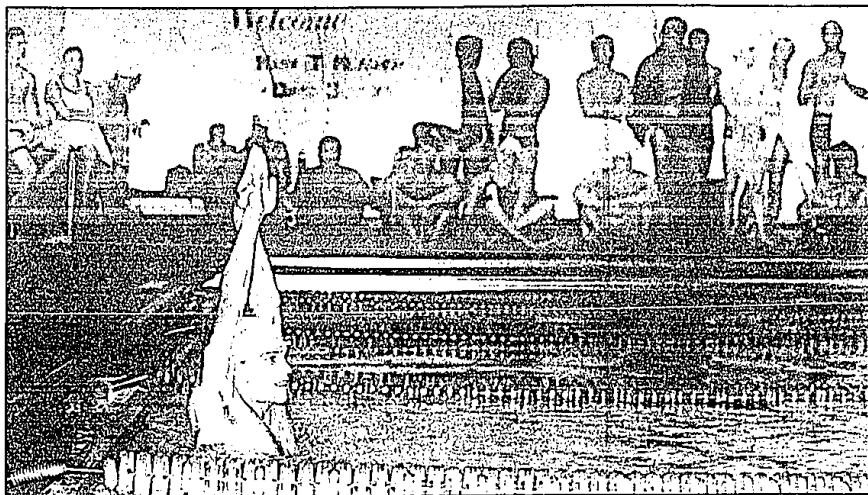


Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312

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DOUG SUSALLA/staff photographer

Former Olympic swimmer David Berkoff demonstrates his technique to an audience of aspiring young swimmers Tuesday at Farmington Hills Harrison High School. Berkoff, a gold medalist

in the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and ex-Olympian Mary T. Meagher gave a series of clinics at various Oakland County sites early this week.

Olympic stars invest in youth

CALL IT an investment in the future.

Because it will be years from now — perhaps as much as a decade — before the results are in. Maybe it'll happen at the Olympic Games in the year 2000; a 21-year-old will climb out of a pool moments after a gold medal-winning performance and plunge right into a TV microphone, announcing to billions:

"When I was 10, I met Mary T. Meagher and Dave Berkoff, and that really inspired me."

At least that's what all those Northwest Suburban Swim League and Michigan Stingrays officials, coaches and parents are envisioning. They're the ones responsible for bringing in the two Olympians for a series of five clinics Tuesday and Wednesday in Bloomfield Hills, Beverly Hills, Farmington Hills and Lathrup Village.

Reasons for recruiting such distinguished athletes — Meagher, known as "Madame Butterfly," has won three Olympic gold medals and holds two world records; Berkoff won a gold and a silver in Seoul last year and has one world mark — to conduct several three-hour sessions can vary, from motivational to technical.

BUT THE REASONS don't matter any more than what the athletes actually said or did during the clinics. What really mattered was they were here. And in a sport like swimming, that is very important indeed.

First, understand the swimmer's dilemma. There are long (four or more hours a day), often boring, usually tedious, and mostly submerged workouts daily. Their only object seems to be to test an individual's mental and physical endurance.

And for what? There are no pro swim circuits. When college ends, so



C.J. Risak

do most swim careers. Only the very elite swimmer (translated: Olympic gold medalists) can make money from swimming.

It is a sport requiring single-minded dedication to achieve national success. No other sport can interfere. There's no time for it. Top-grade swimmers train year-round.

No sport requires so much of its athletes and offers so little in return. Which is why it is so important to have people like Meagher and Berkoff pay visits.

DON'T MISUNDERSTAND. Both believe they are ordinary people, like anyone else in the crowds that gathered to see them. But they aren't. Suffice to say that Oakland County, Michigan's best for swimming, has yet to produce a swimmer the equal of these two Olympians.

When they talk about how to prepare for big meets, or training harder than hard, the gap between them and ordinary people widens. Listen to Berkoff, a Harvard graduate, explain what he enjoys about swimming:

"Money was never important to me. My happiness was important. And I was always happy in the water. Money shouldn't be a motivating factor to kids."

"To me, workouts are the greatest thing in the world. That's what I really miss. I don't miss the competing at all."

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"To me, workouts are the greatest thing in the world. That's what I really miss. I don't miss the competing at all."

— David Berkoff
former Olympic swimmer



"They may learn a few technical things, but I'd never take credit for a future butterfly. I don't expect to do miracles."

— Mary T. Meagher
former Olympic swimmer

Festival softball crown worn by real Champion

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

A true Champion has been crowned king of the annual Founders Festival softball tournament.

This year's winner is a champion in name as well as deed.

Champion Enterprises of Farmington Hills outslugged Dunlevy's Bar 13-7 Sunday afternoon to win its first festival title and fifth tournament of the season.

"The most satisfying thing about this is that we did it going undefeated, and nobody has done that in the last several years," said John Church, team captain and president of Champion Enterprises.

"This tournament has been stacked with big teams in past years, and nobody has gone undefeated," he added. "We had a good C team, and we won it in a big way," first baseman Mark MacDonald said.



A PLAYER who was most instrumental in Champion posting a 5-0 record was shortstop Dave Mossolan, who was named the tournament's most valuable player. The 31-year-old Trenton resident was 22-for-25, which included a 4-for-4 showing in the final, and hit .880.

Champion teammates Tony Kasab, Church and Rick Pringle also were named to the all-tournament team. Pringle hit .762, Kasab .563 and Church .550. Jay Rau wasn't rewarded with all-star recognition but was 9-for-11 and batted .818.

"I just did my part," said Mossolan, a salesman for a Southfield company. "It just seemed everything we did went our way."

"Saturday night we were down three runs but stuck together as a team, and that's why we won the tournament."

Mossolan, surprisingly, had a better individual tournament playing for another team in a different tournament some years ago, but the '89 Founders Festival was the best in terms of team achievement.

"I can't remember exactly, but I had a lot of hits," he said. "This was better because we went through undefeated. The other time we lost early and had to come back."

WINNING THE championship was especially gratifying for MacDonald, one of five Farmington residents on team — the others are Paul Williams, Church, Dave Trowbridge and Tom Church. He has played in the festival tournament for the last eight years without being on a winner.

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DOUG SUSALLA/staff photographer

Dave Mossolan reaches for a ground ball during weekend action in the annual Founders Festival softball tournament. Mossolan was

named Most Valuable Player after leading Champion Enterprises to the title.

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