

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

SFB registration

South Farmington Baseball will register players for T-ball, girls softball and boys baseball for the 1998 season at the Heritage Park Day Center. The times and dates are as follows: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17; 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 21; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24. Boys must be between the ages 5 and 18 on Aug. 1, 1998. Girls must be between the ages 5 to 15 on Sept. 1. South Farmington will also register managers, coaches and volunteers during this registration week but encourages anyone to call one of the league directors to register early. Boys or girls over the age of 11 can register as an umpire and should call Tim Hammer at 474-3483. For more details call the South Farmington Information Line (474-3926).

CC trounces Ecorse

Detroit Catholic Central beat Ecorse, 104-47, in the consolation game of the River Rouge Christmas Tournament Saturday. CC had a balanced attack with five scorers in double figures. Senior center Chris Young had a game-high 25 points and 10 rebounds. Junior Nick Moore had 24 points, senior Joe Janna 16, freshman Justin Ockerman 14 and sophomore Rob Sparks 12. Tyreas Love led Ecorse with 14 points.

Rice edges Wayne

Birmingham Brother Rice (4-1) needed a last-second shot from Gary Littlejohn to post a 57-56 boys basketball victory Saturday over Wayne Memorial (2-2). Wayne trailed by 11 at halftime (32-21) and led only once in the second half, 56-55, on Brian Williams' two free throws with 18 seconds left. Down one, Rice scrambled on its next possession to get off a final shot. An errant pass wound up in the hands of Littlejohn, who scored the game-winner. "We fought so hard it would have been a great win because we were losing the whole way," Wayne coach Chuck Henry said. "I like the way our team is playing right now. We're playing hard." Ron Austin led Rice with 15 points, while Chris Petty and Jon Poyer added 14 and 12, respectively. Williams paced Wayne with 17, while Quentin Turner came through with his best outing with 14. Senior forward Karl Calloway added 10. Rice was 12-of-20 from the free throw line, while Wayne was 14-of-20.

Spartan grapplers 2nd

Livonia Stevenson was runner-up Saturday to host Trenton in a team dual wrestling tournament. Stevenson won four of five matches on the day to improve its overall dual meet record to 5-1. The Spartans defeated Woodhaven (62-30), Lincoln Park (57-18), Dearborn Heights Annapolis (39-30) and Ypsilanti (43-33) before losing to the host school (62-19). Joe Morneau (103 pounds) and Katsuhiko Sueda (119) each finished 5-0 on the day for Stevenson. Jeff Brach (145) led a group of six wrestlers who finished 4-1. Brach earned his 100th career win during the tourney and now has 102 overall.

Youth hockey champs

The Livonia Flyers, sponsored by Little Bill's Trophies of Redford, came away Pee Wee B Division champions of the Wayne Christmas tournament. Goals by Bennett Tyler (unassisted) and Justin Zagata (from Konrad Styka) gave the Flyers a 2-1 triumph over the Dearborn Blackawks in the championship game. Flyers goaltender Andrew Stewart was named to the all-tourney team on route to MVP honors. In the tourney opener, Stewart blanked the Wayne Sabres, 3-0. Bryan Coleman had a pair of goals in the win, while Zagata added another. Styka, Ryan Vella, Brad Meakin and Steve Samelko each drew assists. In the second game, the Flyers and Roseville products battled to a 1-1 draw as Styka tallied the lone goal from Meakin and Jim Kessler. The Flyers reached the final with a 5-3 win over the Toledo Bulls as Zagata scored twice. Dave Giandiletti, Pat Tullio and Meakin also scored goals.

Hawk grid success tops list

Look back at Farmington's year in sports

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Before embarking on the 1998 sports schedule next week, let's take one last look back at 1997 and some of the top Farmington sports stories from the previous year. The Farmington Observer sports pages of the past 12 months were filled with stories of winning teams as well as individual triumphs. Some involve teams whose stories unfolded and whose successes were reported over a period of several months, while others are of single events that impacted on the local sports scene.

What follows are the Top Ten stories of 1997 and many others that deserve special recognition.

Hawks win eighth state title: It was yet another outstanding year for the Farmington Harrison football team, which began the season No. 1 in Class A and finished it that way Nov. 28 by defeating Midland Dow for the championship in the Silverdome, 21-6. The Hawks went undefeated through the regular season and playoffs for the fifth time in school history, posting a 13-0 record.

A 21-7 victory over defending Class AA champion Walled Lake Western in the fourth week of the season catapulted the Hawks to no greater things.

Harrison captured its 12th Western Lakes Activities Association title with a 27-6 win over Walled Lake Central.

The only time the Hawks were on the trailing end of a score was in the first round of the playoffs when Dearborn Edsel Ford took a 21-3 lead.

Harrison rallied to win that game, 56-21, and then defeated Ypsilanti, Birmingham Seaholm and Dow to complete a perfect season and win its eighth state championship.

Hawks coach John Harrington (248-54-1) matched the late Ron Thompson of Detroit DePores, for most state titles. The Eagles have won 10 overall.

Harrison, which outscored its opponents 472-109, was ranked sixth among Midwest teams and 22nd nationally by the USA Today at the end of the season.

The Hawks named their six offensive linemen — Mike Fisher, Chris Gadjev, Brian Lewis, Matt Struble, Brett Foster and Mike Hoad — as their most valuable players.

Baker retires from coaching: After coaching the Mercy High School basketball team for 22 years, Larry Baker made a sudden decision to retire shortly into preparations for a 23rd in late July.

His retirement ended one of Observerland's longest and most successful coaching tenures.

Baker's teams compiled a record of 381-143, which included 19 district championships, 11 regional titles, five quarterfinal victories and two state championships (1975 and 1977).

The 43-year-old Baker had been Mercy's coach since graduating from college but wanted more time to spend with his family.

"I've asked my family to make sacrifices along the way, but it really struck me that I was really making a mistake," Baker said. "I wanted to fulfill my role as a parent as much as I could in such critical times as this."

"Ordinarily, at the end of the season I'm tired and want some distance from the sport. I had been slower to recover the passion one needs to coach, and this year it wasn't coming back."

At the girls state finals in December, Baker and players from Mercy's state championship team were honored as part of the new Michigan High School Athletic Association program Legends of the Game.

"Anywhere you go, everybody knows who Larry Baker is," Mercy Athletic Director Nancy Malinowski said. "I had a gentleman tell me 'Basketball and Mercy go hand-in-hand, don't they?' I said, 'Well, that's Larry; he built this program.'"

Sara Kloosterman is Miss Soccer: Farmington Harrison senior Sara Kloosterman became the first goalkeeper to win the award, the highest individual honor in girls soccer. The award is given each year by the Michigan High School Soccer Coaches Association.

"I think it's everybody's dream; it's always a goal, but you think it's never going to happen," Kloosterman said.



Hawks win state title: Junior Ricky Bryant leaves a Midland Dow defender in his wake as he scores the winning touchdown for Farmington Harrison in the Class A championship football game.



Coaching legend: Larry Baker retired after 22 years at Mercy.



Miss Soccer: Sara Kloosterman, who was the starting goalkeeper for four years at Harrison High, was named the state's top player.

"But it did happen."

Kloosterman has moved on to Michigan State where she was the starting goalie for the Spartans last fall.

She won the Miss Soccer Award despite the fact she didn't play for one of the state's top teams (the Hawks were 7-8-1) and wasn't a high-scoring forward.

"Being in the Western Lakes (Activities Association), Sara was exposed to a lot of good teams and coaches who are involved in soccer," Harrison coach Glenn Brogan said.

"She got a chance to show off her abilities; whereas, a goalie like (Livonia) Stevenson doesn't get that many chances. I think that might have even helped her."

"She deserves to be Miss Soccer. She's a hard worker and a very skilled player."

Kloosterman, who was a four-year starter in soccer, earned 11 varsity letters at Harrison, including four in tennis and three in volleyball.

Hawks excel in track and field: Farmington Harrison won five events and the championship of the 27th Annual Observerland Relays in early May.

The Hawks registered 87 points to finish ahead of pre-meet favorite Westland John Glenn and perennial area track powers Plymouth Salem and Redford-Detroit Catholic Central.

Harrison's Nick Shaieb, Wes Morland and Jason Lampinen won the discus, Joel Fodor, Sam Inglesian and

Brent Mackey the high jump. Shaieb had the best individual throw at 159 feet.

Keith Battle, Chris Knox, Jerrard Johnson and Kevin Woods, Jason Sharp, Morland combined to win the 800-meter, sprint medley and 400 relays for the Hawks.

Harrison also won a Class A regional at West Bloomfield in late May. Shaieb won the discus, Dorwin White the 800 and Battle the 200. Harrison also won the 800 and 1,600 relays.

The Hawks took an abbreviated team to the Oakland County meet and finished fifth. Shaieb won the shot put and North Farmington's Ryan Kosutic the pole vault. Kosutic was a regional champion, too.

Big year for baseball teams: All three varsity baseball teams in Farmington made headlines and enjoyed a measure of success.

Under first-year coach Tim Schafer, Farmington High captured the WLAA Lakes Division crown with an 8-2 record.

The Falcons swept preseason favorite North Farmington twice, gaining some early confidence with a 4-3 victory in nine innings in early April. Farmington won the May rematch, 11-3.

After an early-season drubbing by Walled Lake Western, Farmington Harrison came back to beat the Warriors, 7-5, in a one-game showdown for the Western Division title in May.

Senior catcher Aaron Lawson hit a grand-slam homer, and junior pitcher

Zack Cornwell went 3-for-4 with a two-run homer to clinch the victory.

Harrison then won its second WLAA championship in three years with a 7-5 win over Farmington.

When a reporter pointed out that fact following the game, Harrison coach John Harrington's response was "Hey, how 'bout that? A baseball school!"

The Hawks backed Cornwell's pitching with eight hits and capitalized on 10 walks and three errors to win the WLAA.

North had its revenge in the district tournament, beating Farmington (8-4) and Harrison (3-1).

Junior Kirk Taylor pitched a one-hitter against the Hawks in the final while striking out 13 and walking no one. He also produced the game-winning hit.

The Raiders defeated Royal Oak Kimball in the regional, 5-1, behind the pitching of junior Jeff Trzos, who signed with the University of Michigan in December, but lost to eventual state champion Rochester in the final, 5-0.

Schafer was named Observerland Coach of the Year after leading the Falcons to a 17-10 record. North finished at 18-11 and Harrison 19-5.

Banner year for Falcon softball: Farmington's girls softball team also had a big year to equal the success of the baseball program.

Behind the pitching and hitting of senior Alana Heikinen, the Falcons won the Lakes Division and Class A