

## Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editor/591-2312

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entertainment, business inside



(D1C)

# Weather or not, let's play ball

## WLAA race to go down to wire

## Will North rule city in softball?

Today marks the official start of the 1984 high school baseball season. To honor the occasion, the Observer sports staff has put together a brief composite of area teams. Batter up!

### baseball

#### LIVONIA BENTLEY

- Head coach: Marty Kozak, 20th year.
- Last year's overall record: 9-15.
- Losses to graduation: Dan Rathwell, All-League second base; Jim LaSalle, center field; Gary McInerney, DH; Jim Prokes, Mark Zornik and John Williams, pitchers; John Stedick, shortstop; Brian Bickman and Gary Hilton, outfield.
- Leading returnees: John Walsh, All-League senior catcher; Pat Schneider, shortstop/pitcher; Brian Toovalan, third base/pitcher; Dave Jennings, catcher/outfield; Larry Barschick, first base/outfield (all lettermen).
- Promising newcomers: Scott McDonald, third base; Steve LaFram, pitcher/first base; Dave Quinn; second base; Pat Greenwood, pitcher/first base; Al Young, outfield; Chris Woodman, pitcher/outfield; Kory Lau, infield.
- Kozak's '84 expectations: "I wish I could say where we stand at this time. I've been trying out many combinations."

#### LIVONIA CHURCHILL

- Head coach: Herb Oviatt, 11th year.
- Titles won last season: Livonia City Tournament.
- Last year's overall record: 7-12.
- Losses to graduation: Keith Kuczek, pitcher.
- Leading returnees: Bob Frost, senior shortstop, .305 average; John Fraser, senior pitcher, 3-2 record and 2.92 ERA; Miguel Contreras, senior center fielder, .316; Dave Munson, senior third baseman, .300; David Baird, senior first baseman, .316; Matt Gross, senior second baseman, .255; Chris Desch, senior pitcher.
- Promising newcomers: John Stortz, junior pitcher; Scott Hule, junior outfielder.
- Oviatt's '84 expectations: "We're going to do the best we can in the regular season, division and conference play and try to defend the City title. Our strength is that we have team batters—12 seniors—and depth. We need pitching depth."

#### LIVONIA STEVENSON

- Head coach: Jim George, second year.
- Titles won last season: Lakes Division champions (with Plymouth Salem), 4A conference record.
- Last year's overall record: 10-9.
- Losses to graduation: Six starters including All-Area pitcher Don McGinley (5-1 record) and All-Area second baseman Scott Mader (.327 average).
- Leading returnees: Rick Rozman, senior All-Area pitcher (4-1 record); Dan Garmatz, senior first baseman; B.J. Uile, senior center fielder; Paul Gieszer, senior outfielder; Brad McVine, senior outfielder.
- Promising newcomers: Brian Porter, senior pitcher (first at last season); Brian Cox, junior pitcher.

#### PLYMOUTH CANTON

- Head coach: Fred Grisey, 10 years.
- Titles won last year: Western Lakes Activities Association, Western Division.
- Last year's overall record: 17-7.
- Losses to graduation: Bryan Capronhurst, Don Dombey, Mike Battaglia, Marty McCarthy, Mike Scapello.
- Leading returnees: Mark Bennett, senior first baseman/pitcher; Bucky Blake, junior pitcher; Scott Ford, senior pitcher; Tim Goula, senior catcher; Jeff Olson, senior catcher/DH; Sean Gosset, senior outfielder; Jim Dunn, senior outfielder; John Longridge, senior shortstop.
- Promising newcomers: Mark Kinsel, senior second baseman; Jeff Wittner, senior third baseman; Danny Martin, senior outfielder; Mike Clark, junior transfer from Catholic Central; Duane Bennett, junior pitcher; Jeff Rummel, junior pitcher.
- Grisey's '84 expectations: "This is a good group of kids. They played Connie Mack ball last this summer and came within one game of making it to the Connie Mack World Series. But, you know, this group has yet to win a single game for Canton by themselves."
- "The degree of their dedication and commitment will determine the success of this club."

#### PLYMOUTH SALEM

- Head coach: John Graven, first year, replacing John Oiler.
- Titles won last year: state Class A district and regional championships.
- Last year's overall record: 19-9.
- Losses to graduation: Dave Slavin, Todd Riedel, Mickey Mason, Dan Carlson, Barry McGovern.
- Leading returnees: Rick Barberet, senior pitcher; Mike Gindrich, senior All-Area outfielder; Tom Moore, senior third baseman; Don DeBello, junior infielder; Scott Anderson, senior outfielder.
- Promising newcomers: Ken Harmon, senior pitcher-shortstop; Paul Mazza, sophomore shortstop.

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## NSL battle may pit Raiders — Panthers

The 1984 high school baseball season begins its first week today. Here's a composite look at the Northwest Suburban League.

#### GARDEN CITY

- Head coach: Bob Dropp, 10th year, 251-144 career record.
- Titles won last year: Northwest Suburban League and Class A district.
- Last year's overall record: 10-6.
- Losses to graduation: 13 seniors including All-Area pitcher Joe Tarabochia (from St. Ursula's of Detroit).
- Leading returnees: Steve Kink, who batted .403 with All-Area shortstop Paul Kral, who batted .313 with last year's Brian Ference, third base; Bob Ference, second base; John Bence, catcher.
- Promising newcomers: Mike Rott, Todd Webb and Bob Swope, pitchers; Mark Rott, catcher; Mark Hebert and Jeff Boglietti, outfielders.
- Dropp's '84 outlook: "This will be a redefining year for the Cougars. It will be a challenge to maintain the excellence that Garden City has had over the last six years (four league and four district titles). If the JV pitchers Web (5-1), Rott (5-1) and Swope (3-1) can make the transition to varsity, the Cougars may prove to be a surprise 1984."

#### REDFORD UNION

- Head coach: Stu Rose, fourth year.
- Titles won last year: Redford Union Invitational.
- Last year's overall record: 12-11.
- Losses to graduation: Kevin Schwan, second-team All-Area outfielder.
- Leading returnees: Don Taylor, second baseman, batted .444 en route to All-Area honors; Greg Pichro, pitcher, 10-0 record; Ryan Moore, outfielder; Ryan Moore, senior center fielder; Rich Williams, first base/pitcher; batted .333; Greg Orr, DH/catcher; Mike Harris, first base/pitcher, batted .221.
- Promising newcomers: Dennis Duhan, junior pitcher; Anthony Davis, junior pitcher; Glenn Harwood, JV coach moved up to varsity.
- Rose's '84 outlook: "We have depth and experience that let us as sophomores. We're strong up the middle, but we lack team speed. We're a legitimate contender in the NSL, and should score more runs than our more recent teams. We'll play much better defensively than in '83."

#### REDFORD THURSTON

- Head coach: Emil Majack, 10th year.

#### WESTLAND JOHN GLENN

- Head coach: Norm Hoanes, 10th year.
- Last year's overall record: 13-12.
- Losses to graduation: Tim Kinsel, All-Area first baseman; Dennis Lambert, catcher; Chris Marand, second base; Steve Jaskolski, pitcher/outfield; John Hadden, outfield.
- Leading returnees: Cass Simpson, shortstop; Bob Kijewski, third base; Don Worke, pitcher; Dave Jones, pitcher/outfield; Brian All-Area pitcher/outfield; Jeff Neman, pitcher; Pat Pichro, pitcher/outfield; Glenn Gelscher, catcher.
- Promising newcomers: Steve Kink, sophomore pitcher.
- Hoanes' '84 expectations: "We will be young and inexperienced at key positions, but we should get better by mid-season. Our strength is that we have a more three-dimensional number of pitchers, but we have no proven hitters and lack speed."

#### LIVONIA FRANKLIN

- Head coach: Dave Cullen, fourth year.
- Last year's overall record: 13-12.
- Losses to graduation: Bob Coppock (second team All-Area), Bill Haynes and Rich Wood, pitchers; Mike Johnson, catcher (now at Wayne State); Rich Popp (second team All-Area), outfielder.
- Leading returnees: Dave Delaney, junior outfielder; 200 average; Jeff Kink, senior infielder, .270 average.
- Promising newcomers: Glenn Brando, senior catcher; Rick Cagle and Scott Koring, senior outfielders; Marshall Jowers, senior pitcher/outfielder.
- Cullen's '84 expectations: "We hope to finish at least third in the league and finish above .500. We're a very young team, very inexperienced with no returning pitchers or catchers."

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## Coaches can ease spring sports mess

And you thought the madness only happened in March.

No way. The spring high-school sports scene is the definitive in sports madness as the 21 Observerland schools compete in six sports — baseball, softball, girls track, boys track, girls soccer and boys tennis.

One look at our "Week Ahead" feature will give you an idea of what we're up against this spring. There will be, on the average, more than 100 sporting events happening throughout Observerland per week for the next eight weeks.

And we intend to bring you each and every result.

OBVIOUSLY, we cannot physically attend every game, match or meet. So to get the results in the paper, coaches should give us a call. The Observer sports desk can be reached by calling 591-2310 before 5:30 p.m., or 591-2312 after 5:30 p.m.

Here are the best times to call in your results:

- Tuesday: To report results of weekend on Monday and Tuesday contests, call 591-2312 between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. Or, from 8:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., call 591-2300. Calling at these times will ensure the results get into Thursday's paper.
- Thursday and Friday: To report results of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday contests, call 591-2312 between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. From 8:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., call 591-2300. Calling at these times will ensure the results get into Monday's paper.
- Monday: Do not call after 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday: Do not call.
- Note: Results phoned in after 8:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays will not get into the next edition of the paper. Results may be phoned in until 10 p.m. on Thursdays.
- Also coaches, please be patient. If the phone is busy, as it will probably be on occasion, please call back.

—Observer Sports Staff

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

**A**FTER SUFFERING through numerous seasons as the Northwest Suburban League's girls softball cellar-dweller, it may be time for North Farmington to clear off a spot in its crowded trophy case.

The 1984 Raider contingent appears primed to bring home another title. North finished second in the NSL last season with a 7-5 record, 12-7 overall. Seven starters from last year's team, including two .400 hitters and two .300 hitters, are back to form a powerful nucleus for third-year coach Dennis Mikel.

"Our strengths are going to most likely be our hitting and our defense," Mikel said. "Anytime you can return seven players with experience, you are going to field a pretty solid defensive team. These kids really know the game. They play smart. It's easy for me to make adjustments."

Amy Austin, a three-sport standout, is the team's catalyst. She hit .444 as a junior last season and is a slick-fielding shortstop. She was named first team all-NSL last year.

"Any time you have a player of Amy's ability you have a lot of reason to be optimistic," Mikel said.

**MIKEL ALSO** has three second-team all-leaguers returning: junior catcher Patti Kozicki, senior third baseman Michelle Rosen and junior pitcher Suzanne Greenberg.

Kozicki, a solid defensive catcher, hit .285 last year, mostly on "fender" top-hitters, strugled at a .400 clip last year. Mikel is anticipating big things from Greenberg.

She has worked extremely hard over the summer. She practiced with Farmington Harrison coach John Herrington (who is an outstanding fast-pitch softball player) all summer, and she looked real sharp. I think she's going to have a great season," Mikel said.

Greenberg was 7-5 with a 3.21 ERA last season.

Other returning starters for the Raiders are senior first baseman Linda Rennard, junior outfielder Donna Konjarevich and senior outfielder Tracy Toccolino. Rennard and Konjarevich hit better than .300 last season.

"About the only spots left to fill are second base (a void left by the graduation of Margie Lee) and one outfield spot (a void left by the graduation of Sue Culver)," Mikel said.

Mikel said there were two or three juniors vying for the outfield spot. Sophomore Libby Shaw and junior Allisa Mummert are doing battle for the second-base position.

Mummert and sophomore Mo Paradis may also see some duty on the mound.

Mikel isn't afraid to admit that this may be a little season for his ball club. "We are definitely looking at it," he said. "We were second last year and with seven people back, we certainly have set that (league title) as one of our goals."

#### FARMINGTON

The last time Rich Roy coached the girls softball team at Farmington was in the 1979-80, 1980-81 seasons. During those two years he led the Falcons to a 29-9 record and an Inter-Lakes Conference championship.

"Not this year," said Roy, who has resumed command of the Falcons after a two-year hiatus.

"We may be in for a long year," Roy said. "I told the girls, 'Let's be honest, we are going to struggle. But, hopefully, we have good potential and all we have to do is hang together.'"

The reason Roy is less than optimistic about this season is the lack of experienced players. Seven players on the Farmington roster are freshmen and sophomores. Four of those players are expected to start.

"We have an awful lot of youth, an awful lot," Roy said.

Returning starters from last year's 5-13 team include senior pitcher Jill Waterman, senior shortstop Karen Devine and senior second baseman Tara Twomey. These three will be the mainstays of the Falcon attack.

### softball

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—Dennis Mikel  
North coach

Others expected to contribute include: juniors Alyse Fortune (outfield) and Jenny Wischneyer (pitcher-outfield-first base), and sophomores Cathy Fleer (third base) and Lisa Edwards (pitcher-first base).

There is a big battle going on for the catching job. Kelly Devine and freshman Becky Philip are vying for the position.

Sophomores Terry Harrington and Paula Antashian will see action in the outfield.

"I hope we will be a good defensive team," Roy said. "Our pitching is suspect. We have no experience except for Jill (Waterline). She's not a strike-thrower and pitching is questionable. We may take some lumps."

#### FARMINGTON HARRISON

Look for the Hawks to improve on their 3-15 record from a year ago. Coach Mike Teichman does.

But, as to how much the team improves — well, that depends on several factors.

Harrison looks solid throughout the middle of its lineup. Senior third baseman Karen Sklar is back after hitting .348 and knocking in 16 runs last season. First baseman Teena Hicks, a .316 slugger last year, is also back. Add senior captain Laurie Ambrose (.259) and you've got a nice three-four-five-six combination.

The rest of the spots are open and questionable, especially pitching and catching.

Teichman is counting heavily on the arm of senior Michelle Vogt. Teena Vogt was 2-7 last year, but she sported a fine 2.63 ERA.

"If she can get the ball over, and get people to hit ground balls, we can be OK," Teichman said. "We will have to work hard on our fielding to complement Michelle. She's not a strike-thrower. She'll get a lot of ground balls."

Colette Cashin, a junior, has been the Hawks' catcher for two years. But she has never had to hit. Teichman would like the designated hitter to sub for Cashin at the plate. This year, however, Cashin will be asked to both hit and catch.

Ambrose also has a new responsibility. Ambrose was the starting left fielder last season. She is being asked to replace graduated center fielder Dana Lukomski — Teichman's leadoff hitter and center fielder the past three seasons.

"Our major weakness will be a lack of depth," Teichman said. "We have a definite lack of experience at the top of the order without Dawn. I know I'm going to write her name on the lineup a couple of times this year out of pure instinct."

Lukomski walked onto and made the Central Michigan University team last fall, but was subsequently cut after a scholarship player returned from an academic suspension.

Harrison will open the season today at Southfield. North travels to Ferndale today and Farmington opens with a double-header at Southfield-Lathrup tomorrow.