Marge Cramer (left) and Jennifer Rowe, two All-Area swimmers, have boosted North Farmington's stock in the WLAA this season.

Raiders tough in tough league

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

As the Western Lakes girls swim conference continues to get tougher and tougher so do the teams within it.

From top to bottom, the teams in the Western Lakes appear deeper in talent this year. Farmington and Farmington Harrison, teams that finished near the bottom of the 12-team Western Lakes pack last year, are better. Plymouth Salem, Plymouth Canton, Westland John Glenn and Livonia Churchill, teams that placed in the middle, are better. Livonia Stevenson and North Farmington, the league's elite, are better.

"The league is really too tough," said North coach Pat Duthie. "I hate to say that but it is. There are just too many good kids. Some kids who would normally gain a lot of recognition get lost in this league, and I don't like to see that. Cindy Cramer was fourth-best IMer (individual medley) in the league last year and she placed sixth at the state meet."

The league season officially opens Saturday with the fourth annual Western Lakes Relays at Salem.

Here is a brief look at the Farmington three teams.

NORTH FARMINGTON

Pat Duthie apparently has all the ingredients this season. The Raiders have a strong nucleus of front-line talent, as well as a healthy supporting cast.

"Yeah, we have a nice team," the veteran coach said. "If we can get our act together we could be good. Getting started is the pits, though."

The Cramer sisters return, senior Marge and junior Cindy, along with fellow state qualifiers Jennifer Rowe, Liz Worthen and Amy Meneilley.

Other top returnees include seniors Alice Jewell and Vanessa Aiuto, juniors Megan O'Brien, Karen Paynter, Denise Mannisto, Cindy Sundquist, Jenny Smith, Mary Beth O'Sullivan and sophomores Laurie Oswald, Nancy Wetterholt, Jenny Williams, Jossie Komer and Dorothy Ashley.

As if that's not enough, the Raiders have been enriched with two transfers and a solid group of freshmen. Junior Kym Valentine, from Lansing, and Patty McCarthy, a former state qualifier for Farmington Hills Mercy, have joined the ranks. The freshman class is led by Kim Heller, Marcy Mulbarger, Kim Reese, Kim Mannisto and Beth Smith.

If you want to use the term "loaded," go ahead.

"We have decent depth and obviously some excellent front-liners," Duthie said. "We have the potential, the potential to be better than last year."

North will open against Novi at home Thursday, a meet that offers a bonus for Duthie. His daughter, Kristie, is one of the top swimmers for Novi.

FARMINGTON

Ross Bandy was pleasantly surprised when he showed up for his first practice with the Farmington girls team. Thirty girls showed up.

"My biggest worry when I took this job was the numbers," Bandy said. "My boys team here had only 14. But the turnout has been great and the girls are working hard. We're going to be competitive this season. I'm confident of that."

Senior Mary Griffore, juniors Holly Chivers, Lori Kiel and sophomores Julie Kendall and Stacy Gillary are the top returnees for the Falcons. The team has been energized with a talented group of freshmen Lauren Weary, Missy Kendall and Katie Hohl are the front-runners of the class.

Bandy is also high on a pair of transfers, Jodi Abels, a junior from Birmingham, and Tonya Shicker, a freshman from Texas, both divers.

"I'm really happy with the way the team is looking right now," Bandy said.

FARMINGTON HARRISON

Chuck McClune, first-year head coach of the Hawks, has one goal for 1986: have fun.

"We've had a lot of kids leave the program for one reason or another," he said. "We have to change the image a bit here so we can keep the kids in the program. Girls varsity sports don't have the same appeal here as they do at North Farmington. They get all pumped up about it at North; it's not like that here. We have to change that. We have a lot of talented swimmers coming into the program in the next two years. We're going to have some fun this year, do a lot of things outside the pool. We want these kids coming up to stay with us."

There are six freshmen on the team this season. Next year, Harrison will be getting three more freshmen, each swimming the 100-yard freestyle in under a minute.

The leading returnees this season are seniors Catherine Tucker, Michelle Harrison, Holly Ports, junior Aimee Katz and sophomore Kelly Murany.

McClune is also expecting big things from freshman Danielle King.

"We should do a lot better this season," McClune said. "And there are some kids at school now who could really help us if we could get them back. We have nine divers walking the halls now. Tammy Gura and Charleen Wilson, two of them, could really help us."

Where's the salmon?

Success on lakes spotty, but DNR is optimistic

By Bill Parker
staff writer

Fish on!
Fish on!

Those familiar words to avid salmon fishermen are currently echoing up and down the some 3,288 miles of Great Lakes shoreline as the salmon spawning runs of 1986 begin.

So far this year success has been spotty, but action is expected to pick up at any time.

"Things can explode on a day-to-day basis," said Asa Wright, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Great Lakes program manager. "If the weather happens to change, like a little warm rain, bang, there are fish all over. Then the next day it could be slow again.

"Now is the time for returning fish. Boat activity in the lakes is very strong. The coho and steelhead are starting to come in, but it's kind of sparse. The chinook are already at the river mouths or up stream. The runs will hit quick though. People thinking about getting out should do it within the next two to three weeks."

AS ALWAYS, the Au Sable River is expected to produce a strong run this year. The DNR stocks salmon in Lake Huron from Rogers City through the Thumb Rivers in this area are expected to produce good catches as runs begin.

"Past good fishing spots should still be good," said Wright. "It's slow right now at Oscoda but things are expected to pick up in the river. They're having success in the lake but it seems to be spotty. The fish don't appear to be schooling yet, and we're a little concerned as to why. Runs in Lake Huron seem to be getting a little bit later each year."

Near Lake Michigan the Muskegon, Manistee and Pere Marquette rivers are all "expected to be hot spots again this year."

Success on the lakes has been strong with North Point Nailer-type spoons and J-Plugs. Wright suggests anglers use black or dark colored spoons on sunny days. In the rivers Mepps-type spinners are always good and some success has been reported through tight-lining.

For the less adventurous anglers, snagging is still legal on various rivers in the state including parts of the Pere Marquette, Manistee and Muskegon. (Check with the DNR for exact locations.) But snagging is no longer legal on the Au Sable River at Foote Dam. Anglers are also required to purchase a $7.25 snagging license, on top of the regular fishing license.

outdoors

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

• Independence Oaks Nature Center will be the site of a program titled Harvest Moon, 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 19. An indoor slide program and an outdoor telescope viewing session will be offered. For more information, contact Independence Oaks at 625-6473.

STONY CREEK METROPARK

• Owl Prowl, an indoor slide presentation and a night walk in search of owls will be offered at 7 p.m. Friday.

• Bird Banding, a program which involves catching, identifying and banding birds will begin at 9 a.m. Sunday.

• Green Giants, a program enabling participants to discover the wonders of giant trees will begin at 1 p.m. Sunday.

INDIAN SPRINGS METROPARK

• A breakfast and bicycle tour of the park will be available to the public beginning at 8:30 a.m. Saturday. Cost is $3.75 for adults and $2.50 for children under 12. Participants must bring their own bike and advanced registration is required.

KENSINGTON METROPARK

• Fall Bird Count, an all-day census of migrating and resident birds will be offered Saturday beginning at 8 a.m. in the Nature Center.

• Fossil Finding, a two-hour program of slides, discussion and collection is available to the public at 2 p.m. Sunday.

For more information concerning any of the Metropark activities, call 1-800-24-PARKS.

DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

• The Ninth Annual Wild Bird Seed Sale is continuing through Sept. 26. Sales help support the Audubon Society's sanctuary and building fund. Contact the society's office at 121 S. Main, Royal Oak, or call 545-2929 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

North Farmington undefeated on links

North Farmington's golf team is looking like a state contender.

Buoyed by the strong play of Chris Bayer, Andy Fretz and transfer student Mark Taylor, the Raiders are 3-0 on the season and were winners of the Farmington Invitational.

The Raiders beat Southfield-Lathrup Friday 215-217 at Godwin Glen. On Monday, they bested Farmington Harrison 198-209 at San Marino.

Taylor won medalist honors against Lathrup with a five over par 40. Fretz fired a 43 and Bayer, Dan Babington and Erica Zonder each shot 44.

Against the Hawks, Fretz fired a one-under 35. Bayer scored 40 while Taylor, Mark LaPorte and Steve Wendt each carded 41s.

Mike Kline, Mike Jacques, Pete Longworth and Wes Ports each shot 41 for Harrison (0-2).

"If we can get all three players (Taylor, Bayer and Fretz) going at the same time, we might be able to do something," said North coach Dick Wilson.

Taylor has been a pleasant addition. He was the Ohio Class AA champion a year ago.

North's next match will be against Westland John Glenn Friday at Fellows Creek.

Churchill starts fast

Livonia Churchill got off to a strong start in cross country as both the boys and girls teams breezed to victory over Garden City.

The boys won 17-42 while the girls earned a 15-40 victory.

In the boys competition Dan Montgomery sailed to a first-place finish with a winning time of 17:57. Chris Pfeifer placed second for the Chargers at 18:38 followed by teammates Eric Giles at 18:48 and Darin Dudek at 19:03.

Pete Stapleton was the top finisher for the Cougars placing fifth with a time of 19:10.

Rounding out the top 10 were Garden City's Bob Hancox, 19:22; Churchill's Paul Neumaier, 19:32; Garden City's Mark Sonnefeld, 19:43; Churchill's Mike Parr, 19:45; and Churchills Derek Verant, 19:52.

Karen Kantor led the lady Chargers to victory with a winning time of 22:23. The Chargers took the top six places in the meet with Darlene Copper placing second at 23:08.

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