



(F15)

Top trackman has tools for success



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer
Jason Kocembo of North Farmington made the All-Observer team in the 1,600-meter run. Kocembo, shown winning the city title in that event, had a best time of 4:26.9.

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

The All-Observer boys track team is an intriguing group, one that includes strength, speed, brains and Jason Belaire — who happens to have all three qualities.

Belaire, a four-year letterman at Livonia Churchill, is Observerland's 1989 Trackman of the Year. Belaire also lettered in football and basketball, and is extremely bright in the classroom.

Belaire owns three school records and two Western Lakes Activities Association standards, and he will be remembered most for his all-around ability. This year, he finished sixth at the Class A meet in the 300-meter hurdles and won the regional high jump.

"It has really been a pleasure to have such a tough competitor and talented athlete all wrapped up in one body," Churchill coach Fred Price said. "His contributions to Churchill track have been many and we will miss him dearly."

The Coach of the Year is Richard Gordon, who guided Westland John Glenn to the WLLA meet title, as well as a regional crown.

Introducing the 1989 All-Observer boys track team:

FIELD EVENTS

Jason Gutting, Farmington, shot put Gutting, a senior, won the Western Lakes Activities Association meet with a throw of 48 feet 3 inches. His toss of 59-2 at the Oakland County meet gave him third place and it was Observerland's best this spring.

Gutting was fourth at the regional (47-9 1/2) and he won the Farmington City Meet.

"Jason has been extremely conscientious and a pleasure to coach," coach Jerry Young said. "When a talented athlete becomes motivated to practice hard and improve technique, the result usually produces a champion. His future is going to be exciting and very rewarding."

all-area boys track

1989 ALL-AREA BOYS TRACK TEAM (reprinted from Monday)

FIELD EVENTS

Shot put: 1. Jason Gutting, Farmington; 2. Shawn Wallace, Wayne Memorial; 3. Tony Sheehy, Farmington Hills Harrison.
Discus: 1. Zaim Cunniff, North Farmington; 2. Eric Sheppard, Redford Union; 3. Jeff Gristow, Livonia Churchill.
Long jump: 1. Wendell Smith, Wayne Memorial; 2. Daren Knapik, Redford Thurston; 3. Doreyn Tatum, Wayne Memorial.
High jump: 1. Jason Belaire, Livonia Churchill; 2. Roger Franz, Plymouth Salem; 3. Steve Wallace, Garden City.
Pole vault: 1. Mike Bianchi, Redford Union; 2. David Liorazio, Livonia Franklin; 3. Brian Kerl, Livonia Churchill.

RUNNING EVENTS

100-meter hurdles: 1. Tiber Patterson, Redford Catholic Central; 2. Shayer Barnes, Wayne Memorial; 3. Ryan Polby, Livonia Churchill.
300 hurdles: 1. Fern Whitlow, Westland John Glenn; 2. Jeff Setback, Redford Catholic Central; 3. Brad Armstrong, Garden City.
100: 1. Dale Woodcock, Redford Union; 2. Dave Owens, Redford Catholic Central; 3. Trent Naumethel, Livonia Churchill.
200: 1. Steve Johnson, Redford Bishop Boggess; 2. Andrew Doobins, Westland John Glenn; 3. Steve Burison, Plymouth Salem.
400: 1. Carl Zow, Westland John Glenn; 2. Ron Staples, Plymouth Canton; 3. Steve Woseley, Westland John Glenn.

800: 1. Chad Burgess, Farmington Hills Harrison; 2. David Ryan, Westland John Glenn; 3. John Samborski, Garden City.
1,600: 1. Jason Kocembo, North Farmington; 2. Scott Stryker, Plymouth Salem; 3. Mike Ream, Plymouth Canton.
3,200: 1. Mike Shenden, Redford Catholic Central; 2. Jeff Barringer, Farmington Hills Harrison; 3. Jeff Fedora, Redford Catholic Central.

RELAY EVENTS

400: Wayne Memorial (Aaron Allen, Shayer Barnes, Demetree Welch and Dave Rodriguez); 2. Redford Bishop Boggess (Doreyn Tatum, Dave Rodriguez and Phil Gibson); 3. Plymouth Canton (Jeff Pyslak, Dave Washenko, Eric Miller and Ron Staples).
800: 1. Westland John Glenn (Steve Woseley, Fern Whitlow, Carl Lowe and Andrew Doobins); 2. Redford Catholic Central (Dave Owens, Jeff Setback, Matt Pitt and Tiber Patterson).
1,600: 1. Westland John Glenn (Steve Woseley, Fern Whitlow, David Ryan and Carl Lowe); 2. Wayne Memorial (Aaron Burgess, Doreyn Tatum, Dave Rodriguez and Phil Gibson); 3. Plymouth Canton (Jeff Pyslak, Dave Washenko, Eric Miller and Ron Staples).
3,200: 1. Westland John Glenn (Lee Zornik, Jim Zurawski, David Ryan and Carl Lowe); 2. Plymouth Salem (Scott Stryker, Dave Hamrey, Bob Anshing and Brandon Masterson); 3. Livonia Churchill (Don Kuska, Jeff Marus, Matt Sweeney and Jeff Grassman).

Zaim Cunniff, North Farmington, discus: A three-sport star, Cunniff captured a brilliant high school career by placing first in the discus at the Class A meet. Cunniff, who also was an All-Observer football player and wrestler, had the area's best throw, 163-11.

The team captain captured the WLLA meet crown, placed first at the regional, and second in the Oakland County meet. "Zaim is a great person and a hard worker," coach Mark Bechard said. "He works with the other discus throwers, helping them out. I do not think Zaim has reached his full potential in the discus, having thrown

only for two years. And if he throws in college, he should be a good one."

Wendell Smith, Wayne Memorial, long jump: The senior was Wayne's most valuable performer, and his long jump of 22-4 1/4 broke a school record.

Smith won both the high jump and 300-meter hurdles at the Wolverine A League meet. He cleared 6-7 in the high jump indoors, and this spring his best jump outdoors was 6-5. Smith also competed on occasion in the 1,600 meter relay.

"Wendell's versatility made him a key member on Wayne's co-championship (Wolverine A) team," said Joe

Grasley, whose team tied Class A runnerup Monroe for the Wolverine A regular-season title.

Jason Belaire, Churchill, high jump: The Jason Belaire Era has ended, but his records might never be forgotten — or broken any time soon, for that matter.

The Observerland Trackman of the Year exits with school records in the 300 hurdles (39.4), 110 hurdles (14.4), and high jump (6-9). He also leaves with WLLA records in the 110 hurdles and high jump.

Among his accomplishments this spring were: regional champion, high jump; sixth place, Class A meet, 300 hurdles; titles at the WLLA meet in the high jump, 110 hurdles, and 300 hurdles; 110 hurdle champion at the Observerland Relays.

Belaire also figured in three of the Chargers' four relay events during his career. He was a three-time MVP.

Mike Bianchi, Redford Union, pole vault: Bianchi, a senior, was a Northwest Suburban League champion, and a runnerup at the regional. His best clearance of 12-6 gave him Observerland's third-best jump.

He also cleared 5-9 in the high jump and posted a time of 53.9 in the 400 run.

"Mike works hard," coach Jim Gibbons said. "He takes pride in his performance and the way he represents himself. He's a great team leader."

RUNNING EVENTS

Tiberia Patterson, Catholic Central, 110 hurdles: The Catholic League champion established a school-record in the 110 hurdles, clocking 14.2. Patterson, a senior, won the Operation Friendship championship against the Detroit Public School League, and he was a state qualifier.

"Tiberia made remarkable progress, as this was only his second year running track and first year running

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Connie Mack ballclub finally swings into action

Mantle unit steamrolls Northville

Three pitchers combined for a no-hitter and Shondell Currie collected eight RBI as South Farmington crushed Northville 22-0 in a Mickey Mantle baseball game Tuesday.

Reggie McKinney was the starting and winning pitcher, working the first two innings of the five-inning contest. South is 5-0.

Mike Campbell pitched the next two and Brian Viechio the three. Campbell struck out three and didn't walk any, McKinney and Viechio walked two and fanned two.

Currie got the maximum punch out of his two hits. He followed a bases-loaded double with a grand slam and later drove in an eighth RBI with a sacrifice fly.

Dennis Hirrenkoff was 3-for-5 and had one RBI, and J.J. Burley, John Benninger and Scott Lakatos had two hits apiece. Benninger also scored three runs, had two RBI and stole three bases. Campbell walked four times, hit a sacrifice fly and scored twice.

On Sunday, South Farmington edged the Detroit Eagles 5-3 when Viechio walked and scored the winning run in the sixth inning. After stealing second, he came home on Hurley's RBI single.

Les Luark was the winning pitcher in relief of Lakatos, who walked the first three batters. Luark went 5 1/2 innings, giving up five hits and three runs, before Tyrone O'Neal came on to pitch the last 1 1/2 innings. Hurley, Benninger, Campbell and Eric Wiesner had two hits apiece. Campbell drove in two runs, and Benninger and Wiesner had single RBI.

After having the start of its season delayed by weather and other commitments, the South Farmington Connie Mack baseball team finally got down to the business of playing Saturday.

Coming off a 22-5 campaign in which South Farmington was a regional finalist, the ballclub split a double-header with Wyandotte, losing the first game 5-4 and winning the second 7-0.

South Farmington had its season opener pushed back by Farmington Hills Harrison's success in the high school tournament and several rainouts last week.

The team returns seven players from last year, but notable losses include Jason Hicks, Joe Whitefoot and Joe Jensen — the three of whom combined for a 13-3 pitching record.

South Farmington's roster includes six players off the Harrison varsity team that was co-champion of the Western Lakes Activities Association and won a district title.

KEY RETURNING players are catcher Rob MacDonald, pitcher/infielder Jason Lichtman, first baseman Jeff Skinner, shortstop Leo Devine, pitcher/utility player Mike Dorocak and pitcher Craig Murray.

MacDonald had an outstanding season last summer, batting .412 and driving in 36 runs. Lichtman hit .378, Skinner .346 and Devine .333 with 19 RBI. Dorocak, a 286 hitter, was 3-1 as a pitcher and Lichtman 2-4 to make up for the personnel losses by adding Rich Roy and Andy Weighlin of Clarenceville High, P.J. Green and Chris Schmid of Farmington High, Adam Hasey of Birmingham Brother Rice and Gary Devine, who will be a junior next fall at Harrison.

Weighlin hit .522 and Roy .520 for the Trojans last spring. Green .420 and Schmid .300 for the Falcons. Schmid also had a 3-2 pitching record. Hasey hit .430 and Devine .340 for their high school teams.

Murray will spearhead the starting rotation, coming off a marvelous senior campaign at Harrison in which he posted a 9-1 record and had 130-plus strikeouts.

The other starters will be Roy, Schmid and Dorocak. The relief corp

will consist of Lichtman, Gary Devine and Chad Burgess, who is more noted for his ability on the track than the baseball diamond in the spring. He will attend Grand Valley State on a basketball scholarship.

South Farmington's roster also includes Steve Fitzpatrick, who played at North Farmington, and Matt LeMieux, an '83 Clarenceville graduate. The team is coached by Mark MacDonald, Dave Turnquist and Bob Murray.

THE LITTLE Caesars Connie Mack League of which South Farmington is a member has been expanded to 18 teams this year. The league now takes in teams from the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti and downriver areas.

In the second game Saturday, Schmid and Murray combined on a 5-hitter. Schmid went six innings for the victory, allowing four hits. He also struck out seven and walked one. Murray gave up one hit and a walk in the seventh before eventually striking out the side.

Havey had three hits and Skinner two. Green had a two-run single, and Skinner, Leo Devine and Havey added RBI singles.

In the first game, Joe Venturini, who pitched for the South Farmington Mickey Mantle team two years ago, was the winning pitcher for Wyandotte. He was Melvindale High's ace pitcher last season and will attend Henry Ford Community College as well Murray.

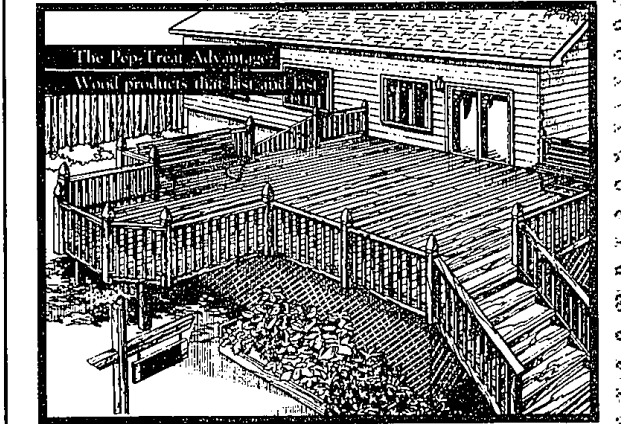
Roy, the losing pitcher, had a no-hitter through four innings, but Wyandotte scored all five runs in the fifth. Murray got South Farmington out of the inning, and Burgess retired the side in the sixth.

South Farmington did all of its scoring in the seventh. Lichtman's sacrifice fly and three straight singles by Roy, MacDonald and Leo Devine made the score 5-4.

MacDonald, however, was thrown out at the plate when he tried to score from second on Devine's hit, ending the game. In the second inning, South had the bases loaded with no outs but failed to score.

Leo Devine and Havey had two hits apiece. Venturini went the distance, allowing 11 hits. But he struck out 10 and walked one.

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