

# Rocks pay tribute to late coach

SIXTEEN YEARS separate the pair of state championships won by Plymouth Salem baseball teams, but there is a special link between the two ballclubs.

The late Wayne Sparkman coached the Rocks to their first Class A title in 1975, and he was very much on the minds of coaches and players Saturday when Salem won its second championship.

"The Rocks' 4-1 victory over Rochester in the final at Eagle Creek was a fitting salute to the former coach, who died of a heart attack at age 48 last November.

Sparkman left coaching after taking Salem to the top nearly a generation ago but had served as a school counselor since that time. Thus, he was known to the players, too, and not just the coaches and administrators who were his friends and coworkers.

As a tribute to Sparkman, the Rocks retired his number this year. The state championship made the tribute complete.

"At the start of the year," Salem coach John Gravin said, "I reminded the kids, if their goal was to win the state championship, what a year to do it when we were retiring coach Sparkman's number."

Another coincidence is that Salem finished the season with a 27-6 record, winning the title with No. 33, the number worn by Sparkman.

"He restored the intensity and discipline to baseball in Plymouth," said Salem assistant coach Dale Rumberger, who played on the first team Sparkman coached at old



Dan O'Meara

Plymouth High. "He was in my thoughts today, because it was Game 33 and yesterday (Friday) in the 8-5 semifinal win over Grose Pointe North) it was 32, my number — and he gave me my number. He was a classy guy, we miss him a lot."

A plaque bearing the No. 33 and a picture of Sparkman will be put on display in the trophy case at Salem High School.

"That will look nice next to the championship trophy," said Gary Balconi, assistant athletic director at Salem.

Balconi and other school officials were unable to attend the semifinal game, because they were participating in the Wayne Sparkman Memorial Golf Outing at Fellows Creek Golf Course.

The event is an annual end-of-year outing for faculty and staff, and Sparkman had been one of its main promoters and organizers. It was renamed in his honor this year.

Balconi, who missed the final game due to a family event in Ohio, called Plymouth-Canton Athletic Director Paul Cummings Saturday night to learn how the Rocks had fared.

The first thing Cummings said upon hearing Balconi's voice was

"Wayne would be smiling." Balconi said. "He knew what I was calling for, that was his way of saying they had won it all."

With eight seniors in their starting lineup, the Rocks had an edge in experience over Grose Pointe North and Rochester. For that reason, Gravin expected Salem to have a good year from the start.

"Anytime I doubted it, coach Rumberger put it back in my head — 'Don't you worry about these guys, coach. They'll do it,'" Gravin said.

"We were a real positive group. There were some tight moments, but we never doubted it."

After the Rocks defeated Plymouth Canton to win the district title, the Rocks had an edge when Gravin was an assistant coach for several years, said he thought Salem could win it all.

Gravin said the same but only to his players.

"I told them if we won our district we'd win it all," he said. (Canton pitcher Scott Kennedy was drafted by the pros, (Westland) John Glenn was one of the best hitting players in the state and (Adrian) pitcher Dan Lock is a major college player. We just believed it from that point."

Salem is 2-0 in state finals and has won district championships in four of the last five years.

"So look out if we get here again," Gravin said. "If our record in the district is so good, if we can get by the regional, look out."

The Rocks joined some elite company Saturday, becoming one of four schools to win two or more Class A titles, the others being Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher (3), Redford Catholic Central (3) and Midland (2). Harper Woods Notre Dame and Ulva Ford had won the last two state titles, but Salem is the first West Side team to do it since Catholic Central in 1987.

"We hear about how great the baseball is on the East Side," Gravin said. "Well, they should come over here and play John Glenn and Plymouth Canton three times a year."

"We represented our side of Wayne County well. We were a team, the best I've ever seen in high school baseball."

"The Rocks had their post-season banquet before the state finals but didn't pass out any awards to the varsity."

"We didn't want to think about past accomplishments," Gravin said.

Salem added a pair of individual honors this week when senior pitcher Scott Rodgers and senior catcher Scott Niemiec were named to the Class A all-state first team by the high school coaches.

Rumberger shared credit for the team's success with the voters in Plymouth and Canton "for getting the millages paid every time, so we can have a freshman program," he said, "because that's what builds championship teams like this."

# Concealed Security 3rd in tourney

Concealed Security finished third in the national tournament in Waterford last weekend, losing to Akron in the playoffs, 3-0.

The metro-area baseball team with Observerland players was one of five division winners in the 20-team tournament.

Akron drew a bye, however, while the other four faced off in the semifinals. Concealed defeated Kokomo (Ind.) 5-2 before playing Akron, the same team that won the Mickey Mantle World Series in Northville last year.

The first inning against Akron was pivotal, according to Concealed coach Lou Pirronello, since the team had three hits and failed to score.

"We hit the ball well but it was somebody," Pirronello said. "It didn't fall for us."

GEORGE LEUNG pitched the first 3 1/2 innings and suffered the loss. Shandel Currie had two hits for Concealed.

Charles Winters threw a complete game against Kokomo, allowing five hits and five walks. Ron Hollis hit a three-run homer and Jim Solak a solo homer in a four-run fourth inning.

Matt Bonkowski was 3-for-3 with one RBI, and Currie had two hits.

Concealed clinched its division title Friday with a pair of wins, 5-0 over Greensboro (N.C.) and 7-5 over Bloomington (Ind.).

Solak pitched a complete game and scattered four hits against Greensboro. He struck out eight and walked three. Currie had two hits again and Solak two RBIs with a groundout and sacrifice fly.

Leung hit a grand slam and Winters was 3-for-3 with one RBI in the Bloomington game. Leung, Eric Miller and Ed Wolkind had two hits apiece

and Volkind two RBIs.

Dennis Pirronello, though he hadn't pitched in four years, worked the last 3 1/2 innings in relief of Mike Grahl to get the win. Concealed had clinched the division title and tried to conserve its regular pitching.

RETURNING to play in the Little Caesars Amateur Baseball Federation, Concealed whipped Windsor 14-1 Monday.

Mark Van Ameyde was the winning pitcher, striking out seven and issuing no walks. He scattered five hits over seven innings.

Mark D'Antonio was 3-for-3 with one RBI, and Currie had two doubles and four RBIs. Solak also had two hits, including a home run, and Leung added a two-run double.

Concealed is 3-0 in the league and 8-1 overall.

# Mid-America wins 2nd straight title

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and Jose and Sever had three hits and three RBIs each. Michelle Bohneke (Farmington Hills) and Jones had two hits and scores three runs each, and Sarah Rowe (Plymouth), Jennifer O'Donnell (Union Lake) and Sinko had single RBIs.

After the Travelers scored their only run in the first inning, Mid-America prevented any more scoring with a good defensive play. Left fielder Cook threw a strike to shortstop Lehnis, who fired a relay to third baseman Jose, who tagged the runner trying to stretch a double into a three-base hit.

The Mustangs defeated South Farmington in their first game 14-0 as Sinko pitched a four-hitter and walked two.

SEVER BELTED a three-run homer and Jones a two-run double. Both were 3-for-4 with three RBIs. Strahan and Lehnis had two hits and two RBIs apiece.

Mid-America advanced to the finals in the winner's bracket with a 5-4 defeat of the Southgate All-Stars. Sever allowed 10 hits but no earned runs in seven innings.

Lehnis had two hits and two RBIs, Bohneke and Cook two hits and one RBI, Jose and Leslee Dickerson

(Belleville) one RBI.

Cook had the highest batting average for the tournament at .615, and she led Jose for second with six RBIs. Sever (.583) led the Mustangs with seven RBIs, hit four homer runs and scored six runs.

Strahan hit .600. Jose .583, Jones .571 with four RBIs, Bohneke .500 and Lehnis .463 with five RBIs and seven runs.

Mid-America, which left today for a tournament in E.Hampton, Mass., is 7-0 in competition with other 15- and-under teams and 9-2 in women's league play. The Mustangs go to Cincinnati June 28-29 for a national invitation tournament and will be host for the Canton NIT on July 6-7.

# baseball

1991 WESTERN LAKES ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION BASEBALL TEAMS

ALL-WLAA FIRST TEAM  
First baseman: Chuck Vochler, senior, Westland Lake Western.  
Infielders: Mike Jank, senior, Westland Lake Western; Chris White, senior, North Farmington; Dave Roman, senior, Edina Parkland.  
Outfielders: Lawrence Scheller, senior, Westland Lake Western; Jason Rigg, senior, Plymouth Canton; Gary Devine, senior, Farmington Hills.  
Pitcher: Scott Niemiec, senior, Plymouth Canton.  
Catcher: Scott Rodgers, senior, Plymouth Canton; Scott Kennedy, senior, Plymouth Canton.  
Designated hitter: Joe Lashy, senior, Westland Lake Western.

ALL-LAKES DIVISION  
First baseman: Tom Devey, senior, Plymouth Canton.  
Infielders: Mike Jank, junior, North Farmington; Ed Quindy, junior, Plymouth Salem; Joe Elstige, senior, Westland Lake Western.  
Outfielders: John Ward, junior, Westland Lake Western; Mark Talaruck, junior, Westland Lake Western; John Kaskas, senior, Livonia Stevenson.  
Pitcher: Mike White, senior, Westland Lake Western.  
Catcher: Alan Scheffer, sophomore, Westland Lake Western; Mark Temple, junior, North Farmington.  
Designated hitter: Andrew Margolick, senior, North Farmington.

ALL-WESTERN DIVISION  
First baseman: Mike Blarford, sophomore, Plymouth Canton.  
Infielders: Mike Beck, junior, Farmington Hills; Harrison Todd McMillan, junior, Farmington Hills.  
Outfielders: Mike Blarford, sophomore, Plymouth Canton; Todd Pivotal and Frank Laarnet, Salem; Jeff DeBelle, Scott Bright, Jeff Coleman, Kevin Grange and Eric Weisler, W.L. Central; Rick Wingo, Steve Rebut and Greg Freytag, W.L. Western; Chad Williams, Ty Kopske and Joe Kallhorn, John Glenn; Andy Gagne, Ken Tennant and Greg Tamas.  
Pitcher: Jeff Mouton, senior, Dearborn; Mark Parter, senior, Dearborn.  
Catcher: Derek Zorn, senior, Dearborn.  
Designated hitter: Andrew Margolick, senior, North Farmington.

NORTHWEST SUBURBAN ACTIVITIES LEAGUE  
Pitcher: Jeff Mouton, senior, Dearborn; Mark Parter, senior, Dearborn.  
Catcher: Derek Zorn, senior, Dearborn.  
Designated hitter: Andrew Margolick, senior, North Farmington.  
Infielder: Kris Bridges, senior, Dearborn; Derek Low, senior, Dearborn; Edsel Ford, Chris Munson, senior, Dearborn.  
Outfielders: Jeff Williams, junior, Garden City; Rob Bacon, junior, Woodhaven; Neil Williams, junior, Dearborn.

# softball

1991 WESTERN LAKES ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION SOFTBALL TEAMS

ALL-WLAA FIRST TEAM  
First baseman: Paul Hansen, senior, Farmington.  
Infielders: Carrie Rochford, junior, Westland Lake Central; Carme Cassinik, junior, Westland Lake Central; Dawn Warner, junior, Livonia Franklin.  
Outfielders: Dana Bohrick, senior, North Farmington; Jenny Murray, senior, Livonia Franklin; Trent Flood, sophomore, Westland Lake Central.  
Pitcher: Kelly Glennie, senior, Westland Lake Central.  
Catcher: Jeff Mayle, senior, Livonia Franklin.  
At-large picks: Kelle Holmes, sophomore, Plymouth Canton; Karen Oack, junior, Westland Lake Central.

ALL-LAKES DIVISION  
First baseman: Carl Palmason, senior, Livonia Stevenson.  
Infielders: Emily Quiani, junior, Plymouth Canton; Trent Gruck, senior, North Farmington; Jenny Savel, freshman, Farmington.  
Outfielders: Katie Bohneke, junior, North Farmington; Kent Fyallson, senior, Farmington Hills; Laura Horne, senior, Plymouth Salem.  
Pitcher: Eve Clear, senior, North Farmington.  
Catcher: Jennifer Lydon, senior, North Farmington.  
At-large picks: Niki Hala, junior, Livonia Stevenson.

ALL-WESTERN DIVISION  
First baseman: Stacey Nyland, junior, Northville.  
Infielders: Kris Ford, senior, Plymouth Canton; Emily Skare, senior, Livonia Franklin; Melissa Kaplan, senior, Northville.  
Outfielders: Lisa Duvitski, senior, Westland Lake Western; Kari Mitchell, senior, Northville; Sarah Schenckelmeier, junior, Plymouth Canton.  
Pitcher: Andrea Najarian, junior, Farmington Hills; Heather Hill, senior, Livonia Stevenson.  
Catcher: Karan Jose, freshman, Livonia Stevenson.  
At-large picks: Jackie Herbert, senior, Livonia Stevenson; Laura Appligan, junior, Northville.

HONORABLE MENTION  
Farmington: Maria Huh; Harrison: Shelby Bouwme, Amanda Ault; Churchville: Vicki Lucas, Janice Sprad; Franklin: Tracy Parker; Jenny Mascareto; Wrentham: Wendy Rydzakiewicz; Stevenson: Rachael Aho, Beth Bako, Erin Peterson; H. Farmington: Michelle Bohneke, Andrea Doso; Northville: Karen Trepanco, Christy Green, Lori George; Canton: Kim Henry, Danielle Morters, Renee Doy; Jenny Scherw; Salem: Andrea Weisig; Jenny Garry; W.L. Central: Job Ockun; Jenny Czach; Daniele Haly; Laura Drake; W.L. Western: Celeste Gross, Shelby Crawford, Dawn Cooley, Jenny Gross; Livonia Stevenson: Heather Burge; Lisa Curries; All Pines: Joie Glenn; Jenny Massey, Cathy Mruk, Karly Koester.

# No. 1 tops with NFWB

The two North Farmington-West Bloomfield Mickey Mantle teams faced each other last week in their only meeting, with coach Jim Ferguson's No. 1 team taking a 15-2 win from coach Cary Moore's No. 2 squad.

Derrick Fox pitched for No. 1 with relief help from Adam Woods in the fourth inning. Keith Lewiston pitched four innings and Peter Metz three for No. 2.

Charlie Goode was 3-for-4 and Scott Lord had a key double for the winners. Jeff Bahri hit a two-run double for No. 2.

NFWB No. 1 improved its record to 3-0 with a 10-2 defeat of Dearborn Travel.

Craig Peterson and Jason Farrell combined on the pitching chores with the help of defensive plays by Goode and Matthew Wolf, who made five putouts, including a pair of over-the-shoulder catches, at second base.

Goode also provided some of the offense with a home run. David Ettinger's two-run single in the bottom of the sixth inning led the win.

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