

FARMINGTON —  
FARMINGTON HILLS  
SPORTS  
SCENE

SFBI baseball tryouts

South Farmington Baseball Inc. will have Little Caesars tryouts from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6, at Founders Park.

Tryouts for ages 9 and 10 will be on field No. 1, ages 11, 12 and 13 on field Nos. 1, 2 and 3; ages 14, 15, 16, 17 and older on field Nos. 5, 6 and 7.

For more information call Greg Anderson at (248) 477-5096.

■ The Michigan Rams 10-under baseball team is having tryouts 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6, at Manning Park in Redford Township (Glendale, two blocks east of Beech Daly Road). For more information, call coach Mark Falvo, formerly of Dearborn Divine Child and now Henry Ford Community College, at (313) 537-3449.

Whalers offer deal

The Plymouth Whalers are offering charter memberships to the Whale Watchers Fan Club, which will provide special deals to all members.

Included in the membership are discounts at local businesses, discounts on Whalers team merchandise, a monthly club newsletter, a club window decal, a club ID card and two Detroit Compuware Ambassadors season tickets. Also, the first 50 applicants will receive one free fan club T-shirt, compliments of Pepsi.

Individual membership is \$15; a family membership (maximum of six people) is \$25. Provide a UPC code from any Pepsi 12-pack product when applying and receive a \$2 discount off an individual membership and a \$3 discount off a family membership (offer ends Oct. 20).

For more information, call (248) 887-5136 or (313) 453-8400.

Rice wins golf tourney

Monday's West Bloomfield Invitational at Kensington Golf Course proved to be a two-team battle.

Birmingham's Heather Rice and Clarkston rose to the top of the nine-team field, but it took a tiebreaker to decide the winner. The Warriors and Wolves posted four-player scores of 314, which forced the fifth scores into play. Rice had an 81 and Clarkston an 85, giving the Warriors the title.

Milford finished third at 322, North Farmington fourth (326) and Farmington fifth (328). West Bloomfield (329), Country Day's B team (336), Farmington Harrison (342) and West Bloomfield's B team (366) rounded out the field.

Clarkston's Bob Schultz earned district honors, firing a 4-over-par 75. West Bloomfield's Brad Schwartz placed second with a 76.

**Curl earns starting job**

Bowling Green State University will open its 1997 football season Saturday at Louisiana Tech with red-shirt freshman Eric Curl (Livonia Stevenson) starting at right guard.

Curl is replacing Sam Henke (Bloomfield Hills Lahser), who broke his hand over the summer and is not expected back to practice until next week. Curl, a former All-Observer griddier, also made the Dean's List last year.

Bowling Green was 4-7 last year.

Adult fall softball sign-up

The City of Farmington Hills is accepting team registrations for the adult fall softball leagues on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Leagues will play one night per week. Men's games are played Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, coed games on Wednesday.

The fee is \$435 per team, plus an umpire fee of \$9 per team at the field. Softballs will be provided.

The season begins the first week of September. Leagues are limited to the first six teams.

For more information call the Farmington Hills Recreation Division at 473-9670 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Softball at The Diamond

Openings still remain in the The Diamond of Farmington Hills (Knights of Columbus) fall softball leagues. Sunday night is coed night. Men's games are played Sunday through Friday.

The entry fee is \$400. For more information call Jeff Price at (248) 426-0658 or (313) 631-3928.

Marlins begin new era in hoops

■ Farmington Hills Mercy will play its first basketball game under the direction of coach Dave Collins when it plays host to Walled Lake Central tonight.



BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Mercy's storied history in girls basketball begins a new era tonight with first-year coach Dave Collins on the bench.

The former Detroit Tiger outfielder replaces Larry Baker, who coached the Marlins for 22 years and compiled a 381-143 record with 19 district championships.

Collins had a late start with his new team after Baker resigned in late July, but he's confident Mercy is ready for its season opener with visiting Walled Lake Central.

"I feel confident the things we have to have in for our first game are in," he said. "Things are going well, considering we've only practiced a few weeks. I'm pleased with where we're at right now."

The late start wasn't new to Collins, who became the Lake Orion boys coach under the same circumstances three years ago.

But it was a sudden change for the players.

"I think there was a lot of anxiety about meeting the new coach," Collins said. "We're not talking about a school that's made three or four changes."

"I think the change was a real shock to them, but I think the transition has gone smoothly. I'm very encouraged with the way our kids have responded to everything."

Collins said he will be a positive coach and will emphasize, in order of importance, "the game of life, excellence in the classroom and improving as basketball players."

In 16 years of professional baseball, Collins played for 15 managers and said he learned something from each one.

"No matter what our record is, they're going to win in our program, because they'll be a better person by being in the program," he said.

"As a coach, you can have an impact and can help them with their confidence."



Veteran forward: Senior Ashley Schumacher (right) is one of five returning players on the Mercy varsity basketball team. The Marlins start the season tonight against Walled Lake Central.

Collins will build his first Mercy team around five returning players who helped the Marlins win another district title and finish 13-10.

The varsity veterans are 6-8 senior forwards Ashley Schumacher and Kelly Moug, 5-10 senior center Heather Davis, 5-9 junior wing Jessie Brennan and 5-7 sophomore guard Susie Roble.

Brennan enters her third season as a starter and was one of the leading scor-

ers last year. She can play the point as well as forward.

"She can score off the dribble, and that's a luxury to have as a coach," Collins said. "She's a very good passer, too. She makes others better because of her ability to pass."

Roble takes over for Jena Kluska at the point and also has the ability to score, according to Collins.

"She's going to develop into a real

good player," he said. "She has very good quickness and handles the ball well."

Schumacher, who will start at forward, in one of the team's best athletes and will be counted on to score points.

"She runs the floor well," Collins said. "She's an excellent outside shooter and one of our better rebounders."

Please see MARLINS, C4

Raiders adjust to loss of key player

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

When junior forward Katie Vihtelic suffered a broken wrist in a scrimmage Saturday, it was a major setback for the North Farmington girls basketball team.

But coach Linda Perkins promises the Raiders, who start the season tonight, will overcome the temporary loss of their leading scorer and rebounder from a year ago.

"The kids are a little frustrated, and she's a little frustrated," Perkins said. "But we're going to get through this, and she's going to come back strong."

BASKETBALL

(Vihtelic) was in there shooting with one arm today. She's very determined. But I have other kids who are going to step up.

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going, and that's what I anticipate they will do."

The 5-foot-9 Vihtelic, who broke her left, non-shooting wrist in a scrimmage with Redford Bishop Borgess, will be out indefinitely, according to Perkins.

Vihtelic, who made the All-Lakes Division team, averaged 12.4 points

and seven rebounds. She was the high scorer in 11 of 22 games with a season-high 27 points against West Bloomfield.

"She's a very aggressive kid who goes to the boards and shoots the ball well," Perkins said. "She has really enhanced her all-round play and stepped up her defense."

"We're going miss all that versatility and bullheadedness in the paint. But that's where Melissa Gratz can do the same kind of things. She's been at the game a long time and is able to adapt."

Gratz, one of six returning seniors, is a 5-9 power forward who was due to start on the wing but will move to the

post in Vihtelic's absence.

Gratz averaged nine points, scoring 20 in a district game against Farmington Harrison, and six rebounds last year and had an outstanding summer, according to Perkins.

"She was stepping up all season, and she was shooting superbly all summer," Perkins said. "She's a team leader on the floor and is definitely going to be an asset."

The Raiders also return 5-5 forward Katie Callahan, 5-3 guards Katie Devoreux and Kellee Fournier, 6-0 guard Dianna Gustyek and 6-5 guard Rita

Please see RAIDERS, C4

Opening serve for tennis season



Team leader: Senior Carla Shade returns to play No. 1 singles for the Farmington Harrison girls tennis team. See Page C3 for information about the Hawks.

New coach oversees veteran Mercy team

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Coech Beth Lipin refers to her Farmington Hills Mercy tennis players as "the lovelies. It's just an endearing term," she said.

But opponents probably won't think the Marlins so nice after seeing what should be a mean Mercy tennis game, according to Lipin.

"The girls want to get to state," she said. "That's their focus because they missed by one point last year, and I think we're going to do it. As the coach, I intend to keep them focused on that."

Lipin begins her first season at Mercy, replacing Mike Arabucki. She was the JV coach last year at perennial Class A power Bloomfield Hills Lahser.

Lipin, 48, is the vice president of a family-owned freight brokerage company but had been a Southfield Public Schools teacher previously.

"I wanted to work with kids, and I found my niche doing this (coaching)," she said. "I do this because I love working with kids. Once a teacher always a teacher."

GIRLS TENNIS

The Marlins boast an outstanding No. 1 singles player in senior veteran Alexandra Shade. She is USTA ranked and defeated Lahser's Colleen McHugh in a dual meet Monday, 6-3, 6-2.

"She's a very good player, and I expect to see her at states along with the team," Lipin said, adding Shade has the potential to win it all. "She's really quite a dynamite player and an asset to the team."

Junior Heidi Wegmueller, who didn't play last year because of a shoulder injury, plays No. 2 singles, senior Jessica Banion No. 3 and junior Sarah Cahill No. 4.

"I think we have a very strong singles lineup," Lipin said. "They're more experienced and just a very good combination."

"They'll only get stronger as the season progresses, and all have the poten-

Please see TENNIS, C3