

# 1999 GIRLS GYMNASTICS STATE FINALS

**March 20**

**Perry Meridian High School, Indianapolis**

Time: 12:30 p.m. -- Opening ceremonies; 1 p.m. -- Competition begins.

Site: Perry Meridian High School, 401 W. Meridian School Road, Indianapolis (four blocks west of 7700 South Meridian Street).

Tickets: \$6.

Credentials: The 1998-99 IHSAA State Finals media pass will be honored.

## **Valparaiso seeks third straight state championship**

Defending state champion Valparaiso will attempt to become the fourth team to win three straight state championships Saturday (March 20) in the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Indiana High School Athletic Association Gymnastics Finals at Perry Meridian High School in Indianapolis.

Schools to accomplish the three-peat feat were Perry Meridian (1978-80), Homestead (1982-84) and Connersville (1987-89). Second-ranked Valparaiso already owns a state-best five state crowns. This will be the seventh state finals appearance in the 1990s and ninth overall for the Vikings, who will be joined in the competition by Homestead, Jeffersonville and North Central (Indianapolis).

Valparaiso scored 110.20 in sweeping competition at the Wawasee Regional to defeat top-ranked Chesterton. Junior Ellison Tipton won four events, including the all-around with a score of 38.35. Tipton was first in the floor exercise and fourth in the all-around at last year's state finals. Aimee Melody won the vault at the Wawasee Regional for the Vikings. She placed third in the all-around, fifth in the balance beam, third in the floor exercise, and fourth in the vault in state competition a year ago.

Fourth-ranked Homestead posted a state-best regional score of 111.15 to win the regional crown at Marion. The Spartans' Kristen Himes won the all-around with a score of 37.40. Shellen Goltz took top honors in the uneven bars. Himes and Goltz finished fifth in the floor exercise and third in the uneven bars, respectively, at the 1998 state finals. Homestead last won a state championship in 1996. It won three in a row from 1983 to 1985.

North Central of Indianapolis earned its fifth state finals trip in six years by winning the North Central Regional title. The Panthers were led by junior Rachel Goldberg, who won the uneven bars and all-around. Goldberg took sixth at the state finals in the vault a year ago, and was the state champion on the balance beam in 1997. Senior Kara Charnoski was the best on the balance beam at the regional. Charnoski placed sixth in floor exercise competition in the 1998 state finals. The seventh-ranked Panthers seek a third state championship. Their titles came back-to-back in 1976 and 1977.

Jeffersonville, making its first state finals appearance in 15 years, rounds out the field. The eighth-ranked Red Devils scored 106.60 points in capturing their first regional title since 1984. Laura Quinn led Jeffersonville by winning the all-around and balance beam at the Columbus East Regional. Andrea Hatchitt captured the uneven bars title. Jeffersonville is looking for its first gymnastics state championship. Its best finish was in 1984 when it was runner-up.

Four of the six gymnasts that placed in the all-around at the 1998 return. They are: Aimee Melody and Ellison Tipton of Valparaiso, Shera Shaw of Huntington North (fifth last year), and Elizabeth Trahin of Fort Wayne Dwenger (sixth last year). Shaw was the balance beam state champ and fifth in the vault in 1998. Trahin was second in the floor exercise, fourth on the balance beam and fourth on the uneven bars in last year's state competition.

**Regional results with all team scores and the individual event winners at each site are available on the IHSAA website under Girls Gymnastics/1999 Regional Results.**

**Complete results from the state finals will be posted Saturday evening on the IHSAA website.**