

N'wood shift affects area schools

By C.J. Risk
staff writer

A benefit to one and all?
Hardly. Not like before, anyway. Prior to the 1987 collegiate sports season, Northwood Institute decided to drop out of the conference it had helped conceive and remain affiliated with the national association it had always been part of.

Now, Northwood is reversing itself.

The winners in the Midland-based college's decision are the other Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference members. It will rejoin starting in 1992-93. Oakland University is among the nine current GLIAC schools.

Others are Wayne State, Saginaw Valley State, Hillsdale, Michigan Tech, Grand Valley State, Lake Superior State, Northern Michigan and Ferris State.

The losers? The NAIA's District 23, to which Northwood has been a part of for 20 years. Among the district members are Marian, Grand Rapids and St. Mary's College. Other current members include Siena Heights, Aquinas College, Siena, Arbor, Grand Rapids Baptist, Michigan-Dearborn and Concordia.

NORTHWOOD APPLIED for readmission into the GLIAC after the conference's expansion committee contacted school administrators in March, 1990. Seven months later, Northwood submitted its formal application.

Two weeks ago, the last remaining hurdle for reentry was cleared when the GLIAC's president's committee unanimously approved the expansion. With 10 members (all within Michigan), the conference is at its all-time high.

college sports

Unlike Northwood's decision between the NAIA and the GLIAC four years ago, this choice was easier. "We looked around to see what was available to us," said Northwood athletic director Dave Coffey, "and the smart decision for us was to get back into the conference we were one of the founders of in 1972."

If Northwood wants to continue its intercollegiate football, it was, indeed, the only option available. Last year, the GLIAC combined with the Heartland Collegiate Conference to form the Midwest Intercollegiate Football Conference.

THE 11-TEAM football-only MIFC — six from the GLIAC, five from the Heartland (four located in Indiana, one in Ohio) — proved a tough nut to crack. It lost Northwood, the only remaining NAIA-associated football team left in District 23, with no one to play.

"The way that football conference was constructed, with 11 teams, it left everyone in it with just one (non-conference) game," said Coffey. "We were on the outs."

Last fall, the Northmen — playing as an independent — played games at Westminster, Pa.; at Findlay, Ohio; and at Tiffin, Ohio. They also traveled to Anderson, Indiana; Marion, Ohio; St. Francis, Ill.; and NCAA Division III teams Alma and Adrian.

The cost of travel was expensive. With 10 members (all within Michigan), the conference's council of athletic directors has unanimously approved.

ALL THAT'S needed is the MIFC's presidents' approval and Northwood will join the league in 1993 (scheduling problems have made earlier admission impossible). Also awaiting the president's OK is the College of St. Francis in Joliet, Ill.

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dual-membership may not be made until next year.

Meanwhile, the NAIA's District 23 is scrambling to fill its dwindling ranks. Nazareth College was expected to join as a full member, but that changed abruptly when the school announced it was closing next year.

Northwood will continue as a district member through the 1991-92 season; when it leaves, it takes with it one of the best small-college volleyball programs in the state.

AT MADONNA, Jerry Abraham was building a solid challenge to Northwood's supremacy (five-straight titles); now his Lady Crusaders will get just one more chance to unseat the champions.

"It will definitely weaken our (district)," said Abraham. "They're an excellent team."

The reaction is the same in most sports, although at St. Mary's, assistant basketball coach Kevin Donahue says, "The handwriting's on the wall. It appears they will be out of the MIFC."

But, Coffey insisted, MIFC football wasn't the only reason Northwood rejoined the GLIAC; nor does the fate of Valparaiso and Butler play a role. "We were admitted (into the GLIAC) regardless of what happens to them," he said.

"I THINK THE move will benefit all our sports, especially football," Coffey said. "It's important to note that Northwood isn't necessarily severing its ties with the NAIA completely, although the school will be required by GLIAC law to compete in NCAAs II in any sports in which the conference has an automatic national tournament berth."

A decision whether Northwood will go strictly NCAAs II or maintain

sports shorts

• SOCCER CHAMPS

The Farmington Bandits repeated as city champions in the boys under-12 division with a 3-0 record.

Team members are Abe Aon, Kenny Barton, Brad Geratski, Chris Hart, Peter Jackson, Ian McNeil, Paul Mitchell, Zack Papir, Dave Petrovich, Randy Sage, Nick Sonowski, Dave Tweedy and Dan Gabriel. The Bandits are coached by Craig Barton and Bob Tready.

THE Farmington Cougars under-14 boys soccer team finished second in Division I with a 3-1-4 record. The Cougars scored 19 goals and conceded eight.

Team members are Mike Buchanan, Rob Burton, Steve Faro, Jeff Gandoilo, Phil Giovannini, Ben Goebel, Nick Hamblin, Mike Lane, Jim Madany, Brian McCluskey, Scott McKay, Chris McQuain, Neal Mower, Keith Sudheimer, Matt Trunk, Brian Peterson, Jamie White and Duane Wilder. The Cougars are coached by Tom Faro and Jim Trunk.

• SOCCER TRYOUTS

The Farmington Soccer Club is accepting registrations for the fall season. Walk-in registration will be Saturday, June 29, July 6 and July 13, at the Visitor Center at Heritage Park from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

First-time registrants should bring a birth certificate and social security number. Registrations can also be completed by mail. Forms are available at the Farmington YMCA and Farmington Hills Department of Special Services Office.

The fee is \$35 and includes a uniform. Boys and girls with birth dates of Aug. 1, 1973 to July 31, 1983 are eligible. For information call the Farmington Soccer Club at 473-0182 or Jan Ricco at 553-8691.

• LIVONIA Youth Soccer Club tryouts for Little Caesars Premier under-12 girls (born between Aug. 1, 1979 and July 31, 1980) will be 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25, at Bicentennial Park, Field No. 2. Call Mario Galindo (464-3957) or Jim Kearny (421-5233).

• TRYOUTS for the Vardar Soccer Club, a boys select team, will be 6 p.m. Monday, June 24, and 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25, at Whitman Field on West Chicago between Farmington and Merriman roads. Boys born between Aug. 1, 1980 and July 31, 1987 are eligible. For information call 464-5218.

• LIVONIA Youth Soccer Club tryouts for a Little Caesars under-14 girls team (born between Aug. 1, 1977 and July 31, 1978) will be 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, June 24 and 25, at Bicentennial Park, Field No. 7. Call 464-6277 for information.

ing the first year the WLAA was in existence.

THE CHARGERS also won three regionals and eight Observer Relays crowns under Price.

In basketball, Price served as both a JV and varsity coach for Churchill.

He was the head varsity coach for three seasons (during the late '70s and early '80s), returning to the bench for another stint during the 1987-88 season.

Ironically, Price's most successful basketball occurred last season, when the Chargers captured their first Class A district champion since 1977, only the third in the school's history.

Churchill was eliminated in the regionals by Dearborn, finishing with an overall record of 15-9.

"Both sports will be tough to miss," Price said. "What I'll miss the most is helping kids learn their skills. I'll miss the association with the athletes and the work that goes into preparing for an athletic contest."

"Sure, it will be different in the winter and spring for me. The fall I've always had open, but I'll be just

as busy, and be able to do some

things that I didn't have the time to do before. I'll be bringing some sashimi back into my life."

Price will also be missed by the Observer sports department.

During the past two decades he has compiled the area's top boys track listings, which ran weekly during the spring.

• SAUM SCHOLAR/ATHLETE

Jeremy Saum, a former North Farmington High School athlete, recently won the \$10,000 Ervin "Red" Klein Memorial Scholarship in Westchester, N.Y.

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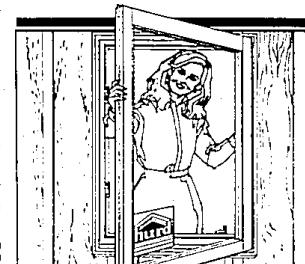
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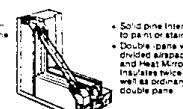
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