

Sever leads Falcons in '94

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

A successful softball season for Farmington High will depend largely on what six returning starters and a new pitcher do.

The Falcons, who were 6-18, have one of the top players in the area in senior shortstop Jennifer Sever. The four-year starter hit .500 with 10 doubles, eight triples, three homers and 30 RBI last year.

"She's real strong defensively, and she's only hitting her pitch at bat," Farmington coach Julie Ingalls said. "She has really learned to discipline herself. She's learned to practice how she wants to play in a game."

"She's real intelligent about the game and ready to play. You can tell she did a lot of work during the winter."

The other returning starters are seniors Mario Walker, Suzanne Major and Sara Thomas and sophomores Dina Aon and Teresa Lindenmuth.

But the key player could be freshman Alina Heikkinen, who replaces Suzanne Carlson at pitcher. Heikkinen has experience and pitched in the Incredible Fast-Pitch League last summer.

"She has good speed and control as far as being in the area of the plate," Ingalls said. "She has a tendency to get high or low, so

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we're working with her on her release."

Sever (a backup pitcher along with Major) pitches for location and makes them hit where she wants them to hit. She's not a strikeout pitcher; whereas, Alina has speed and all that will come.

"From last summer to what she has shown in the gym, the girl (Walker) who caught for her was quite amazed."

Walker missed part of last season with pneumonia but still hit .292 and is ready to resume her duties as catcher.

"She's real quick so she can cover a lot on her defense, and she has a lot more confidence in her arm as far as picking people off first or throwing it down," Ingalls said.

Major returns at first base after hitting .343 and is backed by junior Tammy Walker, who will play when Major pitches. Aon, who played catcher when Walker was out, hit .255 and has experience at second base.

"She's real quick so she can cover a lot of ground," Ingalls said of Aon. "She does a nice job on bunt coverage with the second baseman coming in."

Thomas, who batted .448 and

had 10 doubles, 15 runs and five RBI, will start in center field again, Lindenmuth in left.

"Sara has looked good inside batting, but we haven't been able to do a lot on defense," Ingalls said. "She can do it all offense. Teresa is quick, so I'd like her to learn to bunt; she covers a lot of ground in the outfield."

Freshman Kristen Siskoosy will play third base and also has experience playing in the Incredible League.

The roster also includes junior Lindsey Piel, who led the JV in nearly every category, first-year senior Amy Wagner and sophomores Karen Moore and Katie Lukusiac.

"These players understand the team concept," Ingalls said. "I hope the experience they had makes them intelligent players as far as the situational part of the game. They seem to have more desire to play ball as a group."

"We could be (contenders) as long as we have offense. We want to be strong defensively, but we want to be the one (the opponent is) playing against, fighting our hits, our speed on the base paths."

The Falcons, who were 2-8 in the Lakes Division, begin the season Tuesday at defending Western Lakes champion Plymouth Canton.



SHARON LEMUS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Star shortstop: Senior Jennifer Sever begins her fourth year in the Farmington starting lineup.

Hawks aim for record wins

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Harrison has a simple goal, as veteran coach Mike Teachman describes it, for the 1994 softball season.

The Hawks want to win a school record number of games. That means a minimum of 14 victories, but Harrison has 30 games to do it.

That might also be seen as a lofty objective for many teams, including the Hawks, who were 6-17 and have struggled to be competitive in the past.

But Harrison believes it started to turn the corner last year and has the ability to achieve its goal.

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The Hawks lost only one starter (first baseman Heather Hopkins) and return 10 players, but Teachman will carry only 12.

"This is as good an athletic and academic group as we've ever had at Harrison," Teachman said. "They want to succeed in everything they do and succeed now."

"We have to develop patience and the idea we're going to learn as the season goes on. We want to be in every ball game, and we'd like to be 500."

"But it still comes down to executing the fundamentals. If we don't give teams four- and five-out innings, we might have a chance to compete for the division title, but we're in the tougher division. We have no touches on our side, and we have to play each one twice."

Like any good team, the Hawks have a quality player at shortstop in senior four-year starter Amanda Ault, who hit .346, scored 19 runs, had 15 RBI and stole 22 bases.

"She got a scholarship in volleyball (to Central Michigan), but she's no slouch in this sport," Teachman said. "She holds all most every career record and if she doesn't she will by the end of the year."

Teachman will move junior all-division outfielder Jenny Myliniski to first base in place of Hopkins. She holds single-season records for runs (28), hits (34), extra-base hits (10), home runs (3) and stolen bases (23). She batted .425 last year.

Junior Amy Geary returns at third base. She began last season as the No. 1 pitcher but boosted her batting average to .338 and led the team with 16 RBI after making the switch.

"We found out she didn't really

like (pitching), and it started to affect her hitting," Teachman said. "We relieved her of it and that's when her average started to go up. She probably added 100 points."

The Hawks have two experienced catchers in sophomores Kristen Kozlars, who can also pitch, and junior Kathy Schneider, a line-drive hitter who batted .281 and had 12 RBI.

Senior Becky Maczek or junior Jodi Barringer will play second base. Teachman calls Maczek (209) a possession batter who puts the bat on the ball and doesn't strike out much. Barringer hit .242 and can play outfield, too.

"For us, this is the best we've ever been at all positions," Teachman said. "We have depth at all positions. But with 12 people, if somebody gets hurt, the depth doesn't look too good."

The Hawks should be in good shape for the next three years at pitcher, according to Teachman. Erin Lacosse is a junior and Holly Foster, a sophomore.

Lacosse, who was 3-8 after taking over from Geary, went to several pitching camps and should be improved. Foster started pitching last summer, showed potential in the Incredible Fast-Pitch League and has taken lessons.

Junior Kelly Lacosse returns in center field. She hit only .167, but the Hawks need her defense more.

"She goes after the ball," Teachman said, adding her hitting should be better since they corrected a flaw in her style. "I like to bat her ninth because she can run the bases, and I don't like to clog the bases for the leadoff hitter. She's like a pre-leadoff batter."

Myliniski, Kozlars, Barringer and Foster, who started in right field and hit .232, also can play the outfield.

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"We expect to have one of our better years defensively, because most of the girls have one if not two years of experience on the varsity level," Brubaker said. "If they're the ball players I think they are, they should step up and handle it."

Sophomore Renee Ouellette returns in center field, and Kelman will be back in left. Returning junior Lynette Zelaako is the leading candidate to start in right field, but North also returns seniors Kandara Falerios, Jessica Light and Jill Singer. Juniors Ellen Berman and Megan Stephan are new varsity players who also can play first base or DH.

Brubaker likes the aggressive, hustling play of Kelman, who hit .500 and had an "exceptional" on-base percentage after walking 19 times and being hit 15. She also had 15 RBI.

"She's fearless when it comes to someone throwing the ball at her," Brubaker said.

The Raiders start Tuesday, April 12, at Livonia Franklin.

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