

IHSAA Gymnastics

State Finals Summary

HOMESTEAD DENIES VALPO THIRD CONSECUTIVE TITLE

Homestead edged out two-time defending champion Valparaiso by 15-hundredths of a point to win its fifth state gymnastics championship Saturday (March 20) at Perry Meridian High School in Indianapolis. The Spartans, coached by Jill Beauchamp, scored 111.15, matching their state-best regional score March 13 at the Wawasee Regional.

Junior Kristen Hines led the way for Homestead by winning the vault (9.90), placing third on the uneven bars (9.30), and finishing fifth in the floor exercise (9.60) on her way to a fifth-place all-around finish (37.40).

Other strong performers for the Spartans were Paula Meszaros, who took fourth on the balance beam (9.425) and Shellen Goltz, who had the ninth best all-around score (36.825).

Runner-up Valparaiso scored 111.00, Jeffersonville was third with 107.825 and North Central of Indianapolis finished fourth with a 103.575 total.

Valparaiso's Ellison Tipton claimed the all-around title with a score of 38.20. She was propelled by wins on the uneven bars (9.325) and balance beam (9.70). Tipton also placed fourth on the floor exercise (9.65) and fifth on the vault (9.525). The junior was fourth in all-around competition and first in the floor exercise at the 1998 state finals. Heather Blevins of Blue River Valley was the all-around runner-up after winning the floor exercise, placing second in the vault (9.70) and fifth on the uneven bars (9.25).

Erin Jennings from Richmond High School was named the 1999 recipient of the Mildred M. Ball Mental Attitude Award recipient for gymnastics. Jennings, competing for the all-around title, scored 8.80 on the vault, 8.90 on the uneven bars, 9.05 on the balance beam and 9.25 in the floor exercise. Last year, she placed fifth on the balance beam. Jennings has competed in the gymnastics state finals three of her four years, missing the 1998 finals because of injury. Academically, she ranks in the top 25 percent of her class and plans to study marketing, sales advertising at Ball State University next fall. Farm Bureau Insurance, corporate partner of the IHSAA, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to Richmond High School in the name of Jennings.

Final Team Scores

1. Homestead, 111.15.
2. Valparaiso, 111.00.

3. Jeffersonville, 107.825.

4. North Central (Indianapolis), 103.575.