

Dignitas gains victory in Mile

By C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

Forget the charts. Never mind recent performances, who's beaten whom, the caliber of competition.

If Saturday's 45th running of the Michigan Mile, at Ladbroke DRC in Livonia, proved anything, it was that the charts don't always tell the whole story.

Dignitas is a prime example. His race previous to Saturday's Michigan Mile was the Stephen Foster Handicap on June 19 in Louisville. Dignitas won the Foster until it counted; then he faded, finishing sixth, well behind winner Root Boy.

The chart only reveals that Dignitas "lacked late response" in the Foster loss — which is accurate. The reason he lacked a late response wasn't provided, however.

Until Saturday's Mile, Dignitas, with Larry Melancon aboard, had the response this one, overtaking favorite Root Boy down the stretch to collect the \$120,000 first prize in the \$200,000 race.

Root Boy hung on for second, with Powerful Punch edging Split Run by a nose for third. It

RACING

kept alive what is becoming a tradition in the Mile: longshots reign. Dignitas went off as a 22-1 shot, paying \$47.60 to win. Last year, Classic Seven carried 35-to-1 odds into the winner's circle. Only nine times in 45 Michigan Miles has the favorite won.

The reason for Dignitas' improved performance? "I knew something was wrong with him in the Stephen Foster — he just wasn't himself that day," jockey Melancon explained. "He moved up to second, then flattened out. We found out something was wrong with him, an infection."

"Today he was himself."

According to assistant trainer Chris Goodwin, Dignitas "had an excuse for his poor performance in the Stephen Foster — he had a lung infection. We didn't find it until after the race, and that explained a lot of things. We cleared it up, and he worked nicely at Churchill and we knew things were back to normal."

Indeed. The race couldn't have broken better for Dignitas. Melancon figured there were some speedsters to contend with, and he didn't want to get caught up with them. "I wanted to lay off the pace," he said. "My main concern was, I didn't want to move too soon."

He didn't. Punchy, Dave's Bold Boy, Candid Cameron and Root Boy were early leaders, but their margins were never much, and Dignitas rode the rail just behind. Root Boy got to the lead before the stretch run, with Punchy inside of him. Powerful Punch was running third, but slid outside entering the stretch run, creating a hole that Dignitas obligingly slid through.

The stretch duel was between Dignitas and Root Boy, who went off as the 2-to-1 favorite. Unlike in the Stephen Foster, Dignitas ruled this time.

"He ranks among the best I've ever ridden," said Melancon, a 37-year-old who's been racing thoroughbreds for 22 years. "He's definitely right up there with them."

He also up there as champion of the Michigan Mile.

South teams 3rd in tourneys

SOFTBALL

Kozlars (four hits) and Heikkinen hit two homers each. Heikkinen, Becky Pesci and Diana Dickow had three hits each.

The third victory wasn't decided until the seventh as the Fever edged the Mid-America Motion 8-7.

The Motion had runners at the corners with one out in the seventh. But Pesci speared a line shot near second base and started a game-ending double play, firing to Kristen Siskosky at third for a pickoff.

The Mid-America Magic gave South Farmington its first loss, 23-17. The Fever had the bases loaded in the seventh and eighth innings but couldn't score. The Magic score six runs in the 10th to win the game. Heikkinen was 5-for-6 and Aon, Pease and Angie Newman had four hits apiece.

The Motion avenged its loss to South Farmington and eliminated the Fever 10-6. Kozlars led the Fever with three hits.

12-and-under Flames

A late rally turned an 8-3 deficit into a 19-3 win over the Mid-America Mavericks for the South Farmington Flames. Anna Clark and Brittany Maxey were the leading hitters with three each. The Flames corralled Clinton Valley 3-0 in the next game.

South lost 20-13 to the Michigan Trailblazers but had rallied from a 12-5 deficit to tie and force extra innings. Clark, Jenelle Wellington, Rachel Sundberg and Emilie Villemonte had four hits each for South Farmington.

The Mavericks eliminated the Flames with a 6-5 loss in the semifinals.

INTERLAKES TOURNAMENT

The South Farmington Sparks 10-and-under girls softball team finished second in the Interlakes Tournament July 10-11.

The Sparks rebounded from a 12-2 loss to Interlakes in their first game to stage a come-from-behind, 14-13 win over Garden City and stay alive in the tournament.

C.J. Heap had three hits and three RBI. Jackie Olesky two hits and four RBI. Kelli Vessell had three hits in the first game defeat. The Sparks advanced to the final with a 20-13, revenge victory over Interlakes.

Olesky had five hits and two RBI. Maureen Cebulak three hits and four RBI. Kim Spaulding two hits and Amy Paquette two hits. Vessell had three hits and three runs, Gayle Ternes three runs.

Clinton Valley defeated the Sparks 16-2 in the final.

Other members of the South Farmington team are Bonnie Parrish, Hallene Gabel, Stephanie Pakula, Jacqui Smylie, Elise Fields and Courtney Spaulding. The Sparks are managed by Ray Spaulding along with coaches Tom Olesky and Jack Smylie.

SWIMMING

NORTHWEST SUBURBAN
SWIM LEAGUE RESULTS

BEECHVIEW 291, KENDALLWOOD 285
(Thursday, July 15, at Kendallwood)

Beechview double winners: Kathleen Hunt (8-under, 25 back, 22:40; 25 fly, 22:46; Linda McEneaney (8-under, 25 free, 18:57; 25 breast, 28:52; Julie Kivka (11-12, 50 back, 31:48; 100 IM, 1:23:45; Dennis Sugrue (11-12, 50 free, 33:54; 50 breast, 41:45; Dana Gleason (13-14, 100 IM, 1:16:36; 50 breast, 39:41; Pat Duthie (13-14, 50 fly, 33:57; 50 free, 28:43; Nancy Harvey (15-18, 50 breast, 37:12; 100 IM, 1:07:59).

Beechview single winners: Eric Howard (8-under, 25 free, 18:22; Eric Wolf (8-under, 25 breast, 28:16; Danny O'Brien (9-10, 50 breast, 48:94; Steve Schwed (11-12, 50 free, 42:04; Dana Schwalm (11-12, 50 breast, 44:19; Chris Leano (13-14, 50 breast, 34:67; Josh Dury (13-14, 50 back, 38:04; Michele Pantaleo (15-18, 50 back, 34:24; Veronica Forrester (15-18, 100 free, 1:07:59).

Beechview relay winners: Dana Gleason, 200 medley (Julie Kivka, Dana Gleason, Michelle Pantaleo, Dana Schwalm), 2:26:07; 52-year boys 200 medley (Josh Dury, Matt Walker, Chris Leano, Dennis Sugrue), 2:25:16; 64-year girls 200 freestyle (Veronica Forrester, Nancy Harvey, Julie Hunt, Nancy Harvey), 2:05:07.

Kendallwood double winners: Patrick Neer (8-under, 25 back, 22:40; 25 fly, 22:46; 25 free, 33:76; Danielle Clayton (11-12, 50 free, 31:46; 50 fly, 38:15; Charles Jacobs (15-17, 50 back, 33:79; 100 free, 1:05:02; Karl Kozicki (15-17, 50 fly, 22:02; 100 IM, 1:04:52; Tim Grier (9-10, 50 back, 45:12; 50 free, 36:41).

Kendallwood single winners: Louis Ryon (8-10, 50 back, 49:52; Jennifer Detson (13-14, 50 back, 39:00; Lisa Richardson (13-14, 50 free, 30:85; Becky Ashburn (15, 50 fly, 32:55; Beth Kozicki (9-10, 50 breast, 47:54; Meg Wolf (13-14, 50 fly, 36:83).

Kendallwood relay winners: 40-year 200 medley (Sean Neer, Julie Telford, Beth Kozicki, Louis Ryon), 3:03:54; 64-year 200 freestyle (Pat Kivka, Eric Neer, Charles Jacobs, Ryan McKelvey), 2:01:24. The 40-year mixed 200 freestyle relay team of Tara Grier, Lauren Turner, Paula Brady and Kevin Ryan set a club record of 2:27:17.

VILLAGE 236, WOODBROOK HILLS 214
(Thursday, July 15, at Woodbrooke)

Woodbrooke double winners: Anna Muir (9-10, 50 breast, 45:50; 50 back, 43:47; Kim Marshall (11-12, 100 IM, 1:25:02; 50 breast, 42:22; Amy Finkel (13-14, 50 breast, 38:56; 50 free, 29:58).

Woodbrooke single winners: Ashley Cicay (7-8, 25 back, 27:57; Eric Hocken (9-10, 50 free, 33:50; James Leslie (15-18, 100 IM, 1:05:19; Lynn Leslie (16, 50 fly, 37:03; Chris Meek (16-18, 50 fly, 29:18; Alyssa Melvin (7-8, 25 breast, 27:47; Erica Vincent (15-18, 50 back, 37:59).

Woodbrooke relay winners: 40-year mixed 200 medley (Anna Muir, Kim Marshall, Mike Marshall, Eric Hocken), 2:38:43 (club record); 64-year boys 200 freestyle (Jason Speer, Chris Meek, James Leslie, Tim Muir), 1:47:31. Tim Muir set a club record in the 11-12 boys 50 butterfly (23:06).

Gumbleton from page 1C

some serious problems in the area of communication between the coach, his players and their parents.

Gumbleton, who wouldn't say his age but is probably in his late 50s, said he planned on remaining CC's coach.

"Yeah, I would have come back, at least for one year," said Gumbleton, who teaches at Pierce Middle School in Redford. "I really enjoyed working with the players. Look at (new Red Wings coach Scotty) Bowman. Age doesn't mean anything."

Gumbleton won two state crowns at Detroit Gumbleton in the 1970s and also coached one season at Hillsdale College and three at Oakland Community College before taking over at CC in 1978-79. Each of his previous coaching jobs ended because hockey was dropped as a sport, Gumbleton said.

Several former and current CC players contacted by the Observer said they were surprised to hear Gumbleton is not returning. Gumbleton wasn't a vocal coach, but he preached discipline and good sportsmanship, according to the players.

If there were problems on his teams, the players said, they came from parents who felt their kids weren't getting fair ice time.

"As a captain, I noticed a few of the kids who didn't get ice time, their parents had complaints, but that's the way the game goes," said Mike Giordano, who was a first right winger last year. "Just because their kid doesn't play, you can't take away from the coach."

Frank Novack was one of CC's leading scorers in his only year on the team last winter as a junior. Novack said he liked Gumbleton's style but some of his teammates objected to Gumbleton's rules, which included no swearing.

"He (Gumbleton) didn't like to talk to the parents a lot, he'd stay behind the bench and concentrate on the game and personally I liked it better that way," Novack said. "He did his job and whatever happened off the ice (complaints from parents) he didn't care about. He did a good job with us. He was a quiet guy but if you do what he tells you and things get done, that's all he asks. I don't know who will fill his shoes but they'll be some tough shoes to fill."

Said Larry Basharah, who played on the 1987 and '90 teams: "I knew it would come to an end soon because he's getting a little older but what surprised me is I thought he'd get to end it on his own terms."

Jim McBroome, Gumbleton's assistant coach, said he is not replacing for the head coach's job. "I don't think I'd have the time or meet their qualifications," McBroome said. "I would think there'd be a line up (of applicants) once word gets out."

McBroome was shocked at Gumbleton's removal. "It's a shame he couldn't go out in another fashion, on his own accord," McBroome said. "It's kind of sad. What's CC without Gumbleton? I feel bad for Jack. He might have a hard time going over there or supporting the team in the fashion he was released."

Baseball from page 1C

Dearborn Heights Cardinals 5-3 Wednesday. Lawson led the offense with three hits and two runs. Pat Curran and Aaron Lawson had two hits each, and both Lawsons knocked in one run apiece.

Glaeser went the distance to earn the win. He gave up eight hits but walked only three and allowed one earned run.

SOUTH FARMINGTON SOX West Cornwell struck out 10 and led Wayne to three hits while pitching the Sox to a 4-0 win in Sandy Koufax competition Thursday.

South Farmington had 11 hits,

including three by C.J. Ghanam. Tommy Mondoux (two runs) and Cornwell (one run) had two hits each. Chris Pease delivered a two-run single, and Ghanam also had a pair of RBIs.

The Sox improved to 18-1 in the league and 21-4 overall.

PEE WEE REESE

The North Farmington-West Bloomfield Cobras had a successful campaign (17-3) and will continue in the playoffs, but the regular season ended with an upset loss to Northville last week, 10-9.

Jay Melvin and Adam Fazio had three hits apiece in the finale, and Mike Sopo pitched four inn-

ings of scoreless middle relief.

Previously, NFWB had won two games from Toronto Thornhill teams and defeated Livonia II 14-8.

Milan Gandhi swung a lively bat against the Canadians. Chris Scott excelled at infield defense and Matt Lash and Brian Grohman were the key pitchers.

Melvin and Rob Sparks had three hits in the Livonia game; Sopo, Josh Gad-Harf and Ryan Modica two apiece. Mike Gleason pitched three innings and Sopo the last four.

The Cobras advance to the Pee Wee Reese sub-regional tournament in Garden City July 22-25.

Softball from page 1C

senior fly and fielder's choice. Cheney had a hit and scored a run.

Fantastics win pair

Farmington posted 17-9 and 10-9 victories Tuesday over the West Bloomfield Bombers.

Teresa Lindenmuth was the winning pitcher in the first game, allowing seven hits but only one walk. Wendy Novak, Marlow Walker and Tammy Walker produced key hits for the Fantastics.

Tammy Walker scored the winning run in the second game on an infield hit by Dina Aon. Alana Heikkinen was the winning pitcher. Novak and Kristin Siskosky contributed two hits and two RBI each.

For the Bombers, Courtney Pines had a home run and two RBI in the first game. Shannon Murphy and Kelly Kloustein (three RBI) were credited with two hits and two runs apiece in the second.

West Bloomfield won a doubleheader Thursday from the Commanders, 14-5 and 7-6.

Following the top four teams are the Farmington Hills Majestics (4-9-1), Livonia Lacers (3-5),

Fantastics (3-7), Bombers (2-10) and Commanders (1-9).

The top hitters in the league: Amy Rogiasart (Cobras), .553; Laura Logsdon (Cobras), .500; Anna Song (Bombers), .500; Renee Delak (Diamonds), .471; Jenny Myslinik (Hornets), .464; Nicole Kovachevich (Cobras), .458; Courtney Pines (Bombers), .417; Becky Thursam (Diamonds), .400; Holly Foster (Hornets), .400; Melanie Cheney (Diamonds), .389.

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