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Andover, Barnstable land sectional titles

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High School

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Sectional Gymnastics

HUDSON — The Andover girls gymnastics team barely earned a berth last year in the state championships with a fourth-place finish at the sectional meet.

This year, the Golden Warriors were never in doubt, landing as the impressive top team in the North meet at Hudson High.

Guided by a stellar all-around performance by junior Courtney Carver, Andover took the sectional crown by nearly a two-point margin with a school-record score of 146.1.

Andover coach Tracy Vadala used a deep roster to dominate each event.

“The best part about this team is that they have a lot of depth,” said Vadala. “That is why we’re so strong. From top to bottom, if somebody falls, I know I have someone next in line ready to go.”

Carver and senior teammate Jessie Livingston were the anchors for Andover. Carver finished with the third highest all-around score, 37.375. She won floor exercise with a 9.5 after completing two whip fronts and a roundoff back handspring full. Livingston had a 36.775 all-around score, helped by a clean 9.475 routine on the balance beam.

It was uneven bars, however, that set the Golden Warriors firmly atop the North. They had four gymnasts place in the top 20, freshman Kaitlyn McDonald delivered perfect form on her giants and Carver hit a double-back dismount.

“I was the proudest of bars, because we can struggle on bars,” said Vadala. “To hit bars is huge for us. If we hit bars, we can get the numbers that we saw today.”

Newton South claimed second at 144.475 thanks to a career day by Camila Hernandez, who compiled an all-around total of 37.25. The junior had a 9.425 on floor exercise with clean and high tumbling that included two whip fronts and a roundoff, back handspring, 1 1/2 full.

“Camila had the meet of her life,” said Lions coach Greg Beaupre.

Also for state-qualifier Newton South, Kalena Wang had the morning’s best score on balance beam with a 9.6.

Westford Academy moved on to next week’s state meet by finishing third (141.675), as did fourth-place North Andover (141.475).

South

Defending state champion Barnstable took a familiar path another South girls gymnastics sectional title, following two strong rotations (uneven bars and vault) by experiencing a hiccup on the balance beam. Once again, the Red Raiders brought it all together with an impressive showing on floor exercise.

“After beam they actually got a little upset, and said, ‘We are going to have to pick up those points on floor,’” Barnstable coach Duncan Chase said. “And we did. They showed it off on floor.”

Barnstable scored a huge 37.625 to dance off with their second straight sectional crown on a score of 146.150.

Tali Twomey used a roundoff, back handspring, double-full to earn a 9.725 on floor to cement the Red Raiders in first and give her the day’s top all-around score, 37.150. On beam, Twomey was a bright light in an otherwise shaky rotation. She hit two back handsprings without any hesitation to score a 9.3.

Lauren Hanson also had a strong day for the Red Raiders, winning uneven bars with a 9.5, thanks to perfectly hit handstand pirouettes and giants on the upper bar.

Like Barnstable, Mansfield is headed back to the state championship meet despite struggles on vault. Mansfield still managed to score 141.900 and take second.

“We had a couple of errors here and there,” said Hornets senior Alexa Anastos, who finished fifth in the all-around with a 36.25. “When we were going into the awards in the end, we were really unsure if we were going to make it, so knowing we got second was the best feeling ever.”

Shrewsbury rallied after falling to seventh following its vault rotation, finishing third with a score of 141. Shrewsbury’s Allysa McNeil scored 36.875 to take in the all-around standings.

In a close fight for the fourth and final state championship berth, Wellesley scored 140.375 to edge Falmouth/Mashpee.

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