

Setting pleases Youth Fitness officials

By TOM BAER

If nothing else, the 1977 Detroit Metropolitan Youth Fitness Meet probably turned on a lot of Oakland County residents to the beauty of Willow Metropark, a Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority facility located near Flat Rock.

The 20th-annual Youth Fitness Meet, which attracted more than 2,500 young athletes from 53 Detroit-area communities, was held last Thursday at the little-known Downriver park. Afterward, Oakland County people were raving about the site.

"That was a beautiful place, and I don't think anybody up here knows about it," said Ed Krass, of the Southfield Parks and Recreation Department, which sponsored Southfield's 46-member team in the meet's athletic competition. "It was a nice location — very clean and very quiet."

Evans Bageris, whose 37-member contingent represented the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, echoed Krass' sentiment about the park.

"The facilities are fantastic at Willow Metropark," Bageris said. "It's just a super place. No one knows about it but, with more than 2,000 kids there for this meet, you can be sure that it'll be better used in the future."

Whatever the location, the Metropolitan Youth Fitness Meet is always a highlight of the summer for youngsters ages 10 through 15. Each of the 53 cities entered held its own com-

petition earlier in the summer, and the winners advanced to the Metro Meet.

SOUTHFIELD COMPLETED its 12th year in the program. Farmington, which is newer to the concept, finished its third year.

Boys and girls competed in the 50-yard dash, running hop, step and jump, softball throw, running long jump, standing broad jump and shuttle relay. There was a chinning competition for boys only.

There were three competitive classifications — Class A, ages 14-15; Class B, 12-13; and Class C, 10-11.

The top three finishers in each event received trophies, and all participants were given emblems for com-

peting in the meet.

Debbie Beeler recorded Southfield's only first place by finishing the girls' Class A 50-yard dash in :06.5. Teammate Dina Noorly, who has scored in the Metro Meet for three-straight summers, took a second place in the girls' Class A long jump with a 7-1 1/4 effort.

Farmington's best effort came from Rick Cartis, who finished third in the running long jump.

Good sportsmanship is an important part of the Metro Meet. The teams were vying for the John J. Considine Award, emblematic of good sportsmanship, conduct and appearance during the track and field events. A team representing the city of Inkster won the Considine Award this year.

"Our kids were beautiful," said Krass, whose teams won the sportsmanship trophy in 1970 and 1973, and finished second in 1976. "They enjoyed being there, although they were a little disappointed that they didn't win the sportsmanship award. They thought they deserved it, and so did I."

TO MOST PEOPLE involved, good sportsmanship and conduct are more important than the athletic honors.

"Hopefully, we do a little better in the athletic competition in the future," said Farmington Hills' Bageris.

But that's not the important thing. What's important is that the kids compete with all these other kids. I saw a great deal of comradery among all the kids from the different cities."

After the competition, Willow Metropark was thrown open to the youngsters for swimming, picnicking or doing whatever the park offered.

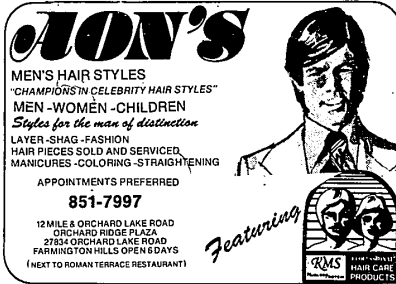
"We told our kids to bring their swimming suits," Bageris said. "They have a beautiful pool there, and the kids used it after they were finished with the competition."

Earvin Johnson, a high school basketball star from Lansing, lighted the torch to signal the opening of the meet, and also led the participants in the pre-meet calisthenics.

Next year's Metro Meet will be held at an Oakland County site. The Pontiac Silverdome and Oakland University have been mentioned as possibilities.

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Legion '9' falls

By TOM BAER

Farmington's drive for the baseball championship of the American Legion's 18th District received a slight setback last Wednesday when it dropped a 4-1 decision to Milford.

The loss left Farmington in second place with a 16-14 Legion record, just 1 1/2 game behind league-leading Birmingham-Troy, which blanked Southfield, 9-0, in another 18th-District contest last Wednesday.

Winning pitcher Kerk Philpott turned out to be tough on Farmington hitters. Philpott, a right-hander, allowed just two hits, striking out three and walking none. He had a no-hitter going for six innings until Dick Radatz singled and eventually scored Farmington's lone run.

Farmington coach Richard Roy, who handled the team in the absence of manager Wally Christensen, credited the loss to a "mental letdown."

"We had defeated Milford by two pretty good scores on the previous Sunday, and I think we were taking them kind of lightly for this game," said Roy, who coaches baseball at Farmington High School during the spring season. "We just weren't mentally ready for this game."

"We weren't hitting the ball for one thing, and we're a pretty good hitting team. For example, Milford's pitcher

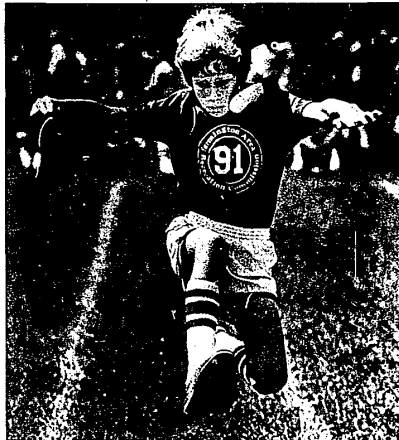
(Philpott) was pretty sharp, but he only struck out three. That means that we were hitting the ball, but they were mostly little popups and ground outs."

MILFORD TOUCHED losing pitcher Gregg Mathiak for a run in the first inning. McDonnell led off with a walk, stole second and scored on Philpott's single. The winners added three more runs in the fourth inning. Philpott doubled, and Kluttenbach reached base on an error. Both runners scored Moore clouted a 325-foot home run, which cleared the left field fence at Milford High School.

Farmington avoided the shutout — and possibly being no-hit — by scoring the run in the sixth. With one out, Radatz singled, stole second and came home on Andy Salinas' base hit. Salinas made it to second base on an outfielder's error, but Mark Purcell struck out to end the game.

In other 18th-District action last week, Birmingham-Troy used a two-hitter by pitcher Terry Schultz and a two-RBI performance by Terry Buchanan and Mike Muha to blank Southfield.

Farmington plays next on Tuesday (Aug. 2) at home against Waterford Chief Pontiac. The game begins at 6 p.m. at Drake Park, Drake Road south of Grand River.



Bill Timility competes for Farmington at the Metropolitan Youth Fitness Meet. (Staff photo by Gary Friedman)

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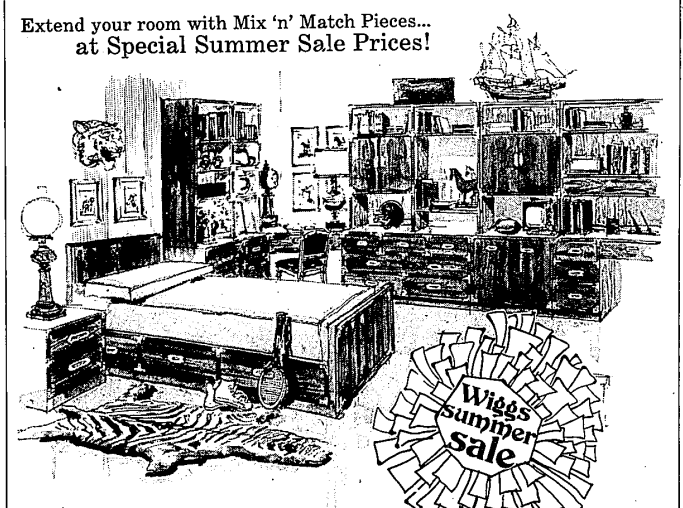


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