

## Goal from page A1

\$100, a bargain for such a program. Some summer goalie schools cost at least \$400 or \$500.

Probably the youngest goalie enrolled in the clinic was 6-year-old Steven Ledesma of Dearborn Heights.

"I like saving," said Steven, who started playing goal last year in Westland.

### Goalie moms

Steven's mom, Michelle, was in the locker room helping him strap on layers of protective equipment. Several other moms and dads were doing the same, helping out their young Chris Osgood proteges.

Osgood, by the way, is Steven's favorite goalie.

"I'm very high-strung," Michelle Ledesma said. "And when I watch him, it's stressful. They (teams) rely so much on good goalies, so I want him to have proper instruction."

Michelle added that it's pretty easy to tell the goalie moms from the moms of other players. "They're the ones chewing their nails off."

Another mom watching the various drills was Maria Shinabarger. She said her son, Michael, although hearing impaired, "always expressed an interest" in playing goal. He already plays some, for fun, with friends and family.

"Now is the time for him to learn," Shinabarger said before Monday's session. "Besides, I think this sport is mostly visual."

On the ice, Michael struggled at times knowing what to do when the coach changed drills, from shooting high to the glove side or low to the stick side, for example. But he showed visible improvement by the time the second afternoon concluded.

"I give him (Michael) a lot of credit," said clinic instructor Doug Jakobik, a former goalie in the North American Jr. A league. "It's just got to be hard (for a hearing-impaired goaltender). You can't hear a whistle or what your defensemen are saying to you back there. I thought he did pretty well."

After Tuesday's session, Maria Shinabarger said she was satisfied that Michael had at least picked up some basic skills and would continue playing the position.

With the spring break for many area school districts, youngsters and their parents made the trek from other metropolitan Detroit communities, Brian Simpson, 10, and 11-year-old David Wilson traveled from Oxford and Howell, respectively.

"It's better than watching TV," joked David following the second session, who then talked about what he learned during the clinic.

"They taught me a lot of stuff, how to make the plays, and how to know if they're going to deke (attempt a fake) or shoot."

Brian Simpson, meanwhile, who plays in a Tivy youth league, said he liked how he learned tips on when to stay on his feet or drop to his knees, "reading the play better."

It didn't hurt the goalies that each instructor — who worked with a group of five goalies — owns a minimum of college or minor pro experience. That is a job prerequisite to join the Suburban Hockey coaching staff, directed by Tom Annatos and Lyle Phair.

Besides Jakobik, the staff included: Scott Cooper, formerly of the New York Rangers organization; Jason Huberschmidt and Mark

Tapp, who both played at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

### No rust

Jakobik said he didn't think having the clinic in April would result in goalies forgetting newly found knowledge over the summer, between hockey seasons. That's because, for some goaltenders, the hockey season never ends. Or, there's another hockey school to attend.

"Hockey is a year-round sport now," Jakobik said. "You see these kids playing all year long, and if not, they'll get going again in August."

Both Jakobik and Tapp said they saw goalies improving over the course of the clinic.

"You can see a big difference," Jakobik said, referring mostly to the younger goaltenders. "They're a lot more comfortable out there today (Tuesday)."

According to Tapp, who also is a teacher at Centerline High School, he noticed the ice pupils were paying close attention.

"What we look for are the fundamentals," Tapp explained. "Are they standing up? Most of the guys here were moving better in their stance (after the clinic). They're learning to execute a save, rather than just stop the puck" by letting it hit them.

He said goalie clinics and summer schools are invaluable because they help newcomers learn through repetition to do something the human body wasn't built to do.

"A lot of it (goaltending) isn't natural. It's just repetition and training your body to do that," Tapp said.

Farmingdale's Tim Griffith wouldn't argue the point. After Tuesday's session, he was tired, but glad he participated in his very first hockey clinic, finally receiving formal training.

"I feel a lot better about it," Griffith said. "I feel more comfortable ... I improved a lot in movement, all sorts of movement. And my stance, too."

And that's half the battle for most goalies. At one end of the ice sheet, instructor Tapp stressed the importance of stance and positioning to the group.

"If you're in position, at the top of the (goal) crease, everything has to go right for the shooter" to put the puck into the net.

For more information about Suburban Hockey clinics, call (248) 478-1600.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL SEZLER

**Practice:** Coaches and students fire pucks at the practicing goalie in front of the net at Suburban Training Center recently. Students learned the fundamentals of tending a goal on the ice. Skills learned included executing a save rather than just stopping the puck.

## Weekend warrior takes some lessons

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.homedomain.net

"It's like sitting on the toilet reading a newspaper," said one of the instructors at last week's goaltending clinic.

Well, I've been trying to play goal longer than most of the other clinic participants have been alive. But never have I heard anybody put the task of proper goaltending stance into such easy-to-understand terms.

It means this: Keep your knees bent and butt down, yee, like sitting. And keep both hands up and slightly in front, hence the newspaper-clutching reference.

In that stance, goalies are instructed to move from post-to-post, out and back, keeping eyes on the puck and sticks on the ice.

Easy to understand, but harder to do. Especially for a 42-year-old weekend warrior. Those knees and hammys ain't what they used to be.

There were some other easy tips:

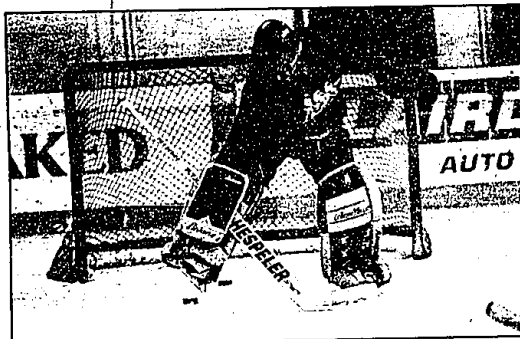
■ When holding the goal stick and attempting to block shots on goal, "roll the wrist" to the right or to the left, rather than thrusting the whole padded arm out there.

■ When action is close to the net, coaches at the Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills instructed us to shuffle the feet from side-to-side, with short steps, to stay up and in position to make the save.

■ On breakaways, we were told to move out, back in, and try to wait out the shooter. A coach told us to wait until the player was a stick's length away before making a save attempt.

We did skating drills (c-cuts, t-glides) and worked on covering loose pucks. There was a one-on-one shootout, where those break-away tips were put to use. And at the end of the second day, goalies and coaches played a crazy game called "Martian hockey," where no rules exist except for one — the coaches always win.

The most frustrating aspect of the clinic was getting dressed in the stall — another toilet reference — while waiting for hockey moms to clear out of the dressing room after helping their sons get ready.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL SEZLER

**Warrior:** The Farmington Observer's very own Tim Smith learned a few pointers during his turn defending the net.

Most surprising? Those guys using regular hockey sticks to fire pucks are goalies themselves. And yes, they blasted away pretty good, too.



### Fur Cleaning & Storage

Your furs have taken care of you all winter. Now it's time to care for them with Jacobson's outstanding fur cleaning and storage service.

**\$60**

cleaning & storage, when you use your Jacobson's charge

**\$65**

cleaning & storage, all other payment methods

**\$25**

storage only

enjoy the packages

**Jacobson's**

Birmingham • (248) 844-8900 Livonia • (734) 961-7996 Rochester • (248) 961-8000

SHOPPING HOURS • MON-SAT 10-9 • OPEN SUN AT NOON



a gift from Jacobson's means more

For the nature lover. Sometimes she doesn't mind having a bug or two in her hair. She'll welcome these pretty critters along anytime.



Barrettes and bobby pins studded with colored stones. From RJ Graziano. \$15-\$38. Fashion Accessories

**Jacobson's**

Birmingham • (248) 844-8900 Livonia • (734) 961-7996 Rochester • (248) 961-8000

SHOPPING HOURS • MON-SAT 10-9 • OPEN SUN AT NOON

## MEAP To take or not to take on April 19

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.homedomain.net

The clock is ticking for high school students, as to whether they will take the Michigan Educational Assessment high school test next week or not.

Parents are watching that clock very closely, and want to be as informed as possible to help their junior sons or daughters make their decision, said Marlene Krochmal, representing the North Farmington High School Parent Information Network.

The high school MEAP will be given in the Farmington district beginning Monday, April 19. In 1998, only 16 percent of eligible juniors took the controversial, much-aligned standardized test.

According to Krochmal, parents from all three high schools compiled a fact sheet about "fre-

quently asked questions" concerning the MEAP. The FAQ letter was assembled based on written correspondence, input from state Rep. Andrew Rackowski and meetings held in the district, with hopes of it being mailed to all Farmington, Harrison and North parents.

Because of the school district's spring recess, the earliest the FAQ letter could be reviewed by district officials is Monday. Even a quick mass mailing wouldn't guarantee much time for parents to read the letter and absorb it before April 19, Krochmal said.

The North PIN supplied a copy of the letter to the Farmington Observer. It is printed on page B7 of today's edition.

Krochmal said the parent group feels there is "information that parents are owed" before a decision is needed.