

Sports

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Farmington doctor assists Gladiators

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

You've seen them on TV — The American Gladiators, who smash, pound and dominate the amateur athletes who oppose them on the Sunday morning program.

But, though they are the epitome of physical conditioning and make it look so easy as they subdue all who dare challenge them, the Gladiators can't do it all by themselves.

Sometimes they need a little help, and Farmington chiropractor Dr. Brian Nocella was there to give it Sunday when the Gladiators made a tour stop in Detroit.

Nocella volunteered to straighten out the Gladiators when they visited Joe Louis Arena during their nine-month, cross-country trek in which they face qualified local challengers in each city.

"They're specially trained athletes, they need care and I was willing to do it," said Nocella, who arrived at JLA around noon to set up his table and tend to the Gladiators before the 2 p.m. start.

"YOU ALWAYS want to take care of someone famous. Not that they're tremendously famous, but it was a chance to meet someone who has a different profession and needed care."

The Gladiators have a trainer who travels with them, but the skills of a chiropractor are not regularly available.

Nocella, a Red Wings season ticket holder, learned of the Gladiators' Detroit appearance when he received a flyer in the mail and saw an opportunity to get involved.

He called Los Angeles where the Gladiators are based and most of



Brian Nocella adjusts the neck of a Gladiator.

their filming and finally located the group in Idaho.

"One of the Gladiators heard the road manager talking to me on the phone and said 'Yes, we want this guy,'" said Nocella, a practicing chiropractor for seven years with an office on Grand River.

"They were thrilled that I was there for them. When I told them of all the red tape I went through, they were even more thrilled. I would jump at the chance again, because I had so much fun."

Case histories of the Gladiators were faxed beforehand to Nocella, who knew what type of care each one needed when he arrived Sunday.

"I JUST DIDN'T know how big they are," he said. "They were much easier to adjust because they're so well defined. There's no fat on them. When I checked for a muscle group attached to the spine, it was right there."

"They know the value of chiropractic care, because they're so

in tune with their bodies. It's like doing a tune-up on a car. Afterward, you have everything working and firing great, and it allows the body to work 100 percent."

Nocella, who made his services available to the Gladiators before and after the competition, sat on the players' bench and watched in the meantime. But occasionally he was needed during the event, especially after the powerball segment.

"Every now and then I got a tap on the shoulder, and one of them would say 'I'm ready,'" Nocella said. "The difference (between the Gladiators and his regular patients) is they have other people trying to inflict damage on them. You're body reacts to it, and it's kinda nice to get put back in line."

Nocella said he was quickly accepted and made to feel welcome by the Gladiators, who were not as friendly toward the challengers.

"One of the competitors entered the room, and one of the Gladiators asked 'What are you doing here? You're not supposed to be here. Get out of here,'" Nocella said. "They're a close-knit group, and I don't think they wanted anybody to come in their circle."

Nocella has worked with athletes in his regular practice — "everything from power lifters to marathon runners" — and treating the Gladiators was no different from what he does to help his every-day patients.

"IN MY PRACTICE, I have large people, too," he said. "There's no difference because of a person's physical stature. It's all technique and how you move it."

"They know the value of chiropractic care, because they're so

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Farmington chiropractor Dr. Brian Nocella works on the spine of Steve Henneberry, better known as Tower of the American Gladiators.

Gibson's hat trick keys win

Farmington achieved an impressive early-season victory in girls soccer Monday with a 3-1 victory over visiting Livonia Churchill.

Senior Sue Gibson scored all three goals for the Falcons, who led 3-0 at halftime against the perennial Western Lakes Activities Association power.

The victory improved Farmington's record to 1-1 in the WLAA and overall. The Chargers were 1-2-1 afterward.

Kim Poppy had two assists and Michelle Lorenz one for the Falcons, who were outshot 12-9 by Churchill. Sarah Green played the first half in goal for Farmington and Jessica Guilford the second.

"We let down a little in the second half, and they pressured our goal the entire half," Farmington coach Cathy Kansman said.

"We tried to feed the ball from the backfield and work up (in the first half), and it seemed to work well. We went to the ball with much more intensity in the first half and that paid off."

"We'd like to get as many victories as we can, and the most important thing with every game we play is to work toward improvement," Kansman added.

NORTH FARMINGTON recorded its first win Monday as freshman Ali Lord scored five goals in the team's 7-0 defeat of host Walled Lake Central.

"This is the first time in my high school coaching career I've seen a girl score five goals," North coach Kris Galezky said. "Walled Lake Central is not the strongest team but not the weakest either. She has incredible skill level and great speed."

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Softball scene

Farmington Hills Mercy third baseman Ariana Poniatowski charges home plate in anticipation of a bunt Monday in a game with

Dearborn Divine Child. Jennifer Janson is the player on base. The teams split the double-header. See story on Page 2B.

SHARON LAMM/Staff photographer

Hawks edge division rivals

Senior Mike Pesci tossed a three-hitter, struck out nine and also played a key role offensively Monday as host Farmington Hills Harrison beat Plymouth Canton at home, 2-1.

The Hawks are undefeated in three games.

Pesci delivered an RBI single in the first inning to score Dan Hight, and he also started a rally in the sixth inning that broke a 1-1 tie.

Pesci singled to start the sixth and stole second base. Key Smith inserted as a pinch runner for Pesci, stole third base and then came home for the winning run on Tom Donagrand's two-out single.

baseball

Harrison collected seven hits as Pesci and Donagrand led the way with two each.

Canton's only run came in the third inning. Mark Shankowski began the inning with a walk and was sacrificed in second base by Brad Paskivitch. After a Canton batter fanned, Ben Hendricks singled to score Shankowski from second base and tie the score at 1-1.

N. FARMINGTON 12: STEVENSON 2: Mark Temple pitched a two-hitter and also delivered a two-run double Monday to lead host North Farmington to a Western Lakes Activities Association win over Livonia Stevenson.

The game was called after five innings because of the mercy rule. The Raiders scored five runs in both the first and third innings. Jon Sturtz was 1-for-4 with two runs, scored and four RBI.

Stevenson's only runs off Temple were unearned and came in the fourth inning on three walks and an

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