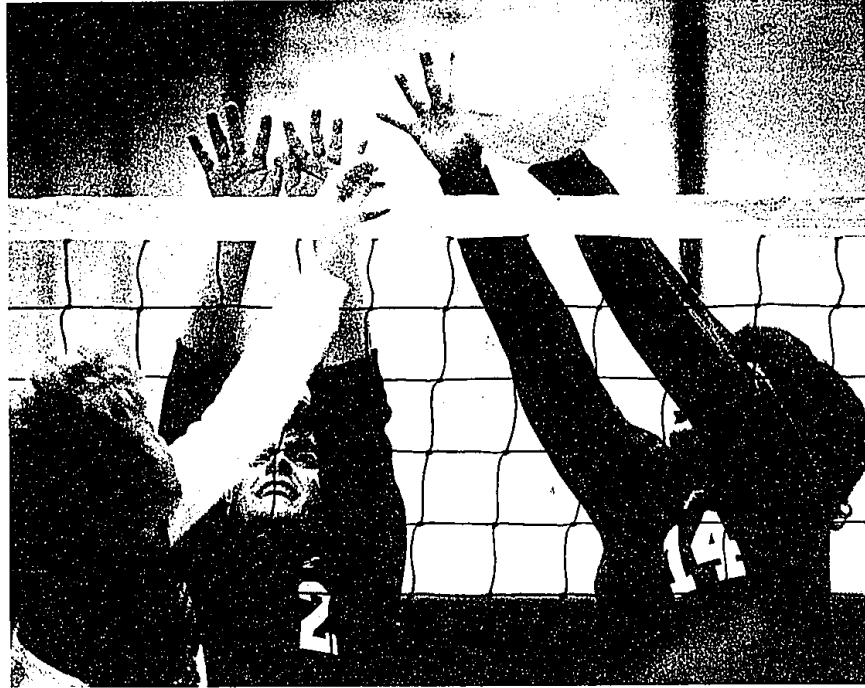


Sports

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A Wayne County study recently gave an indication that female high school athletes are reaching an equal stance with the boys. Total equality, the study says, has not yet been reached, especially in the coaching ranks where female coaches remain few and far between.

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You've come a long way. . .

Girls near equality with boys on sports scene?

By Bill Parker
staff writer

IMAGINE A school year with little or no female athletics. No girls volleyball, basketball, softball or field hockey. No girls track, cross country, tennis, swimming, soccer, gymnastics or golf. It doesn't seem very likely, does it?

Well believe it or not, it wasn't that long ago when there weren't many female athletic programs offered. Oh sure, there was a gymnastics program here and a tennis program there, but the overall picture on female athletics was pretty bleak. Today, however, thanks to the enactment of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, there are a multitude of athletic programs available to female participants throughout the country.

Title IX protects students from sex discrimination in every school and college program receiving federal money. It guarantees equal treatment, access and counseling both inside and outside the classroom. It's the only federal law which prohibits sex discrimination in academics and athletic activities carried on by educational institutions and it applies to students and employees as well.

A RECENTLY PUBLISHED report from the Wayne County Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER) indicated that female participation in athletic programs is increasing in most Wayne County school districts. Twenty-nine of the 34 Wayne County school districts participated in the survey.

All of the Observerland school districts which participated in the survey ranked above the state average in progress toward participation equity. The only Observerland district not included in the report was Garden City. According to GC athletic director Bill Flannery, the reason Garden City didn't participate was simply miscommunication.

"Unfortunately I just didn't get the information in time. I would have been more than happy to answer any questions about our athletic programs. I feel we have a pretty good girls athletic program and I know we would have at least fit in with the county average," said Pinnell.

The PEER report indicated that 15 of the 29 Wayne County school districts responding to the report were above the state average of 37 percent female participation in high school athletics. Hamtramck showed the highest level of female participation at 45.8 percent. South Redford was the second highest with 41.9 percent. Plymouth-Canton Community Schools were third with 41.8 percent. Redford Union was seventh with 40.6 percent. Wayne-Westland was 11th with 38.6 percent and Livonia ranked 13th with 37.3 percent.

OF THE RESPONDING districts, 68 percent stated they saw a noticeable increase in female participation in interscholastic athletic programs. Most indicated that the biggest increase has been in the past three to five years.

"There's no doubt the impetus was provided by Title IX," said Redford Union athletic director Bob Atkins. "I think the attitude of society dictated a change, a need for more female participation in athletics. Title IX just made it happen a little sooner."

According to the report, the greatest inequity in high school athletics in Wayne County (and across the country) is in coaching. At the high school level 83 percent of the coaches are male while just 17 percent are female. This figure includes head coaches and assistant coaches for both boys and girls programs.

Some of the reasons given for this inequity include lack of qualified women applying for coaching positions, female coaches not being as demanding or intense, the fact that

girls sports and coaching is relatively new to females and there's simply a lack of interest.

Atkins agrees. He would welcome the addition of more qualified female coaches at Redford Union but has a hard time finding them.

"A LOT OF people don't understand the amount of time an individual has to put into interscholastic coaching. There is a big difference between interscholastic coaching and recreation league coaching. The difference is commitment and people don't realize this."

"I would love to have more women coaches. We want women to coach girls programs but a lot of women don't have the time for the commitment. They have other obligations. I haven't talked to one athletic director who doesn't want women coaches. If we could get men to coach boys and women to coach girls, now we've died and gone to heaven. It's not that we don't want women it's just that there is a lack of quality women who have the time for the commitment."

Paul Cummings, AD of the Plymouth-Canton Community School District (Canton and Salem), thinks this inequity in coaching will even itself out in the future.

"The most important thing now is that we are starting to have girls, who have already competed, come back to the programs. Girls who have gone through high school and probably college programs are now coming back to coaching and refereeing. This will really be a big plus for the overall picture. I see the unbalance balancing out in the future."

THE PEER REPORT states that another source of inequity for girls sports stems from the current Michigan High School Athletic Association scheduling practices. For example, Michigan is one of only four states in

which girls basketball is played out of the traditional winter season. In Michigan, girls basketball is played in the fall and volleyball is played in the winter.

The PEER report indicates that this scheduling practice limits opportunities for females to participate.

In Wayne County, in the 1985-86 school year, only 975 girls participated in winter sports (gymnastics and volleyball) compared to 2,425 boys who competed in basketball, swimming and wrestling. The report states that the MHSAA should provide opportunities for more female participation in the winter months.

This alleged inequity seems to even out in the spring, however, when there are more opportunities for girls. In the spring boys compete in track, baseball and tennis. Girls have the opportunity to participate in track, softball, golf and soccer. Despite the additional opportunities provided by the spring season, 2,910 girls and 3,614 boys participated in spring sports in 1984-85.

SOME OF THE major inequities indicated in the PEER report include that the girls sports budget is only 36.7 percent of the total athletic budget; only 29 percent of the junior varsity programs are for girls; there is little opportunity for students to participate in coed athletics; and male teams receive more benefit from high school support services (booster clubs, cheerleaders, pep rallies and hand support).

Some general recommendations suggested in the report include more active recruitment of girls for athletic teams; more offering of coed sports; increased efforts to recruit more qualified female coaches; equitable expenditures in the athletic budget; and equitable use of support services.

blind victory," DeBello said. "I told them if we could get our serving going we had a good chance of winning the third game."

That the Marlins did, convincingly. Mersey will compete in the Saline Tournament Saturday, Jan. 3.

for it rallied. Shannon Percy scored on four straight serves to tie the game. Then, with the score tied at 10, sophomore Christy Johnson served out the game — five straight points.

"That really got our momentum going. It was a nice come-from-be-

New Mercy volleyball coach wins debut

Farmington Hills Mersey opened the 1988-89 volleyball season with an impressive 10-15, 15-11, 15-1 win against Royal Oak Shrine last Monday.

The win marked the coaching debut of Tim DeBello, Mersey's fourth volleyball coach in five years. De-

Bello had been an assistant coach at Redford Bishop Dorgens.

"In the first game we made a lot of inexperience mistakes. A lot of free balls scored and Shrine did a great job keeping the ball in play," DeBello said.

Mersey trailed 8-4 in game two be-



Chris
McCosky

Swimmer pays for All-Area oversight

CATHERINE TUCKER was a Class B all-stater in two swimming events. In her four years at Farmington Harrison, she has eclipsed two long-standing school records. She is a superb swimmer.

Catherine Tucker did not make our All-Area swim team.

How come? Let Tucker explain.

"It was basically my coach's fault for not attending the meeting. . . . Because of my coach's lack of responsibility, I lost the 50-yard freestyle position on the All-Area team."

Perhaps Tucker would not have been able to knock Maureen Sudek or Ann Bollinger out of the 50-free-style spot, but without question she would have gained an at-large berth on the team.

But Harrison coach Chuck McClune missed the All-Area selection meeting. The accomplishments of Catherine Tucker went unsung. As Tucker said, "Many of the other coaches who know me assumed that I did poorly, since my coach did not show up. But that was not the case."

I feel bad for Catherine Tucker. She worked very hard to become one of the best swimmers in the area. But instead of basking in the glow of All-Area recognition, she sat down to write a letter to the newspaper expressing her disappointment at being overlooked.

THE POINT of this is not to lambast McClune. He certainly isn't the only coach ever to skip an All-Area meeting. In fact, only four head coaches showed up for the swim meeting last month. The point of this is to illuminate, through Catherine Tucker's misfortune, the importance of the coaches' role in our All-Area selection process.

As hard as Brad Emmons and I may try, we are not omniscient. As sports editors covering 21 high schools over the course of a school year, we cannot possibly determine whether Catherine Tucker is a better swimmer than Maureen Sudek. We might be able to tell you which swimmer competes on the better team, or which events are their specialty, but to flat tell you who is the better swimmer — we need help.

So when the time comes to make those talent judgments, for the purpose of selecting and recognizing the area's best, we call in the coaches.

IN MOST All-Area meetings, attendance isn't a problem. Usually 90 to 100 percent of the area coaches will attend the meetings. Even with perfect attendance, however, there are inequities. There is a tendency for some coaches to form alliances. You vote for my kid and I'll vote for yours. Some coaches feel the athletes in the Western Lakes have an advantage because there are more Western Lakes teams in the area than from any other league. Thus, Western Lakes athletes are more visible to the majority of coaches.

Sometimes those things take effect. Sometimes they don't. It's never perfect. But if there are only four coaches at a meeting, like there often are at swim meetings, the chances for inequity are much greater.

What happened this year at the swim meeting was that Stevenson coach Greg Phill and North Farmington coach Pat Duthie, with some help from a John Glenn coach and a Clanceville coach, selected the team. To help the process, we had an updated listing of the fastest times in the area and results from the state Class A swim meet.

Much good that did Catherine Tucker.

TUCKER SWAM in the Class B state meet. But the results of that meet never got to the Observer sports desk, never got into the paper and Tucker again was the loser.

You can blame me for that if you want. I knew Tucker had qualified for the state meet. But like the coaches, I assumed that she had a bad meet because I never heard from McClune.

Let the record show that Catherine Tucker had a strong state meet. She placed seventh in the 50 free (25.4) and fifth in the 100 free (55.5).

Also let the record show that Catherine Tucker deserved to be on our 1988 All-Area swim team.

For whatever it's worth Catherine, I'm sorry.

Vellucci surviving pro hockey rigors

By Ken McDonald
special writer

The International Hockey League has proven quite an initiation into the professional hockey ranks for Farmington's Mike Vellucci.

So far he has endured the countless rookie jokes and the miles of travel that come along with playing for the IHL's only western franchise in Salt Lake City, Utah.

And as Vellucci so aptly puts it, "It's welcome to the pros, and there's not a red carpet out there."

But don't feel sorry for the 19-year-old Vellucci, he's doing just fine. He's patiently awaiting his chance to reach his ultimate goal — playing in the National Hockey League.

Vellucci signed a three-year contract with the Hartford Whalers last June. He attended the Whalers' training camp in September and another camp with Binghamton of the American Hockey League — Hartford's top farm club.

He performed well at both camps, impressing Hartford officials along the way. In seven scrimmage games with Binghamton he notched seven points. But because of space limitations — Binghamton is shared by both Hartford and the Washington Capitals — he was moved to Salt Lake City.

"THE TRYOUTS went really well," Vellucci said. "The Hartford officials told me they were really happy with what they saw."

"It's a numbers game," he added. "There's only three (professional) leagues out there and they are over-



Mike Vellucci
no red carpet

crowded with players. But I'm surviving."

Vellucci is doing more than just surviving. In 18 games with Salt Lake City prior to this weekend's action, Vellucci had poured in two goals and 12 assists for 14 points. His first professional goal proved to be a game-winner.

Most of Vellucci's playing time has come on Salt Lake City's power play. He has earned the tag as an offensive-minded player.

"I've been labeled as an offensive defenseman," Vellucci said. "But I would rather be labeled as an all-around player."

So Vellucci is working on his game constantly. When the team has a day

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