

Sports & Recreation

The Farmington
Observer
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Sunday, March 15, 1998

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

New coaches selected

Farmington Public Schools has announced the hiring of three new coaches for prominent positions starting with the 1998-99 academic year. John Bechtel will coach the Farmington High varsity football team, Richard Burrell the North Farmington varsity football team and Glenn Breuhan the new unified hockey team.

Bechtel, who is employed in the business world, is a former head coach at Orchard Lake St. Mary's and served as defensive coordinator under former Farmington coach Lauri Niakanen.

Burrell is a 1979 graduate of North and was a member of North's 1978 Class A runner-up team. He later attended and played football for Hope College.

Burrell, who is employed as a social worker for Lake Orion Schools, had been Lake Orion's head coach from 1988-97.

Breuhan, who teaches adaptive physical education in Farmington Public Schools, has an extensive coaching background in various levels of competitive hockey.

He has an advanced level certification from the USA Hockey Association, and he also has played collegiate, senior and adult hockey.

Breuhan, who is a graduate of Wayne State University, also coaches the Harrison High girls soccer team and was the boys soccer coach until a few years ago.

Youth baseball benefit

Farmington youth baseball and Farmington American Legion baseball will benefit from a Vegas Night fundraiser on Saturday, March 28, at the American Legion Hall, located at 81775 Grand River.

All rules will conform to the State of Michigan. The event begins at 6 p.m. and lasts until 1 a.m.

A raffle will be held at 8 p.m. There will be 300 tickets sold at \$50 apiece with a one-in-300 chance to win \$5,000. There will be a \$3 entry fee at the door if a raffle ticket is not purchased.

For advanced tickets, contact Wally Christensen at (248) 474-8554.

Baseball tryout news

• Tryouts for Livonia Travel, a 13-year-old Little Caesars baseball team, will be 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 21, and 1-3 p.m. Sunday, March 22, at Bicentennial Park.

• Players cannot be 14-years-old prior to Aug. 1, 1998. For information, call Ken Marx at (248) 477-4489 or Max Riehl at (248) 380-9885.

• Willie Mays-age (9- and 10-year-olds) tryouts for the Bandit Baseball Federation will be from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, 17, 24 and 31, at Franklin Middle School.

Approximately 12 players will compete in a 35-40 game schedule May through July. Home games will be at Wayne Memorial High School.

For information call (313) 729-8127.

Botsford Golf Clinic

Botsford Hospital's Total Rehabilitation and Athletic Conditioning Center will sponsor a six-week golf program titled "Teo Off With TRACC."

The program is designed to help players avoid golf-related injuries and improve their games. Classes meet every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from March 17 to April 24.

Two of the weekly sessions will be held at TRACC (39750 Grand River in Novi). The third will be taught by a golf pro at the Oasis Driving Range in Plymouth.

The \$125 fee includes a take-home exercise program. To register call Shol Levin at (248) 473-5600.

College tennis duo

Sisters Keely and Lauren Jones will play No. 2 doubles for the Vassar College women's tennis team in the upcoming spring season after posting a 7-4 record last fall.

Both are graduates of North Farmington High School. Keely is a senior at Vassar, Lauren a freshman.

Playing No. 4 singles last fall, Keely was 7-5 and a semifinalist in the New York State Tournament.

The Brewers played four matches in California during spring break and return to a full schedule of matches in the Northeast. Vassar is located in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BETAN MURPHY

Champions celebrate: Farmington High seniors Bryant Bronner (45) and Trevor Gaines (54) hoist the championship trophy in celebration after the Falcons defeated Harrison in the district final.

Falcons win district title

■ Farmington High rallied in the fourth quarter again Friday to beat Farmington Harrison, 49-41, and win a district tournament title.

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Last week's district tournament confirmed this about the Farmington High boys basketball team: Never count the Falcons out in the fourth quarter!

For the third time in a week, Farmington rallied in the fourth quarter to win Friday, and this time it netted the Falcons their first Class A district championship since 1994.

Farmington finished the game with a 17-3 run, erasing a 12-point deficit and defeating crosstown rival Farmington Harrison, 43-41, in the final game at Bloomfield Hills Lahser.

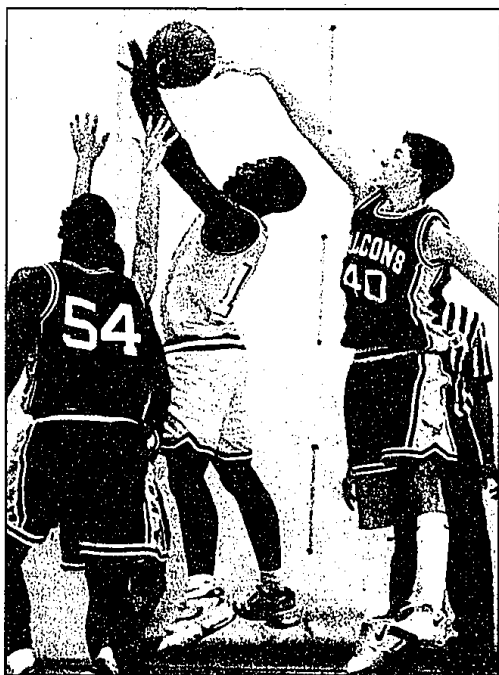
"When we were down 12, I didn't know if there was a lot of hope, because that's a lot of points to make up against a good Harrison team," Farmington coach Denny Mikel said.

"The kids refuse to lose; they fight to the end. The kids played hard, and things turned our way. It happened so quickly I don't remember it all."

The Falcons (15-7) will play either Birmingham Brother Rice or Southfield-Lathrup at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the regional tournament at Plymouth Salem.

"I'm not going to count my kids out," Mikel said. "Anything can happen; they don't quit. No matter who we're playing, I'm going to say we have a chance."

For Harrison (18-4), the loss was stunning and heartbreaking. It marked the second year in a row the Hawks have lost by two points in the district final.



Key play: Senior Matt Orr makes an important play at the end of the game, knocking away Kareem Smartt's last-chance shot.

'Encore'

Pesci gets extra year with U-D baseball

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Opposing coaches and players aren't going to like this, if they haven't heard the news already.

Mike Pesci is back in the lineup, playing baseball for the University of Detroit-Mercy.

Like everyone else, Pesci thought his collegiate playing career ended last spring, but he has been granted a rare sixth year of eligibility by the NCAA.

That can only be bad news for Midwestern Collegiate Conference opponents since Pesci was named MCC Player of the Year in 1997 and led the Titans to the conference championship.

If you're longtime U-D coach Bob Miller, you have a different opinion. "Nobody, with the possible exception of Pesci himself, was happier at the news."

"It's like the Yankees after Mickey Mantle retired, and then he comes back for a year," Miller said.

"He's not only a great player but a great leader. That's what a lot of people don't know about Mike — the leadership qualities he has, the influence he has on the younger players and the way he handles them."

"He's a hard-working, big, beautiful kid. That's all I can say."

Pesci's extra year of eligibility is the result of having missed most of his freshman season and all of the following year due to injury.

After graduating from Harrison High School where he was a three-sport standout, Pesci spent the fall of 1992 at Eastern Michigan.

He was at Yavapai College in Arizona the following spring but appeared in only three games before breaking a bone in a foot. Because he did play, he thought it counted as one season of eligibility.

When he broke the same foot that fall (1993) and missed all of the '94 baseball season after having surgery, Pesci figured that was his redshirt year.

He later played one season (1995) at Henry Ford Community College and two (1996-97) at Detroit-Mercy.

Pesci believed he had used up his eligibility under NCAA rules, which require an athlete to complete his college career in five years.

He never thought a rarely-used NCAA rule that allows for a sixth year would apply to him until last fall when he talked with U-D catcher Juan Sanchez, who thought he might miss a second straight season because of a knee injury.

Pesci recalled the conversation: "He said to me 'Weren't you hurt two years?' 'Yeah! I only pitched in three games. I'm too old; I can't come back.'"

But he started looking into the matter and was encouraged when the U-D compliance coordinator found a case example that was similar to his.

If an athlete plays in less than 20 percent of the games before being injured, that season doesn't have to count against his years of eligibility.

Ultimately, Pesci met the requirement of being injured two years in a row. "I really didn't think I had a chance even once. I started gathering information," he said. "I thought I had a 20-percent chance; I really didn't give it much thought."

"But the more I gathered information and showed it to people, the better the odds were looking. By the time I sent the information to the NJCAA, I felt like it was the other way around. I thought I had an 80-percent chance; my optimism did a 180."

After submitting game statistics from Yavapai and medical documentation for his injuries to the NJCAA, NCAA and MCC, Pesci's first year was recognized as a medical redshirt year and he was granted a medical hardship for '94.

"It's like a dream come true," said Pesci, who is working on his master's degree in Detroit-Mercy's MBA program. "It's an opportunity I never



Mike Pesci still a U-D Titan

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