

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Fire defeats Knights

Led by Eric Lubanski's three assists, the Farmington Hills Fire Squirr AA hockey team (ages 10 and 11) defeated the Livonia Knights Tuesday at the Devon-Aire Arena in Livonia, 4-2.

Lubanski (Farmington Hills), who leads the Fire in scoring with 52 points in 36 games, passed to right winger Pat Shaw (Plymouth) with 1:16 remaining for the game-winner.

Other Fire scorers were Les Bilibioff and Brent Dexter, both of Farmington Hills. Dexter netted two goals — the second being an empty-netter off a Lubanski feed that sealed the victory.

With the win, the Fire pushed its Little Caesars league record to 8-6-1 and overall record to 21-12-5.

"It's always a great win when you beat Livonia," Fire assistant coach Kevin Longuski said. "They're always physically tough and well coached. They have developed into our most intense rival since we entered the league three years ago."

New Year's Eve Run

The 28th Annual Belle Isle New Year's Eve Family Run/Walk, presented by Detroit Edison and Blue Cross/Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan, will be Wednesday at Belle Isle.

The four-mile inline skate kicks off a series of races at 3:30 p.m. followed by the children's and open one-mile run/walk at 4 p.m. and the four-mile run and racewalk/fitness.

All children 12-and-under in the one-mile will receive trophies. The first 500 runners will receive a special award and all finishers will receive a commemorative award.

The cost is \$15 (children 12-and-under) \$20 (adult) on race day and includes long-sleeve shirt, awards, food and beverages.

For race information, call (313) 886-6560 between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

For \$10 per person, a post-race New Year's Eve Party (until 1 a.m.) will immediately follow for adults 21 and older at the Belle Isle Casino. The price includes, food, DJ, beer, wine, pop, door prizes and champagne toast at midnight.

For party information, call Dennis Hanley at (248) 646-3792.

Whalers on Team USA

Plymouth Whalers forwards David Legwand and Jesse Boulerice are playing with Team USA in the World Junior Championships in Finland.

The Americans dropped a 4-2 decision to Russia Tuesday. Legwand and Boulerice played in the game but failed to score. The tournament runs through Saturday, Jan. 3.

Race volunteers needed

Each year more than 1,000 runners and walkers participate in the annual West Bloomfield Half Marathon, 5K run/walk and Kids Fun Run.

These races, however, wouldn't happen without the help of volunteers. They pass out water along the course, serve as course marshalls and help with registration.

Volunteers are being sought for this year's event on Sunday, April 19, at West Bloomfield High School.

To volunteer, call Judy Share-Vine, recreation superintendent for West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation at (248) 738-2500.

Adult men's basketball

The City of Farmington Hills is accepting new team registration for men's basketball. Registration is based on a first-come, first-serve basis. Leagues will play one night per week, Sundays and Mondays. The cost is \$325 per team.

League play will begin the first week in January, 1998, at the Costick Activities Center in the Elovon Mile Road and Middlebelt area. For further information, call the Farmington Hills Recreation Division at (810) 473-9570.

City volleyball to start

The Farmington Hills Recreation Division is offering men's and coed open volleyball leagues in the gymnasium at the Costick Activities Center, located on Elovon Mile Road between Middlebelt and Inxter roads.

Games will be played on Tuesday evenings and will start Jan. 6, 1998.

Bryant, U-M hope to finish No. 1



Kevin Bryant, a former Farmington Harrison all-stater, will do his part on New Year's Day to help the University of Michigan win the national championship. He plays on special teams and is a backup at wide receiver.

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

If the University of Michigan wins the Rose Bowl Game on New Year's Day, the victory will complete a big year in sports for the Bryant family of Farmington Hills.

Kevin Bryant is a redshirt sophomore playing for the No. 1-ranked and undefeated Wolverines, who are on the verge of winning their first national championship in 60 years.

His younger brother, Ricky, played a key role in Farmington Harrison winning the Class A high school title a month ago and posting a perfect, 13-0 record.

A former Harrison star himself, Kevin helped the Hawks win back-to-back state titles in 1993-94 and watched his brother in this year's final game against Midland Dow at the Silverdome.

"That was the only game I saw and I was nervous for him, but I was so proud of him," said Kevin, who spoke via the telephone Friday from Pasadena, Calif. "A lot of people say he's going to come up here and take my position."

"We talk all the time and tease each

other. I tell him I have two rings and am about to have three; he just got his first."

Bryant began his college career as a defensive back but is now a backup wide receiver who also plays on special teams.

Senior Russell Shaw is ahead of him on the depth chart, but Bryant hopes to see the ball Thursday against Washington State and make the starting lineup next season.

"The last half of the season I was working a lot at wide receiver," he said. "They were trying to work me in with the first group."

Bryant, who goes against Heisman Trophy winner Charles Woodson every day in practice, caught passes in the Indiana and Notre Dame games. He'll be on the field Thursday for both kickoff teams as well as punt returns.

"I'm happy with (his U-M career to date), because each year I've moved up, and next year I hope to be taking over the wide receiver position," he said. "I'm growing and learning a lot and getting a good education."

"I was expecting to see more (playing time), but I wasn't mad at what hap-

pened this season. I'm happy with my contribution, and the coaches are happy with it."

Bryant has as his personal motto the Latin phrase "carpe diem," which means to seize the day, make the most of your opportunities.

"Every chance I get to practice or play in a game, I treat it as the last one," he said. "I try to give 100 percent in everything I do. You have to seize every day and thank God you have another chance. I have to use the talent he blessed me with."

The Wolverines hope to seize the day on New Year's Day and follow through on their opportunity to finish as the No. 1 team in the country.

"It's like a dream come true," Bryant said. "When you're growing up, you always dream about going to the Rose Bowl, being Big Ten champs and having a chance at the title."

"As a team, we're not really concerned about it. If we win, the polls will take care of themselves, so we're just concentrating on Washington State."

Bryant is making his second trip to California, he was there previously on a family vacation — and enjoying the change from the dull, gray, December weather in Michigan.

"It's beautiful out here," he said. "During practice, I can look over and see the mountains; it's real nice. It's nice and sunny; there's a nice breeze."

Big Ten teams usually have trouble



Kevin Bryant: Harrison grad will play for No. 1 Wolverines in Rose Bowl Thursday.

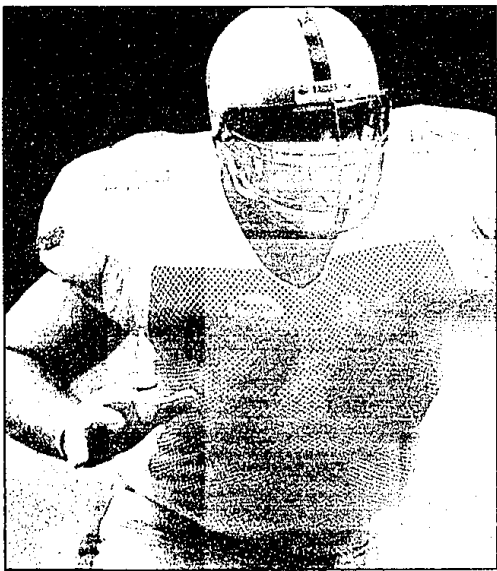
getting back on track a month after the regular season, have found the nice weather too distracting and traditionally haven't done well in the Rose Bowl.

"That's why Bryant thinks it was a good idea for U-M coach Lloyd Carr to take the team to California earlier than usual."

Please see U-M, E3

Brzezinski earns All-Big East honor

Ex-Catholic Central lineman becomes Boston College star



Collegiate standout: Doug Brzezinski, a former Catholic Central lineman, earned All-Big East honors for Boston College this year.

BY BRAD EXONS
STAFF WRITER

The 1998 football season for Boston College offensive lineman Doug Brzezinski was nothing short of a disaster.

It was more like a scene from the movie "Titanic." He was treading water.

But the 6-foot-4, 305-pound left tackle from Redford Catholic Central survived the year of turmoil to earn All-Big East honors in 1997.

Although BC finished 4-7 for the second straight year, Brzezinski was one of four Eagles named to the All-Big East's first team.

"It was a relief more than a surprise," said Brzezinski, a senior from Livonia with one year of eligibility remaining. "Last year was a horrible year for me. I got benched in the Pitt game. There were a lot of problems within the team."

These were just not small problems, but BIG problems for BC, which was rocked by a gambling scandal where three Eagle players bet against their own team.

"It was kind of blown out of proportion by the media," Brzezinski said.



Doug Brzezinski former CC star

"College athletes all over bet, but this whole thing was idiotic. These guys were calling their bookies from the hotel."

The national media scrutiny which followed turned out to be a huge distraction and the school's football program had been sullied.

Dan Henning, former San Diego Chargers head coach and Detroit Lions offensive coordinator, stepped down following the probe after three seasons as BC's head coach. (Henning is now the offensive coordinator for the Buffalo Bills.)

"Things just got out of control," Brzezinski said. "He was a good coach, but he trusted the players too much. With Henning, the players always pushed the envelope."

"Guys were just dogging it and going through the motions the weight room, and some weren't even showing up. A lot of guys, who were used to being coddled in high school, claimed they were hurt and were getting out of practice and not playing when they could have."

"There was a lot of stress and it was a bad situation. Things were tough all the way around. And it was no person in particular."

After a 4-7 season in '96, BC went with Tom O'Brien, the offensive coordinator at Virginia as its new head coach. His offensive coordinator and

Please see BRZEZINSKI, E3

Last hurrah!

Albion's Pesci rebounds to finish career as winner

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

FOOTBALL

By most any standards, it was a successful football season except at Albion College, which always sets the bar higher than most teams.

The Britons didn't match their pre-season expectations during an up-and-down 1997 campaign, but senior Joe Pesci (Farmington Hills) and his Albion teammates were still winners in the end.

Pesci, who waited three years to become the starting quarterback, compiled some impressive stats while guiding the Britons to a 6-3 record, including a 31-13 victory over Thomas More College in the season finale.

He was among the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association leaders in passing efficiency, completing 107 of 210 attempts (51 percent) for 1,523 yards and nine touchdowns in eight games.

Pesci, though, pleased with all that, was disappointed a ninth consecutive MIAA championship and an NCAA

playoff berth eluded the Britons. But he was determined to overcome a personal setback and make the most of his last season.

Albion started out 2-1 in non-league action, with a 10-14 loss to Wehsak in the second game casting early doubt on its playoff chances.

The Britons began MIAA play with a 61-6 rout of Olivet in the Albion homecoming game, but the next week they fell on the receiving end of a 69-16 defeat at Alma. The loss snapped Albion's 39-game MIAA unbeaten streak dating back to 1989.

"We had one of our best games of the year against Olivet, and we came out flat and didn't have any enthusiasm against Alma," Pesci said. "We got our butts kicked; it was a wake-up call."

"I woke up the league, too, because they knew the title was finally up for grabs. We knew every game was going to be tougher, because teams knew we

could be beaten.

"Just the thought of having the winning streak end" was deflating. "It was devastating because the tradition had been built up over time. It hurt more than any game I've lost in my life. It was a very tough pill to swallow."

"But stuff like that happens, and you move on and start a new one. That's what the guys plan to do next year."

The Britons rebounded with two straight victories and remained in title contention by giving unbeaten and nationally-ranked Adrian its first defeat, 31-13.

But that game was also a setback for Pesci, who suffered a concussion in the first quarter and watched the rest of it from the sideline, unable to play a pivotal role in the outcome.

"It happened on third down, so the next time we got the ball I went back out," Pesci said. "After that series, I went to the sideline and told the trainer I didn't remember anything that just happened."

Please see PESCI, E3



Joe Pesci: Ex-Hawk finished his career as Albion College quarterback with a victory.