

Area sprinter eyes Big 10 100-meter title

By C.J. Rieck
staff writer

If there is a single ability Vivian McKenzie possesses that separates her from the rest of us, it's determination — and then some.

From the time she was a sophomore in high school, McKenzie knew what she wanted and what she'd have to do to achieve it. What makes her more unique is that she has seen her goals reach fruition.

McKenzie has traveled a circuitous route to reach her present position, which is lofty indeed. Currently a senior at University of Iowa, she is the reigning Big Ten 100-meter track champion.

Not just for last year, though. McKenzie is on the brink of doing what no other sprinter has ever done in the conference. When she takes to the track at the University of Wis-

consin May 23-24, she'll be gunning for her fourth straight title.

IT'S A GOAL she's — here's that word again — determined to reach.

"People are trying to get in my way," McKenzie said, "but they're still going to have to beat me."

Winning four consecutive league titles was not on McKenzie's mind when she decided to attend Iowa. "I never realized I was establishing a precedent here," she said.

That didn't enter her mind until after she won the 100-meter crown as a sophomore. "Last year (as a junior), I really wanted it," she said.

She got her third straight in spite of an injury that caused her to miss the start of the season. McKenzie rebounded to run a school-record 11.45 in the league preliminaries.

McKenzie came to Iowa from West Bloomfield. And Detroit Mum-

college sports

ford. And Detroit Chadsey. She attended all three high schools, establishing herself in track as a freshman and sophomore at West Bloomfield.

BUT THE STRENGTH of the Laker team graduated after McKenzie's sophomore season. She decided to go with it; she transferred to Mumford.

"I wasn't getting the competition I needed," she explained. "The only time I was challenged was at the state meet."

McKenzie was running with the Motor City Striders, too. So when she switched schools she knew others on

the track teams.

"By my junior year, I thought I needed to get people to notice me," she said. "I really wanted to get a scholarship and go to college and compete."

Which explains why McKenzie transferred again, after her junior year, to Chadsey. More competition.

McKenzie's determination to get noticed paid off in several scholarship offers. Michigan and Michigan State both recruited her heavily, but McKenzie wanted to leave the state. "I knew everyone on the track teams there," she said. "I just felt I needed a change."

MIKE STRONG had recruited her for the University of New Mexico, but McKenzie thought that "was too far away." She couldn't decide until Strong called back, this time as an assistant coach at Iowa.

McKenzie has never regretted her choice of schools, and Iowa has not regretted her decision, either.

Repeating as champion is never easy. The 100 might be more difficult. College-level talent is extremely close to begin with. In a race that lasts less than a dozen seconds, any mistake, however small, can spell the difference between victory and defeat.

While McKenzie's raw ability has carried her to the title, it's her tunnel-visioned determination that has kept her on top.

"My concentration is very, very intense at that point," she said of the start of the 100. "I never even think

about my start. I concentrate on the last 20 meters of the race because that's where I tend to slack off. That's what happened last weekend. I relaxed and Davera (Taylor, a teammate) went right by me."

McKENZIE LOST to Taylor Saturday at the Iowa State-hosted Velshea Relays. Taylor, who McKenzie said she "considers to be my biggest challenge," was hand-timed at 11.2. McKenzie's clocking was 11.3.

"If I see someone close to me (in a race), I try to remain loose and calm," McKenzie said. "I want to keep my stride, and I don't want to tense up."

So far, McKenzie's concentration has been excellent. She still has a semester of school remaining — she'll help coach the track team next fall — and plans to keep running.

Falcons advance

The state soccer tournament has begun and two Observant teams have advanced from pre-district qualifying rounds.

Farmington knocked off Southfield-Lathrup in a qualifier Tuesday, 5-1. Stacy Schalm scored three goals for the Falcons and Laurie Dingle two. Leslie Martin had two assists.

The Falcons (6-3) will play Dearborn Fordson in the pre-district. No game date has been set.

Livonia Stevenson, No. 2-ranked both statewide and in Observantland, zipped Ann Arbor Pioneer Monday, 5-0.

"It was us, Ann Arbor Pioneer and the wind out there," said Spartan coach Noreen Divens. "The wind was really bad, and it was throwing the ball all over."

Stevenson managed to outshoot Pioneer, 31-2. Elaine Zager recorded her ninth shutout.

Lori Green scored four of the Stevenson goals and Marcella Allan had the other.

Stevenson will play North Farmington in the next round.

OTHER MATCHES

MERCY 2, FOLEY 1: Farmington Hills Mercy got goals from Margaret DeMattia and Stacy Nolta Tuesday to nip Catholic League rival Madison Heights Bishop Foley.

DeMattia's goal was unassisted and tied the game 1-1 in the first half. Nolta scored the game-winner with 12 minutes left off a corner kick from Maribeth Knight.

Mercy (6-1-2) outshot Foley, 41-10.

CANTON 10, HARRISON 1: Plymouth Canton (6-4-1 overall, 4-4-1 in the Western Lakes) kept Farmington Harrison winless Monday.

Shannon Meath and Beth Frigge scored two goals each. Candl Jones had a goal and three assists while Jenny Steinhelb scored once and had four assists. Trish Greenhalge, Lori Stocklein, Michelle Lonigro and Renee Rice also scored.

The Hawks lost a tough 4-3 decision to Walled Lake Western last Friday. Jennifer Hughes, Janine Whittemore and Julie Reeker all scored for Harrison.

FRANKLIN 5, GARDEN CITY 0: Five different Livonia Franklin strikers scored and pair of Patriots shared the shutout Tuesday.

Angie Silegmeier, Heather Colvin, Deanne Brda, Kathy Kulick and Andrea Horn each scored for Franklin (6-5-2).

Kim Owings and Colvin played goal and stopped all four shots.

On Monday, the Pats lost a 2-0 Western Lakes match to Northville.

SALEM 3, FARMINGTON 0: Missy Smith, Julie Tortora and Jill Estey each scored for Plymouth Salem Monday.

Eileen Schnackel made six saves to post the shutout.

Farmington was playing without the services of leading scorer Laurie Dingle.

Salem is 8-2-1 on the season.



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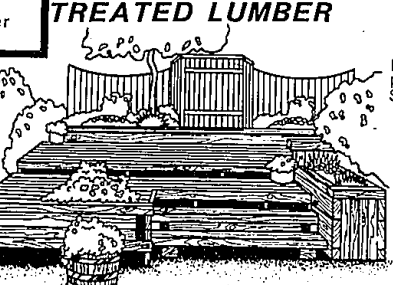
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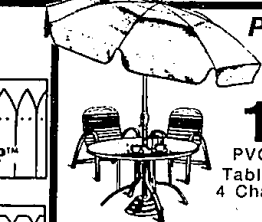
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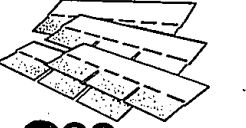
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