

Titans look to clinch conference crown at Xavier

By C.J. Rissak
Staff writer

Just 3 1/2 weeks ago, the season seemed mired in mediocrity again — for University of Detroit's baseball team.

The Titans have always seemed to be pretty good, but never quite good enough. They were 31-24 last year and reached the championship round of the Midwestern Collegiate Conference tournament before losing. After opening the tourney with wins over Evansville and Notre Dame, U-D lost to Evansville twice.

So Evansville went to the NCAA tournament and the Titans — for the 23rd season in a row — didn't.

Nothing seemed to change this year. On April 16, U-D was 12-15-1 overall and 3-3 in the MCC. All things considered — the team is young (only four seniors) and several key players (outfielder Steve Wujczyk and pitchers Pat Miller and Mark Talley) were coming back from serious injury — the so-so record wasn't unexpected.

BUT, WHEN the Titans jolted Notre Dame in South Bend, winning three of four games, U-D coach Bob Miller said he could feel something good was about to happen.

"I sensed an air of confidence," said Miller, a Redford resident now in his 25th year of coaching at U-D. "I thought we might come on right then."

Miller is a noted optimist, but his feelings proved accurate. From that weekend in Notre Dame until Tuesday's double-header split with Michigan State at U-D, the Titans were 13-5 — including a 12-2 MCC record that all but wrapped up first place in the MCC's Eastern Division. One win in U-D's final four games at Xavier this weekend, or a Notre Dame loss, clinches the title.

The Titans must still survive the MCC tournament, which begins Wednesday in South Bend, to get into the NCAA tournament. But that con-

fidence Miller could sense 3 1/2 weeks ago has U-D flying high, making them an odds-on favorite in the double-elimination MCC tournament.

THE REASONS for the Titan success are numerous. "We've got great athletes on this team, no doubt about it," said Miller. "I told them their hard work and perseverance would pay off."

That "keep your chin up" attitude helped, but so has a lot of off-season work — particularly from the injured. Wujczyk, a Southfield-Lathrup graduate with a year's eligibility remaining, tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his knee in the fall of 1987 playing intramural football.

The knee was rebuilt and Wujczyk went 17 months without playing, working instead on rehabilitation. It paid off: Wujczyk returned from the long layoff better than ever.

He batted just .243 as a sophomore and .219 as a freshman, with a two-year total of two home runs and 15 runs batted in. This year, Wujczyk is hitting .352 with five doubles, four triples, two homers and 28 RBI.

"It was a lot of hard work," Wujczyk said of his comeback. "There was 12 months of strictly rehabilitation. A lot of people doubted I would be back."

Miller was one of the doubters. "I really didn't expect anything from Steve," the U-D coach admitted. "I certainly didn't expect this."

Even Wujczyk can't explain how, after a 17-month layoff, he can come back hitting better than ever. "I guess I just remembered how to hit. It doesn't surprise me. I always had that confidence."

PAT MILLER is another surprise, although the junior righthander from Redford Union (he's one of five RU grads on U-D's team) had other motivational sources. For one, he happens to be the coach's son.

Pat was bothered by a sore elbow his entire sophomore season. His best pitch is a sinking fastball, but the soreness had reduced it to 79-81

mph. And as his fastball slowed, his record swooned. He was 3-2 last year with a 7.13 earned run average, after going 3-1 with a 4.81 ERA as a freshman.

His mound failures combined with his status as the coach's son to make the season miserable. He had surgery on his elbow after last season, and bone chips and spurs were removed. He didn't play at all last summer, and his status for this season was questionable.

Except to his father/coach. "He told me, 'For us to have a good year, you have to help us,'" Pat said. "There was a lot of pressure. I had to prove myself that I wasn't on the team just because of my dad. I didn't think (my teammates) accepted me."

"That was the hardest thing, proving myself and getting accepted."

Pat has nothing left to prove. He's moved up in the rotation from the No. 6 man to No. 3, and he is second on the team in wins. He has a 5-1 record with a 3.40 ERA, and his fastball is back up in the 85-88 mph range.

BUT EVEN the contributions from unexpected sources like Wujczyk and Pat Miller isn't the whole story. Of the team's top seven hitters, four are sophomores and one is a freshman.

Among that group are starting shortstop Rick Tavormina, from Westland John Glenn (.365, six doubles, two triples, 12 RBI); starting catcher Mike Stefanski, from RU (.360, six doubles, one triple, 17 RBI);

and starting first baseman Lance Sullivan, from Livonia Churchill (288, five doubles, one triple, two homers, 24 RBI). All three are sophomores.

There's more. Senior lefthanded

pitcher Mark Coburn, from Plymouth Canton, is 4-1 with a 4.40 ERA; sophomore lefthanded pitcher Doug Piser, from Farmington Hills (and Birmingham Brother Rice), is 2-5 with a 4.11 ERA; and junior second

baseman Dennis Bushhart, from RU, was hitting .287 with six doubles, a triple, a homer and 25 RBI before going down with a severe knee injury suffered against Notre Dame last weekend.

TOTAL®

Try Our Top Quality Gasolines:
Regular, Unleaded,
Premium Unleaded

Cigarette Cartons
All National Brands



11.69
(100's + .40 Per Carton)
plus tax

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.
Expires 5-30-89

Coke 8 Pack
½ Liter Bottles



2.19
plus deposit
Expires 5-14-89

Milk
Homogenized
1 Gallon



1.99
Expires 5-30-89

Faygo 6 Pack
12 oz. Cans



1.09
plus deposit
Expires 5-30-89

Ruffles
7 oz. Bag



.99
Expires 5-30-89

Offers Available Throughout Detroit At Participating Locations



DISCOUNT TICKETS!
Save \$3.00 each on Adult Tickets

You get more when you make it to Total!

Canadian Fur Specialist for Over 60 Years
Furs by Arpin

• No Duty & Sales Tax Refunded • Full Premium On American Furs

484 Pelissier St. • Windsor
1-519-253-5612

The Cornwell Pool & Patio Ad
which appears in today's
Home and Garden Section
has an incorrect expiration date.
The ad should read "Now through
May 31st."

Improve Your Business
With Trunked Two-Way Radio

Can you afford the
expense of cellular?



• WE COVER
SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

RADIO ACTIVE
COMMUNICATIONS CO. INC. (313) 398-3333

UGLY KITCHEN CABINETS?

DON'T REPLACE... 'REFACE'
MODERN & EUROPEAN STYLES

FORMICA Solid Colors and Woodgrain SOLID WOODS Oak, Cherry and Birch

SERVING WAYNE, OAKLAND & MACOMB

• FACTORY SHOWROOM • FREE ESTIMATES

1842 E. 11 Mile Rd., Madison Hgts.
1 Block W. of Dequindre Daily 9-5, Sun. 10-4

Cabinet Clad • 541-5252

TWO WEEKS ONLY
MARINER

FULL PRICE
\$795

ALL POOLS INCLUDE:
• Pump & Filter • Lining & Sealing • Electric & Plumbing • Pool & Deck • Fencing • 1 Year Workmanship Guarantee

THE ONLY WAY TO GET A POOL CHEAPER IS TO...
STEAL IT!

Q.D. 19251
SWISS AREA
19257

FULL FINANCING
ARRANGED

DOLPHIN POOLS 352-9880

West Dearborn Presents...

a Juried Fine Arts Fair

Art on the Avenue

One Block N. of Michigan Avenue
on Garrison at Military

Saturday, May 13th • 10-8
Sunday, May 14th • 12-6

• Over 100 Artists • Mimes • Musicians • Refreshments



DEARBORN MUSIC 33 YEARS SERVING YOU

ONE OF THE DETROIT AREA'S
MOST EXTENSIVE SELECTIONS

• ALBUMS • SINGLES • CASSETTES • COMPACT DISCS
• ROCK IMPORTS • MUSIC VIDEOS

We Special Order WITH THIS AD

\$2.00 OFF

ON ANY LP, CASSETTE OVER \$6.00 &
C.D.'S OVER \$10.00 (Sale Items Not Included)

Expires 5-21-89

22000 MICHIGAN AVE. • DEARBORN
1 MILE WEST OF SOUTHFIELD • 581-1000

VISIT OUR NEW LOCATION
Canton Corners
42679 Ford Rd. at Lilley • 1/4 Mile W. of I-275

981-7530

OPEN DAILY 9:30-9
SUNDAYS 10:00-5

Oriental Rugs
• Great Selection
• Excellent Quality
• Best Prices

nigossian's
ORIENTAL RUG CO.

WEST DEARBORN
21918 Michigan Ave.
1/4 Mile West of Hyatt

Established 1971 277-1331

Muirhead's

a delightful shopping experience
Fashion Leader in Mens, Womens & Childrens

SPECIAL — 25%-50% OFF on selected items
from our 18 departments • 3 Days Only

22370 Michigan Ave. • 561-9200 • HRS: M-W 10-6, Th 10-9, Fri & Sat 10-6

THE 222 SHOPS

Fleming & Wells
Fine Antique & Estate Jewelry
561-4224

Foxy Lady
The Best in Hair, Nails, Faces
277-8777

elle
Contemporary Boutiques • Jewelry & Accessories
Lingerie & Gift Certificates Available
561-1600

22266 Michigan Ave. • Dearborn • Parking in the rear