



Mike Cupples has gunned down many an opponent with a strong throwing arm and a potent bat.

# 'Average' hitter laces league foes

By C.J. Risak  
staff writer

Most college baseball scouts had Mike Cupples figured the same way: too small (5-foot-11, 185) and not enough power for a catcher. Phil Regan, the former Detroit Tiger who was coaching at Grand Valley State College, thought differently.

"They were out of catchers and he said I'd play a lot," recalled Cupples, a Rochester Adams graduate now in his junior year at Grand Valley. "No one else really recruited me."

So Cupples enrolled at Grand Valley, where he has been a starter — at catcher — ever since.

HE HAS DONE more than just start, however.

"We'd be hurting without him, definitely," said Grand Valley coach Doug Wabeke, who took over for Regan this season and has guided the team to a 24-10 mark. "He's our No. 3 hitter, our No. 1 catcher and our leading RBI man."

He's only caught college-level pitching, but he's definitely a pro prospect. The only things he lacks are a little power and some speed.

Lots of college coaches would quickly grab Cupples even with those "shortcomings" after viewing his contributions: 31 hits in 90 at-bats for a .344 average, five doubles, one triple, five homers and 23 RBI. Behind the

plate, he has committed just three errors.

It's not as if Cupples has recently blossomed. As a sophomore he batted .394 with three homers and 31 RBI; in his freshman season he hit .333.

"I'm not a power hitter," said Cupples. "I hit for average, but I do get a few homers."

THE STATISTIC that pleases Cupples most is his strikeout ratio. He has fanned only twice this season.

Cupples' ability caught the eye of several pro scouts last summer, when he was the regular catcher for the Grand Rapids Sullivan team that won the National Baseball Congress Tournament championship in Kansas City.

While Cupples may lack some size and speed — "I'm pretty quick but I'm not De Wittaker," the catcher said — he is blessed with a fine throwing arm, as baserunners in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) have discovered.

"I get rid of the ball pretty quick," Cupples said. "Not too many people steal on me."

HIS ABILITY has helped Grand Valley to a GLIAC-leading 9-3 mark, 2½ games ahead of Wayne State (6-9). Grand Valley plays back-to-back double-headers against league rivals Hillsdale (4-9 in the league) Friday and Wayne State Saturday. Both are on the road and are the final four games of the conference schedule.

## college sports

### U-D honor roll of top athletes lists local stars

Some colleges recruit athletes from all 50 states. Others are more confined, but if a school is going to compete on the NCAA Division I level, it better be prepared to do some traveling.

That's the general belief, anyway. But University of Detroit has bucked that trend and succeeded. That was evident when the school held its annual All-Sports Awards and Hall of Fame Induction dinner last month.

In addition to inducting golfer Tom Watrous, baseball player Blake Orr, basketball's Doris Murray and football's John Costi, Howard Keating and Bud Payne into the school's Hall of Fame, 29 current U-D student athletes received awards. And seven of those were from the Observer & Eccentric coverage area.

Here's a list of those local student athletes honored at the dinner, held at the Gourmet House in St. Clair Shores April 16.

**Dan Horvath, DeLodder Award:** Horvath, a senior from Livonia and a Stevenson grad, earned the DeLodder Award for the third time in his career, team's Most Valuable Performer.

Horvath has 41 match wins in his career, including 12 in a season twice, and was U-D's top singles and doubles player for three seasons.

**Tom Miner, President's Award:** Miner excels in the field for the baseball Titans, but he won the President's Award for using his head. The annual honor is presented to senior athletes who have attained academic excellence throughout his collegiate career.

Miner, a Garden City West grad, batted .373 last year as a junior and .348 as a sophomore. He made just five errors last year in winning the Nolan Gold-Glove Award.

**John Minich, Leo DiMambro Award:** This award goes to the student-athlete who best typifies the "U-D man." Minich, a senior golfer from Lathrup Village, best filled the criteria, which included high moral standards, pride, determination to excel, graciousness in victory and defeat, leadership and love of alma mater.

Minich stands 57th on the U-D all-time golf list with an 82.80 stroke average. A Birmingham Brother Rice grad, he was U-D's low scorer 11 times in his first three seasons.

**John Muller, Most Outstanding Rifleman:** A sophomore from West Bloomfield, Muller claimed the award for displaying the best form and marksmanship. A team captain, Muller earned Lake Erie Intercollegiate Rifle Conference Most Improved honors for improving his scoring average from 421.5 as a freshman to 408.6 last season.

A West Bloomfield grad, Muller also led U-D to Most Improved honors in the conference.

**Dan Ryan, Dominick Taddone Award and Fr. Norbert Heister, S.J. Award:** Ryan earned a pair of awards at the banquet, the first for the spirit he provided the U-D cross country team, and the second as the outstanding student-athlete representing the school.

Ryan was the Titans' top finisher in five of its 10 cross country races with a best time of 28:21 over five miles at the Siena Heights Invitational. The senior from Redford and a Catholic Central grad also turned in outstanding performances on the indoor track team, tying the team standard in the two mile run of 9:35.00.

**Karen Foster, Most Outstanding Women's Softball Player:** The sophomore from Garden City earned the award for the 1983 season not just for her athletic skill but also for the leadership and inspiration she provided. A third-baseman, Foster played in all 17 games and made just four errors for a .923 fielding average.

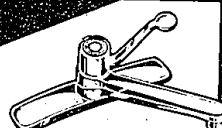
**Greg Wendt, Dual Better Training Award:** This award is presented annually to the student athlete who demonstrates the most courage, perseverance, dedication and spirit of self-sacrifice in seeking to attain their highest physical and mental well-being. Wendt, a junior from Livonia and a Redford Catholic Central grad, did all of that.

A transfer from DePaul University, Wendt was red-shirted this season and yet still displayed great leadership effect in his conditioning program, gaining strength, stamina and confidence while looking ahead to next season. Wendt will have two years of eligibility remaining at U-D.

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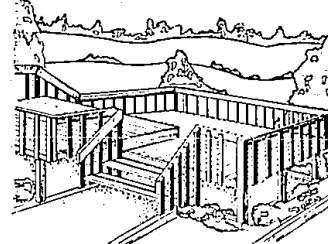
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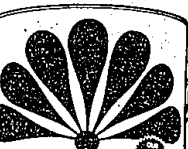
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