'92 in Review from page 1B

Shamrock success is not relegated to football, however. In the last year, they've won league titles in baseball, soccer, wrestling, swimming, cross country and

track, too.

That's a record that's hard to

That's a record that's hard to match.

2. Erns Ending: Two of Observerland's most successful and colorful coaches called it quits in 1992. In early November, Plymouth Canton baseball coach Fred Crissey hung up his cleats after 19 scasons. Later the same month, Livonia Franklin football coach Armand Vigna resigned after 18 years.

"I have had great experiences and terrific kids," said Crissey, who compiled a 369-123 record, winning three Class A regional titles and finishing second in the state in 1982. "It's been a good run and I've onioyed it. But things changed."

Crissey, who coached nine all-staters and sent six players into professional baseball, gave up coaching to spend more time with his family.

Vigna, who compiled an 85-79 record and won the state title in 1976, has packed up and moved up north to Rogers City.

Also saying so-long in 1992 were Ralph Temby, an assistant football coach at North Farmington for 25 years, and George Lovieh, Franklin athletic director the past 18 years.

past 18 years.

3. The Boys of Summer: It

Walter's Appliance, representing the Livonia Collegiate Base-ball League, lost its opening game at the All-American Amateur Baseball Association Tournament in Johnstown, Pa., to Schongetady, NY, 11-7. Down to the loser's bracket they went.

The LCBL representative has never fared well in this prestigues tournament, Losing seemed almost expected, Opposing teams from areas more prominent in baseball were always better stocked in talent; this year seemed no different.

But Walter's won its next game, 13-7 over the Bayside Yankees (Long Island, NY.), then beat Philadelphia 11-1, Washington 13-11 and Schenectady 8-7. That put Walter's into the champion-hip round against New Orleans.

The comeback from the brink of climination had thus far been remarkable — and it was about to transcend even that.

Trailing 7-5 with two out in the hight in the first zame against.

Trailing 7.5 with two out in the ninth in the first game against New Orleans, Walter's outfielder

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It's Open Bowling Season at. . .

Craig Overaitis (from Livonia Franklin) hammered a three-run homer that propelled Livonia to an 8-7 win and into a final-game showdown. That's when the magic ended; New Orleans rallied to beat Livonia 9-6 and claim the title.

But Walter's had overcome heavy odds to reach the final, the only LCBL team to do so.

4. Tragedy: Aaron Roberts, one of the most telented football players ever to come through Observerland, was shot and killed at the intersection of 10 Mile Road and Evergeen in Southfield on Saturday, March 21. He was 29 years old.

"It's very and," said the Rev. Norbert Clemens, one of Roberts' mentors at Catholic Central and a life-long friend. "He was a page of a guy, It's a 'right each of a guy, It's a 'right ending for good guy to meet."

After gaining All-American

of a guy. It's a tragic ending for a good guy to meet."

After gaining All-American credentials (2,335 yards rushing and 24 touchdowns in two seasons) and leading CC to its first state title as a junior in 1979, Roberts endured a frustrating four years at Michigan State. His foothall career ended, far sooner and ingloriously than anyone expected, in 1985 after he was cut by the Denver Broncos.

He struggled to find inner peace and happiness without football. He was just starting to pull things together—he married, had a 4½-month old daughter and was returning to school to get a teaching certificate — at the time of his death.

6. Observerland's Olympian:
Farmington archer Jennifer
O'Donnell, with a second-plant
finish at the Olympic Trials, became the third Observerland athleto to compete in the Olympics.
(Hurdler Rex Cawley of Farmington, gold medalist in 1964, and
hockey player Al Infrate of Livania in 1894 were the others.) She
placed 11th overall in women's
archery at the summer games in
Barcelona, Spain.

Barcelona, Spain.

6. Terriffe Turnarounds: If one word can be applied to the fall season, turnaround fits best. There were a bunch.
Leading the list are Garden City's and Redford Thurston's football teams. Garden City had been 1-8 in 1991; in three previous years under coach Bob Elsiminger's direction, the Cougars' best record was 4-5.

This year, Garden City reversed that trend by going 7-2. The Cougars were a single point from the playoffs; they lost to Romulus Sept. 14 in overtime when the Eagles made good on a two-point

gles made good on a two-point conversion.
Thursion's lest winning season before this year was 1974. In 1991, they were 2-7. But, with a 25-player roster, coach Bob Snell righted that by guiding the Eagles to a 6-3 mark.
Wayne Memorial went 4-5 in 91, then lost its first two games of 29 before bouncing back. The Zebras won their next seven, the lest a 35-7 trouncing of rival Westland John Glenn, to reach the state playoffs for the first time.

westland John John, to Feinst Lime.

In nother arena, there was Livonia Franklin soccer. The Patriots were 8:5-1 in 31 and looking up at the city's domination of the looking up at the looking up at the looking up at the looking lookin

season.

7. Sisters and Survivors: On June 19, sisters MacKenzie and Jenny Emmett, lying on separate hospital beck, held hands.

"I love you," Jenny said.
"I love you," said MacKenzie. With that, the two sisters underwent a long and dangerous bone marrow transplant, an operation that saved Jenny's life. The previous spring, Jenny, a junior, was an all-state goolie on the state-ranked Plymouth Salem soccer. Not long after she found out she had contracted a rate form of leukemia known as myelodipplastic syndrome.

It was determined that she would have the bone marrow transplant; with her younger sister as the denor, in June after she graduated. Esfore that, though,

she started in goal for Salem in the season-opener against rival Plymouth Canton and didn't yield a goal in a 0-0 tie.

The surgery was a success and Jenny, at last report, was well on the road to recovery.

8. State Champs: Observer-land produced five individual state champions in 1992, three in

iand produced new including state champions in 1992, three in wrestling.
Plymouth Salem senior Dan Bonnett, 48-1 with 37 plans, claimed the state title at 125 pounds. Westland John Glenn junfor Mike Reeves, 42-1, ruled the 152-pound division. Catholic Central senior Dan Kelly, 47-2-1, won the crown at 171.
Catholic Central produced two other state champs. Senior swimmer Randy Tecters won the 100-yard breaststricke with a time of 57:63. Senior Mike Mittman was the individual champion at the state cross country meet, running the course in 15:55.8.

9. Basketball's Back at Ma-

9. Basketball's Back at Madonan: It's been an up-and-down, sometimes agonizingly slow process, but progress is being made. The athletic program at Madona University is on the rise; next year, men's basketball will reappear as a variety sport. It will return after a five-year absense under the direction of Bill Sharpe, who's been an assistant coach at University of Michigan-Dearborn. The resumption of the men's basketball program will give Madonna five intercollegiate sports: baseball, softball, volley-ball and women's basketball are the others.

10. A New Alignment: The Northwest Suburban League is gone. So, too, is the Tri-River League, and the Wolverine A League. Starting in the fall, all three will merge to form one gigantic, 22-team league; the Michigan Mega Conference.

Scheduling non-league games has been a headache for schools in the past. Under the new alignment, it won't be. There will be three divisions for every sport, with at least seven schools in each; enrollment and caliber of play will determine who plays where.

Redford Union and Garden

where.
Redford Union and Garden
City were both part of the NSL;
Thurston was in the Tri-River,
and Wayne Memorial was a
Wolverine A member.

Neaton from page 1B

cial inspiration this year be-cause of the loss of his No. 1 fan, his grandmother Gladys Butler who died Oct. 30 after

Butler who died Uct. 30 after suffering a stroke.

"She was great, very supportive," said Neaton. "I remember she couldn't handle watching the games too much because she was always nervous I'd get hurt, but she kept all the (newspaper) clippings. She used to follow me a lot."

Neaton entered 1992-93 ranked sixth on the U.M alltime defensemen scoring list with 28 gools and 71 assists for 99 points. After picking up assist in Sunday's win own source of the Wolverines, who are 12-3-2 overall.

overall.

Neaton's best season, pointwise, came in 90-91 when he scored 15 goals with 28 assists. He has managed to stay consistent on the ice and in the

sistent on the ice and in the classroom despite risking burn-out? by spending most of his summers also on the ice. Neaton last summer played in Finland for the 22-men U.S. 20-over Team; in '31 he played for the U.S. at the World Junior Championships in Saskatoon; in '30 he won a silver medial playing for the West Team in the Sports Festival in Minneapolis, Minn. "Patrick's a smaller defensaman (G-feet, 180 pounds) but I can play him as a penalty

killer, when we're two-men short or on the power play," U-M coach Red Berenson said, "He's a good defenseman, his skills are excellent and I can

skills are excellent and I can see his improvement (over four years). I expect him to lug the puck and join the rush at the same time."
Neaton, an assistant cap-tain, spent his first two years being teamed with David Har-lock, who is in the same class.— Harlock, now a senior captain, is more of a defensive-minded, player (five goals, 29 assists for his career). "They were a great pair. No."

his career).

"They were a great pair, No.:

1 on defense, but now we're playing them with youngen players," Bereason said.

Neaton was drafted in theseventh round (145th overall).

of the 1990 National Hockey League draft by New Jorsey and remains property of the power of the property of the property of the power of the property of

Tim Taylor, who ceached the Over-20 Team during the summer, also is the coach of the 1994 U.S. Olympic Team.

"I got to see what his program is like, the calibre of play." Neaton said. "It's something I'l shoot for. It is a great opportunity (playing in the Olympics)."

Smith from page 1B

sic. Although the injury gave Smith more time to devote to his classes, he hasn't been missing from the team's work-

missing from the team's work-outs.
"I'm still going to the rink every day, riding the bike, lift-ing weights while the guys ore on the lee." Smith said. Smith's family moved from Canton to Hamburg last sum-mer but it wasn't the first time

mer but it wasn't the first time he's had to get used to new sur-roundings. He left Canton High School after his junior year to spend his last year of high school in Rochester, Minn., where he played junior healest hockey. Smith and a teammate

stayed with a family in Rochester and found out ahead of
time what college might be
like.

"It helped me to learn how to
live without parents for a
year," Smith said.

Smith had no problem settling on MSU after his year in
Rochester. His father, Jim; was
a long-time hockey coach and
had several players continue
their careers at MSU.

"Since I was a little kid, the
place I wanted to end up was
MSU," Smith said. "All the
guys (this fother coached) said
MSU is a great place to play.
It's almost like a dream come
true."



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