

# Area baseball teams battle Mother Nature

By C.J. RISAK

Never mind the 30-degree temperatures. Forget about tomorrow's snowstorm. Spring has finally arrived, like it or not.

No matter what the weather, spring arrives with the first pitch of the baseball season.

Each year, it seems Mother Nature fights against that opening loss, delaying the start of baseball season a day or so. But, no matter what she tries, sometime during the first week of April, the first game will begin.

Sometime later this week, West Bloomfield High, Orchard Lake St. Mary's and Walled Lake Central will play their first baseball of the year. And, as it is at the beginning of every sports season, each of the team's coaches are optimistic about their team's chances in the upcoming season.

West Bloomfield finished with an 11-7 record last year and missed the Greater Oakland Athletic League title by losing to Rochester in the final game, 2-1. Rochester ended up the undisputed champ, while Coach Jeff Snary's West Bloomfield squad finished second.

Orchard Lake St. Mary's had one of its best seasons last year, capturing the West division of the Catholic C-D league, then beating the East division winner to win the C-D crown. St. Mary's capped that with a win over Detroit Mumford, the Detroit Public School League runner-up, in the Operation Friendship game at Tiger Stadium.

**THE EAGLETS POSTED** a 10-0 league record and were 19-4 overall. It was their second West division title in a row. Since Sandy Peters took over as head coach three years ago, they have won 22 of 24 league contests.

Walled Lake Central had a 15-10 record last year, good enough for a third place in the Inter Lakes League. Central made it to the state district finals against Plymouth Canton last season before losing.

Ken Butler's teams have won three league titles in his 10-year tenure as head coach.

"We had a strong JV team last year, and we'll have a young team this year," Snary said about West Bloomfield's chances in its league.

The Lakers will have seven seniors and eight juniors on their squad. One of last year's top two pitchers, Steve Sudbay, returns, along with David Long. Long started three games as a sophomore last season and won them all.

But Sudbay, a senior righthander who was 5-3 last year, is figured to be the ace of the staff.

Along with Long, who is also a righthander, the pitching staff will consist of juniors Jim Arnold and Steve Swanson. Both are lefthanders.

The team's strongpoint will be in the infield, which returns intact. Co-captains Kirk Miller, at third base, and John Alexander, at shortstop, are the strongest links. Miller, a senior, hit .400 while Alexander, also a senior, hit .330.

The rest of the infield is also seniors, with Bruce Buffmyer (.240) catching, Mike Ronan (.320) at first, and Dave Ward (.290) at second.

**THE OUTFIELD IS** going to be completely rebuilt for West Bloomfield. Sudbay, Swanson, and Long, when not pitching, will share two of the three positions, with junior Bob Fascetti playing in the third spot.

"All of them (Sudbay, Swanson, Long) will be in there," Snary said. "They're all good hitters, and we need their bats."

Snary figures Rochester, which returns seven lettermen from last year's championship team, to be the favorite in the league. Waterloo Kettering and Bloomfield Hills Andover, along with West Bloomfield, may challenge for the crown.

"But you can't count Milford or Clarkston, either. The GOAL is one of the stronger leagues around."

Orchard Lake St. Mary's returns three starters from last year's championship squad, but several of the Eaglelets saw extensive action during the last campaign and will be counted on heavily.

"We have a lot of kids who can play," Peters said of his 1979 squad.

Senior Nua Vucinaj, a righthander who had a 5-1 mark in 1978, will be the top pitcher on the staff. Joining him on the mound will be two sophomores: Lefthander Brian Jatczak, and Martin Vucinaj, a righthander who had a 1-2 record last season.

Junior Joe Bok (righthander) and

seniors Bob Militech (lefthander) and Andy Radzko (righthander) will all make relief pitching appearances for the Eaglelets.

The infield is anchored by Dave Kay, a senior who has started four years at second base and batted .300 last season, and catcher Tom Sikora, a .280 hitter in '78.

Sikora and Nua Vucinaj will also see action at first base. Sophomore Steve Downey and Radzko will both play some catcher, while a freshman, Don Butler, will start at short. Third base "is the weakest position on the team," said Peters. Vucinaj and another freshman, Carl Pellagata, will be playing time there.

**IN THE OUTFIELD,** senior Frank Zimolzak will start in right, with Mike Crachiola, a sophomore, in center, and Jatczak, when not pitching, in left. Militech will be the designated hitter.

St. Agatha, Mt. Carmel, and St. Andrews will give St. Mary's the toughest battle for the division title.

"We have a very young team," Peters said. "If the pitching holds up, we'll be up there. We have three starters that can be unbeatable. The left side of our infield is a bit weak, but we'll work it out."

Walled Lake Central coach Ken Butler will be counting heavily on his three returning outfielders to help out a new pitching staff.

"Our pitching is questionable," Butler said. "We'll hit and run and field well, but our pitching is going to have to come around for us."

"I think we'll score some runs, but how many?"

Leading the hitters will be the three outfielders, each of whom hit over .300 last season. Bob Burmeister and Don Robinson will pitch as well as play outfield, and Brian Scott, who started in 1978 as a sophomore, will play full time again.

Greg Miller, a senior who has started for three years as a catcher, will be the mainstay in the infield. Miller hit .338 for Central last year.

Chris Clark and George Burgess, both juniors, will share the first base chores, with senior Brian Norris returning at second. Junior Lonnie Crauthan has the edge at shortstop, with Mark Williams, a senior, returning at third.

Two juniors, Dave Gorgan and Dan Odette, will join Robinson and Burmeister on the mound. All, except Robinson, are righthanders.

Butler figures Livonia Stevenson and Farmington to be the toughest in the Inter Lakes League, but added, "I think we'll do well."

Central plays at Milford on Wednesday, then is off for the spring break before returning to action against West Bloomfield on April 24.

Orchard Lake St. Mary's opens with a doubleheader against St. Benedictine on Saturday, while West Bloomfield takes on Bloomfield Hills Lahser Wednesday.



West Bloomfield's Kurt Miller has been busy at practice all week preparing for the

Lakers' baseball opener. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

## Baseball schedules

### WEST BLOOMFIELD BASEBALL

**VAISITY SCHEDULE:** April 11, at Bloomfield Hills Lahser; April 24, Walled Lake Central; April 27, Kettering; April 28, Clarkston; May 1, at Farmington Harmon; May 2, at Rochester; May 4, at Bloomfield Hills Andover; May 7, Milford; May 8, at Kettering; May 11, at Farmington Harmon; May 14, Rochester; May 18, Andover; May 18, at Milford; May 19, Birmingham; Schedule 23, May 21, at North Farmington; May 22, at Waterloo West; May 23, at Southfield Lakeland; May 25, Pine Hills; May 26, at Detroit Catholic; June 2, Detroit; June 9, Riverdale; June 16, Piquette.

### ORCHARD LAKE ST. MARY'S

**VAISITY SCHEDULE:** April 11, at Bloomfield Hills Lahser; April 24, St. Agatha; April 24, at St. Andrews; April 25, at St. Agatha; April 26, at St. Andrews; April 27, at St. Andrews; April 28, at St. Andrews; April 29, at St. Andrews; May 1, at St. Andrews; May 2, at St. Andrews; May 3, at St. Andrews; May 4, at St. Andrews; May 5, at St. Andrews; May 6, at St. Andrews; May 7, at St. Andrews; May 8, at St. Andrews; May 9, at St. Andrews; May 10, at St. Andrews; May 11, at St. Andrews; May 12, at St. Andrews; May 13, at St. Andrews; May 14, at St. Andrews; May 15, at St. Andrews; May 16, at St. Andrews; May 17, at St. Andrews; May 18, at St. Andrews; May 19, at St. Andrews; May 20, at St. Andrews; May 21, at St. Andrews; May 22, at St. Andrews; May 23, at St. Andrews; May 24, at St. Andrews; May 25, at St. Andrews; May 26, at St. Andrews; May 27, at St. Andrews; May 28, at St. Andrews; May 29, at St. Andrews; May 30, at St. Andrews; May 31, at St. Andrews.

### WALLED LAKE CENTRAL

**VAISITY SCHEDULE:** April 11, at Milford; April 24, at West Bloomfield; April 27, at Waterloo West; April 28, at Waterloo West; April 29, at Waterloo West; May 1, at Waterloo West; May 2, at Waterloo West; May 3, at Waterloo West; May 4, at Waterloo West; May 5, at Waterloo West; May 6, at Waterloo West; May 7, at Waterloo West; May 8, at Waterloo West; May 9, at Waterloo West; May 10, at Waterloo West; May 11, at Waterloo West; May 12, at Waterloo West; May 13, at Waterloo West; May 14, at Waterloo West; May 15, at Waterloo West; May 16, at Waterloo West; May 17, at Waterloo West; May 18, at Waterloo West; May 19, at Waterloo West; May 20, at Waterloo West; May 21, at Waterloo West; May 22, at Waterloo West; May 23, at Waterloo West; May 24, at Waterloo West; May 25, at Waterloo West; May 26, at Waterloo West; May 27, at Waterloo West; May 28, at Waterloo West; May 29, at Waterloo West; May 30, at Waterloo West; May 31, at Waterloo West.

## NF outruns Central

Paul Welch won the mile run with a time of 4:50 to hold North Farmington down Walled Lake Central, 74-14, last Thursday in a rain-shortened track meet on Farmington Harrison's track.

Mark Biehl won the discus event for North with a throw of 143-24, and teammate Bob Morden won the pole vault with a 14-foot effort. Doug Sheldon of Central won 5-foot-10 to win the high jump.

In the girls' meet, which was held

concurrently with the boys', North Farmington bested Central, 40 1/2-32 1/2.

North's Nancy Hughes won the shot put (32-1), and teammate Kelly Donaldson won the 100-yard dash (13.1). North's 800-yard relay (Hughey, Connie Peponis, Jenny Raeber and Donaldson) won with a time of 2:04. The Raiders' 440 relay (Raeber, Peponis, Donaldson and Donna Downs) won with a 58.2 closing, being put on North's new all-weather track.

Junior Joe Bok (righthander) and

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