

# SPORTS

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FARMINGTON HILLS  
SPORTS  
SCENE

### Alumni runners wanted

If you have run in one of the 24 previous Observerland Track Invationals, Redford Union athletic director Jim Gibbons is interested in hearing from you.

The 25th Observerland Invitational for boys will be Saturday, May 6, at RU's Kraft Field, and Gibbons wants to commemorate the event with an alumni run/walk. The distance is still to be decided, but Gibbons on Friday talked about having an event of 1,600 meters.

Gibbons wants everyone to know well ahead of time to get in shape. He's working on getting an oxygen tank for the finish line. "It would be open to anyone who ever participated," Gibbons said. "This is one of the longest running traditions in the state, literally." Anyone worried about running on RU's cinder track, relax. It's been replaced by a modern all-weather surface. There also was an Observerland Invitational for girls before being disbanded several years ago, so women are also welcome. Kermit Ambrose, the legendary starting official, is expected to be on hand, according to Gibbons. If interested in participating, call Gibbons at (313) 592-3408.



Jim Gibbons

### LCBL losing 3 teams

The Livonia Collegiate Baseball League has added one team to its ranks, but commissioner Gary Gray still expects to have fewer members than last season.

The LCBL fielded seven teams last year, but is expected to have five in 1995, according to Gray. Decision Consultants Inc., a team coached by Madonna University coach Mike George, has joined old standby Walter's Appliances, Little Caesars, Hines Park Lincoln-Mercury and Wendy's of Ann Arbor.

Those five teams already have submitted the entry fee of \$600, but with the deadline to register Friday, Gray said he isn't optimistic about Westland Federation, Garden City Collegiate and Del-Wal remaining as members. Gray said he hasn't talked to any representatives from Del-Wal or Garden City Collegiate, but Westland's coach Joe Vondracek indicated lack of financial backing is a reason for his team's absence.

Gray wasn't expecting to hear from Garden City, which indicated last summer it wasn't coming back after having to forfeit victories and miss the playoffs because of an ineligible player.

"One of the big problems is money, unless you get a great sponsor, it is very difficult," Gray said. "The entry fee is incidental compared to how much it costs for uniforms, equipment, travel, insurance, field rental and even umpire fees." The ideal number of teams would be eight, Gray said. Having only five teams means one team will have a bye on each scheduled date of games, he said.

He's hoping to start the 28 or 30-game schedule on May 24. "It bumps me out quite a bit," said Gray, adding there is "no possibility" of a sixth team joining. "No one has inquired, or come forward. We had five a few years ago, but it's been up to six or seven after that."

### Crusaders rebound, 12-6

It took a game but the bats finally warmed up for the Madonna baseball team in the Colorado West Classic in Grand Junction, Colo.

After opening the tournament with a 7-3 loss to Howard Payne University of Texas on Thursday, the Crusaders unleashed a 13-hit attack in a 12-6 win over Abilene (Texas) Christian University Friday.

Madonna (12-10) was scheduled to play again late Friday night and on Saturday in the five-team round-robin format. The championship game was set for Sunday.

The Crusaders fell behind 5-0 after two innings against Abilene. But a triple by sophomore Shawn Ponzak and a double by freshman Jason Renkiewicz to lead off the third inning sparked a seven-run outburst. Singles by Scott Anderson, Kurt Wilczynski, Jim Solak and Craig Petersen followed.

Anderson finished the day with three hits, two runs and four stolen bases. Solak, Aaron Jones, Wilczynski and Ponzak (two triples) had two hits each.

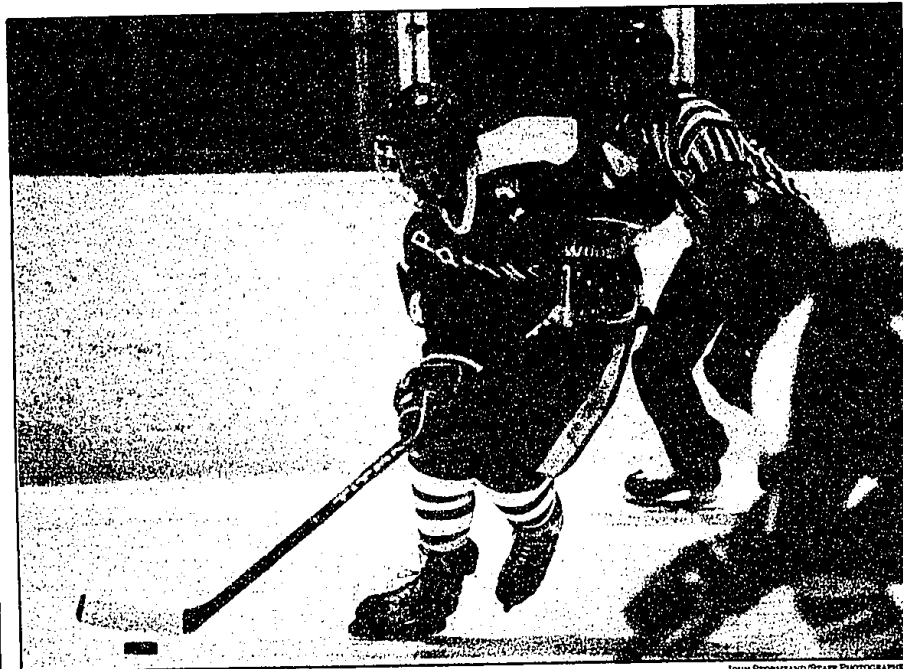
Sean Henkal was the beneficiary of the hit parade. The right-hander settled down after his rough start to record his third win in four decisions. Five of the six runs against him were earned. He allowed five hits and seven walks and fanned six.

Against Howard Payne on Thursday, Jones went 2-for-2 with a triple and an RBI while Solak got a run in with a ground out.

Jason Dubey (2-1) took the loss for Madonna working 4 1/2 innings. He yielded seven hits and five runs, three earned. He walked only one. The Crusaders offense managed six hits.

(Farmington readers should send sports information to Dan O'Meara at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. The fax number is (313) 591-7879, the phone number (313) 963-2141.)

### Mustang magic



JOHN STORMEZAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

State runners-up: Farmington Hills resident Jon LaCroix of the Birmingham Mustangs Midget AA hockey team skates up ice in a game against Woodhams during the recent state playoff tournament hosted by the Birmingham Hockey Association. Birmingham won its three round-robin games to qualify for the finals. The Mustangs defeated Redford in the semifinals, 5-2, then lost to Saginaw by that identical score in the championship game to finish as state runners-up.

## New faces dominate North varsity



BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

After losing six key players, the North Farmington softball team is going through a transition.

While the Raiders do have some veteran players returning, the overall picture is one of having to retool for the 1995 season.

"We're not going to get blown out of games; we're going to be young but competitive," coach Dave Brubaker said.

"We have a bunch of girls who are hungry and very dedicated. Usually, our practices last an hour and a half, but we've been going two hours because the girls want to practice."

It appears the North Farmington softball team is starting over this year, but coach Dave Brubaker has plenty of confidence in his many young players and likes their potential.

North lost 10 seniors to graduation, including pitcher Melanie Cheney, catcher Kate Mackie, left fielder Amy Kelman and infielders Allison Stein, Becky Thrusman and Jennifer Cassidy.

The Raiders return senior co-captains Renee Delak and Lynnette Zelasko, senior Meagan Stephan and juniors Renee Ouellette and Amy Finkel from a team that was 11-16.

Delak will start again at first base and Zelasko in right field. Ouellette has been the regular center fielder since she was a freshman.

But the Raiders will be largely a young team with a number of fresh-

men and sophomores in the starting lineup.

"Overall, the team has good speed, and the athleticism is pretty good," Brubaker said. "The only thing we're lacking is the experience."

That's the case in the pitching department where sophomore Kathie Collins and freshman Michelle Spitz will share the workload. The one not pitching will play left field.

"Because they haven't pitched in a varsity game doesn't mean they can't pitch," Brubaker said, adding the two right-handers have pitched two years in the summer league. "This is the first time I've had two girls put this much time and dedication into it."

Delak batted .246, scored 12 runs and had 20 RBI. She also had four doubles and one home run. Her fielding percentage was .969.

"She's going to anchor the infield,"

Brubaker said. "We're looking to her for leadership; she's a natural-born leader."

The infield includes freshman Lynn Livermots at second base and sophomore Michelle Sklar at shortstop. Stephan will split time with sophomore Kelly Brannack at third base.

Finkel also plays second but will probably be used most as a designated hitter and runner.

Sklar has big shoes to fill, replacing all-area shortstop and four-year starter Allison Stein.

"Her skills are to the point she's going to get nothing but better," Brubaker said. "I don't see her as a big hitter yet, but Allison didn't hit that well her first year, either."

The catcher is freshman Katie De-

See RAIDERS, 3C

## Harrison's Herrington receives double honors

The honors keep coming for John Herrington, the only football coach in the 26-year history of Farmington Hills Harrison High School.

Herrington, who also coaches the varsity baseball team, is one of seven finalists for the national coach of the year award in football.

The winner will be announced at the National High School Athletic Coaches Association awards banquet Friday, June 30, in Tucson, Ariz. Herrington also will be honored as Midwest Coach of the Year at that time.

Marysville's Walt Braun is the only Michigan football coach to win the national award. Herrington's teams have won seven state championships, including the last two Class A titles, and compiled a 216-50-1 overall record. His teams are 37-6 in post-season games.

He also will soon have the rare distinction of being a member of two Michigan halls of fame.

Herrington is slated to be inducted into the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame on Sunday, June 25.

"I'm fortunate to coach all these

years, with all of the indoor practices, and not get killed by a baseball," Herrington said. "I think that's how I got in."

The banquet begins at 7 p.m. at Zucora's Holiday House in Mount Clemens and precedes the annual all-star game Monday, June 26, at Tiger Stadium.

Herrington has coached baseball for 33 years — the past 23 with the Harrison varsity during which time the Hawks were 259-233.

He guided the Hawks to two league championships and two Class B state semifinal berths in 1981 and '85.

Herrington became a member of the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1986. He was named the 1986 Coach of the Decade in football by the Detroit Free Press.

"I've been fortunate, being able to coach both sports and do it for a long time," Herrington said. "So many coaches seem to burn out and leave early, but I've enjoyed it."

Herrington also received the Meadowbrook Country Club's Sportsman of the Year Award March 10.



ANDY HEALY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Coaching accolades: John Herrington will be busy in June, accepting special awards from his peers.