

Sports

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(F1C)



Chris McCosky

Tiger blood flows throughout ages

OCTOBER 1988, Mort Callison, Eric Lyons, Dominic DiMaggio — my school chums — and myself, all of us just one month into the sixth grade, hopped onto our bicycles and raced as fast as we could to Ed's. Ed's was a barbershop we used to hang out at back then. We never got our hair cut there, no way. We went there for two reasons. No. 1, Ed was a great old guy who didn't mind telling stories to us young punks. No. 2, Ed had a color TV and a pop machine that charged just 10 cents per Pepsi. As I look back on it, it all kind of reminds me of a scene out of Ring Lardner. Four young and rambunctious youths crammed into a tiny barbershop on Inkster Road with an aging barber who rarely cut hair but loved to talk. On this crisp October afternoon, however, no one was talking. The Tigers were on the tube about to wrap up their first championship since 1945. I remember it all so well. It was the first time my Tigers brought tears of joy to my eyes and made all those insufferable losing years sufferable.

ME AND MY chums got to Ed's in the seventh inning of the seventh game — we were feeling kind of lucky. The Cardinals' Curt Flood had just misplayed Jim Northrup's fly out into a two-run triple.

"Hit ya' dola' fellas," Ed said upon our arrival. "Get a pop and sit down. The Tigers are winnin'." Nine outs and three Pepsis later we bid Ed so long and busted tail down old Avondale Avenue toward home. I remember it was one of the most joyous feelings I'd ever known. Mort, Eric, Dom and I were slapping five and screaming "HOW 'BOUT THOSE TIGERS!" for all ears to hear.

Horns were honking. People were dancing in the streets. My neighbors were hugging and kissing. Banners were everywhere — most of them had "Sock it to 'em Tigers" or "Hit that ball Willie" or "Denny McLain for President" inscribed upon them.

When I got home, I remember my father sitting at the kitchen table with a huge smile and kind of a glazed look in his eyes. He looked fatigued — as if the euphoria had sapped his energy. It was a great moment for him. At the time, though, I couldn't really understand his reaction. Why wasn't he out whooping it up with everyone else?

NOW COMES 1984. Ed's Barbershop is now either a lawyer's office or a doctor's office. A sick feeling in the bottom of my stomach tells me Ed wasn't around to share this latest bout of Tigermania.

I am no longer a schoolboy — though some may argue that I still act like one. I'm a sports editor now. I'm supposed to be totally objective when it comes to sports. I am not supposed to root, root, root for the home team.

Yet, since 1988 I have endured 16 seasons of disappointment with the Tigers. Some years, 1973 through 1975 were just flat-out embarrassing. Some years, 1972, 1981 and 1983, were fairly exciting. But, all years since 1988 ended unhappily.

Then came 1984. The Tigers started at a 35-5 clip and I was on cloud nine. They slumped before the All-Star break and I became grouchy and irritable. They lost the first game after the break and I was worse.

Then they won the next three and my mood brightened. So it went throughout the summer, my mood was tied to successes and failures of the Detroit Tigers. (Please, don't try to analyze this peculiar behavior. It won't do you any good. You see, my second uncle, Barney McCosky, played for the Tigers in the late 1930s and early '40s. His blood flowed into my father, my father's into me. It's a hereditary thing.)

FRIDAY NIGHT, Oct. 5. I'm frenzied. The Tigers are battling the Royals for the American League pennant. The little black and white television set in the managing editor's office here at Observer & Eccentric headquarters is on. I'm racing back and forth taking prep scores and results over the phone, catching glimpses of the game whenever I can.

Brad Emons, Scott Adler, Hugh Gallagher, Jim Ritz, Dave Withers and Jackie McKernan — co-workers — are all huddled into the ME's office. I join them in the bottom of the ninth. Let's see the phones ring — I'm not home for three more outs.

First batter Lynn Jones. I'm pacing like an expectant father. He flies out on the first Willie Hernandez pitch. Two more, Willie, two more baby. "Settle down, Chris, you're going to give yourself an ulcer," Jackie says. She doesn't understand. It's a blood disorder — I'm no longer in control of my emotions.

SECOND HITTER, George Brett. My God! He can tie it up with one swing. I saw him do it against the Yankees in 1976. Whew! Willie gets him on an easy grounder.

I'm on my knees now. One more Willie baby! Hal McTear. Infield grounder. Single. Damn it! If Howie Melt says one more thing about Alan Trammell's arm I'm throwing this chair through the TV.

Darryl Motley. You can get him Willie. I'm on my knees. Paul Pop. Stay in play, stay in play! Squeeze it, Marty, squeeze it. YES!!! Everybody else in the newsroom is screaming and shouting. The TV shows the party downtown. Everyone's whooping it up.

I'm sitting at my desk with a huge smile and kind of a glazed look in my eyes. It was as if the end my dad had sapped my energy. I now fully understand my father's reaction to the Tigers' triumph in 1988.



photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington diver Katie Macintosh (above) and teammate Amy Bischof earned the Falcons a second place Thursday night.

cross country

Farmington pack gets RU crown

It was an important hurdle for Jerry Young's Farmington boys cross country team.

All season the Falcons have been touted as the best team this side of Catholic Central. That is, they were supposed to be the best public school team in Observerland.

Well, the Falcons took another step toward proving that Tuesday by surviving a muddy Cass Benton course and a talented 10-team field to win the annual Redford Union Invitational.

It was the sixth time the Falcons have won the RU gathering.

"We thought we had a good shot at winning it," said Young. "We would have been very disappointed if we didn't."

Deborn placed second with 88 points. Deborn Edsol Ford (132) was third. Host Redford Union (185) was fourth and Westland John Glenn (188) placed fifth.

THE REST of the field placed in this order: Northville (216), Walled Lake Central (238), Livonia Bentley (240), Belleville (245), Walled Lake Western (251), Livonia Stevenson (265), Garden City (271), Plymouth Salem (292), Plymouth Canton (306), Farmington

Harrison (337), Livonia Churchill (364), Trenton (395), North Farmington (430) and Redford Thurston (455).

Chris Inch paced the Falcons, placing fifth overall with a time of 16:51. Dave Dunneback took ninth in 17:03. Al Stebbins (17:04), placed 10th, Bruce Krait (17:07) 12th, Bryan Lawton (17:15) 18th, and Kere Kerr (17:16) 19th.

"The kids really did a nice job," Young said. "The weather was just terrible. It was humid, wet, muddy. Not real conducive to cross country running."

(See Monday's Observer for complete statistics of both the boys and girls races at the RU Invitational.)

FARMINGTON HILLS MERCY ran its dual meet record to 9-1 with a 15-50 clobbering of Birmingham Marian Tuesday at Cass Benton.

Carol McLampy (21:37) led the Marlin parade at the finish line. She was followed by Marnie Healey (21:59), Amy Lafferty (22:14), Megan Gerick (22:34) and Kim Davis (23:20).

The victory earns Mercy at least a tie in the Catholic League with Ladywood and Regina.

OCC runners gain tie for Macomb title

Three runners placed among the top six, enabling Oakland Community College's cross country team to tie with Lansing CC for first at the Monarch Invitational Sept. 28 at Macomb CC.

Geoff Clendening led the Raiders by finishing fourth overall (25:53). A pair of teammates followed: Greg Palardy, fifth (26:36) and Robert Henderson, sixth (28:00).

Other OCC scorers were Ryan Robin-

son, 11th (28:49) and Steve Willusz, 13th (27:02).

OCC and Lansing each scored 39 points. Macomb was third with 82, followed by Grand Rapids CC (128), Schoolcraft College (185), Kent State-Ashland (185), St. Clair CC (236) and Alpena CC.

Lansing's Eric Stuber was the overall winner (23:35).

North swimmers take FHS Relays

Maybe they should call it the North Farmington relays. The North Farmington girls swim team dominated the six-team field Tuesday night to win the Farmington Swim Relays.

The Raiders amassed 90 points, taking first in five of the eight events. West Bloomfield (77 points) placed second.

The rest finished in a pack: Novi (44), Northville (43), Farmington Harrison (41) and host Farmington (31).

The Raiders began the meet by winning the first two events. Kathy Pierog, Cindy Cramer, Colleen Carey and Jill Menellely combined on a 4:26.8 to win the 400-yard medley relay.

Amy Menellely, Kelly O'Brien, Liz Worthen and Marge Cramer went 2:24.4 to win the 200 breaststroke relay.

West Bloomfield won the 200 backstroke relay (2:08.8) and the 200 freestyle (1:45.9).

PIEROG, AMY Monfette, Jennifer Rowe and Marge Cramer won the 200 butterfly relay in 2:08.1 for North.

Cindy Cramer, Amy Menellely, Worthen and Carey captured the 400 individual medley in 4:27.7. The crescendo relay was also won by North — Amy Monfette, Suzette Greenberg, Jill Menellely and Rowe went 5:04.7.

The host team, Farmington, took a pair of seconds. Katie Macintosh and Amy Bischof amassed 165.5 points in the diving relay which was second to West Bloomfield's 174.4.

The Falcons also got a second from their 200 freestyle team — Jenny Zuborski, Julie Rainford, Mary Ellen Lorenz and Carolyn Smith swam a 1:55.9.

Harrison got a second in the medley relay. Michelle Harrison, Catherine Tucker, Melissa Joy and Diana Raddatz went 4:48.3.

Nancy Schwedt, Raddatz, Tucker and Joy combined on a 5:13.6 in the crescendo, also good for second place.



Colleen Carey of North Farmington helped her team to victory at the Farmington Relays Tuesday swimming in two winning events.

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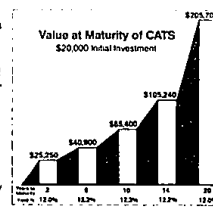
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