## Sports

entertainment inside

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### Feeling the heat

Farmington's Al Stebbins certainly did at the Class A state meet Saturday — not heat from fellow runners as much as the near 90-degree heat that enveloped lower Michigan. Still, Stebbins turned in a fine performance in the 1,600 run. Details on Page 2D.

GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

# Hawks face a tough road in 'B' regional

**By Chris McCosky**
staff writer

Some parents of Farmington Harrison baseball players may be packing lunches for the trip to Mount Morris Saturday, but the Hawks aren't in for a picnic.

Harrison's opponent in the state Class B regional semifinal game is Bay City Handy — a team that is no stranger to the Class B state tournament. Handy has won district titles in four of the last five years, lost in the regionals finals a year ago and was the state runners-up in 1982.

This season, Handy is 24-11. That record takes on greater significance considering the team was 9-9, at one point.

If the Hawks survive Handy, they would face either Flint Ainsworth or Marine City. Marine City is 22-1 and Ainsworth is a few notches above .500. "But I understand they have real good pitching," said Harrison coach John Herrington.

In either case, no picnic.

"IT SHOULD be a real good tournament," Herrington said. "Our kids are really looking forward to it. In fact, I think our kids were looking to the tournament before the league season."

Understandable, really, considering the murderous Western Lakes schedule and Harrison's lengthy run in the Class A state tournament last year when they reached the state semifinals.

Bay City Handy can empathize with Harrison's regular season plight. They too were ousted from league contention early.

"We've played pretty much all Class A teams," said Handy coach Dave Petrosky. "We beat Midland Dow and they were state-ranked. We play all the Midland schools, we played Mount Pleasant.

"We have three good pitchers and we've been playing our best baseball of the season during the last two weeks."

HANDY'S ACE is junior righthander Greg Behmlander. He has posted a 9-2 record this season with losses to Grosse Pointe North and Midland. His ERA is 1.33.

"We don't have a lot of power, but we score a lot of runs," Petrosky said. "We have a bunch of good allaround ballplayers; no one really outstanding."

Right fielder George Escamilla is leading the team with an even .400 batting average. Petrosky said he has five other players hitting .300 or better.

"I'm worried, though — we had two kids get hurt in the district," he said. "Our No. 2 pitcher probably won't be able to play. One of our other starters got hit in the eye before the districts and it swelled up real bad. He played, went 4-for-4 with one eye."

Tough kids in Bay City.

THE HAWKS, who beat No. 2-ranked Linden and Ortonville Brandon in district play last week, will probably start sophomore Jason Hicks in the semifinal game. Mark Schmidt and Gary Schwedt may also see work.

Sam Rineer and Ken George have been the hot hitters of late for the Hawks. George, as he did so often in the state tournament last year, knocked home the game-winning run in the district finale last week. He had four hits in the game. Rineer slammed a key two-run homer against Linden.

Mount Morris is located near Flint. The easiest route to the field, according to Mount Morris athletic director John Burtrum, is to take I-75 north to the Mount Morris Road exit. Head east on Mount Morris to the second stop light: Neff Road. Make a left and you are at the field.

Harrison plays Bay City at 10 a.m. Ainsworth and Marine City go immediately after. The title game is slated for 2:30 p.m.

# Early rounds pave way for Catholic Central's net crown

**By Brad Emons**
staff writer

A record-breaking opening day of tennis carried Redford Catholic Central to its second straight Class A title.

Shamrock netters went undefeated during the first three rounds on Friday, scoring 21 of their 24 points in the two-day event held at the Midland Community Tennis Center.

Midland Dow finished second with 22 points, while three teams, including Catholic League champion Birmingham Brother Rice, tied for third with 19 each.

"It was more difficult winning it this year because the points were more on target," said CC coach Frank Garlicki. "The weather wasn't a factor this year and everybody played their normal game."

Catholic Central reached the semifinal round in six of seven flights.

The Shamrocks' lone champion was No. 3 singles player Steve Campbell, a sophomore who beat Chris Madison of East Lansing for the crown, 6-4, 6-1. He finished the

## tennis

season with a 33-1 overall record.

"STEVE IS JUST a fantastic kid and a neat kid to coach," Garlicki said. "He's a serve and volley player. He uses the baseline game, but prefers being at the net."

CC's No. 3 doubles team of Mark Frederick and Walt Bartels reached the finals of before being ousted by Birmingham Seaholm's Joel Bodine, 7-6, 4-6, 6-3. The CC pair finished with a 20-5 record.

At No. 1 doubles, CC's Jim Gillespie and Jeff Huston reached the semifinal before losing to another Seaholm duo, Pat Dunn and Jeff Ingold.

At No. 2 doubles, Randy Janis and Rob Transou of CC ran into Catholic League nemesis Tim Kalil and Dave Piazzon of Rice in another semifinal. Phil Eagleson, the Shamrocks' No. 2 singles player, reached the final

four before losing to No. 1 seed Tony Grover of Dow. Such was also the case of No. 4 man Anthony Mikulec, a freshman, who was ousted by No. 1 seed Ed Bowman, also of Dow.

The only Shamrock denied a spot in the semifinals was No. 1 singles player Mark Agah, who was taken out in a quarterfinal match by top seed Chris Walker of Grand Rapids Creston.

GARLICKI said he was confident his team could repeat, even after losing the Catholic League crown to Rice on May 24.

"I was never concerned," said the CC coach. "I could tell right away that they were playing to their best performance levels."

With only the No. 3 doubles team of Frederick and Bartels graduating, Garlicki and his team are already eyeing a third consecutive crown in 1987.

"The kids are very excited," Garlicki said. "We've already planned a team meeting Thursday to plan our summer and fall tennis schedules."

# The wrongs of spring

THE WACKY WORLD of prep spring sports:

If state tournament time in basketball is known as "March Madness," then what can possibly describe the lunacy of spring tournaments?

It just doesn't make sense. High school sports seasons in the fall and winter are reasonably constructed and fairly simple to figure.

Take football, for example. Players and fans know there will be a game every weekend. They know when league games are upcoming. Both have ample time to psyche up.

And if they win eight or nine games, they know their bonus will be a trip to the state playoffs.

BASKETBALL IS similiar. Games are basically on the same days. Players get used to that routine. It's a long season, but it can be divided into phases: preseason, league season, state tournament. And both players and fans know that when the regular season ends, the state tourney begins.

Now consider spring sports.

If Alfred Hitchcock, Stephen King and Edgar Allen Poe had collaborated in twisting diverse elements into one massive mess of a season, they could have fared no better.

How did we sink to such depths? Search me. I'm fairly certain I can't even say how deep we've sunk.

A season should build toward a crescendo. Nearly every sport follows the same basic plan. It's the one in which the season ends with a championship game.

Week after week, the field of competition narrows until just two teams remain for the climatic showdown.

SOUND FAMILIAR? The object is to build the drama through the season until the do-or-die finale.

Another important element of spring sports in relation to drama: Don't overdo it.

Too many ultimate showdowns not only ruin it for the athletes as well as the fans. How many times can even the best athlete peak in a season?



**C.J. Risak**

A third ingredient in devising a well-conceived sports season is date planning. Set your playing dates so fans can plan around them, and so athletes can point toward them. It serves as another form of goal-setting.

All three elements are vital in the construction of a sports campaign. So how many high school spring sports seasons meet all the criteria?

HOW ABOUT NONE?

As for building toward a climax: It's true each spring sport has a state tournament or championship. However, teams in baseball, softball and soccer can be eliminated from the state tourney by midseason.

Troy's girls' soccer team, for example, won the Southeastern Michigan Association championship, but the Colts were ousted from the state tourney on May 7 by Grosse Pointe South. It was their 11th game of the season, roughly two-thirds of the way through their schedule.

Ditto for Garden City's softball team, which was rated No. 1 in the state, and Rochester Adams baseball squad, which reached sixth-ranked statewide status. Both lost in predistrict games.

AS FOR TOO many pivotal, all-important - showdowns: Consider what many Metro Suburban Activities Association track teams experienced in a two-week period — state regionals, May '16; MSAA league meet, May 20; Oakland County meet, May 23; Ambrose-Eccentric Relays, May 27; state finals, May 31.

Was the Western Lakes Activities Association track schedule any less stressful? Pretend you're a WLAA track coach for a moment. Try telling your star sprinter to concentrate

on Wednesday's league meet when the state finals are Saturday and see how successful you are.

As for specific timing of events: Need I go into this? A schedule containing at least three contests a week is often transformed into something still more monstrous by unpredictable weather. A well-planned campaign can be devastated by a week of rain-outs.

DON'T STOP there, though. A baseball or softball coach who has manuvered his team through this morass might start feeling smug, until he realizes he's reached the state regionals but hasn't a team left.

Proms and graduations have more than once humbled the elite, bumping them from powerhouse to pitiful.

So, all things considered, what have we got here? I'm not sure I know, but it sure is ugly.

And yet, as twisted and godawful as spring sports may seem, it would take just a few changes to set things right.

First, put state tournament competitions after the completion of the regular seasons for every sport. What incentive can a kid have to play a game when he knows his team is already out of the state tournament?

SECOND, CUT on the number of scheduled events. Allow a set number of regular-season tournaments or invitationals. Same thing with dual meets or games. And put state tournaments on Fridays, when they won't interfere with proms and graduations.

Third, set aside specific days each week as rain days. If Monday's game is rained out, then it will be played Tuesday. If the game can't be made up in a week's time, cancel it (unless a league championship depends on it).

It's time those responsible for establishing spring sports policy became more organized. Goals must be clearly set so athletes can easily focus their priorities.