

# Tigers sign Paul Wenson

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

The Detroit Tigers, whose pitching staff has been battered often this season, have convinced Paul Wenson of Farmington to give up his senior season of college ball at the University of Michigan and immediately join their rookie-league team in Bristol, Va.

Wenson, who was bypassed in the recent baseball draft of amateur players, convinced the Tigers Saturday night that he deserved to play for pay when he pitched four shutout innings in a Class A summer league in Pontiac. They, in turn, convinced him to accept their offer, which Wenson said included a big enough bonus to pay for his last year at U-M.

Wenson signed on Sunday, cleaned out his locker at U-M on Monday, left for Bristol on Tuesday and began a two-week training session on Wednesday. The league, comprised of free agents and players who were recently drafted either out of high school or after their junior or senior years of college, begins play following training camp.

Though the life of a rookie-league player means subsistence wages, bus rides, few fans, meager meal money and the fact that 98 percent of them never make the big leagues — Wenson was ecstatic.

"It was something I never thought I'd get. It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance," Wenson said. "You play baseball all of your life for a chance like this and I wasn't going to pass it up."

THE SIGNING and the events preceding it were a family affair. The Tiger scout, Ken Madeja, sat with Wenson's father, Frederick, during

the game. Not only was Paul pitching, but his older brother, Tony, who played two years in the New York Yankees' farm system, was catching. In fact, it was Tony's first organized baseball game in eight years.

After the game, Madeja approached Paul. "He asked me to think about signing with the Tigers and to contact him," said Wenson Monday after fetching his things from Ann Arbor. "I thought about it and contacted him."

Like almost immediately. By the next night, Madeja was in the Wenson's parents' home and Wenson, a 1983 graduate of Farmington High and a former all-Observer baseball selection, was a Tiger.

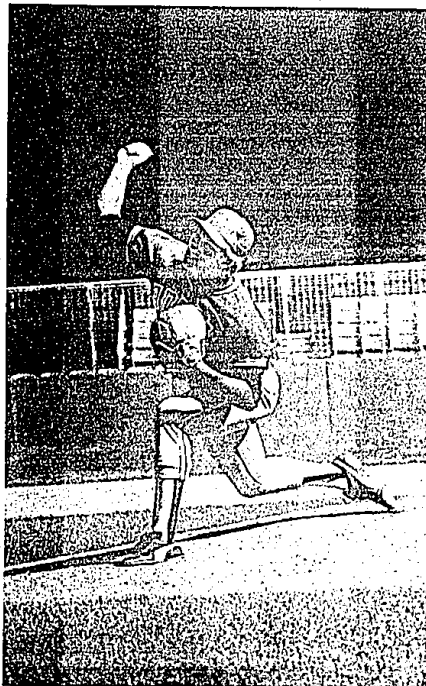
"I'm in shock. It really hasn't hit me, yet. It's not something I ever expected to happen. I guess you can say I'm on cloud 9."

Wenson, 20, a 6-foot, 185-pound right-hander whose strength is the movement on his fastball, was 4-0 with two saves and a 2.58 earned-run average for the Wolverines this year, who won the Big Ten title and made it to the first round of the NCAA playoffs before closing out the season at 47-12.

Despite his record and U-M's success, Wenson wasn't thrilled with his relief role.

WHEN ASKED if he had mixed feelings about leaving the Michigan baseball team, Wenson said tactfully: "I have no regrets at all. I wish I could have pitched more, but the opportunity didn't present itself."

Wenson, who is majoring in management and communications, said he will continue his education as off-season opportunities present themselves. For now, it's first things first. That means: Play ball.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

U-M junior Paul Wenson will forego his senior year as he signed a free agent contract with the Detroit Tigers. He reported to Bristol Tuesday.

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(F30)

## Hawks or Wings hold NHL key to Donnelly's future

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

The teams fall as the weeks go by, and Mike Donnelly still waits.

The Vancouver Canucks, the Washington Capitals, the Chicago Black Hawks and the Detroit Red Wings were all bidding for the Michigan State left-winger's services up until last week. Then it was only Washington, Detroit and Chicago.

Now, according to Donnelly, it's probably between Chicago and Detroit.

And yet he waits like a player does in the crease for that pass to bang in the net. As his agent Bob Goodenough deals with the respective front offices, Donnelly considers his options.

Such is life for a free agent, who scored 59 goals for the national-championship Spartans this season. "It's been very long and slow," said Donnelly, who believes he'll be signed in three to four weeks. "People think it's easy... but you have to weigh a lot of things and look at all the options."

THE MAIN thing Donnelly is considering is a chance to play. He doesn't want a guarantee, just an opening. The left-wing situation for both the Red Wings and the Black Hawks looks deep.

Detroit stacks up the left side with John Ogradnick, Petr Klima, Gerard Gallant and Bob Probert. Chicago lines up with left wingers Al Secord, Jeff Larmer and Troy Murray.

Donnelly has met with Red Wing front office personnel Jim Develano, Jim Lites and Nick Polano. He also met with Black Hawks general manager Bob Pallford.

"It was basically getting to know each other," said Donnelly, a Livonia Franklin product. "They seemed like very nice people."

Donnelly is careful not to tip the balance when talking about either club. The Red Wings' history of turmoil doesn't bother him.

"It enters my mind," said Donnelly. "Mike Ilitch is a winner. They just ran into a string of bad luck this year, but I'm sure they're going to turn it around."

RED WING interest in Donnelly could heighten, especially if they draft MSU teammate Joe Murphy in the first round of the upcoming National Hockey League draft. Murphy, a center, is considered the top-rated prospect in the draft.

"We played together last season," said Donnelly, and played well together. But I have to do what's best for myself. It's not going to be a factor whether I go there or not."

The actual dollar figures and length of the contract Donnelly and his agent are asking for are not being disclosed. Goodenough is tight-lipped about the negotiations. "We're considering the organization and how they perceive Michael

## hockey

as a player," said Goodenough. Donnelly said he really doesn't know what's being bandied about in terms of the money and length of the offers.

"I really don't know," he said. "My job is to play hockey. His (Goodenough's) job is to do that."

AND IN FOUR years at MSU, Donnelly did his job well. A walk-on, the 5-foot-11 wing improved as he went along.

His freshman year he scored seven goals. His sophomore year he had 18 and his junior year 35. This season's goal-scoring exploits (59 goals in 44 games) set an MSU all-time scoring record.

He received first team all-American and all-Central College honors. Also Donnelly was a finalist for the Hobey Baker Award (college hockey's equivalent to college football's Heisman Trophy).

Perhaps one of the most noted honors, though, was Donnelly's selection as Spartan Male Athlete of the Year along with Scott Skiles and Lorenzo White.

The trio of Spartans all had outstanding years and received all-American honors. Some considered it a cop out selecting all three instead of one.

"I'M GLAD they didn't pick one person," said Donnelly. "All of us had good seasons and all of us deserved the honor."

Personal awards aside, Donnelly is most proud of MSU's NCAA championship this season. Last season the Spartans fell in regional play to Providence College, despite entering the tournament as the No. 1 seed.

This season, MSU avenged that by beating Harvard in the NCAA finals in Providence, R.I. Donnelly scored the game-winning goal and was selected the tournament most valuable player.

Donnelly credits Ron Mason's program for his continual improvement.

"If you were willing to give a 100 percent, he'd go out of his way to work with you," he said.

Donnelly, judging by his previous credentials, had no problem with such agreements. He led the Detroit Junior A Hockey League with 48 goals and 64 assists for 112 points as a member of the Waterford Lakers.

AT FRANKLIN, he earned all-state honors.

The final proving ground, the NHL, awaits.

"I'm really going in there with an open mind," said Donnelly. "I just have to forget about the success I had in college and go out and win a job."

## Raider grads bolster Adray team

The mastery continues.

Doug Doyle, the Hillsdale College left-hander who pitches summer ball for Walter's Appliance in the Livonia Collegiate Baseball League, simply over Redford Little Caesars hitters.

Doyle, for the sixth straight time over the last two seasons, beat Little Caesars. On Sunday, he fired a two-hitter winning 2-1. Doyle faced 24 batters in the seven-inning game. He fanned six and didn't walk a batter.

Doyle got some defensive help from catcher Scott Papich. The Livonia Churchill graduate gunned down three would-be base stealers.

Both of Walter's runs were up-earned in the third inning. Steve Feilick singled home the first run, then he scored the game-winner on Dave DeMay's base hit.

The win salvaged a split of a double-header. Caesars, behind the strong pitching of Plymouth Canton

grad Mark Coburn, won game one 4-3.

Coburn, who twirls for Kansas City Community College, allowed three hits, fanned three and walked three. Coburn, with runners on first and third and one out in the bottom of the seventh, got a key double play to preserve the one-run victory.

Don Taylor's double in the fifth provided the game-winner. Tyrone Gaines and Bob Caspia had two hits apiece for Caesars.

Last Friday, Walters knocked off Caesars 3-1. Left-hander Gary Zvolinski scattered five hits and struck out five to pick up the win. Zvolinski, a Brother Rice grad, played for Valencia Junior College in Orlando, Fla.

Eddie Shepler rapped two hits for Walter's (4-3). Caspia had two more hits for Caesars.

As of Sunday, Livonia Adray, Caesars and Tom Holzer of Northville were atop the LCLB standings with 5-2 records.

LIVONIA ADRAY won three straight from West Bloomfield over the weekend. It won a 4-3 thriller on Friday, then swept a double-header Sunday, 10-0 and 11-1.

On Friday, Michigan State-Livonia Stevenson product Rick Rozman shut down West Bloomfield. Catcher Dwayne Bennett, Plymouth Canton-Kansas City CC, led the offense with three hits.

Don Veeling, the Eastern Michigan football-baseball star, shut down West Bloomfield in the first game Sunday. John Poznyak got the win in the second game.

Veeling and Dennis Bushart (Redford Union) led the offense.

TOM HOLZER stayed with the front-runners by sweeping three from Wendys of Ann Arbor.

On Friday, Holzer got a pair of three-run homers from Martin Eddy en route to a 12-1 win. Pitcher Dave Kopitzke allowed just one hit — a lead off home run in the first. He fanned nine in a five-inning game.

North Farmington grad Scott Draper hit a solo home run and Eric Engel, also from North, had a two-run single.

On Sunday, Holzer won 7-0 and 11-1.

Chris Stout and Chris Dominique combined to hurl a three-hit shutout. Stout allowed the three hits in five innings to get the win. Holzer was the beneficiary of 11 walks from Wendy hurlers.

Wendys (0-7) gave up 16 more walks in a build (and ugly) second game.

A two-run, two-out double by Eddy provided the game-winning runs for Holzer. Rob Cannon knocked in three runs with a pair of hits. Engel and Draper each had a pair of hits and a pair of RBIs.

Mark Persall pitched two scoreless innings in relief to record the win.

## Franklin faces tough test in semis

By Brad Emone  
staff writer

How good is Livonia Franklin's next softball opponent?

Coach Joe Epstein has to wonder about South Lyon, especially after the way the Lions pounded Plymouth Salera, 20-4, in district play. During the regular season, Franklin had three close games with Salem, winning two of three.

"I feel confident that if we beat South Lyon, we can go all the way," said the Franklin coach, whose team is 29-5 overall. "And I don't go on a limb very often. You never know about that game with Salem. I understand there were a bunch of walks and errors. I've seen some good teams have bad days."

South Lyon (30-10) is coming off a 2-1 win over Lansing Eastern in the regional final. The Lions also knocked off state-ranked East Kentwood in the regional semifinals.

South Lyon pitcher Andrea Nelson, a 5-foot-9 junior, is 23-7 this season. The Lions also rely on the hitting of Tina Weiss, Cindy Dickson, Barb Duggan and Kim Shanks.

If Franklin has any edge against South Lyon heading into Friday's Class A state semifinal at Michigan State University (game time is 5:30 p.m.), it's experience.

THE PATRIOTS went all the way to the state championship game last year before losing to L'Anse Creuse North, 5-0.

South Lyon, meanwhile, is coming off its first district and regional titles in 10 years.

Epstein is confident because the Patriots are playing near flawless softball defensively.

The Franklin coach juggled his lineup several times during the season, but has settled on a starting line-up during tournament play.

Junior shortstop Maria Vasselou, who had some defensive problems earlier in the season, has solidified the infield with some strong play during the state tournament.

Junior Kris Roman, the Patriots' starting left fielder last year, is making all the plays at first. At third base, junior Gayle Cheadle has filled in admirably for the injured Patty Wilcox. Second base belongs to

"I feel confident that if we beat South Lyon, we can go all the way. And I don't go on a limb very often."

— Joe Epstein  
Franklin coach

Karen Schoeninger, one of the team's most aggressive hitters.

BUT THE KEY to the Patriots' success rests behind the plate where sophomore Kim Godfrey, has claimed the starting catching job, Cherie Mascarello in center and Obey in right.

Epstein tried three different catchers, including starting sophomore right fielder Rose Obey, before settling on Godfrey.

The outfield lineup consists of Brentley Tranter, Shelly Lankford in left, Cherie Mascarello in center and Obey in right.

But everybody knows the Patriots revolve around pitcher Tracy Leek, a senior with pinpoint control. Last week at the Southfield Regional, Leek allowed only six hits and walked one in 14 innings.

Her value as a fielder is also unmatched.

"If you're going to get on base against Tracy, you better get a hit," Epstein said.

The Franklin coach is convinced his team can hit any of the state's best pitchers. The big question this season has been defense.

"THIS IS A BETTER hitting team than last year," says the Franklin coach. "And I've got some other kids who can swing the bat."

"I love to get Terry Obey (a senior) in the lineup for batting, but this is the best defensive lineup. I experienced a lot and this is the best lineup I feel."

"The kids really feel comfortable Saturday and they prove it with some solid, solid defense."

In shutout wins over Westland John Glenn and Belleville, the Patriots committed only one error. The other semifinal, beginning at

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