



**Ageless veteran:** Sam Skeegan has played volleyball for more than 40 years and also teaches the game to younger players.

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"I would have liked to have been there," he said.

The Olympic team includes players from around the state and only practices when preparing for tournaments.

But Skeegan and some of his age teammates also play 7-on-7 in a 20-and-over competitive recreation league in Walled Lake. Sunday night is set aside for coed pool volleyball.

"Volleyball is a sport you can play the rest of your life, and it's one of the few men and women can play together," said Skeegan, who has continued to play long after giving up softball and flag football.

"When I was in high school in Pittsburgh, it was a varsity sport, so I started at age 14. I've been playing for over 40 years."

Skeegan has seen the sport grow in popularity, too. The Walled Lake program consists of 89 teams as opposed to about a dozen in the 1970s.

"Twenty years ago we were second in the state, and now we can't win the league," he said, adding Walled Lake has possibly the best recreation leagues in Michigan. "What's happened is more and more people are playing vol-

leyball.

"Years ago we were fighting to be the top Open Division team. Now the Open Division has a lot of young guys, 20 to 23 and 6-foot-3. My guys are still 6-3 but now they're 40 years old."

"Part of it is we're getting old, but more are playing, especially the bigger, younger guys."

Skeegan also was a driving force behind the Michigan Boys Volleyball Association and "a concerted effort to pressure the Michigan High School Athletic Association to make boys volleyball a high school sport."

"If we can get it initially as a club sport, we're willing to do that, but we feel it should be a varsity sport," he said.

Though it's a girls-only high school sport in Michigan, more young men are playing the game and breaking down the stereotype of it as a female sport, Skeegan said.

"Boys are playing more beach volleyball, and it's becoming more of a macho thing," he said. Added assistant coach Ken Bertin: "Once a boy sees another slam the ball down, it gets his attention."

To promote the sport, Skeegan spends two nights a week teaching the sport to boys and girls.

He is presently involved in preparing several youth teams for the upcoming Maccabi Games. For the last 11 years, he has run a program at the Farmington YMCA to teach the game to any high school student wanting to learn.

"The thing about volleyball is it's a team-oriented sport," he said. "You need someone else to make you good. It teaches teamwork."

Skeegan is the guru of volleyball, according to Bertin, a former player under Skeegan.

"Nobody could touch him," Bertin said, adding a lot of guys playing the game wouldn't be if not for Skeegan's tutelage and insistence on perfection. "He was tough on us."

Skeegan insists his players learn to serve overhead, and he teaches a sophisticated 6-2 offense.

"We're trying to teach them the right way, even though we only get them once a week," he said. "I don't like to see them not doing it right; I don't want them to get lazy."

# Stingers win softball doubleheader

The Stingers, an 18-and-under girls fast-pitch softball team, took a doubleheader last week from host West Bloomfield, 7-3 and 20-1.

Pitchers Angie Hudson (Garden City) and Robyn Pitman (Taylor Light & Life) struck out six and two, respectively, to hurl the Stingers to an opening game victory.

In the second game, the Stingers unloaded as lead-off batter Kendra Dumke reached base four

times and scored four runs.

Kelly Shanks, Andrea Mida and Hudson all collected doubles during the twin bill, while Stephanie Smith added her second triple in two outings.

The winning pitcher was Andrea Mida, who got middle relief help from Jennifer Wilson.

■ **SEAS 18-7, LASERS 7-3:** The Livonia Lasers dropped their first two games in the Incredible Girls Fast-Pitch Softball League to the Northville Niners in a twin bill June 29 at Franklin High School.

Jami Grigel went 2-for-2, including a grand slam in the second inning in the opener, but it was enough as the Niners won in three innings (stopped because of the 1:20-hour time limit).

Maria Lopiccolo and Kim Rowland each added one hit.

Pitcher Melissa Zawacki took the loss, giving up nine walks and five hits. Zawacki also took the loss in the nightcap, giving up seven hits and four walks.

Melissa Wolvin had an RBI triple in the fourth inning, scoring Margaret Schultz. Randi Wolfe and Zawacki had the other hits for the Lasers.

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by a 4-0 margin.

"We had lost to that team twice before by 1-0 scores," said Strikers coach Tom Martin, "and I think the kids came out real nervous in that first game."

"Before our game against them (Monday), I told the kids, 'You can beat this team.' And we did — we had a lot of kids step forward today."

It was a fine ending to a season that was lackluster until the last few weeks. "We didn't have a good season," Martin said. That changed the weekend prior to the Wolverine, when they reached the finals of a tournament in Youngstown, Ohio.

After losing to the Thunder in their opener, the Strikers defeated the USL Titans 3-0 and played Arsenal F.C. (Ohio) to a scoreless tie. In the semifinals, the Strikers edged the favored Rochester Attack 3-2 in a shootout, thanks to keeper Brian Beszycki's three penalty-kick saves.

The other local teams to win Wolverine titles were also in the boys divisions. In the under-16 boys, the LYSC Wings edged the USL San Marino Strikers 1-0 in the championship contest.

Like the Canton Strikers, the LYSC team did not survive the tournament unscathed, but instead had to come back to beat a team it had lost to earlier in the final. After opening with a 2-1 triumph over Arsenal F.C., the Wings lost 2-0 to San Marino. The Wings then beat the Livonia Meteors 3-0 before tripping the Ann Arbor Arsenal 3-1 in the semis.

The other local champion was the under-12 Michigan Wolves, which rolled to five-consecutive victories en route to the championship. The Wolves defeated the Windsor F.C. Nationals 5-1; Minelli's Sault Civics (Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario) 7-1; the Ann Arbor Arsenal 9-1; and the Sterling Heights Sting 8-0.

In the final, the Wolves — coached by Les Neal — had to battle, but they beat the Nationals again, 3-2.

A few other local squads did make it to their division finals. The Lobos '81 were beaten by the Indy Inferno (Indiana) 3-0 in the under-14 boys division. And in the under-19 boys, the Muskegon Lakers edged Michigan United 1-0 for the title.

The local girls teams were less successful. The Canton Quest got to the championship in the under-12 division, but lost 4-0 to Arsenal F.C. (Ohio). "The team that took first was very, very good," said Quest coach Ellen Schroeder. "I understand it was a team of all-stars from Ohio."

Making matters more difficult for Schroeder's Quest was the absence of five starters for the final. "We won our last two tourna-

WOLVERINE SOCCER	
Tournament results from July 1-3 at Schoolcraft College	
<b>BOYS UNDER-14</b>	
Final:	Sault Ste. Marie (Ind.) 4, Northville Sting 2. Semifinals: Blue Devils 13, Dearborn Wolverines 1; Fling 3, Novi Jaguars 8-0.
<b>BOYS UNDER-12</b>	
Final:	Michigan Wolves 83 3, Windsor F.C. Nationals (Ont.) 2.
<b>BOYS UNDER-10</b>	
Final:	Indy Inferno (Ind.) 3, Lagoon '81 0. Semifinals: Inferno 4, River Busters 3; Lobos 1, Ann Arbor Arsenal (Underman) 0.
<b>BOYS UNDER-8</b>	
Final:	LYSC Wings, USA San Marino Strikers 0. Semifinals: Wings 3, Ann Arbor Arsenal 1; Strikers 1, Detroit (Dix.) Physiotherapy Civics 0.
<b>BOYS UNDER-6</b>	
Final:	Marion (Ont.) "The Force" 3, Arsenal F.C. (Ohio) 2. Semifinals: Marion 5, St. Anne Michener 0; Arsenal 2, Novi Jaguars 7-1.
<b>BOYS UNDER-4</b>	
Final:	Canton Strikers 2, Livonia Thunder (Ont.) 1. Semifinals: Strikers 3, Rochester Attack 2 (shootout); Thunder 1, Arsenal F.C. (Ohio) 0.
<b>BOYS UNDER-3</b>	
Final:	Jersey Dean Civics (Ont.) 2, Sault (Ind.) 1. Semifinals: Jersey Dean 2, Ann Arbor Arsenal 1; Sault 2, Rochester Lightning 0.
<b>BOYS UNDER-2</b>	
Final:	Kochegon Lakers 1, Michigan United 0. Semifinals: Lakers 3, Royal F.C. 2; United 2, Plymouth Stars 1.
<b>GIRLS UNDER-12</b>	
Final:	Arsenal (Ohio) F.C. 4, Canton Quest 0. Semifinals: Arsenal 5, LYSC United 0; Quest 1, USL Strikers 0.
<b>GIRLS UNDER-10</b>	
Final:	Xenia Flash (Ohio) 2, Lapeer Renegades 0. Semifinals: Flash 2, LYSC United 0; Renegades 1, Rochester Rockets 8-2 0.
<b>GIRLS UNDER-8</b>	
Final:	East Side (Ont.) Strikers 2, Rochester Falcons 0. Semifinals: Strikers 5, MYSL Fraser Fury 3; Falcons 4, Arsenal (Ohio) F.C. 0.
<b>GIRLS UNDER-6</b>	
Final:	T.D. (Ind.) Elite 0, Ohio Cosmos SC 0 (tied for title). Semifinals: Elite 2, Livonia (Ind.) Flames 1; Cosmos 1, Sault (Ind.) Civics 0.
<b>GIRLS UNDER-4 (Recreation)</b>	
Final:	Shamie Express 1, Farmington Flames 0.
<b>GIRLS UNDER-2 (Recreation)</b>	
Final:	Sterling Sharks 2, Sterling Gingers 0.

ments (at Canton and Saginaw), and we came in second today, so I'm happy," said Schroeder.

In the girls under-14 division, the Xenia Flash (Ohio) beat the Lapeer Renegades 2-0; in under-16, the East Side Strikers (Windsor) blanked the Rochester Falcons 2-0; and in under-19, the T.D. Elite (Indiana) and Ohio Cosmos were ruled co-champs after a controversy surrounding the Elite's victory in a shootout.

There was also play in two recreation divisions. The Sterling Sharks beat the Sterling Stingers 1-0 in the under-10 girls final, and the Shamie Express edged the Farmington Flames 1-0 in the under-14 girls match-off.

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