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Dad knows best in Kowalkowski family

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

As a father and former professional football player, Bob Kowalkowski of Farmington Hills has always been a source of advice and inspiration for his son, Scott.

And last week the elder Kowalkowski might have provided the Notre Dame linebacker with the most important words of wisdom after Scott was selected by the Philadelphia Eagles in the National Football League draft.

The 22-year-old Kowalkowski went in the eighth round, which isn't terribly low but not high enough to give a player a sense of security about making the team.

Kowalkowski, who played at Orchard Lake St. Mary's High School, knew he wouldn't be drafted in any of the first three rounds, but he had hoped to go in the top six.

However, the order in which a player is taken isn't that important, certainly not the most important detail, Bob Kowalkowski told his son.

HE SHOULD know, too. He was drafted in the seventh round by the Detroit Lions in 1985, following his junior year at Virginia. He later played 11 seasons as an offensive guard with the Lions (1986-76) and one with the Green Bay Packers (1977).

"I said 'You wanted the opportunity to try pro football. There are as many drafted above you who won't make the team as there are drafted below you. It's not a question of what you do when you're drafted, it's what you do after you're drafted.'"

"There are a lot of failures on both sides. You just don't want to be one of the failures."

There was some tension in the Kowalkowski home on the second day of the draft (April 22) as they waited for word of Scott's selection. They were anxious hours for father and son.

"I wasn't discouraged, but you tend to doubt yourself," Scott said. "Am I good enough to be in this league? Then, all of a sudden — Bam! It happens. Now my work just begins."

Draft Day '91 was quite different in terms

of media hype and interest from the day 28 years ago when Bob Kowalkowski was selected. The process of evaluating college talent is a more involved and scrutinizing effort, too.

"I FELT MORE pressure for him than I ever did for myself," Bob Kowalkowski said. "I looked in the paper and saw I didn't get drafted (in the early rounds), and I didn't know I had been until three days later when I went back to school."

"There's such a difference now in the draft as far as the combine workouts and testing in college. I think I had two scouts time me in the 40 in my junior year after practice. Other than that, I didn't have a lot of contact with the pros."

"The only thing they don't do (nowadays) is pick up your lip and see if you've got blue lips."

Scott Kowalkowski went through three workouts for the Atlanta Falcons alone and, like his father, was eventually chosen by a team he had no contact with prior to the draft.

But the Eagles saw enough of the 6-foot-2, 230-pound Kowalkowski, who runs the 40-yard dash in 4.7 seconds, and knew enough about him from the combined workouts to want him in their camp.

"We watched him in the all-star games, and we liked what we saw," Eagles linebackers coach Jim Vecchiarella said.

"WE THINK he's solid enough to bring him here and have a closer look at what he can do. We think he's the kind of guy who will come in here and give it his best effort."

Vecchiarella likes the fact Scott comes from a program like that at Notre Dame, one loaded with talent and where the competition for playing time is keen.

Bob Kowalkowski believes Scott's background with the Fighting Irish has prepared him well for pro football — or whatever he chooses to do after school.

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Scott Kowalkowski
drafted by the Eagles



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

North Farmington pitcher Chris White lost a foot race with Glenn's Steve Fuller to first

base. The Rockets rallied in the sixth inning to run an upset bid by North.

Raiders, Hawks fall shy in WLAA games

North Farmington and Farmington Hills Harrison came up short in a pair of key baseball games Thursday in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

The visiting Raiders fell two runs shy of unbeaten Westland John Glenn in the Lakes Division, 5-3. The Hawks lost a Western Division contest to Walled Lake Western in eight innings, 3-2.

Glenn scored four runs in the sixth inning to erase a 3-1 lead by North. The Rockets, ranked No. 2 in Class A, sent seven men to the plate, scoring on John Ward's bases-loaded triple and Andy Gagne's single.

Chris White was the losing pitcher in relief of starter Mark Temple. The last two runs in the sixth were charged to White. Temple gave up three hits, struck out five and walked three in five innings.

Gagne had an RBI triple for Glenn's first run. Andrew Margolick, White and Temple had consecutive singles for North during a three-run third inning, and Dave Rankin doubled in the second run. The third scored on a throwing error.

Lawrence Scheffer, 4-0 with two saves, was the winning pitcher. He pitched the last 3½ innings in relief

baseball

of Aaron Scheffer, allowed one hit, struck out three and walked one.

The Rockets are 3-0 in the division and 8-0 overall. North is 1-2 and 2-4. In a WLAA game played Wednesday, Livonia Franklin defeated the visiting Raiders 6-4.

Adam Stein was the losing pitcher in relief of starter Brian Gonterman. Dave Roman pitched the final two innings to get the win.

Jason Horwitz had two doubles and Gonterman two singles for North. Roman, Dan West and Kirk Evans notched two hits and one RBI apiece for the Patriots, 3-2.

KARL SINCLAIR scored the winning run for Western in the top of the eighth on a walk, single and wild pitch. Andrew Smith's solo homer had tied the score 2-2 in the sixth.

Gary Devine went the distance for Harrison on the mound and saw his pitching record dip to 1-2. He struck

out eight, walked six and allowed five hits. Despite being under 500, he still has an impressive earned run average of 1.94.

Smith had three hits, including a double, and two RBIs. He also scored a run. Mike Pesci and Steve Hagopian were 2-for-4. Pesci also had a double and scored the other run.

The Hawks are 2-1 in the Western Division and 3-3 overall. Harrison had eight hits and made one error. The Warriors played an errorless game.

KEN BAZZY pitched a no-hitter Wednesday as Livonia Clarenceville blanked visiting Harper Woods 1-0 in eight innings. The Trojans are 2-1 in the Metro Conference and 4-1 overall.

Bazzy, a senior right-hander who is 2-0, struck out five and walked one. He hasn't given up a hit in the last 12½ innings he has pitched.

Terry Donahue also went the distance for Harper Woods, allowing six hits and two walks. He struck out six.

In the eighth inning, Tony Malinowski doubled and scored the winning run on consecutive singles by Andy Van Erp and Carl Holston.

Lydon keeps North unbeaten

North Farmington extended its perfect softball record in the Lakes Division to 3-0 by defeating Westland John Glenn 9-1 Thursday.

Jennifer Lydon pitched a complete game for the Raiders, 5-2 overall. She walked four and struck out three.

Cathy Mruk went the distance for Glenn and walked seven. Each team had five hits.

Eve Claar's three-run triple in the sixth inning gave the Raiders a 9-1 advantage. Lydon and freshman Allison Stein had RBI singles.

Glenn committed three errors, including an outfield miscue in the first inning that allowed North to score two runs. A Farmington Hills Mercy split a softball doubleheader Wednesday with visiting Harper Woods Regina, winning the first game 3-1 and losing the second 6-4.

Maureen Paulsen pitched a complete game in the opener, a two-hitter that included 10 strikeouts and two walks. Paulsen

and Kim Hirschard also had two hits each.

Mercy pitcher Krista Miller gave up three earned runs in 5½ innings, but the loss went to Paulsen, who also was charged with three earned runs in the last 1½ innings.

Angela Mastromoni had two hits and two RBIs for the Raiders. Jennifer Banish had one hit and one RBI, and she scored two runs.

A pinch-runner Janene Copti scored the winning run in the seventh inning Thursday as Livonia Stevenson edged Farmington 4-3 in the Lakes Division.

Copti was running for Jackie Richardson, who drew a walk from losing pitcher Cory Wojcik. She scored on Rachel Allers' two-out single.

Allor had two hits and Gayle Richardson scored two runs for the Spartans. Farmington's Jenny Sever and Kerri Finlayson had two hits apiece.

Stevenson is 2-1 and 3-2; the Falcons 0-3 and 4-5.

Dome touted as World Cup site

IT'S ANYBODY'S CALL, what will happen at Wednesday's press conference unveiling the grand plans to bring the World Cup to Detroit. My guess is it will be met with mixed amounts of incredulity and incomprehension, doubt and disdain.

In other words, a typically American response, with all bases covered.

It's true, to most laymen — and where soccer is concerned, that's what most Americans are — the bid to bring a portion of the tournament to the Motor City seems improbable.

The proposed site is the Pontiac Silverdome. Some of you may remember when the Silverdome housed a professional soccer team (the Detroit Express); you probably figure this to be a perfectly suitable location.

Wrong.

FIFA, the international governing body for soccer, would frown upon the Silverdome unless alterations were made. Substantial alterations.

MAINLY, THE field would have to be changed, both in size and substance. The required area needed for a regulation soccer pitch is greater than the size of the Silverdome floor; also, World Cup soccer must be played on grass.

I'm sure there are a few Americans who figure we can buy off FIFA, that laying out a few U.S. dollars in the right places will let us put these games wherever we damn well please.

Sorry. That thinking is incorrect. Indeed, if we don't come up with enough facilities, FIFA may just take the cup away. It probably won't happen,



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but it could.

At any rate, don't expect FIFA to prostrate itself before the American dollar. Playing sites will have to meet specifications.

That's why the committee putting together Detroit's bid — it's headed by Roger Faulkner of Bloomfield Hills, formerly a part-owner of the Express — has devised a plan to convert the Silverdome into a Soccerdome.

THIS PLAN reportedly calls for building a platform several rows above the current Silverdome field. That would make for a larger playing surface.

As for the surface, sources have indicated a temporary grass field could be grown on the platform.

There's no doubting the expense and work a project of this magnitude would require. Conservative estimates are a cost in the millions, with several rows of the Silverdome's lower seats being removed.

At this point, a lot of Americans — certainly those who applauded and agreed with University of Michigan officials when they refused to allow

their stadium to be considered as a playing site — will protest, loudly. Rip apart the Silverdome, invest a couple of million in refurbishing it, and for what?

Three or four soccer games, all featuring foreigners. Ridiculous.

Still, you must understand there is a far greater number of people who find it difficult to believe we wouldn't go to any lengths — even if it meant building a brand-new stadium — to host a few cup games.

TRUE, THEY aren't from the United States. But they've seen cities — like Italy last year — do just that, build entire stadiums so they could host part of what is considered by many to be the greatest sporting spectacle in the world.

And rest assured, the loudest argument for hosting part of the cup is the money it will generate. Untold millions will flow into local businesses as tourists stream into Detroit.

Also, they will argue, FIFA won't be too rigid with its restrictions. Soccer people around the world would like nothing more than to tap into the U.S. market, perhaps even form another pro league here. They may never get a better opening than this.

It will be worth the hassles and the investment of a few million, Wednesday's argument will go when the bid is officially announced. The benefits would outweigh the detriments.

Probably true. But convincing millions of Michigan taxpayers, including those who have steadfastly resisted soccer during the last two decades, won't be easy.

Marlins blank Ladywood, 3-0

Farmington Hills Mercy remained unbeaten in girls soccer Thursday with a 3-0 victory over Catholic League rival Livonia Ladywood. The state-ranked Marlins, who led 2-0 at home, are 7-0-1 overall.

Sophomore midfielder Carrie Dziadosz scored the first goal, and junior forward Tania Magooce got the next two.

Senior forward Dana Lehmkuhl assisted on all three scores, and goalkeeper Renee Larabell got credit for the shutout.

"I think we could have scored five or six goals if things had gone right," Mercy coach Deepak Shivraman said. "I expected our team to play better."

"The 3-0 score is a bit misleading, however. Ladywood did everything to keep pressing, to disrupt things. I was impressed with our goalkeeping and defenders."

FARMINGTON scored three second-half goals Wednesday to finish off crosstown rival North Farmington 5-1.

Julie Dugan scored two goals for the Falcons, 1-1 in the Lakes Division and 3-4 overall. Sue Gibson, Monika Kurzer and Michelle Lorenz had one goal each, and Kurzer also had two assists.

Farmington can win the city championship today when it plays at Farmington Hills Harrison at 5:30 p.m. The Hawks and North play Wednesday, May 8, at Harrison.

The pressure was on the Plymouth-Canton teams' last week, and both were equal to the task in games matching state-ranked opponents.

Canton's contest with Northville had added significance Friday, being a Western Division game in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

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