

Franklin advances in baseball tourney

Livonia Franklin's Patriots turned in a star-spangled performance Saturday by capturing the tough Class A district baseball crown at Redford's Capitol Park.

Franklin, coached by Gerald Cullin, did it against two of the better teams in the state — Redford Bishop Borgess and Detroit Catholic Central.

Solid pitching and errorless defense carried the Patriots to the two wins. In semifinal action Saturday, Franklin upset state-ranked Borgess(20-5), 7-2, while Catholic Central edged Livonia Stevens, 4-2.

In the championship game, Franklin whipped the defending state champs, 8-2.

"They really played great ball," said Cullin of his team, now 16-7 overall. "It was by far our best performance of the year."

Franklin now advances to the regional at 12:30 p.m. Saturday at Hazel Park. The Patriots will meet Warren Mott. In the other semifinal, top-ranked Grosse Pointe North will face

the Detroit Northern district winner at 10 a.m. The winners will meet at 3 p.m.

Junior left-hander Ralph Scharf hurled seven strong innings for Franklin against Catholic Central. He allowed six hits, struck out five and walked four.

Catholic Central jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in the first inning as lead-off man Jerry Scanlon greeted Scharf with an opposite field homer to right.

Franklin, however, got two back in the bottom of the inning without a hit. Bob Nolan and Doug White, both whom walked, later scored on two CC errors.

CC tied it up in the second when Carl Ruffino homered, again over the right field fence.

Franklin then exploded for five runs in its half of the inning. With the bases loaded, Larry Rotter singled home Bill Cech to give the Patriots a 3-2 edge.

Herb McManaway, who destroyed Borgess with three hits in the opener, followed with a bases-clearing triple against CC starter Greg Ward. First baseman Dave Rettig followed with another triple to make it 7-2.

Catcher Steve Droz closed out the scoring with an RBI double in the fifth. Cullin was enlivened with the Patriots' play in the field.

"We didn't make an error all day,"

he said. "Doug (White) started a nice double play for us that really helped in the second game."

Ralph (Scharf) did a nice job. He threw strikes."

In the opener Franklin expected to see Borgess ace Greg Brake, but instead found No. 2 man Richard Heathfield, a right-hander on the mound.

"We thought we would face Brake," said Cullin. "We practiced against two junior varsity left-handers with Brake in mind on Friday."

The fired-up Patriots took a 1-0 lead, in the first off Heathfield an RBI single by McManaway.

Droz increased the lead to 3-0 when he doubled home two more runs. In the third White, a third sacker, smacked a double to give the Patriots a 5-0 bulge.

Brake, who was being saved for the possible final, came on in the third. But Franklin continued the assault.

In the fifth inning, Scharf singled and later scored. Droz, who had three RBIs, walked and scored.

Canoe club proposed

By DOUG FUNKE

If you own a canoe and haven't used it much, or if you want to try canoeing but don't know how to get started, Bill Labbe is a man to see.

Labbe's dream is to start a canoeing club to teach novices the basics of the sport and an appreciation of the outdoors.

"As I drive around, I see a lot of canoes in back yards, but not many people using them," he said. "A canoe is probably the most versatile, useful watercraft available."

"A lot of people who get a canoe find out they can't handle it very well. Most people need to know how to paddle a canoe straight and how to turn — basic technical strokes," said Labbe.

"Before you ever get in a canoe, you should know how to swim and how to right it (the canoe). You should not be in a canoe without a personal flotation device."

"There are proper ways to launch a canoe."

"I would like to see more people learn properly because their interest level would stay higher."

Labbe said he doesn't want to dictate what the canoeing club will accomplish. He does have some ideas, though.

"I'd like to have lessons in technique and safety and equipment. I would like to see outings on a regular basis, weekly or semi-weekly."

"I'd like to see canoeing advanced into the schools — canoeing and safety competition and flat-water racing."

Labbe, 40, has been canoeing since he was nine years old.

"I started fishing in a canoe and became so interested in canoeing, fishing became secondary."

Labbe is convinced there is a need for a club.

"There is a difference, he believes, between a canoeing club and a fishing club."

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For the novice ...

If you're an infrequent or beginning canoeist, there are several things you can do to make the experience more enjoyable:

- First, leave the beer and other liquor at home. Canoes can tip over easily, and an intoxicated person becomes a safety hazard to himself and others in a group.
- Never canoe alone when you are just learning the sport. On the other hand, you won't build up much good will nor will you enjoy the ecology of an outing as much if you're part of a large, noisy group.
- Most aluminum and fiberglass canoes will float if they capsize, so stay with them if they tip over.
- Be considerate of fishermen and swimmers.

Free canoeing guides and maps of the Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority are available by writing HCMA at 2050 Penobscot Building, Detroit, 48226. A large self-addressed stamped return envelope with 20 cents postage is requested.

Some easily accessible places to canoe in the area are the Huron River near Fossil Lake, Kensington Lake and Lower Huron Metropolitan Park. Newburgh Lake is also a good place to learn. Consult the HCMA guide for launching sites and liveries.

Many canoe rental sites are listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book. Call ahead or write in advance to get the proper type of canoe for your outing and the best possible rental price.

If you're interested in starting a canoeing club, Labbe may be reached at 261-6212 4-8 p.m. weekdays. A meeting will be arranged if enough interest is shown.

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