

# All-Stars savor special day

BY BRAD EMONS  
STAFF WRITER

Nick James and Justin Marcia both reached their field of dreams Monday in the 14th annual Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association All-Star Game at Tiger Stadium.

James, a catcher from Westland Glenn, and Marcia, a pitcher from Plymouth Salem, were both members of the East squad which wound up on the short end of a 9-5 verdict against the West.

But the final score really didn't matter for the two local players.

"It was an honor to play with guys of this talent," said James, who will play next year for Henry Ford Community College. "Just to come out and throw the ball around with the guys was great. It was a lot of fun to play with ballplayers who are a lot better than you are."

"It was great God gave me the talent to be involved with a game like this."

James caught the final four innings and got only one at-bat.

He was close to being the East's final out in the bottom of the ninth, but fought back from an 0-2 count to earn a walk against West hurler Cory Coombe of Clio.

"I was in a pretty good spot, I just tried to hang in there," said James, who is catching this summer for the South Farmington Barons' Connie Mack team. "I didn't want to be the last man frozen (on a called third strike). I didn't want to be on the ESPN highlight."

Marcia, a 5-foot-7, 140-pound right-hander, pitched two innings, allowing three hits and one earned run.

But it seemed that every hurler the East threw out there got



Savor the moment: A pensive Nick James: "It was an honor to play with guys of this talent."

roughed up to a certain extent and allowed at least one run.

That cast included Michigan's Mr. Baseball J.J. Putz of Trenton, a third-round pick of the Chicago White Sox; Gary Kinnie of Mount Clemens Chippewa Valley, a fifth-round pick of Seattle; Luke Bonner of Dearborn Divine Child, a 33rd-round pick of the Tigers; Redford Union's Brian Berryman, a late pick of the Houston Astros; and Farmington Hills Harrison's Jake Lawson, who has signed with Oakland University.

"I just tried to treat it like any other game," said Marcia, who plans to walk on next year at Western Michigan University. "I just tried to get the ball over the plate. I threw fastballs, curves and changeups."

Both James and Marcia came away with some lasting impres-

sions of their teammates.

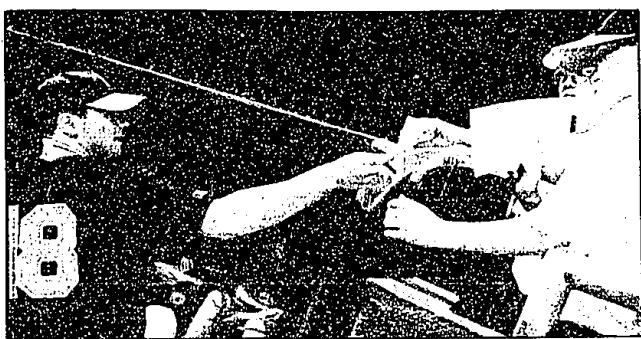
"I thought Kinnie had the best stuff," James said. "And he threw a hard fastball today. It was also fun to catch Putz in the bullpen. I've caught him in the past."

Marcia, who is playing summer ball for Salem's Connie Mack entry, will also carry with him some memories.

"I got to bat and it was only my second at-bat this year," said Marcia, who grounded out to short in the sixth inning. "I was impressed with Putz, Kinnie and Jason Rice."

Rice, a catcher from Northville and headed this fall to Michigan State, nearly took one out of the yard in the third inning, but settled for a three-run double off the top of the fence, just above the 365-foot sign in left-center field.

He was named East MVP.



Star treatment: Harrison's Jake Lawson signs a few autographs at Tiger Stadium Monday prior to the Annual Michigan Coaches Association East-West All-Star Classic.

## Stars from page 1C

land University, was pleasantly surprised to hear one of his fastballs touched 88 miles per hour on a professional scout's JUGS gun.

"The whole game was mapped out by the coaches, and I knew I was going to throw in the ninth," Lawson said. "I wasn't real nervous, I just wanted to throw hard."

All-star games are nothing new for Herrington. He coached in the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association All-Star Game once during the 1980s and in 1990 was a coach in the National All-Star football game for high school seniors.

"This is my third one and I've enjoyed every one of them," Herrington said.

Still, Herrington was nervous for Lawson and the other three representatives from the Western Lakes Activities Association — Plymouth Salem's Justin Marcia, Westland John Glenn's Nick James and Northville's Jason Rice.

Rice was named Most Valuable Player of the East team after hitting a double off the top of the fence in left-center field to drive in three runs in a four-run third inning. Herrington felt like a politician giving his endorsement to someone running for office.

"When Jake was out there I was pretty nervous because I wanted him to do well — and he did," said Herrington, "and I felt the same for the guys from our league, because I helped talk

them up to the committee."

The thrills won't end at Tiger Stadium for Herrington, who is in Tucson, Ariz., this weekend as a nominee for the National Coaches Association National Coach of the Year in football.

Herrington is one of seven nominees from seven regions. Marysville's Walt Braun is the only Michigan coach to ever win the award.

Herrington said he doesn't have any immediate plans to retire as either a coach or history teacher at Harrison. When the time comes, he will go out as both a teacher and coach.

"I think you lose something when you leave the classroom (but remain as coach)," Herrington said.

## Barons blast NFWB

The nightcap of Jake Lawson's day-night double-header Monday wasn't nearly as memorable. It was, in fact, downright forgettable.

After competing in the Michigan Coaches Association All-Star game at Tiger Stadium Monday afternoon, Lawson took the mound that same evening for his North Farmington-West Bloomfield Connie Mack team. The opponent was the cross-town rival Barons from South Farmington and Lawson, the Farmington Harrison standout, didn't last an inning.

The Barons plated seven runs in the first inning and went to

score a 10-3 victory in the Little Caesars conference game.

Nick James, who also played at Tiger Stadium earlier Monday, had two hits on the night including a two-run double off Lawson in the first. Dave Hansel and Chris Kerney each added two-run singles in the first.

Angelo Palazzetti earned the victory, working four innings and allowing two runs. Hansel pitched the last two innings. The game was called after six because of lightning.

The win, their fourth straight, puts the Barons at 4-2 in the Little Caesars play. NFWB falls to 1-5.

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