

Paul Naumoff: At home, at play

Normally, Paul Naumoff would be insulted if someone suggested that the Lions are praying in their huddle. When that same observation comes from his eight-year-old daughter, Nicole, he just smiles.

"Nicole couldn't understand why we got in a huddle," Naumoff said. "She thought we were praying. She said, 'Mommy this is funny. They get together, pray and then go out and bump heads.'"

A third-grade student at Pine Lake Elementary School in the Bloomfield Hills School District, Nicole is one of three children in the Naumoff household.

She has an eight-year-old brother, Chris, and a four-year-old sister, Celeste. All three attend Pine Lake.

Naumoff and his wife Melva have been married 12 years. They met in junior high school when he was 14 and she was 12.

The Naumoffs have lived in the Moon Lake Townhouse in West Bloomfield for 18 months. They lived in Fox Hills for eight years. They are now building a house in Rochester.

"THERE ARE ADVANTAGES and disadvantages to being married to a professional football player," Melva said, "like going to bed with ice packs."

Melva stiffened when Naumoff suggested there was some glamor involved.

"Of course all our friends know who Paul is," Melva said. "Sometimes when I show my credit card in a department store, people recognize the name. The comments are usually nice."

Although Naumoff may use ice packs for bruises, he is one of the most durable Lions players. He has been in the starting lineup for 115 consecutive contests since taking over the starting linebacker role in the last three games of his rookie season (1967).

Naumoff was the fourth leading tackler on the team, with 50 last season. He has two interceptions this season. A 1966 All-American from the University of Tennessee, Naumoff was the Lions' most valuable defensive player in 1975.

With his 12 years experience, he was one of the few veterans who survived first-year coach Monte Clark's broom when Clark cleaned house.

"There's a big difference this year," Naumoff said. "A lot of the old ball players are gone. There are new faces and new personalities. It's sad to see old friends gone."

"IT'S LIKE WHEN you're growing up," Naumoff said. "You go to the playground every day and play ball with the same kids."

"All of the sudden one day you show up at the stadium and your friends aren't there. That's the sad part about football."

Practices, games, banquets, personal appearances and charity work make family life difficult during the regular season.

"Celeste doesn't like it when I play football," Naumoff said. "In the off season, I have a lot of time around the house. During training camp and the season, I'm gone a lot. She can't understand why I have to work mornings now."

Neither of the girls care very much for football. They both fell asleep at the game they attended last year.

"It's too long for them," Melva said. "They're too young to sit still that long."

They do, however, like sports. Celeste swims, while Nicole favors gymnastics.

Chris is just the opposite of his sisters in his attitude toward football.

"I'd rather play football than anything," Chris said.

CHRIS DOES PLAY football in the Birmingham-Bloomfield Football League. He is a member of the Junior varsity Lions along with Monte Clark's son and the son of former Tiger baseball player Jim Price.

"I get a lot of enjoyment watching Chris play," Paul said. "It's relaxing, going to practice sitting under a big oak tree and watching him play football."

"But it's a rough game," Paul said. "I hope he burns out and loses interest in football. He's a better baseball player than football player, and he's better at golf than baseball."

"I started football at an early age, like Chris," Paul said, "but I'm not as fortunate as he is. He's playing organized football now."

"I never played organized football until 10th grade. I played a lot of neighborhood football."

Melva has a different reaction when watching her son Chris play football.

"It's funny watching Chris," Melva said. "It's like watching Paul. I started watching Paul when he was about Chris' age."

When Paul is home, his house is often "wall to wall kids."

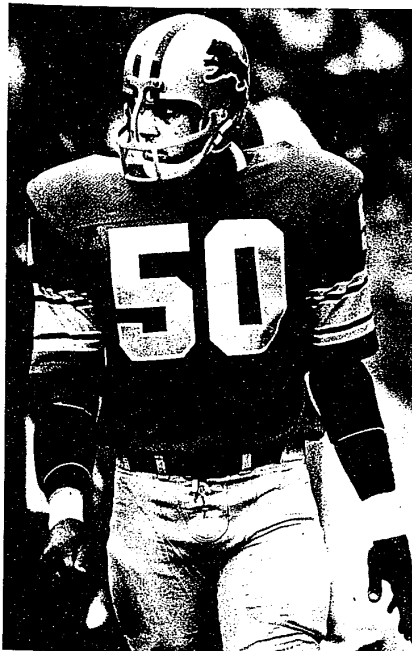
"Sometimes I feel like I'm feeding the neighborhood kids and treats," he said. "I really love it."

THE CHILDREN say that their classmates often ask for autographs or tickets.

"Nicole came home one day and wanted 27 tickets," Paul said. "She was going to take her whole class to a game."

"I told her that would cost \$270."

Family hobbies include just about any sport. Last winter, they played basketball every Friday night. Paul and Chris play a lot of golf.



Paul Naumoff: "Nicole couldn't understand why we got in a huddle. She thought we were praying."

SCS Eagles: soccer underdogs

By C.J. RISAK

One of the biggest attractions sports can offer to the spectator is the chance to cheer for the underdog.

There is nothing more satisfying than seeing the little guy topple the big guy. This conviction is evident in many of our sports teams today. But it is also true that, more often than not, it is the little guy who gets killed.

Southfield Christian is one of those little guys. Last year, the school's soccer team competed in the Northwest Soccer League, which consisted of mostly Class A teams like Groves, Andover, Lahser, and Ferndale. These schools all have attendance marks of over 2,000 students.

Southfield Christian has approximately 275 students in grades nine through 12.

But Christian didn't drop out of the NSL because they were getting killed.

"We decided to change leagues for a couple of reasons," Christian coach Bob Newman said. "And one of those reasons was the size difference between our school and the Class A schools in the NSL. Not that we couldn't compete with them; we still have some on our schedule."

"But, with nine other teams in the league that are all much bigger than you are and that have a bigger population to draw from, it would make it very tough for us to ever win the league title."

"The kids have to have some motivation. They have to believe they have the chance to win the league. We just

felt they would have a better chance against schools more their size."

Size differences weren't the only reasons for switching leagues in the NSL last season. Christian had to play 18 league games. With their non-conference games against other parochial schools, they had a schedule of 26 games.

"This year, we're in the Metro Conference," Newman stated. "We only have seven league games and a maximum of three playoff games."

The Metro Conference is in its maiden season. Other members of the league are University Liggett, Hamtramck, Bishop Gallagher, Bloomfield Hills Roper, Immaculate Conception, Chippewa Valley, and Harper Woods Notre Dame.

Christian has fared better this season in their new league. On Tuesday, they posted their third league victory, beating Immaculate Conception, 1-0. Sweeperback John Mullins scored the game's only goal with just ten minutes remaining. Rick Whitney picked up the assist.

The victory raised the team's record to 3-3 in the league and 4-2 overall.

Newman figures a lack of consistency is the team's biggest weakness.

"We have an experienced defense," he claimed, adding, "Last year, this defense allowed half as many goals as the team the year before did. But they've been inconsistent this season."

Junior Rick Harris is the team's leading offensive threat, and also the league's leading scorer with six goals.

Turkey trot planned

The Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department is sponsoring its second-annual Turkey Trot, a cross country run at the San Marino Golf Course on Nov. 18.

Separate races for competitive runners and joggers are planned, and there are 14 age groups and four race distances.

Competitive divisions and race distances include boys and girls under 10 years of age, one half mile; boys and girls from 11-13, one mile; boys and girls 14-15, two miles; and boys and girls 16-17 and men and women 18 and over, three miles.

A joggers race of two miles is planned for men and women in four age groups: 20-29 years of age, 30-39,

40-49 and over 50.

Awards will consist of turkeys for all first-place finishers, medals for first, second and third place winners, and participation ribbons for all runners.

Pre-registration is advised and will take place at the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, 31555 Eleven Mile Road, prior to the day of the meet. On-site registration will begin at 9 a.m. on the day of the race at San Marino, 26624 Halstead Road between Grand River and Twelve Mile.

The entry fee is \$1 for runners 17 and under, and \$3 for adults. Additional information may be obtained by calling Jeff Farland at 474-6115.

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