad, New London captured second both in the FC and district and 13th in the regional.

Zac Sendelbach, a state qualifier, heads the returner list.

Also in the group are Troy Coombs, Nathan Grys, David Dvorak, Kyle Cramer, Jared Cumberledge, Cory Landis, Nick Missler, Adam Essenmacher, Andrew Harner and Lucas Smith.

"The athletes are working hard," Olien said. "We expect good results. I see the Firelands Conference as being the most balanced team wise I've every see it from top to bottom."

JERRY HARRINGTON/REFLECTOR

Western Reserve letter-winners for the boys' team this season include (from left) — Nick Gordon, Nick Swan, Matt Maloney, Perry Tracht, David Movrin and Keiffer Williams.

JERRY HARRINGTON/REFLECTOR

Returning letter-winners for the Western Reserve girls' team consist of (from left) — Colleen Nitchman, Samantha Boyd, Keely Telquist and Jackie Davis.

■ Willard

WILLARD — Willard's boys' team has nine on the roster, including state qualifier Richard Featheringill.

Others on the roster include senior Kyle Wilson, juniors Travis Salyer, Craig Wolfe and Jordan Sickel, sophomores Ross Violette and Thomas Niedermeier and freshmen Wesley Popa and Jose Delacruz.

Meanwhile, the Lady Flashes check in with 12 participants.

Seniors include Alicia Niedermeier and Catherine Luna. Juniors consist of Rebecca Keefer.

Sophomores are Tracey Stockmaster, Amanda Sledge, Ashley Sexton, Megan Van Pelt and Mandy Reber.

And the freshman class is represented by Elizabeth Lenz, Brandy Linville, Victoria Predemore and Stephanie Reiderman.

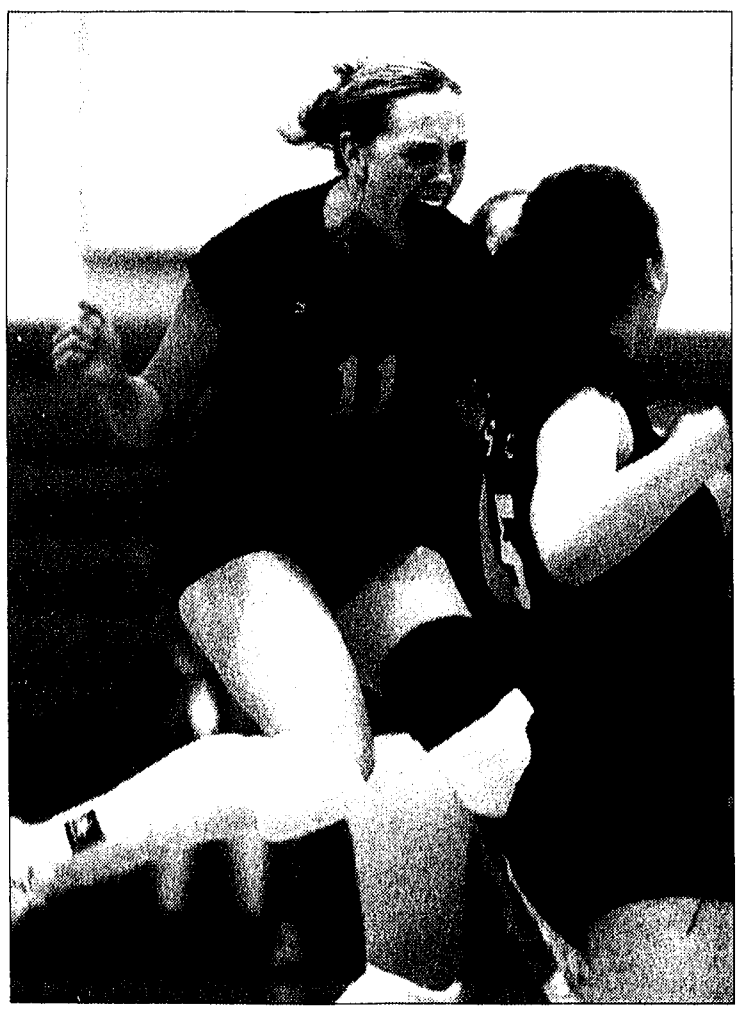
■ Plymouth

PLYMOUTH — Plymouth returns six boys' for the 2004 season, including juniors Evan Fackler and Skylar Branstool and sophomores Mike McKenzie, Justin Adams, Matt Ball and Bryant Foster.

On the girls' team, seniors Heather Stoodt and Brooke Waddles are both two-year letter-winners.

Juniors Kristin Keaton has one letter.

Juniors Megan Hursh and Megan Hedeen and sophomore Ashley Speicher are also on the roster.



REFLECTOR

St. Paul senior Katie Playko (11) reacts Monday night after the Lady Flyers score a point against Keystone at the Convocation Center.

St. Paul sweeps Keystone in opener

VOLLEYBALL

St. Paul opened the season with a 25-20, 25-12, 25-20 win over Keystone Monday in prep volleyball action at the Convocation Center.

Megan Centers paced the Lady Flyers (1-0) at the net, going 28-of-29 with 14 kills and three blocks.

Kate Schafer contributed 19-of-26 with 10 kills, Leah Schaffer gained 11-of-13 and seven kills and Bethany Davis went 9-of-10 and five kills.

Centers and Katie Playko recorded three blocks each.

In serving, Playko went 16-of-16 with four aces, Davis posted 13-of-13 and two aces, Schaffer added 12-of-13 and Centers chipped in at 10-of-12 and one ace.

As a setter, Playko went 66-of-68 with 20 assists.

In serve reception, Schafer was 17-of-19 with 15 digs, Schaffer chipped in with 12 digs and Samantha Tracht notched eight.

St. Paul made it a sweep on the night, winning the jayvee 25-11, 25-3 and the freshman 25-11, 25-17.

"We've got to be pleased as all the programs looked good," Lady Flyers coach Bill Cramer said. "I'm pleased with all the time and effort that the coaches put in.

"We looked sharp for the first outing."

Cramer said there wasn't much adjusting of the rule changes, namely the point-total increasing to 25 for each game and best of five; instead of three.

"Most of our players are in JO (Junior Olympics), so basically this is nothing new to them," he said. "They were excited."

St. Paul starts Firelands Conference today by hosting Plymouth.

Nick Strance helps Ashland to victory

BRIEFS

ASHLAND (AP) — Antwan Hart rushed for 101 yards and two touchdowns Saturday night to lead Ashland to a 48-7 win over St. Joseph's (Ind.) in Lee Owens' first game as the Eagles' head coach.

Owens, fired by Akron last November after nine years as coach, saw his team score the game's first seven touchdowns after the season-opening kickoff was delayed more than an hour by storms.

Hart had a 28-yard TD run in the second quarter to give the Eagles a 27-0 lead and a 2-yarder in the third that made it 41-0.

The Eagles also got touchdowns from their special teams and defense.

Devin Conwell scored on a 30-yard interception return and David Ziegelhoffer returned a punt 51 yards for a touchdown.

Ashland's Nick Strance, a Willard graduate, finished 14-of-17 for 85 yards and a touchdown. Jason Schwalm had 85 yards rushing and a touchdown on seven carries.

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Tuesdays: 9am (Early Mornings) Ladies' League; 7pm (Berlin Comm.) Men's League
Wednesdays: Noon (Noon Loafers) Ladies' League; 6:45 (Vacationland) Ladies' League; 7:30 (Huron Merchants) Men's League
Thursdays: 7pm Classic Trio League
Fridays: 6:45 Mixed (5 per team)
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