



Brad Emons

Nice guys can finish on top

IN MY JOB, I'm supposed to be impartial. When I cover a sporting event, I try not to get involved.

Sometimes that's hard to do. But when I go tomorrow to Ypsilanti High School for the Class B state baseball semifinals, I'll be pulling for Thurston High School.

Yes, I'm rooting for the Blue and White. My team is the Eagles. Thurston, a Cinderella team at 15-9-1, is taking on Grand Rapids Christian (10-9) in one semifinal. The other game, scheduled for 3 p.m. Friday at Ypsilanti, pits No. 1 ranked Wyoming Rogers (31-2) against Fenton (22-2).

I'm rooting for Thurston to win it all simply because the school needs a shot in the arm.

This is the same school which suffers through a constant turnover of coaches and athletic directors. It's a same school which has trouble getting kids out for football. The Northwest Suburban League (NWL), of which Thurston is a member, wants to disassociate itself from the Class B school. The school's front lawn is just a stone's throw away from powerful Catholic Central, which eats up the district's top student-athletes.

BUT DESPITE all the school's problems athletically, one thing has remained constant — Emil Majeski.

A dying breed, Majeski remains as one of the school's few in-house coaches. He's stuck around as the head baseball coach for 19 years, a remarkable feat.

Majeski has had some good teams at Thurston. He's won many league titles, but always came up short-handed in the state tournament.

Until this season, Thurston had never won a district title.

"We had a good team last year, but we lost to Garden City and (Joe) Tarasavage 2-0 in the district," said the Thurston coach. "I've felt bad because we've played good baseball in the past." After trying Garden City for the NWL title this year, Thurston's state tournament run began with a lopsided win over U-D High, followed by an 8-6 shocker in the district final over Dearborn Divine Child, favored to win it all.

On Saturday in the regional, Thurston knocked off two more state-ranked teams — Monroe Catholic Central and Clawson — both by a run.

Why has this team accomplished more than any other Thurston team?

"THIS TEAM plays well together and they pick each other up," Majeski answers. "They have a great attitude and they're super competitors."

Thurston got off to a slow start this season, but gradually picked up steam, making the clutch plays to win big ballgames.

"They've been kind of running Thurston down, but we had a tough schedule — all Class A teams," said Majeski. "The schedule is paying off. Playing good teams brings out your weaknesses."

Thurston's team batting average is .398, the highest in a number of years. Collectively, the team has 14 homers, five by center fielder Tim DeMarco.

DeMarco, a 210-pound threat, is one of four Thurston players hitting over .300.

"He hits the ball as hard as anybody," Majeski said.

Catcher Bob Rousseau has 11 doubles and a .383 average to lead the team. When they're not pitching, Greg Somerville and David Kress alternate in left field and are hitting .349 and .325, respectively. Rightfielder Sam Anstee sports a .396 average with first baseman John Bilchurs at .377. Third baseman Brian McGrath, meanwhile, went 3-for-3 in the win over Clawson.

But Majeski said it's the defense and pitching which has kept the team in the hunt.

"WE PLAYED excellent defense in the regional," Majeski said. "We made only one error."

A good indication of Thurston's clutch defensive play came against Monroe CC.

Shortstop Dave Dziobak and second baseman Mike Maurin turned a double play to end the game.

"We got off to a slow start because Dave was out sick," Majeski said. "You need your starting shortstop in the lineup."

Majeski hasn't decided on a starting pitcher for tomorrow, but he's comfortable with either Greg Somerville (7-0 record, 1.83 ERA) or David Kress (6-3, 2.61).

"I'm just really happy for the kids," Majeski said. "And I'm happy for David Kress."

"He lost some tough one-run ballgames early in the year. And then he was pressured by his peers to go to Florida over Easter vacation, but he changed his mind and decided to stay and play ball."

WHILE OTHER area schools were idle during the holidays, Thurston stayed home and swept a double-header from Wayne Memorial and it's been upset ever since.

"I think our program is real sound," said Majeski. "We still have in cut (players) and we had 18 on the JV and they were 10-4."

"Greg Alsola (former All-Area player from Bishop Gorman) became my assistant this year and he's done a nice job."

Thurston held graduation for the Class of 1994 today.

But the real celebration could come Saturday with a state championship medal hanging around each player's neck.

"I want to win because I think that would be a great Father's Day present," Majeski said.

If any coach deserves that kind of gift, it's Majeski.



Laurie Day Livonia Bentley



Tom Domako Livonia Stevenson



Jeff Gray Farmington

Hoop coaches throw a party

By Chris McCosky staff writer

The Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan (BCAM) is throwing itself a party this weekend in Kalamazoo.

And what a party it will be. They call it a festival — the fifth annual All-Star Festival to be precise. What these coaches do is gather the best high school boys and girls basketball talent in the state, divide them up into six teams, and let them go at it.

The coaches also throw in a few perks for themselves. Namely, a golf outing, a pig roast and a hospitality party. A good time, no doubt, will be had by all.

But, the main purpose of the festival is never out of sight. And that purpose is to provide a showcase for this state's abundance of talented basketball players.

THREE BASKETBALL games, played Saturday at Western Michigan University's Read

Field House, provide the stage for these athletes.

At 3:30 p.m., the girls' all-star game will commence. The best players from the east side of the state go against the best from the west (all players selected by the BCAM).

On the East team are All-Observer standouts Laurie Day from Livonia Bentley, who is bound for Lake Superior State College, and Sarah Basford from Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy, bound for the University of Michigan.

Basford was the Marlin's leading scorer in both her junior and senior seasons. She led Mercy to a Class A state title as a junior. Day, a splendid two-sport athlete at Bentley, averaged 15 points, seven rebounds, three steals and three assists per game last year.

Other members of the East team, coached by Flint Northwestern mentor Roger Zoll, include Kim Chandler (Dearborn Fordson), Kendra McDonald (Cass Tech), Katie Nuoci (East

Detroit) and Jolynn Schneider (Harper Woods Regina).

The West squad will be led by BCAM's Miss Basketball Michelle Kruty from Manistee. Other West stars include Marva Fuller (Holly) and Shawne Brown (Leland).

THE GIRLS' contest will be followed at 5:30 by the boys' Class B-C-D all-stars.

The East squad will be led by Detroit Country Day's Rich Goldberg, who is headed for Creighton University. Others on the squad are Andre Bond and Donnie Hall (Willow Run), Ben Morton (Detroit DePuy), Reggie Smith (Southgate Aquinas) and Tony Hollifield (Oak Park).

The featured attraction of this fifth annual festival, the boys' Class A all-star game, tips off following a slam-dunk contest at 7:30.

The East squad will be led by Mr. Basketball, Demetrius Gore from Detroit Chadey. Gore will play next year at the University of Pittsburgh.

Tom Domako, the 6-foot-8 Livonia Stevenson standout, will represent Observerland in the contest. Domako, bound for the University of Montana, scored 859 points, grabbed 324 rebounds and dished out 105 assists in his two-year varsity career at Stevenson.

Others on the East squad, coached by Detroit Southwestern's Perry Watson, include: Glynn Blackwell (Highland Park), Lenard Collins (Chadsey), Clarence Jones (Southwestern), and Chascey Scott (Southwestern).

The West roster is equally impressive: Jeff Gray (Flint Northwestern), Jeff King (Lansing Sexton), Eli Parker (Pontiac Central), Michael "Pop" Sims (Grand Rapids Union) and Gary Thompkins (Jackson).

The BCAM know how to throw a party. The cost to be part of the fun is \$3 per ticket which is good for all three games. The tickets are available through the Western Michigan athletic ticket office, 616-365-1780.



Area burners

Farmington's Brian Loozer and Jeff Lawton head up the 1994 Observer's All-Area track and field team. This year's team, the best in many years, is previewed on page 6C.

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