

Sports

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Grahl's return sparks Security

The Concealed Security I Connie Mack baseball team couldn't have asked pitcher Mike Grahl to come back at a more opportune time.

Playing first-place Ypsilanti on Monday, Grahl showed he's almost fully-recovered from a shoulder rotator cuff injury suffered in the spring, leading Concealed to an 11-0 win at Eastern Michigan University.

Grahl pitched six innings — the most he all season — and allowed only one Ypsilanti hit. He struck out four in improving his record to 2-0.

The win improved Concealed to 15-2 in the league with seven games left to catch Ypsilanti, which is one game ahead. The teams won't meet again after having split the season series.

Concealed coach Lou Pirronello said Grahl, a South Lyon graduate who is leaning toward attending Madonna University, didn't throw more than 100 pitches.

"He's a Division I pitcher and everyone has turned their back on him, but Madonna coach Mike George said 'hey, we're still interested,'" Pirronello said. "He wasn't throwing 85 miles per hour, but put it this way, he one-hit a team that didn't lose a game in our league all year. He's probably throwing at 80-85 percent, and at 85 percent, Grahl's a damn good pitcher."

Jim Solak (Dearborn Divine Child) started the game but left with arm trouble after pitching to only two Ypsilanti batters. He did a job at the plate, however, going 3-for-4 with a triple and two RBI. Matt Bonkowski (Garden City resident and Divine Child) was 2-4, and Matt Fennelly (Redford Catholic Central and Western Michigan)

baseball

went 1-2 with three RBI.

BOTH CONCEALED SECURITY I and Concealed Security II played in the Edgar Martin Classic in Wheeling, W. Va., over the Fourth of July weekend and each came back with positive results.

Concealed Security II, featuring younger players at the Connie Mack level, proved it belonged by going 4-0 and tying for one of the five division titles. (Thirty teams from across the nation competed.)

Concealed Security II tied for the division lead with Lexington, Ky., but the southern team won the second tie-breaker and a chance to advance further in the tournament. The two teams each allowed nine runs total in the four division games, but Lexington beat Concealed Security II in the second tie-breaker, by outscoring the Michigan team, 28-27.

In its first game, Concealed Security II beat Somerset, Pa., 3-2, despite trailing 2-0 heading into the seventh inning. Matt Gren's (Birmingham Brother Rice) bases loaded double with two out scored the tying runs in the seventh, and Carl Sinclair (Walled Lake Western) singled home Green with the winning run.

The winning pitcher was Joe Kelly, who allowed three hits in the first and none after that as he improved to 5-1. Kelly waked two and struck out four.

In Game 2, Concealed Security II used a 15-hit attack to whip Hannu

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Christine Mahon (10) of Farmington, a member of the under-14 Livonia Youth Soccer Club United, battles Jessica Limauro of the Troy Chargers for possession.

Sub keeper lifts Wolves

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

When Robbie Harkins volunteered to play goalie Sunday for the Michigan Wolves Under-16 boys soccer team, it saved coach Dan O'Shea from having any further worries at the Wolverine XII Tournament.

The Wolves were one of 14 teams crowned champions at Schoolcraft College, and Harkins played a key role in the team's second-straight Wolverine championship.

Harkins played most of the semifinal and all of the championship game as the Wolves beat the Canton Titans, 2-1 in a shootout. First-string keeper Cal Kaliszewski was given a red card during the first half of a 2-0 semifinal win over Bealing (Pennsylvania), meaning he was unable to play the rest of that game as well as the championship.

In stepped Harkins, who normally plays sweeper for the Wolves and Redford Catholic Central.

"He stepped up and said he could do it so we went with him," O'Shea said. "He's not normally a goal-keeper, but he played great and is an unsung hero. He played good games."

Harkins made a key save during regulation to allow the Wolves to finish the two halves tied at 1-1 with the Titans. After a scoreless overtime period, both teams scored on four of their five penalty kicks, to send the game into a second shootout.

During the second shootout, Jeff Thomas scored for the Wolves, but Blex Allie's shot for the Titans sailed wide right of the net to enable the Wolves to win.

This was the second straight year the Wolves beat the Titans in the Wolverine final on a shootout.

"Canton's a good team and played real well," O'Shea said. "I thought the first goal either way would put the game away."

Jon Landefeld's goal with about 30 minutes left in the second half gave the Wolves a 1-0 lead, but Canton tied the game later in the second half to force overtime. Canton coach Les Neal wasn't pleased with the final results but at least Canton played much better than the last time the two teams met in the regular season — a 7-1 Wolves' win.

Scoring during the first shootout for the Wolves were Thomas, Adam Schomer, Adam Pichler and Landefeld. Billy Power made a key save on the Wolves' first penalty kick in the shootout off the foot of Ben Cesa.

Scoring for Canton during the first shootout were Kris Willman, Mike Hayes, Ryan Smith and Ryan Phipps.

"A shootout doesn't really show who's the better team," Neal said. "It's a tough way to lose, a tough way to win. We played a tough game, but it's like playing a football game and kicking field goals afterward to decide who wins. Unfortunately that's the way ties are settled in the states. I understand time restrictions, but it puts a lot of pressure on the kids and isolates the goalies."

UNITED GIRLS PREVAIL

In the 14-under girls division, Pat McCaul's Livonia Youth Soccer Club United beat the Troy Chargers, 3-0, in the final for their second straight Wolverine title.

The team, together since 1989, has a three-year record of 58-2. United beat the Chargers, 1-0, during the state title game early this summer but this time United led 2-0 early.

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Farmington fights, but errors are fatal in loss to Royal Oak

It was a battle all the way, but in the end it was faulty defense that doomed Farmington's American Legion baseball team in its battle against league-leading Royal Oak.

Four Farmington miscues resulted in four runs; leading to a 6-5 triumph for Royal Oak Tuesday in Farmington.

The game was a back-and-forth struggle throughout. Farmington (now 7-9) scored twice in the third inning on singles by Tom Grigg and Jason Pinho, followed by walks to Chris Lowery and Eric Wiesner, with Wiesner's forcing in a run. Mike Zielenksi lofted a sacrifice fly to score the second.

Royal Oak tied it with two in the bottom of the third, with ground outs by Jeff Harris and Jeff Young producing runs. Farmington recaptured the lead on Lowery's two-out single in the fourth, scoring Chuck Bockler, who had singled.

But errors led to two Royal Oak runs in the bottom half of the inning. Jason Beverlin walked and Joseph Abbott reached base when his fly to right was dropped, putting runners on second and third. Andy Whitney's grounder to third was booted, scoring one run, and Jason Bridges' single scored a second.

FARMINGTON TIED IT at 4-4 in the fifth on Joe Leahy's double and Eric Messner's run-scoring single, but Royal Oak went back in front in the sixth when Jamie Edwards reached third after his bunt attempt was tossed away. He scored on Whitney's single, putting Royal Oak ahead 5-4.

Farmington tied it again in the top of the seventh. Leahy, Messner and Bockler all singled, with Bockler getting the RBI.

But once more, the lead didn't last. Beverlin reached

base when Farmington pitcher Andy Duncan missed tagging first on his grounder. Joseph Abbott followed with a long fly ball that was dropped at the left field fence, allowing the winning run to score.

Duncan was the losing pitcher, in spite of a strong effort: 6½ innings, seven hits, two walks, five strikeouts, only two earned runs. Harris got the win in relief of Beverlin, the starter.

Bockler had three of Farmington's 14 hits. Griggs, Lowry and Messner had two apiece.

FARMINGTON HAS been chosen to represent the 18th District at the four-team Continental Amateur Baseball Association Tournament, which starts Friday in Lincoln Park. The winner advances to the World Series in Maryland July 19-21.

Last week, Farmington traveled to Kokomo, Ind., for the 14-team Wooden Bat Classic (only wooden bats allowed) without much success. After getting rained out in its opener, Farmington beat Cleveland 6-3 — then lost five-straight.

Zielenksi got the pitching win in the opener, striking out eight and walking two. Lowery had a triple and home run, knocking in two runs, and Pinho had two hits and scored twice.

After that, it was downhill. Farmington lost 7-1 to Carmel, Ind.; 9-1 to Edina, Minn.; 9-5 to Parma, Ohio; and 8-6 to Edina again.

Against Carmel, Steve Rabaut had two hits; in the first loss to Edina, Griggs had a double and scored his team's only run. Rabaut again had two hits against Parma, and in the second loss to Edina Farmington got a triple and a single from Lowery, who scored twice, two hits from Wiesner, a two-run triple from Pinho and a double and two RBI from Zielenksi.

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Farmington's Joe Leahy puts the tag on Royal Oak's Jamie Edwards, fanning Edwards' base.

stealing attempt in the second inning of Tuesday's game.