

Mt. Ararat, Falmouth capture singles tennis state titles

BY BOB CONN
BRUNSWICK TIMES RECORD

PORTLAND — Top seed Nick Mathieu of Mt. Ararat in Topsham and third-ranked Julia Brogan of Falmouth captured boys and girls singles tennis state titles in the high school championships held Monday at the Racquet and Fitness Center.

HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS

In the girls matches, St. Dominic's Academy No. 1 tennis player Bethany Hammond had been here before, facing a tough opponent in the singles

tennis state championships. This time around, Falmouth top player Brogan stood across the net, with both players trying to outthink and outwit the other.

It was Brogan who stood tall this time around, taking a close 6-2, 7-6 (3) victory in the semifinals, ending a solid run by Hammond.

"I was not connecting with the ball, and she is a really tough player," said Hammond of the opening set that saw Brogan reel off the final four games, including breaking Hammond twice.

But the Saint came out strong in the second set. Down 3-1, she broke Brogan's

serve and held to even the match. Tied 4-4, Hammond broke Brogan two more times in the set, leading 5-4 and 6-5, only to watch as Brogan did the same to force a tiebreaker. Brogan trailed 2-0 in the tiebreaker but reeled off seven of the final eight points to end the match.

"She changed her strategy in the second set and started going to my backhand more and ran around her forehand, which I wasn't expecting," said Brogan of Hammond. "She hit the ball a lot harder in the second set. She is a great player and a fighter. It is tough to come back from 6-2, but she did."

"I knew that I had to fight back. It is awesome competing with her," said Hammond, whose Saints begin the Class C South postseason with a quarterfinal matchup at home on Wednesday against North Yarmouth Academy. A likely opponent for Hammond is Panthers No. 1 Lena Rich.

"Now it is about fighting for the team, knowing that we have a great team," Hammond said.

"I am proud of myself. If there is anyone to lose to, it is Julia. She is such a good player and a good competitor," she said.

Brogan moved on to the

girls final against Wells' Rosemary Campanella, who led top-seeded Lana Mavor of Yarmouth 4-0 when Mavor was forced to retire because of an upper body injury.

Despite the added rest, Campanella struggled against the consistent Brogan, who rolled to a 6-1, 6-0 victory, keeping the girls state title at Falmouth after former Yachtsmen Olivia Leavitt captured the crown the past three seasons.

The boys final came down to top-seeded and two-time state finalist Mathieu and third-seeded Mariy Vykhotsev of Thornton Academy in Saco.

This was Mathieu's year, as the junior earned a hard-fought 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 victory to finally capture the title that former Eagle and Mathieu mentor Mike Hill owned from 2007-09.

Mathieu advanced to the title match by surviving a slow start against No. 4 Michael Mills of Cape Elizabeth for a 7-6 (5), 6-1 win.

Vykhotsev advanced when second-seeded Nick Forrester of Falmouth was forced to retire after injuring himself in the opening set. Vykhotsev led 5-4 when Forrester, who had taken a tumble two games earlier, was unable to continue.

Worried Gasol wants Zika details ahead of Rio games

REUTER

MADRID — Chicago Bulls and Spain basketball center Pau Gasol wants clarity on the Zika outbreak in Brazil before deciding whether to compete at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in August.

Gasol, who has represented his country at the last three Games, says there is not enough information about the outbreak of the virus that is linked to serious birth defects.

"I feel a responsibility to raise awareness and inform about something that we are not talking enough about and which is a big unknown," the 35-year-old told a news conference on Monday.

"The Olympics can be an opportunity for this virus to spread. I want the health of sportsmen, fans and their families that will travel to Rio to come first.

"It wouldn't surprise me if certain athletes decided not to take part in order

not to put at risk their health and that of their families."

Asked if he was among them, Gasol said: "I am evaluating it like any other athlete or person that is considering going to Rio.

"Some of my teammates are looking to start a family in the near future and they cannot risk the health of their future children or wives."

The World Health Organisation rejected a call on Saturday to move or postpone the Olympics over the outbreak after more than 100 leading scientists said new findings about Zika made it unethical for the Games to go ahead.

"It's a very serious situation and there is a lack of knowledge even among the experts," Gasol said. "The national Olympic committees and world health organisations need to give information that is 100 percent and with the biggest clarity possible."

Zika

Continued from Page B5

three weeks, Heymann said.

This is a precaution to prevent women from contracting the mosquito-borne virus, which can cause microcephaly and other serious abnormalities in babies. The connection first came to light last year in Brazil, which has confirmed more than 1,400 cases of microcephaly.

"This infection is a predicament for all people of child-bearing age who live in Brazil or who travel to Brazil. And that includes both men and women," Heymann said.

"Women could get infected and come back and become pregnant within three weeks or four weeks, or they could be pregnant

when they get there. And men could go there and come back with the infection and infect their sexual partner back home."

Heymann is a U.S. epidemiologist and former senior official at WHO who headed its response to the deadly SARS virus (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in 2003, when the agency imposed travel restrictions to try to curb that deadly outbreak.

Referring to Zika, he said: "Women of child-bearing age who are not pregnant should understand the risks before they go."

"It's not a recommendation not to go (to Brazil), it's a recommendation to balance between the risks of getting pregnant and the risks of getting Zika," he said. "But for those women who are already pregnant, there's a clear risk."

IndyCar

Continued from Page B5

"I'm going to carry [on] with a great sense of responsibility," declared Rossi, who remains on the Manor payroll as reserve driver.

"We need to really push this forward. It was an incredible event for the hundredth running of the Indy 500.

"We need to do everything in our power to continue the momentum forward, make it even bigger next year."

Despite a youthful vibe and party mantra, a glance around the stands on Sunday showed the Indy 500's fan base to be an aging one.

IndyCar and the IMS have actively engaged social media and are desperately trying to connect with a new generation of fans most of whom seem as interested in the Saturday concerts, which this year featured Journey, as Sunday's race.

It was Lady Gaga, not race winner Rossi, who had Twitter buzzing on Sunday when she showed up for a ride with 76-year-old motor racing legend Mario Andretti in a two-seater IndyCar during the formation laps.

IndyCar has worked hard

to repair the damage done by a bitter decade-long feud that split the sport into two warring series (Indy Racing League and Champ Car) until reunification in 2008.

That left deep scars and as the two series bickered, NASCAR swooped in to fill the void and scooped up unhappy motor racing fans, sponsors and television ratings.

Undoing that damage and winning back fans has been a slow, humbling process but there are signs IndyCar and its crown jewel, the 500, are starting to regain some of their sparkle.

"We've always thought as the 100th running here as an opportunity to continue to build the whole of the series," said Mark Miles, CEO of Hulman Company which owns and operates the Speedway.

"We still have work to do. We don't want to overshadow the other races on the series we want to help profile," he added.

"The 100th was not the end of anything, the 100th is the beginning of what's next and the continual extension of the importance of this event.

"It is not an overnight sensation and we are looking forward to the 101st and building on this strong platform."



LINDA COAN O'KRESIK | BDN

Bangor's Sarah Bragg is safe at third as Brewer third baseman Courtney Melvin reaches for the ball in the first inning of their game Monday at the Bangor High field.

Softball

Continued from Page B5

first inning at the expense of Brewer senior righty Ally Chapman.

Emily Gilmore drew a leadoff walk and stole second. Megan Conner was hit by a pitch, and Gilmore and Conner worked a double steal.

Emma Payne delivered Gilmore with a sacrifice fly to center, and Conner moved to third on the throw to the plate.

Bragg lofted a high pop fly

that dropped into left center to drive in Conner, and she scored when Jenna Bishop slapped a line-drive single into right center.

"I had been struggling with my slapping. I'm happy I got the hang of it today," said Bishop.

Chapman settled down nicely after the first inning, hurling three innings of two-hit shutout ball until the Rams added a pair of runs in the fifth.

They added another in the sixth off Davis.

In the fifth, Conner belted a one-out double into right center, went to third on

Payne's sacrifice and scored on a wild pitch.

Bragg then belted a high pitch over the fence in left field to extend the lead.

"I like high pitches," said Bragg with a grin. "I saw the ball well today."

In the sixth, Bangor reached Davis for a run on singles by Madison Drake, Kathryn Sund and Gilmore (RBI).

Brewer made things interesting in the seventh.

Libby Hewes lofted a lead-off single into left center and, after a wild pitch, Mikayla Henderson walked. After another wild pitch,

Davis poked an RBI single to center and M.J. Sellars drove in the second run with a fielder's choice.

Sydney Hewes followed with a single, but Bragg got a strikeout and foul-out to end the game.

Bragg was the game's only repeat hitter.

"We were bitter about losing to them because we didn't feel we played our best. But we turned it around today. Just about everyone had a hit. It was a group effort. And Sarah pitched a really good game," said senior second baseman-outfielder Gilmore.

NASCAR

Continued from Page B5

couldn't have been a worse time to stage one of NASCAR's most boring races ever — unless you were a Martin Truex Jr. fan. The driver for Furniture Row Racing led 588 of the 600 miles. Jimmie Johnson grabbed the lead for all of 100 feet once at the start/finish line to get the only pass of Truex under green that didn't involve pit stops.

For Truex, who missed winning the Daytona 500 by scant inches, the long wait to win a major race is over. After losing last year's Charlotte marathon to Carl Edwards in the closing stages on fuel mileage, Truex won for the first time this year absent any surprise at the finish.

"For a guy like me to win a race like this is a big deal," he said Sunday night.

It was also the first victory for Furniture Row Racing since switching from Chevrolet to Toyota and becoming an affiliated team with Joe Gibbs Racing. Including the near miss at Daytona, coming into Charlotte the Furniture Row team sustained its theme of close but no trophy. Truex had led 417 laps prior to the race before

adding 392 to that total.

Were there times when he thought about his past record of missing the checkers?

"There were a few moments towards the end of the race where I was thinking, 'Please, I don't want a caution,'" Truex said. "But you're not really saying, 'What the hell is going to happen this time?' You're trying to stay positive and stay focused and do the things you need to do. But the last couple of laps is a little bit more difficult when you're getting close and you just want to see that white flag. And you kind of have a finger or two crossed on the steering wheel there trying to get to the end."

Near the conclusion of his post-race interview, the driver apologized briefly for stinking up the show. But it was clear that Truex, crew chief Cole Pearn and team owner Barney Visser enjoyed putting on a butt-whipping and turning the other teams into also-rans. Chevy driver Kevin Harvick finished second after overtaking Johnson, but didn't even get close to the rear bumper of the Toyota.

The only threat to Truex were Ryan Newman and Ricky Stenhouse Jr. Each of them put up aggressive resistance to being lapped, the

only thing enabling Harvick and Johnson to draw closer.

The full-bearded Visser, a low-key mountain-man type, is clearly his own man in a garage full of clean shaven team owners. But following criticism for switching from Chevy after initially building his team around the Detroit brand, he was clearly glad to see that first victory for the Japanese company.

"It was the most excited I've ever seen him," Truex said. "I'm pretty sure he even hugged me."

"You know, it's been kind of a steady progress," Visser said of his team's development.

Visser has now won with three drivers, including Regan Smith and Kurt Busch, and recorded victories in two of NASCAR's classic events, including the Southern 500 at Darlington.

"We started pretty much with nothing and now we're able to gradually attract drivers that could get up front and win," Visser said. "Kurt was big for us. He showed that our equipment was pretty good. And Martin obviously stepped in, and I think he's proven to the whole world now who he is. He's led a lot of laps this year. It's just been steady progress for us."

Visser, a relatively tough taskmaster, insists on the

team's location in Denver near his business headquarters and far from NASCAR's Charlotte hub. After the Saturday night Sprint All-Star Race was delayed by rain, Pearn and his crew had only a day and a half to return to the shops and prepare for the Coca-Cola 600, where qualifying ran on Thursday.

The Furniture Row shops are located in a nondescript industrial park not far from downtown Denver just off of Interstate 70. Hundreds of thousands drive by daily without ever knowing the shop is there. The team once asked Visser about putting up a sign. He replied, "Would that make the car go any faster?"

By elevating Pearn to the role of crew chief last year from his job as an engineer and hiring Truex, Visser and his team general manager Joe Garone found the final two pieces of the puzzle to create a squad that is a race contender on a regular basis. Visser's deal with Toyota and Gibbs may be the missing pieces of the puzzle to a championship season after last year's fourth-place finish.

"We want to do better this year," Truex said. "Leading laps is great, but we need to keep winning some more and hopefully put ourselves in position to go for a title."

Red Sox

Continued from Page B5

son, who posted his fourth quality start in seven tries.

"They are the highest scoring team in the league," Wilson said of the Red Sox. "Overall I was proud of the way the guys came out and battled."

The Red Sox had plenty of hitting stars as Xander Bogaerts had two doubles and two RBIs and Blake Swihart had three hits before a Memorial Day crowd of 43,926 that saw homers hit by Jackie Bradley, Jr., David Ortiz and Marco Hernandez.

Bradley broke a tie with a solo homer to center in the sixth off starter Wilson (2-4) to give the Red Sox a 3-2 lead.

Ortiz hit a solo homer to lead off the eighth against

rookie lefty Ashur Tolliver as Boston built the margin to 4-2.

Hernandez hit his first career homer in the eighth, a three-run shot off Mychal Givens, as Boston upped the lead to 7-2.

"He really spread it open for us," Farrell said of Hernandez.

The Red Sox (31-20) are now two games ahead of the Orioles (28-21) in the American League East.

The Orioles scored two runs in the fifth to tie the game at 2-2. Ryan Flaherty had a run-scoring double for just his second RBI of the year, and Chris Davis had a sacrifice fly.

Bogaerts extended his hitting streak to 23 games with an RBI double in the third. That gave the Red Sox a 2-0 lead.

"He is really emerging as one of the best players in the

major leagues," Farrell said of Bogaerts. "An elite player."

The Red Sox stole a run in the first to take a 1-0 lead. Mookie Betts (two runs) led off with a single and went to second on a ground-out. Bogaerts then hit a ball in front of the plate and was thrown out by catcher Caleb Joseph at first, but Betts kept running around third and scored as Wilson was slow to cover the plate.

Showalter argued with home plate umpire Laz Diaz that Bogaerts hit the ball off his foot, but the play stood as Bogaerts was credited with an RBI.

"Maybe a fortunate break," Farrell said. "He (Betts) set the tone early. He never broke stride."

Baltimore left the bases loaded in the second. Joseph, with no RBIs this year

in 66 at-bats, grounded out with the sacks full to end the frame.

Wilson allowed eight hits and three runs in 6 2/3 innings before Tolliver took over in the seventh. Bogaerts was thrown out stealing, after a replay review, for the third out with Ortiz at the plate in the seventh. Betts also had two hits for the Red Sox, who entered the day with a major league-high 295 runs.

NOTES: Orioles RHP Kevin Gausman (0-2, 3.24 ERA) is slated to face Boston LHP Eduardo Rodriguez, scheduled to make his first start of the year, on Tuesday. Rodriguez came up through the Orioles' system before he was traded to the Red Sox in 2014. The Red Sox sent down RHP Heath Hembree after the game to make room for Rodriguez.