

SPORTS

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MONDAY, JULY 10, 1995

FARMINGTON FARMINGTON-HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Marshall named MVP

Justin Marshall of Farmington and the Vardar III Soccer Club of Southfield was voted the most valuable player in the under-18 boys U.S. Youth Soccer Association regional.

Vardar defeated Missouri Gallagher in the finals 2-1 to win the regional championship June 23-28 in Blaine, Minn. Vardar advances to the national event July 25-30 in West Palm Beach, Fla.

This is the second time this team has gone to the national championships, having won the under-16 age division two years ago in Phoenix.

Other members of the Vardar team are Nick Deren, Jeff Babinski, Livonia; Scott Buzsak, Jeff Fliss, Graham Wilk, Canton; Brian Collier, Inkster; Steve Corder, Dan Savich, St. Clair Shores; Joe DiMaggio, Washington; Mike Kiley, Plymouth; Brandon Maggio, Northville; Dave Stanovich, Harrison Township; Steve Trampantia, Ann Arbor; Bryon Turpin, Pontiac; Matt Walt, Troy; Jeff Atkins and Jeremy Harkins, Sterling Heights.

Bandits win tourney title

The Farmington Bandits won their age-group soccer championship in the Canton Invitational on Memorial Day weekend.

The Bandits defeated the Novi Jaguars 4-1, Toledo Roadford 10-1 and Fraser in the final 6-1. The Farmington players are Michael Buchwald, Matthew Cave, Marshall Clayton, Stephen Denton, Peter Galopin, Sunil Kothari, Brett Laird, Kasey Lopata, Jonathan Moll, Jonathan Parker, Thomas Prazak, Tom Phillips, Joseph Russo, David Stahl, Noah Stern and Eric White.

The Bandits are coached by Craig Barton, Mark Phillips, Karl Lopata and Jim Moll.

Soccer sign-up

Registration for the Farmington Soccer Club's fall season is under way. The age groups for boys and girls range from under-9 to under-19.

The fee is \$55 if received by Saturday, July 15. Registrations received after that date will be \$65. For information call the Farmington Soccer Club at (810) 474-8588.

Fantastics sweep games

The Farmington Fantastics began the Incredible Girls Fast-Pitch Softball League season Thursday with a doubleheader sweep of the Livonia Lasers, 6-2 and 9-0.

Alicia Heikkinen had 11 strikeouts while allowing four hits and five walks in the first game.

She also helped her cause with two hits, Melissa Strikulis and Katie Lukasik had RBI hits, and Kristin Siskowski scored two runs.

In the second game, Amanda Porter, Maureen Carolan, Siskowski and Heikkinen batted in runs to give Farmington an early lead, but the Lasers rallied with a seven-run fourth to lead 6-7.

The Fantastics came back to win when Heikkinen doubled home Strikulis and scored the winning run on Beth Hawald's bunt. Heikkinen was the winning pitcher again.

Women's softball event

Crackbox Sports will have its fifth annual Founders Festival women's softball tournament July 14-15 at the Knights of Columbus in Farmington Hills.

The entry fee is \$125 per team and covers the cost of refreshments, umpires, softballs, scorekeepers and awards for the winning team and most valuable player.

Crackbox also is accepting registrations for its summer volleyball leagues and second softball season.

To enter the tournament or inquire about league registration, call (313) 473-8973.

Roadrunner Classic

The 12th Annual Roadrunner Classic, featuring an 8-kilometer race through downtown Northville, starts 6 p.m. Saturday, July 22.

The event also includes a 5K race/walk, one-mile general run/walk and Junior Classic (youthsters 12 and under).

More than 1,000 runners competed in last year's event, which includes a post-race party at the Northville Community Center.

For entry fee information and registration, call Running Fit of Northville at (810) 380-3333.

Golf for cerebral palsy

The United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit Golf Outing will be 1 p.m. Friday, July 28, at the Golden Fox Golf Course in Plymouth.

The entry fee of \$100 entitles participants to a round of golf with the use of a cart, and dinner. Door prizes will be available. WBB-TV2 anchor Mike Redford will serve as master of ceremonies for the dinner.

The golf tournament will be a scramble event, with the 12th hole featuring a hole-in-one contest. The prize is a 1995 Pontiac Grand Prix. Corporate hole sponsorships and beneficiary hole sponsorships are available.

For more information, call the UCP of Detroit at (810) 867-6070.

Latra leads Barons to key victory



Rally starter: Catcher Nick James was solid behind the plate, called a good game for Nick Latra and started a second-inning rally with a leadoff single.



BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

A baseball game that started badly for Nick Latra and his South Farmington teammates had a good ending Thursday.

Latra pitched a five-hit complete game to lead the host Barons to a 6-4 victory over Kensington Valley in an important Connie Mack contest.

The Farmington High senior had a rocky start, giving up a leadoff homer to Ryan Pease, but Latra had only one other tough inning and ended up having a key role in the win.

"In the first game I pitched this year, I was real wild, and when that guy hit the first pitch I thought, 'Oh, no,'" Latra said.

"I needed a good outing here; I wanted to show these guys (teammates) something, because they haven't seen me pitch that much."

The game ended in dramatic fashion with Kensington having two runners on base and Drew Henson at the plate. His two-run homer in a three-run third inning made the score 6-4.

Latra had retired the first two batters in the seventh on a groundout and a strikeout, but consecutive infield errors put Kensington runners at the corners.

With two strikes against him, Henson drove a Latra pitch out of the park, but it was left of the left-field foul.

"(Catcher) Nick James came out to the mound, and the first thing I said was, 'He's going to strike out now. There's no way I'm going to let him get a hit now,'" Latra said.

"He wanted me to throw a high

fastball inside: 'Let's see if he's Cecil Fielder.' I said I'd throw an outside curve, but that was in the dirt. Then I threw the fastball and he K'd. We can thank Nick for that call."

Two pitches after the near homer, Henson, who also had a two-out single in the first, went down swinging.

South Farmington did all of its hitting and scoring in the second inning, quickly overcoming the early Kensington lead.

Kensington pitcher Jason Huron struck out three of the first five batters he faced, but that changed in a hurry. Farmington ripped seven hits and used three Kensington errors to take a 6-1 lead.

"We played with a lot of character," said South Farmington coach Marty Wilk Sr., substiting for Dick Miller, who was away on business. "The boys reached down and hit the ball. Latra kept us in the game, and we made the defensive plays when we had to."

South Farmington scored its runs with two out. Jamie Palazetti singled home the first run, and an error allowed Burch to score.

After Angelo Palazetti hit safely, Chris Kearney hit a two-run single, and Ron Blackmore and Mike Dagunanno followed with consecutive RBI doubles.

"I really needed a big lead, so I could be more relaxed on the mound," Latra said. "I didn't want to blow it. We're in second place in the league, and another loss would have knocked us out."

South Farmington, 8-2 in the Little Caesars Baseball Federation and 12-

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Cobras, Braves earn tourney titles

The North Farmington-West Bloomfield Braves beat the previously undefeated South Farmington Blues 3-1 to win their own Independence Weekend Mustang baseball tournament.

To reach the championship game, the Braves defeated the South Farmington Niners (13-9), Novi Express (18-9), South Farmington Eagles (4-3) and Bloomfield (18-5).

Ben Darga and Ryan Ellis scored the first runs in the final game by taking advantage of Blues errors in separate innings.

The Braves added an insurance run in the last inning as Matt Richard singled and later scored on a sacrifice fly by Ellis.

Kevin Lamb and Kyle Flanchem limited the Blues to six hits while striking out five. A diving catch by center fielder Evan Rodriguez in the second inning was the best defensive play.

Hitting leaders for the series were Jeff Marx and Richard, both of whom batted .500. Matt Clark hit .429 and Lamb, Flanchem and Matt Waskewicz were .333.

Marx and Flanchem lifted home runs over the left-center field fence and drove in seven runs each.

BASEBALL

Lamb and Flanchem had two pitching wins apiece while Matt Perry and Rex notched saves. Darga earned a win and a save.

The Braves are 10-0 in tournament play.

Cobras win tourney

The NPWB Cobras 12-year-old travel baseball team won the Seventh Annual NPWB Bronco Tournament July 1-2 with a 5-0 record.

Mark Lundquist earned two pitching victories, winning 5-2 over Allen Park in the second game and tossing a four-hit shutout at Allen Park in the fourth, 4-0.

Chris Petersen and Nate Mihelich combined pitching talents in a 17-5 rout of Bloomfield Hills in the opener.

Mihelich also beat the Troy Hurricanes 11-0, and Petersen won the championship game 15-1 over Garden City in which Jeff Grant mopped up in relief.

Lundquist, Petersen, Mihelich, Grant, Mike Artinian, Adam Farber, Aaron Diamond, Rob Keuten,

Charles Pinkston, Samer Walaalakar, Eric Hackem and Matt Williamson contributed to the offensive effort with their hitting.

The Braves are managed by Jim Petersen. The coaches are Dave Hackem, Dennis Lundquist and Chuck Pinkston.

Blues avenge loss

The South Farmington Blues 14-year-old baseball team avenge its only Little Caesars Federation loss by beating Northville 9-1.

Anthony Toney and Evan Feldman sparked the offense with out-of-the-park homers.

The Blues followed with victories over Livonia (5-3) and Garden City (mercy) and then extended their league record to 14-1 by rallying to beat the NPWB Cobras 4-3.

The winning run in the NPWB game was scored by Steve Jackson, who capitalized on an error throw to third after stretching a fielder's choice grounder for two extra bases. Jackson also recorded the pitching victory in relief. Zak Burton pitched well for the Blues despite the loss.

The Blues have received strong infield support from John Marchal at third base, Bobby Austin at shortstop

and Charlie Avery at first.

Catcher Ryan Kravitz and outfielder Blake Ashley also have had hot bats for the Blues in recent games.

Rams boost record

The Commerce Lake Area Rams added two more wins last week to boost their Mickey Mantle (15-16) record to 8-3, defeating Redford 3-2 and Southgate 12-2.

In the Redford game, Rick Thorning of Thorling pitched a complete game three-hitter, and he helped his cause with a two-run homer.

The Rams totaled 15 hits against Southgate and had another strong pitching performance from Gary Festa of Farmington Hills, who threw a one-hitter.

Adam Ritter had two doubles and two RBI, Chris McQuiston two hits and four RBI. Kevin Thorning, Bill Kaddilian and Peter Varon (two hits) added two RBI apiece.

"The young men believe in themselves and continue to play confident baseball with tremendous character," Rams president and general manager Dan Varon said.

Varon and Ron Kathrein organized

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Mavericks court AAU national crown

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER

By day, Norm Oden keeps the package moving as a supervisor for United Parcel Service.

At night, Oden coaches the Motor City Mavericks, one of the top AAU age-group boys basketball teams in the country.

And does this 16-and-under team deliver.

The past two summers, Oden's teams have finished runner-up in the nationals. Last summer, the Mavericks lost to Memphis in the 16-and-under championship game in Kingsport, Tenn.

This week, the Mavericks are seeded No. 3 in the 68-team field for 16-and-under entries. The tournament started Sunday in Oklahoma City, Okla.

"We've never won this, but I'm confident we'll do well this year," said Oden, an Oak Park resident who admitted he's never played the game, but because a studious fan over the years. "We have some kids who are new to teach. We have a pretty good team IQ and OPA."

Oden's 11-player roster reads like a Who's Who among the top underclassmen in the state of Michigan.

Observant is well-represented.

Twins Lorenzo and Levell Gussa, both of Wayne Memorial High, who stand 6-6 and 6-9, respectively, are big contributors for the Mavericks.

BASKETBALL

Although Levell has played in the shadow of his brother the past two years at Wayne, Oden said the shorter version is starting to blossom.

"I believe Levell wears a size-13 shoe now," Oden said. "He has good skills. Once he gets a little taller, stronger and physically more mature, he's going to be a heck of a player."

Shane Bettler, a 6-5½ do-it-all center-forward, is the most recognized of the group nationally. He led Beverly Hills-Detroit Country Day to the state Class B title last March.

The guard corps includes Lorenzo Gussa, who led Wayne to the state Class A quarterfinals last spring; 6-foot Kyle Jones of Orchard Lake St. Mary's; 6-10 John Borovich of Birmingham; 6-11 Greg Gray of Southfield-Lathrup; and 6-11 Kevin Bambenek of Farmington Hills Harrison.

"Lorenzo plays same at the point, but he's usually our three man (position)," Oden said. "He plays everywhere."

And if that's not enough, throw in 6-2 Ray Pope of Farmdale, the original Maverick who started with Oden at age 12. He is the only senior-to-be with the

rest being juniors.

Others include 6-6 Juan Piques of Anchor Bay; 6-5 Greg LaPointe of Mount Pleasant; and 6-3 Charlie Bell of Flint Southwestern. (Dane Flis of Clarkston is injured and cannot play this week, according to Oden.)

So with all that talent, does Oden just throw out the ball and let them play?

"Actually, we're pretty structured," he said. "We run a motion offense and use multiple defenses. We like to get out and run, but when you get down to it, you have to make plays to win tournaments."

Practices, usually held two to three times per week at either River Rouge or Country Day, are often tougher than the games.

Oden's club won the state championship over Memorial Day weekend at UM-Dearborn against the Mavericks No. 2 team, which is also entered this week as the No. 37 seed in Oklahoma City.

"When we practice you're seeing some of the best (incoming) juniors in the state," Oden said.

Two other Wayne High players, 6-1 James Wooden and 6-3 Richard Haskins, are members of the other Mavericks along with 6-0 Alex Knapp of Benholm; 6-0 Trent McNelly of Ann Arbor Greenhills; 6-5 Chris McNeal and 6-1 Alvin Jones, both

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