

Mercy softballers boast 'winning experience'

By TOM BAER

Farmington Our Lady of Mercy's softball team has a tough act to follow.

Last year, Mercy coach Linda Barber produced one of the area's stronger softball clubs. The Marlins compiled a 16-3 overall record, finished second behind Redford Bishop Borgess in the Catholic League, and won a Class A district tournament before finally losing to Borgess in the regional.

But Mercy has eight girls back from that team, so Barber could have the makings of another winner this spring. "I'd say we look pretty good," said

Barber, whose team opens its season on Monday (April 17) at Harper Woods Regina. "Our starters have lots of experience, and it's been mostly winning experience."

Mercy's returning seniors include infielder Suzanne Brown, catcher Janet Cizneros, and outfielders Diane Dietz, Debbie Vargovick and Lynn Loesche. Junior infielders Vicki Vermeesch and Diane Jones have experience from last season, as does sophomore pitcher Margie Kueber. Gretchen Larges, another junior, was the reserve team's top pitcher last season.

"Our pitcher will be good, although

probably not outstanding," Barber said. "I think our defense should be our strong point. We have four solid infielders, and our outfielders have been looking good, too."

Mercy lacks a softball field at the school. The Marlins play their home games at Farmington City Park No. 1, Power and Shilawasee.

FARMINGTON HARRISON's softball team didn't have much to cheer about last season. Coach Sandra Rivers' Hawks finished last in the Western Six League with a 2-6 record to go with a 3-15 overall mark.

But Rivers, a physical education teacher at Farmington's Warner Junior High, is optimistic about Harrison's chances this season.

"It looks pretty good this year," she said. "Hopefully, there'll be a turnabout. Defensively, we're looking great. We could have the best infield in the area... certainly the best the school's ever had."

Three key seniors are third baseman

Nancy Bowden, who batted over .500 last year; first baseman Laura Arnoldy and catcher Judy Keck. Junior Helen Laskaris and sophomore Linda Bache have been looking good in the outfield.

Rivers' top three pitchers are seniors Vivian Jorensen and Barb Erickson and junior Lori Webb. "We may have a problem with pitching," Rivers said. "We have more speed than last year. I just hope they can develop some control to go with it."

Harrison plays on Wednesday (April 19) at Plymouth Canton.

AT FARMINGTON HIGH, coach Vestus Spindler hopes he can cash in on last season's youngsters. Farmington satirized six sophomores last season, and the team went 4-10-1 overall and 2-10 in the Inter Lakes League.

Outfielders Wendy Dierkes and Michelle Goyette batted .360 and .350, respectively. Pitcher-outfielder Liz Merrell and first baseman Key Deeg also have plenty of experience. "We should have a fairly representa-

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tive team as opposed to last year when everybody was learning the game," said Spindler, who teaches English and drama at Farmington.

"From our practices, I'd say that our outfield and infield will be strong. We still have a question mark with the pitching. Several girls are vying for the spots."

Farmington has a game at Walled Lake Western on Tuesday.

North Farmington coach Dave Finney doesn't like to talk about last year's softball record, but that's understandable. The Raiders, playing

in their inaugural season, failed to win a game in 15 outings.

"We had the type of record that nobody likes to have," said Finney, a history teacher at North. "We can only look up."

Carol Flessa, a senior outfielder, should be a North starter. Ann Radewig, a junior pitcher-outfielder, and sophomore infielders Doreen Gundie and Cathy Kirkendall have been looking good, according to the coach.

"I have a few weak spots," Finney said. "I still haven't decided on a catcher, and that's a pretty important position."



Michelle Thorstad pitches during a practice at Farmington High. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Softball schedules

NORTH FARMINGTON

SOFTBALL SCHEDULE — April 17—Garden City East, 3:45 p.m.; April 18—at Redford Thurston, 4 p.m.; April 19—Livonia Franklin, 3:45 p.m.; April 20—at Westland John Glenn, 4 p.m.; May 1—at Garden City East, 3:45 p.m.; May 2—at Redford Thurston, 3:45 p.m.; May 3—Farmington Harrison, 3:45 p.m.; May 4—Livonia Franklin, 3:45 p.m.; May 5—at Westland John Glenn, 3:45 p.m.; May 6—Garden City East, 3:45 p.m.; May 7—at Redford Thurston, 4 p.m.; May 8—Livonia Franklin, 3:45 p.m.; May 9—at Westland John Glenn, 4 p.m.; May 10—at Livonia Churchill, 4 p.m.; June 3—District.

OUR LADY OF MERCY

SOFTBALL SCHEDULE — April 17—at Harper Woods Regina, 4 p.m.; April 18—at Birmingham Marian, 4 p.m.; April 19—at Detroit Dominican, 4 p.m.; April 20—at Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher, 4 p.m.; May 1—at Redford Bishop Borgess, 4 p.m.; May 2—Harper Woods Regina, 4 p.m.; May 3—at Birmingham Marian, 4 p.m.; May 4—at Detroit Dominican, 4 p.m.; May 5—Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher, 4 p.m.; May 6—at Redford Bishop Borgess, 4:30 p.m.; May 7, 21, 25, 29—Catholic League Playoffs; June 3—District.

FARMINGTON HIGH

SOFTBALL SCHEDULE — April 17—at Walled Lake Western, 4 p.m.; April 18—at Farmington Harrison, 4 p.m.; April 19—at Pontiac Northern, 4 p.m.; May 1—at Waterford Township, 4 p.m.; May 2—Livonia Stevenson, 3:45 p.m.; May 3—at Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; May 4—at Milford Lakeside, 3:45 p.m.; May 5—Pontiac Northern, 4:45 p.m.; May 6—Waterford Township, 3:45 p.m.; May 7—at Livonia Stevenson, 4 p.m.; May 8—at Walled Lake Central, 3:45 p.m.; May 9—at Milford Lakeside, 4 p.m.; May 24—North Farmington, 3:45 p.m.; June 3—District.

SOFTBALL SCHEDULE — April 18—at Plymouth Canton, 4 p.m.; April 19—at Farmington High, 3:45 p.m.; April 20—at Waterford Mott, 4 p.m.; April 21—Livonia Churchill, 4 p.m.; May 1—at Walled Lake Western, 4 p.m.; May 2—Northville High, 3:45 p.m.; May 3—at North Farmington, 3:45 p.m.; May 4—Plymouth Canton, 3:45 p.m.; May 5—at Waterford Mott, 3:45 p.m.; May 6—Livonia Bentley, 3:45 p.m.; May 7—at Livonia Churchill, 4 p.m.; May 8—at Walled Lake Western, 3:45 p.m.; May 9—Southfield Lathrop, 3:45 p.m.; May 24—at Oak Park, 3:30 p.m.; June 3—District.



Farmington's Wendy Dierkes connects in front of catcher Sue Sever and coach Vestus Spindler.

Falcon trackmen win

Farmington High, with Harold Rumm, winning two events, scored 65 points to win a tri meet with Southfield High (58) and Northville (44) last week on the Falcons' track.

Ruttia, a senior, posted firsts in the two-mile run (10:03.4) and the mile run (4:43.2). Teammate Martin Schwartz won the 100-yard dash in :10.7. Farmington also won the high jump with Rick McKibben going 6 feet-2, and the pole vault with Jim Brancheau making 12 feet.

Southfield's Dave Walnroth won the shot put (54-8) and the discus (182-9). Ken Raby of Southfield took the 120-yard high hurdles in :15.5.

In another area boys' track meet last week, Waterford Mott bested North Farmington, 92-66, at Mott.

North won six of the 16 events. Jeff Cohen, a junior, was a double winner, taking the 100 dash in :10.4 and the 220 dash in :23.1. Other North winners: Rich Burrell (:42.3 in the 330 low hur-

dles), Art Doran (:15.7 in the 120 high hurdles), Mark Biehl (127-6 in the discus), and the mile relay (3:43.0) by Greg Rapp, Jeff Lasich, Jamie Bothwell and Karl Hamina.

Matt Barnard of Mott won two individual events, the 800 run (2:05.8) and the mile run (4:41.1).

Earlier last week, North Farmington defeated Walled Lake Western, 100%-57%. Biehl, throwing the discus for the first time ever, logged a toss of 141-8 — and smashed the school record by 20 feet. Cohen won the 100 (:10.1) and the 220 (:24.0).

FARMINGTON HARRISON opened its outdoor season last week with an 81-63 loss to Waterford Kettering.

Harrison hurdler Jim Stojek won a pair, going :41.3 in the 320 high, and logging a :15.5 in the 120 low. Harrison's 440-yard relay (Tom Reynolds, Mike Schwab, Mark Worsley and Steve Statfield) won in :48.4.

Worsley won the long jump with a leap of 19-1/2. Cliff Norton topped the pole vault at 10 feet, and Charlie Rogers won the mile run with a time of 4:51.0.

All three Farmington teams are active this Tuesday (April 18). North Farmington runs at Plymouth Canton, Harrison runs at Birmingham Sea-holm, and Farmington runs at Livonia Churchill. All meets begin at 4 p.m.

Meet results — see page 2

Mercy sets record

Farmington Our Lady of Mercy got a record-setting performance from its two-mile relay, and ended up with 12 points in the Spartan Relays April 6 at Michigan State University's Jenison Fieldhouse. Mercy finished sixth in the 91-team field.

Mercy's two-mile crew (Michele Collins, Vickie Salbaum, Sue Heinen and Lynn Yadsch) logged a meet-record 10:07.7, two seconds faster than the previous record set by Redford Bishop Borgess in 1976.

"I just loved that performance," said Mercy coach Bob Kirkland. "I knew we had a good chance to take first and maybe even to get the record. But the kids ran even better than I thought they would."

Mercy's mile relay (Collins, Salbaum, Julie Basford and Lynn Yadsch) finished fifth in 4:22.5.

"We got the psychological goal we

set out for — we came in ahead of Bishop Borgess," Kirkland said. "Borgess won the Spartan Relays last year. This year we beat them by one point. It's the first time we can say we beat Borgess in anything."

In a girls' track dual meet last week, Farmington defeated Waterford Kettering, 87-49.

Harrison won 10 of the 14 events. Terri Duckett and Ruth Grabowski each won two individual events. Duckett took the 110-yard hurdles (:18.6) and the high jump (4-foot-6), and Grabowski won the 440-yard dash (:55.0) and the 220-yard dash (:28.6).

Harrison runs next on Tuesday (April 18) at North Farmington. On the following Thursday, Milford Lakeside runs at Farmington High, and Mercy entertains Harper Woods Regina at Royal Oak Shrine. All meets begin at 4 p.m.

N. Farmington batters tee off

Jeff Thomas pitched a two-hitter, and John Crotty clouted a grand-slam homer to pace North Farmington's 19-0 victory over Highland Park last Thursday in the season opener for coach Jerry Maxwell's Raiders.

Thomas, a senior right-hander, went all the way, striking out 13 and walking two. North produced 12 hits. In addition to Crotty's third-inning grand-slam, the Raiders got a three-run homer and a double from Dan Gasser and a homer and a double from Jim Minihmet. Barry Balbes knocked in three runs with a single.

Highland Park was charged with seven errors.

North plays next on Monday (April 17) at Garden City East. The North-West Suburban League contest begins at 4 p.m.

HARRISON — W. BLOOMFIELD

Coach John Herrington's Farmington Harrison club also opened its season on a successful note, taking a 9-3 decision from West Bloomfield last Thursday.

Brett Homovec, an outstanding passing quarterback on the school's football team, was the winning pitcher. He worked six innings, allowing six hits, fanning nine and walking none. Steve Zerito pitched an inning of relief.

Al Gonilwich doubled in two runs for Harrison, and teammate Wm Dahm knocked in two runs with two hits and scored a pair of runs.

Harrison plays next on Wednesday (April 19) at home against Plymouth Canton. The Western Six League contest starts at 4 p.m.

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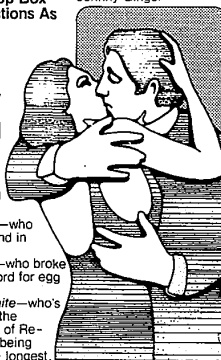
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