

Observer's top coaches include North's O'Leary

By Brad Emmons
staff writer

In the world of team sports, coaching is often overlooked in favor of the athlete.

But when it comes to prep sports, coaching often is the determining factor in terms of wins and losses.

This year, the Observer sports staff would like to honor six coaches who made a great impact on their respective programs this season. The jobs they turned in are noteworthy, and they are to be commended for their efforts.

Here is a rundown of the fall sports Coaches of the Year.

JIM O'LEARY, North Farmington, football: Riddled by graduation the previous year, the second-year coach took a relatively inexperienced team and led it to an 8-1 record and the Northwest Suburban League (NSL) crown (for the second straight year).

After succeeding one of the state's top coaches, Ron Holland, O'Leary's record over the past two years has been 14-4.

O'Leary's performance in 1984 is to be saluted along with the performances turned by Garden City coach Dean Shipman and Livonia Stevenson's Jack Reardon, whose teams each went 7-2. Farmington's Don Kuch should also receive mention. His team finished 6-3, with two of the losses coming to top-rated Farmington Harrison. The Falcons also dashed North's dream of an un-

beaten season with a win in the final game.

TIM NEWMAN, Livonia Franklin, girls basketball: The third-year Franklin coach worked wonders this year with a team whose tallest player was 5-foot-6.

The 27-year-old Newman led Franklin to a 17-5 overall record and brought the school its first ever district championship. The Patriots also were co-champions of the NSL for the second straight year.

In three seasons, Newman's record is 44-21. He is a Franklin graduate.

Other fine jobs turned in by area coaches that shouldn't be overlooked are those of last year's coach of the year, Plymouth Salem's Fred Thomann, and North Farmington's Greg Grodzinski.

MIKE MORGAN, Plymouth Canton, boys soccer: In his first year with the boys, Morgan led the Chiefs to the second best record in the Western Lakes Soccer League behind Livonia Stevenson.

The Chiefs won the Western Division and finished the year with a 14-3 overall record. Morgan also coaches the Canton girls.

Among other area boys soccer coaches who deserve mention, include Stevenson's Pete Scerri, who led his team to the state championship final; and Plymouth Salem's

Ken Johnson, who directed his team to the Class A regional final.

LOIS McDONALD, Livonia Stevenson, girls swimming: The veteran Stevenson coach has led the Spartans to a trio of second-place finishes in the state Class A meet.

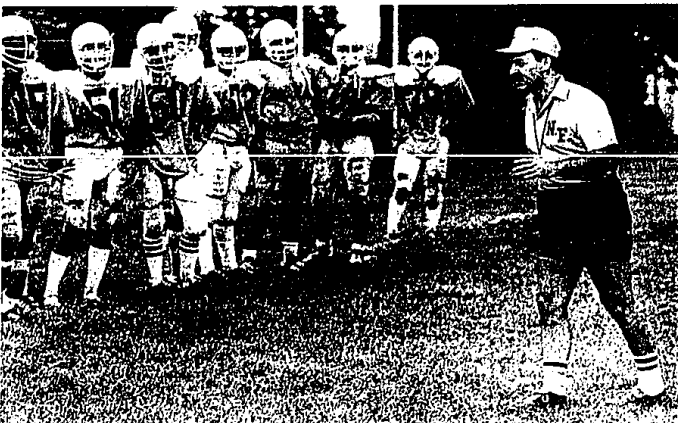
This season, Stevenson won the Western Lakes Relays and the WLLA title, setting numerous records. Stevenson was unbeaten and ranked No. 1 before being nixed out by Ann Arbor Pioneer in the state finals.

Not to be overlooked are the efforts turned in by North Farmington's Pat Duthie, whose team was sixth in Class A; and Plymouth Salem's Chuck Olson, whose team finished second behind Stevenson in the WLLA.

TONY MAGNI, Catholic Central, boys cross country: Perfection is something rare in high school sports, but Tony Magni, along with assistant Kevin Kavanagh, directed Redford CC to 13 straight dual-meet wins without a loss.

Magni also led CC to its second straight Class A state and regional crowns, not to mention the Operation-Friendship and Catholic League titles.

Magni was also honored last month as Class A Coach of the Year by MITCA, the statewide organization of cross country coaches. In addition to the outstanding



RANDY BORGST/staff photographer

Jim O'Leary, 1984 Coach of The Year from North Farmington, captured his team's attention and

this year's Northwest Suburban League championship.

year by Magni, the Observer would also like to recognize Farmington's Jerry Young, whose team qualified for the state meet, won the WLLA and was ranked in the top 10; and Westland John Glenn's Ed Phillips, whose team won the Northwest Suburban League meet and finished second in the regional.

ALAN MARTENS, Livonia Churchill, girls cross country: Led by Martens, Livonia Churchill came on strong at the end of the season to earn the No. 1 ranking in Observerland. An also-ran at mid-season,

Churchill's young team came of age late in the year, winning the Western Lakes meet and qualifying for the state by finishing first in the regional.

Martens, though, gives much of the credit for the team's success to

veteran boys coach Dave Westover. Also to be saluted is first-year coach Tom Triesdale, who guided Plymouth Salem to its first-ever state meet berth; and Redford Union's Jim Miller, whose team placed second in the regional.

Rebuilt Pioneers still a power

By C.J. Rieck
staff writer

Replacing a three-time NCAA Division II Summer of the Year is never easy. Add to that the graduation of 10 other seniors, and it can be devastating.

But Oakland University men's swim coach Pete Hovland anticipated it. He knew what was coming. What he didn't expect was to lose Mike McCloskey.

McCloskey, an All-American in two events last season, was expected to help offset the loss of Tracy Huth, a four-time national champion in the 200-yard and 400-yard individual medleys. But McCloskey didn't make grades, and that has left a gaping hole in OU's lineup.

"He couldn't have replaced Tracy," said Hovland. "But he would have placed in the top three nationally. It was a tremendous loss."

Which means that OU, which placed second in each of the past two seasons at the NCAA Division II Finals, will be hard pressed to match that performance.

"Everyone is calling it a rebuilding year," Hovland said, admitting, "We are very young, very inexperienced."

BUT THE CUPBOARD is far from bare, not with a strong group of freshmen and solid returnees.

Leading the returnees is senior John Christiansen, from Grand Haven, who has won Michigan Pointe, and sophomore Steve Larson, from East Kentwood.

Christiansen, a sprint freestyler and butterflyer, was an NCAA finalist in three events and is steadily nearing his lifetime bests. Croghan, a distance freestyler, was second in the 1,650 and third in the

OU sports

800 at last year's nationals. He, too, is already nearing personal bests.

Larson suffered through a "bad national meet" last season, according to Hovland. But, he added, "He's rebounded and made the (national) cuts already. He's a key for us — he's got potential to score in three events. He's the most talented sprint and middle-distance freestyler to come to OU in a long time."

Another swimmer Hovland is expecting to rebound from a disappointing national meet is Colton, who as a freshman was a double national champion in the 100 and 200 backstrokes. Last season, he was second in the 100 and seventh in the 200.

"Jeff's attitude is completely different," said Hovland. Hopes of trying out for the U.S. Olympic team distracted Colton, Hovland said, and he overtrained for last season's nationals.

"I think we've got the old Jeff Colton back," Hovland said. "He's turning in times as good as he's ever done."

THE FUTURE of OU swimming rests with a group of promising freshmen and a transfer student. Freshmen Jeff Kuhn, from East Kentwood, and Mark Vanderley, from Grandville, finished one-two in the 100 breaststroke at the Class A state meet last year. Vanderley has also proved to be a capable IM'er.

Jeff Cooper, of Schwartz Creek, and Tom Warnica, of Rochester, add depth to the middle-distance freestyle event, while Steve Hamsy, from Chelsea, was a state Class B finalist in the 50 and 100

freestyles. All three are freshmen. The transfer student who has helped greatly is sophomore Mike Koleber, from Washington (Mich.) and the U.S. Naval Academy. Despite sitting out a year, Koleber "hasn't missed a beat" in the sprint freestyles, according to Hovland.

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volleyball

Raiders feast in winning opener

The North Farmington volleyball team made the best of its season opener Wednesday dusting off Novi, 15-4, 15-5.

Patti Koricki, senior setter, led the way by nailing 10 of 11 serves, 4 for aces. Suzette Greenberg went 12 for 12 from the service line with 2 aces.

"Our serving pretty much dominated the game," said Raider coach Sandy Lubieniecki. "It's early in the season. We were just a little ahead of them."

Nancy Coltran played a strong game on the front row for North.

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