

Madonna has record number of recruits

By C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

If bigger is better, then Madonna University's baseball team is on a fast track to success.

Not that the Fighting Crusaders could avoid it. With a team featuring a rebuilt infield and just four seniors, they posted a 39-25 overall record in '95 and reached the final three in the NAIA Great Lakes Regional, their best post-season performance ever.

So, a year after rebuilding the infield, Madonna coach Mike George must do the same in the outfield.

That shouldn't be much of a problem. George will have plenty to choose from with the recruiting class he has coming in — the largest in number (17) by far since George began the program.

BASEBALL

In 1989 (10 was his biggest).

And that number does not include two redshirts George hopes to have join the team, right-handed pitcher Monte Travitt and catcher Delano Voletti.

If he had stopped his efforts with just Dearborn Divine Child graduates, George could very probably have termed it a success. From the team many thought was the finest in the state last year, in any class, George has signed three players.

That doesn't include Voletti, also a Divine Child graduate.

The leader of the Falcon grade is Aaron Shrewsbury, a 6-foot-2, 245-pound outfielder/catcher who first baseman whom George hopes will "provide some of the offensive punch we're losing."

The other two DC recruits are both right-handed pitchers: Joel Fabris and Joe Bligg.

Two of his recruits are from Observerland schools: Eric Marcotte, a shortstop from Plymouth Canton who played last year at Henry Ford CC, and Joe Nienstroy, a catcher/pitcher/third baseman from Redford Thurston.

As for the others, once again George pursued pitchers.

What George did get were some left-handers: Mitch Jabbenzaki, Novi; Jason Ayyotte, Walled Lake Western; Jeff

Warholik, Alpena; and Eric Crawford, Davison. Of the four, George thinks Jabbenzaki could contribute on the mound right away.

Additional right-handed pitchers are Bob Hamp, a Class A all-star from Alpena; Bob Mason, South Lyon; and Tom Sutter, a U.S. Air Force veteran.

E.J. Roman, from Orchard Lake St. Mary's, is a right-hander who bats left and who can catch and play third base, too.

And Kevin Sullivan, a pitcher/first baseman/third baseman from Riverview Gabriel Richard whose size (6-1, 220) indicates "he's going to provide some offensive punch for us."

Helping fill the voids in the outfield will be Mark Taylor, from Gibraltar Carlson, and Bob Leon, from Roseville and Macomb Community College.

Vardar from page 1C

DCD's Jeremy Harkins, who is headed to Butler, suffered a knee injury in the regional final. He played in the national semifinal, but for defender Dave Stanovich (Troy Athens/University of Detroit Mercy), who had to sit out because of a red-card suspension handed out in the regional final.

"He (Harkins) had to sweep for us the first game and was our MVP," the Vardar coach said. "We couldn't have won that game without him and he showed a lot of courage out there."

Other players include backup keeper Jeff Atkin (Sterling Heights), forward Steve Corder (St. Clair Shores/U-D Mercy), forward Joe DiMaggio (Washington/Macomb CC) and Steve Trammitt (Ann Arbor Pioneer/Vanderbilt).

Sixteen of the 17 players saw action in the two USYSA national

games. "We were kind of like the Oakland Raiders, on and off the field," Lupencic said. "Sometimes practices were brutal and a lot of times I had to break up fights."

"We had eight new players this year. It was sometimes the national champs against the national 'wannabes' because some hadn't won a national title before."

"But they had dual respect for each other. They played with a lot of intensity and heart, and some times you like that more than finesse and skill."

"They didn't want to be losers, and I like that."

Lupencic, who is also U-D Mercy's women's varsity soccer coach, may not be able to lead the Vardar under-19 club team next year because of new NCAA restrictions on off-season coaching.

Family ties aid 'Cats' playoff drive

By C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

Truth is, this team is really misnamed, and has been for the past few years.

The group that has been the most dominant in the Metro Summer Hockey League isn't the one featuring the most talent or boasting the best shooters or defenders.

What it does have is continuity. And why not? Although other teams in the MSHL have brother acts to call upon, none take it to the extreme the Wildcats do this year.

The "Relative Cause" or even "Brother Brigade" would be more appropriate, considering there are three surnames spread among nine of its players. That kind of "relationship" is a good reason why the "Cats" advanced to the MSHL playoff final with an 11-3 trouncing of the Spartans in the Baker Conference final Thursday at the Plymouth Cultural Center.

The win put the "Cats" into the league championship game against the Falcons, 16-2 victors over the Wolverines Thursday at Canfield Ice Arena in Dearborn Heights. It marks the first time in recent history the two top teams

HOCKEY

In each division — both were 10-1 in the regular season — reached the playoff final.

According to MSHL bylaws, teams can remain basically intact from season to season, but they will not play under the same team name every year. Last season, this year's "Cats" were the nucleus of the Broncos, a team that reached the playoff final before losing to the Lakers.

That means the five Pietillas and two Wiegands — the Elenichs joined the team this year — had lost just two games in two years entering the 1995 final, played last night in Plymouth.

In the logjammed win over the Spartans Thursday, five "Cats" scored two goals apiece. Josh Wiegand (from Plymouth), Mark Pietilla and Kevin Pietilla had three assists apiece to go with their two goals; Jake Wiegand (Plymouth) and Jake Gusk also had two goals each.

Denny Elenich (Livonia) had a goal and two assists, Keith Pietilla picked up four assists and Jim Pietilla netted two assists.

For the Spartans, who finished with a 9-8 record, Vic DeCina (Canton) accounted for all three goals. Paolo DeCina (Canton) assisted on two of them.

FALCONS 15, WOLVERINES 2: The Falcons swept their only loss of the season by dominating the Wolverines Thursday at Canfield Ice Arena.

It was basically a two-man assault effectively for the Falcons, regular season champions of the Eagle Conference. Jim Hubenschmidt (Livonia) accounted for five goals and four assists, while Mike Knudsen (Livonia) netched four goals and six assists.

The onslaught started early for the Falcons, who built a 7-0 lead before the end of the first period. The best the Wolves could do was narrow the gap to 7-2 after two periods, but the third belonged to the Falcons.

Don Hunt (Livonia) added two goals and five assists to the Falcon attack. Terry Guse (Livonia), Mike Marzucco (Livonia), Paul Schloss (Livonia) and Dan Brady contributed a goal and an assist apiece, with Jesse Hubenschmidt (Livonia) adding three assists.

The Wolves (8-4-1), who defeated the Falcons 4-1 July 26, got a goal and an assist from Bob Nagy and a goal from Bob Flury Brian Gullery (Farmington Hills) was in and for the Wolves.

WOLVERINES 7, MUSKIES 4: In an opening-round playoff game last Wednesday, the Wolverines got two goals and two assists from Kevin O'Connor to advance to Thursday's Eagle Conference final.

Rob Flury shipped in with a goal and two assists, and Kevin Markowski and Brian Hannigan each had a goal and an assist for the Wolves. Other goal scorers were Bob Nagy and Eric Norman.

For the Muskies (3-9), Dustin Sprock had two goals, Brian Hickey (Canton) had a goal and an assist, and Kevin Desautels had a goal.

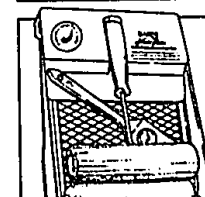
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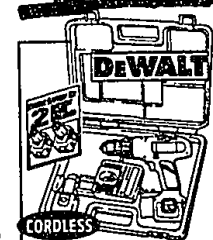
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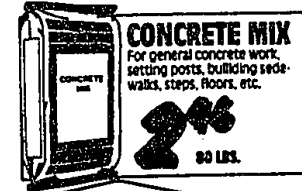
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