

UDM's coach inducted into Michigan Sports Hall



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Once part of the same pitching rotation for the Philadelphia Phillies, their achievements will forever be seen on the walls of Cobo Hall as new inductees into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame.

Bob Miller, a Redford Township resident and long-time baseball coach at University of Detroit-Mercy, and Robin Roberts are former members of the famed Whiz Kids pitching staff that led the Phillies to the 1950 pennant.

Looking more like grandfathers and probably feeling like kids in a candy store, they were among seven new inductees at a recent ceremony at Cobo.

Prior to an 18-year career with the Phillies, Orioles, Astros and Cubs, Roberts made a name for himself as a pitcher and baseball player at Michigan State. He won 266 career games and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1986.

Miller had a 10-year career with the Phillies, pitching in 261 games as a starter and reliever. He started a game in the 1950 World Series.

He has been in the insurance business since his retirement from major leagues because he never would have made it just on his salary at U-D.

BASEBALL

Despite a smaller budget than most NCAA Division I programs, Miller has compiled an 866-692-2 record in 35 seasons, entering this year, and twice taken teams to the NCAA Tournament.

Had he not been such an outstanding baseball player and coach, Miller might have been best suited for a career in landscaping.

Miller has groomed the Titans' baseball diamond almost as well as he's prepared his players for their post-graduate days. If the Titans home field had lights he'd be on his tractor cutting the grass or dragging the dirt well into the evening. His pride for the game and his school is shown with every turn.

No doubt, the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame takes as much pride in its recent induction of Miller.

His first team, in 1965 the Titans made a return appearance in 1987.

Ironically, perhaps his best team in 1978 failed to earn an at-large bid despite 33 victories.

"I've had hundreds of players. Lots of engineers, lawyers, dentists, accountants, I've had them all," said Miller, a Redford St. Mary graduate. "I've always emphasized the need for the kids

to get their degrees and use baseball as a means to that end. 'Get your degrees, boys,' I don't know how many times I've said that in meetings."

Miller's son, Pat, went from being a bat boy at U-D for his father in the 1970s to a pitcher for him a decade later. Pat, a Redford Union graduate, was one of the proud members of the Miller family in attendance at Cobo.

Another son, Bob Jr., played for his dad in the late '70s.

"We're very honored by this," Pat said. "I always thought he'd go in but didn't know when. But I knew he earned it. He taught you heart, how to win, playing hard every single day."

Pat was a fan favorite as a bat boy, wearing a uniform with the name Bears across the front as he trotted out to the field to pick up bats and balls left by the players. The outfit was the same one worn by members of the Bad News Bears, a baseball team in a popular movie at the time, but there was nothing but good news associated with Miller's teams.

While his players are in class Miller can often be found tending the Titans' baseball diamond, making conditions perfect for his team or any other organization using the field.

U-D Sports Information Director Mark Engle remembers the last time he saw anyone other



Bob Miller
UDM baseball coach

was dragging the field between games and he must have fallen asleep at the wheel or something because he almost drove into coach, who fell down getting out of the way," Engle remembers, laughing. "I don't remember another kid dragging the tractor from then on. It's a real source of pride how nice the field looks."

Engle said the turnout to a recent U-D baseball reunion for all classes shows the amount of respect Miller's earned.

"It's amazing how many old ballplayers are there, you can tell they had fun and want to do it again," Engle said. "He wants his teams to play hard and have fun."

Miller thanked all the supporters of U-D baseball, those who

contribute financially or just by showing up and watching games. One of the team's biggest fans, Father Herman Mueller, also earned his praise for the mass he says on road trips to the coaching staff and players.

Mike Pesci, a Farmington Harrison graduate, a recent U-D star, now is an assistant coach while working on a graduate degree.

"Coach is a straight-up honest guy, tells you the fair way, how it is," Pesci said. "There's no tape with it. He respects you more than any person I've been around. He had the trust in me and give you every opportunity to succeed. Players love playing for him."

The only thing missing from this proud night for Miller were his parents, Al and Helen, who are deceased.

"If I had one wish it would be that my parents, who gave me so much support and worked so hard to get me a good education, could be here with me," Miller said. "When I started the job as an assistant coach, they gave me \$600 a year and I said 'Wonderful.' When I became head coach, they gave me \$900. We've had four presidents, four athletic directors and nine basketball coaches and I'm still there cutting the grass, taking care of the infield."

Falcons advance to district play; Hawks finish 3rd in tourney

Junior pitcher Melissa Mytty was her old self Wednesday, and that was good news for the Farmington softball team.

Mytty, who missed a good part of the season with a sore back, showed no signs of discomfort and was almost perfect in her pitching.

She threw a one-hitter, struck out 15 and walked only one to lead Farmington to a pre-district victory over Livonia Stevenson at Plymouth Canton, 7-0.

"I'd like to say she was 100 percent today, but I don't think so," Farmington coach Jerry Osborne said, adding Mytty was more like 80 to 90 percent.

SOFTBALL

"But she's definitely back. I was really happy with the way the girls performed today. The defense played well, but we only had five or six chances. That's because Melissa played so well."

"When you have a girl throwing that well and striking out that many, you're going to win a lot of ballgames, because the defense doesn't have to work as hard. That was due to her; she did a nice job."

The Falcons (10-17) had 10 hits and were led by Angie

Luttman, who was 3-for-3. Meghan O'Rear and Amy Paquette had two hits apiece, and Tricia Krause, Mytty, Heather Martin and Danielle Lewis added one each.

Luttman and O'Rear also had two RBIs; Luttman and Krause scored two runs apiece.

HAWKS 3RD AT NOV: Farmington Harrison rallied to score two runs in the seventh inning Saturday and defeat Livonia Franklin in girls softball, 3-2, and earn third place in the Novl Tournament.

The Hawks loaded the bases in the seventh on consecutive singles by Lindsey Emmett, Kelly Taylor and Jonelle Wetling. Two runs scored on a wild pitch.

Freshman pitcher Kristin Schroek won her first varsity start, scattering four hits over six innings. Emmett worked the final inning and earned a save.

Harrison had eight hits (all singles) off Franklin pitcher Tara Muehler, who pitched her third game of the day.

The Hawks began the tournament with a 17-0, three-inning rout of Auburn Hills Avondale in which Emmett pitched a perfect game.

All Ault was 4-for-4, had four RBIs and scored four runs. Emmett and Taylor went 3-for-3; Emmett also had four RBIs, and Taylor also scored four runs. Kristin Vitalis chipped in two hits and two runs.

Harrison lost its second game, 2-1, in eight innings to a fine Marine City team (31-4). In each of Marine City's four losses, the game was decided by one run.

With the international tiebreaker in effect, an error during the issuance of an intentional walk resulted in the loss for Harrison.

The Hawks took a 1-0 lead in the third inning on a Vitalis hit, a stolen base, a sacrifice and a groundout. Ault pitched the entire way for Harrison, allowing seven hits while striking out four and walking one.

Harrison kept the game close with a pair of super defensive plays, according to coach Mike Teachman.

With runners at third and no outs, Emmett fielded the ball at first base and threw to home plate for the out each time.

SEAHOLM 10, COUNTRY DAY 0: Avery Gholston tossed a two-hitter and struck out 12 as the host Panthers (17-11) rolled to a Division II pre-district win Tuesday.

Andrea Silechka supplied a two-run triple in the five-inning contest. Carrie Gonzalez had three hits.

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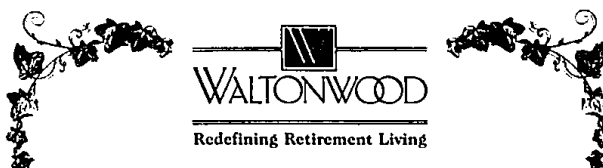
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