

Sports

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(F16)



Jim Hughes

'Experts' say Hearn wins

PLEASE FORGIVE me if the last thing on my mind right now is high school baseball, softball, track and field, soccer, tennis, golf, etc. Until later this evening, the lone sporting event on my mind is the fight.

This is the day of the long-awaited world middleweight championship prize fight featuring Thomas Hearns, the challenger, and Marvellous Marvin Hagler, the champion. I won't be able to concentrate on Thursday's Troy-Southfield track and field meet until the fight is over.

Hearns, the pugilist from Detroit's Kronk stable who makes his home in Southfield, steps up from junior middleweight with hopes of cracking Hagler's coconut head and capturing his third world title. Hagler, who hasn't lost since March 9, 1976, risks his title in perhaps the biggest challenge since he began fighting as a professional in 1973.

The local favorite, tabbed the "Hit Man," has lost just once when he suffered a technical knockout against welterweight king, Sir Sugar Ray Leonard. Hagler's losses have come against Bobby Watts and Willie Monroe.

THE MEN HAVE had two common opponents — Roberto Duran and Marcus Gerardo. Hagler defeated both on decisions. Hearns KO'd Duran in two rounds and Gerardo in one.

Enough has been written about the fight. We've heard everything from Hearns is tailor-made for Hagler to Hagler is tailor-made for Hearns.

We've heard all the name-calling between the two fighters — a ritual in hyping a championship bout. The only thing I've yet to read is an interpretation about a comment Hagler made concerning Hearns' out-of-the-ring demeanor.

It seems Hagler was quoted as saying Hearns has an "ego" problem. Understand, now, that this is coming from a man who had his name legally changed to "Marvellous."

I have my own ideas about the fight, but I'll save them for later. Let's take a look at what the area experts have to say:

KERRY ROOP, of Nature's Way Martial Arts Academy in Rochester and "retired" Professional Kickboxing Association's light heavyweight champion: "Hearns should win because of his past performances against the same fighters Hagler's fought. He's a better boxer, from a technician standpoint. As long as he doesn't stand toe-to-toe, it should go the distance and Hearns should win a decision."

GARY CASKEY, Eccentric photographer and "No. 1" stringer for United Press International who has shot two Hearns fights for the service: "Hopefully Hearns because I'm pro-Detroit. I think Hearns (25) has the youth advantage over Hagler (30). He's a more devastating puncher from the outside."

STEVE DARNELL, professional middleweight from Livonia who sparred with Hearns last month: "My heart is with Hearns, but my head says Hagler. Hearns has a big ego, like he's invincible. I think he might get knocked off his high horse."

MARTY BUDNER, my colleague whose only knowledge of fighting comes from watching hockey games: "I like Hagler. I think he has too much punching power. He's proven himself more than Hearns has. I think he'll be too tough inside. Although I want Hearns to win, I don't have a very good feeling. I think Hearns will fall like the Silverdome roof."

RICH SWENSON, all-around Eccentric Journalist and an avid boxing fan: "Hearns. If you've never seen a coconut cracked, you better watch this fight. Hearns is going to drop Hagler like a bad habit."

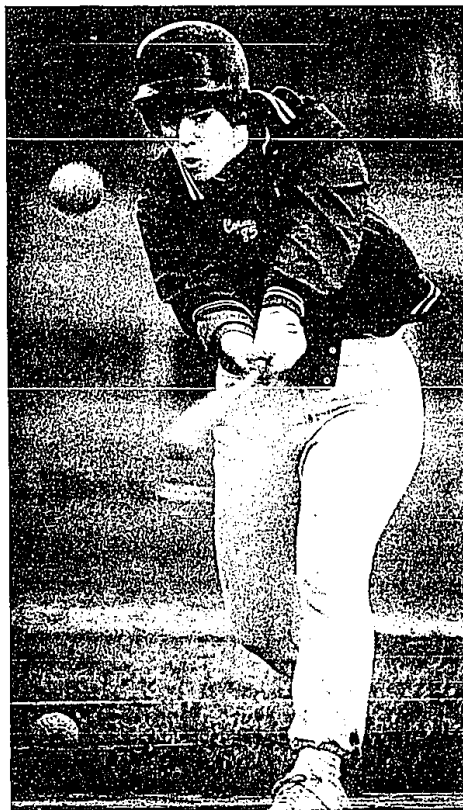
CHRIS MCCOSKY, Observer sports editor who thinks John Miller can KO either fighter: "I like the Hit Man. I don't think he'll knock out Hagler in three rounds like he says, but I think he'll win. Hearns had Leonard beat, and Leonard beat one of the best fighters of all time. If Hearns fights a smart fight, he'll win it."

C.J. RISAK, Observer & Eccentric sports columnist who knows more about bowling than boxing: "Hearns on a decision. It'll be close, but Hearns'll win because he'll hurt Hagler early, then box him the rest of the way. He has the best jab around and he has superior height and reach. I'll go 12 rounds. We'll get our money's worth. At 35 bucks a shot, we're better."

JEAN BRAND, in charge of medical records for a Southfield doctor's office and self-proclaimed boxing expert: "Hearns. That's what you want me to say, right? I'm really not sure. I like Hearns because of his reach advantage. If Hearns can keep Hagler away from the in-fighting, the Hit Man will win."

BRAD EMMONS, Observer sports editor and president of the Craig Payne Fan Club: "Hearns because he learned a lot from the Leonard fight. He learned he can't go toe-to-toe. If he boxes and moves, that's when he's most effective. Bob and weave."

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Colette Cashin is one of only three seniors on the Farmington softball squad this season as the Hawks try to reach the .500 mark.

Graduation hits softballers hard

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Graduation losses are a lot like spring break for area coaches. The coaches don't like them, but there's nothing they can really do about it.

Graduation, it seems, was extra harsh on the three Farmington-area softball teams this season. North Farmington, Farmington Harrison and Farmington all lost key players from last year's team.

North was perhaps the hardest hit. Coach Dennis Mikel lost one of Observerland's most productive players in Amy Austin, as well as three-year starters Linda Renard and Michele Rosen.

Farmington lost three key players in Jill Waterman, Karen Devine and Tara Twomey.

Harrison lost Karen Sklar, who has earned a spot on the Michigan State roster as a walk-on, and centerfielder-lead-off hitter Laurie Ambrose.

PERIAPS IT'S appropriate that North Farmington has the best crop of returnees of the three. After all, the Raiders lost the most.

Mikel is returning six players who either started or saw considerable action last year. Leading the group is all-Northwest Suburban League catcher Patti Kozicki. Her battery mate, three-year varsity hurler Suzette Greenberg is also back.

Donna Konjarevich, a three-year starter and second team all-NSL last year, is back at first base. Senior Lisa Mummert and juniors Libby Shaw (second base) and Ma Paradis (shortstop) are also back.

"We're still a young team," Mikel said. "We have four seniors, four juniors and four sophomores. The potential is good if the inexperienced players can produce consistently."

One of the younger players expected to contribute is sophomore Renee Fishell. She'll see action at both third base and on the mound.

With experience, not to mention talent, on the mound and behind the plate, the Raiders should improve upon their 11-7 record last year and could challenge for the NSL title with John Glenn and Livonia Franklin.

FARMINGTON COACH Richard Roy will have to rely heavily on underclassmen this season. The Falcons will open the season with just two seniors and three juniors.

Senior Jenny Wischmeyer and junior Lisa Edwards will share the mound duty. Behind the plate

softball

is sophomore Becky Philp. Those three constitute Farmington's returnees.

Roy, though, is enthusiastic about some of the new faces in camp.

"These younger kids have shown a very good attitude," Roy said. "We have some good young players."

Among the promising newcomers are junior outfielder Michelle Devine, sophomores Mary Velucci (second base) and Jenny Zahorski (pitcher, second base) and freshman Kelli Ross (shortstop).

The Falcons were 5-15 last year. The Falcons could improve on that record, if the hitting comes around and the young players contribute.

FARMINGTON HARRISON coach Mike Teachman, entering his fifth softball season, has always been one to take a realistic approach when assessing his teams.

When asked about the Hawks' outlook for 1985, the likeable coach simply replied, "500."

The Hawks have a good group of athletes with the potential to be a good hitting club. At the same time, the team lacks pitching and softball experience.

Three seniors head the list of returnees. Catcher Colette Cashin and outfielders Sandy Turnquist and Kim George.

Teachman is hoping to get solid production from juniors Dana Dinkins (outfield, catcher), Kristi Rugh (shortstop) and Diana Raddatz (first base, outfield) — all three are multiple-sport athletes at Harrison, as are George, Turnquist and Cashin.

Sophomores Theresa Spis (centerfield) and Heidi Reyst (pitcher, third base) will also help out.

Harrison will open the season Wednesday at Northville. Farmington is at Livonia Bentley Wednesday and North opens the NSL season at home Tuesday with Livonia Franklin.

Setbacks can't discourage Roth

By Marty Budner
staff writer

JEFF ROTH is without a playing card.

But he still owns a set of golf clubs and is employed. He figures that's not all bad.

Roth, the newest member of the three-man professional staff at West Bloomfield's Tam O'Shanter Country Club, participated last summer on the Tournament Players Series (TPS) golf circuit.

Although he didn't fare well enough to regain his TPS playing card, Roth, a 27-year-old Farmington resident, doesn't consider the experience a failure.

"I certainly was disappointed I didn't regain my player's card just to see what I could do a second year," said Roth last week on a quiet April morning inside the Tam O'Shanter clubhouse. "But I don't feel like I failed."

"Having the kind of stroke average I did, being on the money list, finishing fourth in one tournament and reaching some personal goals. I feel I didn't fail at all. I just didn't play good enough to regain my card."

"I definitely played better than a high percentage of guys who are out there all the time," he said.

THE TPS IS a satellite series — a minor league, for sake of comparison — where golfers refine their game in hope of gaining glorification as a main-tour member alongside such stars as Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson or Craig Stadler.

The series, co-sponsored by the PGA tour, the PGA Club Pros of America and local businesses, consisted of 9 events in 1984. Individually, Roth was sponsored by upper Michigan's Sugarloaf Resort and various friends.

Roth's best TPS showing was a fourth-place finish at the Everett Open in Seattle last August when he pocketed \$7,300. For the series, the Plymouth Salem High School graduate had a 71.8 TPS stroke average, was 47th on the money list among more than 300 people and averaged a little over \$1,000 per event.

"I thought I did pretty darn good considering I never played major pro golf before and that I played against some of the guys coming off the main tour

like Dennis Watson, Peter Jacobson and Chi Chi Rodriguez," he said.

"I figured I played in some 45 tournaments last summer. I broke even on the TPS series, but it was playing in all the other tournaments to keep sharp that really hurt the pocketbook. If I had to do it again, I might not schedule as many events."

"I learned that when you're playing golf at that level it's the guy who has the best psychological game that does well," said Roth. "It's not the best physical game anymore because everybody can hit from tee to green. It's the guy with the best mental approach who can win the most."

ONLY THE TPS' leading money winner at year-end gains an automatic exemption to the main tour the following year. The others have two chances to qualify for the TPS.

Roth, who graduated from the University of Arizona in 1979 with a business degree in real estate, failed to re-qualify at regional championships held in Chattanooga and California.

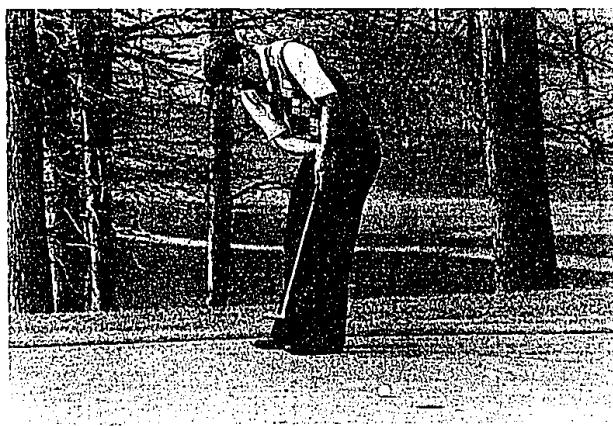
Roth, who quit his job as assistant club pro at Wabcock Country Club to enter the TPS series when he originally qualified in the fall of 1983, was left without a job and without the tour card.

"I made a few phone calls around December, and I eventually was able to get the job out here. I kind of staggered through the holidays — I had some personal problems, too — but I wasn't really depressed about not making the tour. I was thinking about staying out in California, but (Michigan) is where I have a lot of friends."

Will Roth return to the TPS for another shot at the big time?

"You never say never, but the circumstances would have to be extraordinary. Right now, I'd have to say no," he said. "My No. 1 object is to get my own job. With my background, experience and playing knowledge, everything's kind of complete for me. But you have to be patient and wait for the right opportunity."

"I'm just glad to be here right now, and I think I'll fit in to this position very comfortably," he said. "Golf means a lot more to me now. They can never take my clubs away."



Jeff Roth demonstrates his brand new, and somewhat unusual, putting stroke.

Farmington club player learns lesson through positive thinking

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Save for a lone duck waddling up the pathway to the main clubhouse, Thursday morning was lifeless around the Tam O'Shanter Country Club.

Normally the private club off Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield would be bustling with activity at 7 a.m. Buy not this day.

Outside, the course remained untouched, with traces of winter's wrath — puddles of water, uncut greens and scattered leaves — still in evidence. Inside the shop, assistant pro Skip Huegla charted an account book while newcomer Jeff Roth awaited an interview and short picture-taking session.

Roth, just two weeks on the job, had hoped to begin his instructional duties by now. He figured on already having played a few rounds to become acquainted with club members.

But no.

The flickle Michigan weather has delayed his playing duties but hasn't curtailed his enthusiasm.

ROTH, THE FORMER assistant pro at Wabcock Country Club and Birmingham Country Club, is back in town and anxious to share his experiences with the 200-plus club members of Tam O'Shanter.

Roth played on the Tournament Players Series satellite tour last year. His ultimate goal was to qualify for the PGA's and USGA's main tour series, but it didn't work out.

Although Roth finished fourth in one tournament (the Everett Open in Seattle), placed 47th on the TPS money-winning list and had a stroke average of 71.8, the 27-year-old pro failed to recapture his 1983 TPS playing card.

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