

Sports

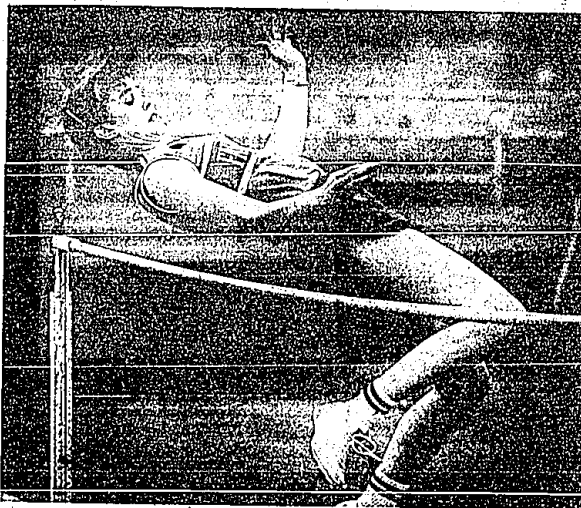
Chris McCosky, Brad Emmons editor/591-2312



Thursday, May 17, 1984 O&E

(F1C)

Falcons capture RU Relays



Tulja Pittila helped the Falcons to second-place finishes in both the high-jump relay and the shot-put relay in Saturday's RU Relays.

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

It was a crowning moment in the long, successful, and a bit overlooked coaching career of Farmington's Gerry Young.

His girls track team carried him off the Redford Union track Saturday after the Falcons bested a strong 15-6 Northern in the annual RU Relays.

It was the first time the Falcons have won the event, known as the female counterpart to the boys' Observerland Relays.

Farmington amassed 61 team points. Pontiac Northern, the No. 1 team in Oakland County and the meet's overwhelming favorite, took second, just five points back.

"Some of the coaches were upset that Northern was even in the meet because they are outside the (Observerland) area. They are a real tough squad, but our girls just did an all-around outstanding job. I think the RU people were happy to present us with the trophy," Young said.

Farmington flexed its muscles in the field events to build up what proved to be an insurmountable lead. With a first in the discus relay, second in both the shot-put and high-jump relays, and a fourth in the long-jump relay, the Falcons had 39 points before running a race.

The Falcons also took three of the four individual firsts out of the field. Terri Quenneville won the shot (33-0). Beth Sherman won the discus (110-7) and Samira Silvers took the high jump (5-3).

Lauri Runk, Farmington Harrison's four-event star, won the long jump with a 15-4½.

Farmington didn't win another first, but it placed in 10 of the 14 events. The Falcons took three seconds, three thirds, a fourth and a sixth—displaying great team depth.

After 15 events, the Falcons led Northern 57-35. At that point, Borgess was second with 46, Northern, however, took a first and a second in the final two events to close the gap.

NORTHERN'S LISA McCoy set the only meet record of the day with a swift 11.37 in the 100-yard dash. Livonia Chigrelli's Julie Roca outlasted a very strong open mile field, breaking the tape at 5:28.31, some six seconds before Farmington's Jenny Lindbert.

The host team, RU, scored only 23 points but it won two events. This

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C.J. Risak

Boycotting our legends, dreams

REWRITING "The Christmas Carol" in sports-ese. The Ghost of Sports Past arrived last week — at local movie houses. It's called "The Natural," and it stars Robert Redford as baseball phenom Roy Hobbs in the screen adaptation of Bernard Malamud's novel.

It's pure fiction, this film. It's a Ruthian legend and Camelot fantasy blended into a baseball fairy tale. It's good guys vs. bad guys, the corrupt powerful against the righteous individual.

It's fun. And, as outlandish as it might seem, it is the very foundation of baseball and sports itself.

LEGEND, FABLES, tall tales of mighty deeds achieved with one swing of the bat is what baseball is.

It's Babe Ruth pointing to the spot where he'd hit his homer.

It's Lou Gehrig's farewell speech.

It's Don Larsen hurling a perfect game in the World Series.

It's thousands of tidbits and anecdotes fondly remembered and clearly detailed by millions of fans, each with his own personal favorite to protect.

The story "The Natural" tells is outlandish, which is what makes it so real. Sports is the imagined becoming reality.

WHO COULD HAVE expected Roger Bannister to shatter the four-minute mark in the mile in such unlikely conditions (poor weather and no racing for 3 years)?

Who would have believed Bob Beamon would jump more than 29 feet that day at the Mexico City Olympics?

How many thought the Tigers would win the 1983 World Series after trailing three games to one?

"The Natural" is surreal. It's just images projected on canvas.

It also provides a perfect definition of sports: striving for what had only been imagined before, shooting for the unattainable.

NOW FOR THE DEMONS OF Sports Present.

That, too, surfaced last week. It came over the airwaves. The Soviets said "no" to the Los Angeles Olympics. Their allies soon joined the boycott.

It is a travesty of major proportions.

Not just to us, the public who will once again — as in 1980 — miss the opportunity to crown new heroes, new Olympic gods. There will be no Nadia Comaneci or Olga Korbut this year. Their countries won't be in L.A.

And even as we marvel at the exploits of a Carl Lewis or Mary Decker-Tobin, it will forever be accompanied by a "but" or an "if," as in, "But if the Soviets had been there . . ."

BUT THE GREATEST SORROW is not ours to carry. The athletes who for eight years trained and worked and sweated for this one chance, the opportunity to show the entire globe his or her strength and ability and talent, are being cheated.

It's a devastating loss. The countless, endless hours of preparation from those like Michelle Bernbe, the rhythmic gymnast from Rochester; Jeff Pierce, the bicyclist from Livonia; Gary Wojdyla, the rower from Plymouth; Tom Bahits, the pole vaulter from Redford; Craig Payne, the boxer from Livonia; all Olympic hopefuls who, even if they make the U.S. team, will compete in what amounts to nothing more than a Friends of the U.S. Games.

A curse on Carter and his 1980 boycott! A pox on all politicians who overstep their bounds, who interfere where they have no right.

They have robbed us, these attention-starved meddlers, of a chance to adore our champions. And worse, they have spared eight years of labor these Olympic athletes — Soviet and U.S. alike — have devoted to attaining a dream.

THE SHADOW OF SPORTS FUTURE is just that — dark and undistinguishable, lacking clear outline.

It is foreboding, when faced with the reality of the present. What the Soviets did by boycotting the L.A. games, which was certainly in retaliation for the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow games, could destroy the Olympics forever.

The pillars of Olympia are cracking now. By 1988, they will collapse should the course remained unchanged.

Politicians are easy to blame for the impending disaster, but not wholly. We, too, bear the responsibility.

OUR IDEALS HAVE STRAYED. We professionalize our amateurs, like our Soviet bloc rivals. We count medals like missiles — the country with the most wins.

Lost is the individual striving for perfection, to do what no man has done before.

Gone, too, in this world of automated athletics — even prize, is the deed that existed only as a dream and some young gods led it into reality and legend. Our heroes may end up only as real as Roy Halladay's childhood dream.

We need people to breathe life into him, to transform fiction into reality. Without the Roy Halladay mythos has no future because it will have no past. Should the Olympics crumble, many Halladay legends will be forever lost.

And that will be a tragedy of enormous proportions.

girls track

REDFORD UNION

OAKLAND COUNTY

PONTIAC

NORTHERN

BORGESS

LIVONIA

GARDEN CITY

PLYMOUTH

PONTIAC

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football

State says no to Ahern Plan

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

The Michigan High School Athletic Association, through its Representative Council, has said no to a plan that would have expanded the high-school football playoffs to 128 teams.

The council, which consists primarily of high-school principals and superintendents, decided that "there would be no change in the high-school football playoff format for the 1984 season."

The decision came after the council met Sunday through Thursday of last week.

"An overwhelming number of school administrators do not want to expand the playoffs," said Vern Norris, the executive director of the MHSAA. "This is a tough thing to say because of all the negative things we read about the playoffs every fall, but it seems most people are satisfied with the present playoff structure."

The playoff expansion plan brought before the council, the Ahern Plan, was developed over a three-year period by Livonia High School coach Jim Ahern. The Michigan High School Football Coaches Association adopted the Ahern Plan in April.

"WE'RE NOT about to hang it up now," said Ahern. "We have to go back, re-evaluate some of the things in the plan and contact more principals and superintendents. We need to get their feelings on the issue and go from there."

Ahern said he was disappointed that the council would not at least publish results of a mythical "paper playoff" using the Ahern Plan during the 1984 season.

As it stands, the 32-team, eight-team playoff format is the only playoff format in Michigan.

In expanding the playoff format to include 128 teams, the Ahern Plan proposed two additional playoff dates. These dates would be made up, in essence, by playing the first game of the season before Labor Day, and then scheduling three playoff dates within an eight-day span.

The Ahern Plan was to take effect in the 1984 season.

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