

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Hornets win again

Both Leeb and Kristin Schrock pitched a pair of shutouts Thursday to lead the Farmington Hills Hornets-Leo's Coney Island softball team to a doubleheader sweep.

The Hornets defeated host Livonia Ladywood, 14-0 in the first game and 6-0 in the nightcap, to improve their record to 11-1 in the Girls Incredible Fastpitch Softball League.

Leeb tossed a two-hitter in the opener, which ended in a five-inning mercy. She struck out six and walked three.

The Hornets had 15 hits, including three by Jacqui Smylie, who drove in two runs and scored two.

Schrock, Leeb, Erin Held and Ellen Doughty contributed two hits apiece. Held had two RBI and scored a run; Leeb had one RBI and scored two runs, and Schrock and Doughty, who had a double, had one each.

Abbey Cleland, who reached base with a hit, a fielder's choice and an error, scored three runs. Mo McNeil and Liz Ghannam had one hit and scored one run each.

Schrock pitched a no-hitter in the second game, striking out 11 and walking five. The game was stopped after six innings because of a time limit.

Smylie hit a two-run double, Schrock had two hits and scored a run, Cleland knocked in a run and scored two. Doughty walked three times and scored twice and Ghannam had a single and scored a run.

FSC registration open

The Farmington Soccer Club has room for additional players for its fall soccer season.

Registration forms are available at both Farmington libraries and the Costick Activities Center.

For more information call Fred Nassar at (248) 426-7146.

FHS runners in training

The Farmington High School boys cross country team meets at 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday to train at Drake Park.

Farmington High School boys interested in running cross country and participating in summer workouts should call Chip Bridges at (248) 474-1516.

Hockey team started

Mike Lautenbach is organizing an independent hockey team that will be composed of players from Farmington Public Schools.

The team will play in the newly-formed Junior Varsity Division of the Little Caesars League. Players must attend a Farmington high school and must be in the ninth through 11th grades.

Interested parties should contact Lautenbach at (248) 489-6599 or (248) 619-8766.

Prep coaches wanted

Redford Catholic Central is looking for a freshman soccer coach. For more information, contact head soccer coach Dana Orucchi at (248) 374-3298 or e-mail him at dorucce@centralnet.net.

Farmington Hills Mercy is looking for coaches to fill two tennis team positions. For more information, please call the athletic office at 248-476-2836.

Sportsmanship awarded

Several area schools received the Michigan High School Athletic Association's 'Good Sports Are Winners' Award at the district level for the spring season.

In baseball, Catholic Central, Farmington, Livonia Stevenson and Redford St. Agatha earned the honor.

Plymouth Canton was honored in girls soccer, Livonia Churchill and Livonia Ladywood in girls softball.

Ballplayer recovering from injury

Nick Hippler of Farmington was injured July 10 when he was struck in the head by a batted baseball during a game in Europe. He had surgery and is recovering but remains in a Dutch hospital. Hippler is a June graduate of Farmington High and is a former varsity catcher.

BY DAN O'MEARA
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Farmington's Nick Hippler is on the road to recovery after suffering a head injury during a baseball game earlier this month.

But the 18-year-old still has a ways to go, and he's a long ways from home, too.

Hippler remains in a Dutch hospital following the July 10 incident that occurred while he was touring western Europe with an American team.

Hippler, who was the starting catcher on the Farmington High School varsity for three years and graduated in June, was on the mound for the Baseball All-Stars in an apparent attempt to conserve other pitching arms.

A line drive off the bat of a European ballplayer struck Hippler above the

right ear as he completed his follow-through.

He remained in intensive care for several days and has undergone two medical procedures; he'll require a third before he's able to return to the United States.

Hippler was transferred to a hospital in Zwolle in the northern Netherlands. His mother, Jan, flew to Europe and has been at his bedside throughout the ordeal.

The presence of a family member has been a source of comfort to Nick, according to his father, Mark Hippler, who added his wife is also a nurse.

"He's had some difficult nights," Mark said. "He's expressed how scared he is. He's been very emotional about this."

Nick is the second of four children in the Hippler family, which struggled to

deal with the news of his injury and the gravity of the situation.

"It's hard to conceive of losing a child, but that was a real possibility," Mark said. "We did a lot of crying."

"(Nick) had called and left a message Monday (July 9). We kept it, because we wanted to hear his voice every day."

"Then, he called after the operation, and the difference was like night and day. It was devastating."

"It was great to hear his voice and know he was recovering, but the contrast was too great to take. That's when it hit me."

Hippler's condition has improved dramatically since he was hospitalized, however.

He's able to talk, eat and move his limbs, and the chances for a complete recovery look good.

"He's sharp," Mark said. "He's real weak and his speech is a little off. But, all in all, the reports have been positive other than the initial shock."

"He actually complains about the food. It's hospital food, and it's strange food, too. They got him some chicken and a hamburger today, and he was

pretty happy about that."

Nick has even called home himself to talk to his father and has received phone calls from his teammates in Farmington.

"I was driving down the road; the cell phone went off, and it was him — to my great surprise," Mark said. "He did it all himself. That's an indication how sharp he is."

In the first medical procedure, doctors inserted a pressure-sensitive device into Hippler's head to determine the extent of swelling.



Nick Hippler

Please see HIPPLER, B3

New meaning to the term dust-up



It's all in a day's work: Kyle Burcar will need more than a Dust Buster to get his uniform clean. Burcar was covered in dusty dirt and white chalk after sliding into home plate last week during an American Legion baseball game. The former Farmington High first baseman scored his team's lone run in Post 346's 6-1 loss to Berkley on Tuesday at Farmington High School.

Legion squad opts for Ruth state tourney

With Berkley having wrapped up the American Legion baseball league title, Farmington Post 346 and other teams decided to forego some of their final games and play in the state Babe Ruth tournament.

"I have nine boys who want to play ball," Post 346 manager Wally Christensen said, adding he hoped others would return from tournaments with other teams in time to play for Farmington. "If we hang on (Friday) and win, we'll be in there."

Three players on the Post 346 roster were in Florida with the Michigan Panthers and two others were in a tournament in Saginaw.

Farmington was the second-place team in the American Legion circuit, so it received the No. 2 seed in the Ruth tournament.

Post 346 is joined by fellow Legion teams Wixom and Chief Pontiac. Niles and Lincoln Park round out the Babe Ruth field.

The winner goes to the Midwest Regional in Wisconsin, but Post 346 will be without Christensen if it wins the state tournament.

Christensen leaves Monday on a 39-day vacation to Alaska. He plans to drive his motor home the whole way, traveling down the West Coast and across the United States on his way back.

If Post 346 wins the state title, the team will be under the direction of assistant coaches Lee Luttman, Ken Chesney and Robert Houchins.

Farmington and Chief Pontiac opted not to play their final Legion games against each other Wednesday and Friday, and Shelby forfeited to Farmington on Thursday.

Post 346 did plan to play host to Anchor Bay in a Legion doubleheader today, beginning at noon at Farmington High School, as originally scheduled.

13-year-old Cobras have major accomplishments

BASEBALL

The 13-year-old NFWB Cobras completed their tournament and league seasons with an impressive record of 56-9-2 while playing many games against 14-year-old competition.

In Little Caesars 14-and-under league play, the only all-13 team in the 17-team division ended up tied for first place with a 15-4 record.

The Cobras shared league honors with the 14-year-old Cobras, who ended the season with 13 straight league victories, and the Royal Oak Rangers.

Brad Lovick, Antonio Evangelista, Danny Richard and Alan Oaks batted

over .400 in league play for the 13-year-old Cobras.

Brandon Borsen (five wins, 1.46 ERA) and Cary Philiagan (three wins, 1.26 ERA) led the team in pitching.

Vinnie Sarafa led the team in RBI, and Mike Wiseman caught most of the games and threw out over 90 percent of the runners who tried to steal.

Kevin Sack, Chad Paul, Ray Swwak and Justin Goltz also contributed during the year with excellent defense.

The Cobras finished first in six tournaments, including a Triple Crown World Series qualifier in Cincinnati and USSSA World Series qualifiers in Kalamazoo and Sterling Heights.

During the season, the Cobras batted .347 and had an overall ERA of 2.61. They also outscored their opponents, 622-249.

The Cobras make their final tournament appearance of the season in the CABA Ultimate World Series July 27-Aug. 5 in Broken Arrow, Okla.

The Cobras are managed by Alan Borsen and coached by Hathem K. Sarafa and Tom Wiseman. Tryouts for

the 2002 season will be Sept. 8-9. Times and location will be announced later.

10-year-olds win district

The 10-year-old NFWB Cobras travel baseball team went undefeated and won the American Amateur Baseball Congress district tournament July 14-15 in Dexter.

In the first game, Cory Manogian went the distance as the Cobras beat Battle Creek Knight Construction, 12-4.

Please see COBRAS, B3

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