



Senior ballplayer: Zach Lessway returns with varsity experience and will start in the outfield for the Raiders.

Raiders from page B1

The other varsity players are junior utility infielder Dan Canvasser and sophomore outfielder Aaron Drury. The Monday scrimmage starts at 3:30 p.m. at North. The Raiders play 4:30 p.m. Friday at Cranbrook.

"This is the youngest team I've had in quite a few years," Horwitz said. "I think we could be a spoiler. Overall, I think (the division) is going to be pretty even. I don't know if we can go all the way, but I think we'll do all right."

BY DAN O'MEARA
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Pete Finn is Farmington's new varsity baseball coach only in as far as he has yet to coach his first official game with the Falcons. Otherwise, he is definitely known as baseball and Farmington.

First, he has taught physics and the principles of engineering at the school for three years and was going to assist former coach Tim Schafer this year.

Schafer, who was also the defensive coordinator on the football staff, left to become a teacher and head coach in that sport at Berkeley.

Furthermore, Finn spent the last three seasons as head coach of the Birmingham Seaholm baseball team, guiding the Maples to some good years.

Finn's first Farmington team will be strong up the middle with experience at four key positions.

Junior catcher Nick Hippler, junior second baseman Brad Barenio and senior center fielder

BASEBALL

Justin Gerwatowski enter their third season as starters. Junior Ian Pardonnet becomes the regular shortstop.

"(Gerwatowski) has good range; he has good speed and gets a good jump on the ball," Finn said. "He handles the ball well as far as picking it up off the turf."

"(Hippler) is already helping out the young pitchers. He's been great for them, because he has patience. His throwing arm is what everybody talks about, but a catcher needs to handle the staff and he does that real well."

Finn compares Barenio with former Seaholm player Adam Ritter, who wasn't big in stature but always got the job done.

"(Barenio) has a lot of range and will play well for us," he said. "He has good foot speed, and that's what is important for us."

The Falcons have another vet-

eran player at first base in junior Kyle Burcar. Sophomore Chris Chesney will play third base.

Farmington should have a good outfield with senior James Claranhan, who hit .335 last year, and either junior Bernie Brown or sophomore Preston Picard and Tony Luttman on either side of Gerwatowski.

"We hope to communicate real well," Finn said. "We've been working hard on getting the infield and outfield to work well together on cutoffs without having to yell all over the place."

"We want the outfielders to know where the ball is supposed to go by the time they reach the ball. If we get a good jump, with decent speed, hopefully, we'll take away some hits."

Farmington lost all-area pitching ace Charlie Avery to graduation. This year's staff consists of Pardonnet, junior Brett Brown, senior John Walsanen, Bernie Brown, sophomore Bob Houchins and Luttman. Walsanen and Pardonnet have the most experience with about 20 innings

apiece last year.

"We have good kids; I think they'll throw strikes," Finn said. "We have a lot of young guys, so we're working on their mound savvy and presence, because we don't have a lot of experience there."

"And the defense has to help out; offensively, we have to be better. I don't think we have a dominant pitcher, but we have some kids who can compete and get the ball over. We just have to keep working them."

The Falcons, who were 11-18 last year, open the season Tuesday at Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook.

"I'd say, if I had this team in the Oakland Activities Association, it would be as competitive as any team I've coached," Finn said. "With a lot of young players, we realize we're lacking a little experience."

"We want to compete in every game and execute to our fullest potential. If we have some success by the end of the league season, we'll be real happy."

Whalers tie playoff series with Storm

Suddenly, it's back to square one for the Plymouth Whalers.

Randy Fitzgerald's second goal with 12:52 left in the game gave the Whalers a 3-2 win over the host Guelph Storm on Friday night. But more importantly, it evened their best-of-seven series in the opening round of the Ontario Hockey League playoffs at two games each.

And the two teams, as well as home ice advantage, headed back to Compuware Arena on Saturday night for the fifth game of the series. Game six

HOCKEY

will be held in Guelph on Tuesday night, while a seventh game, if necessary, would be held at Compuware on Thursday.

Fitzgerald's second goal was the only 5-on-5 score of the game for the Whalers, coming off assists by Shaun Fisher and Eric Goody. Not surprisingly, the two goals earned Fitzgerald first-star honors.

Justin Williams gave Ply-

mouth a 1-0 lead on a short-handed goal with one second left in the first period, with the assist coming to Fisher.

Guelph tied the score at 1-1 just 1:38 into the second period as Charlie Stephens scored a power-play goal from Lindsay Plunkett and Brent Kelly. But the Whalers regained the lead at the 4:11 mark when Fitzgerald scored a power-play goal from Damian Surma and Fisher.

The Storm tied it again with 5:13 left in the period as Bo Subr knocked the puck past

Plymouth goalie Rob Zepp with the assists going to Joe Gerbe and Radik Matalik.

It was one of Zepp's rare misses on the night as the net-minder made 40 saves and earned the game's second-star honors. The Storm's Chris Madden made 30 saves on the night. Plymouth and 11 penalties for 22 minutes and managed to kill off a 5-on-3 Guelph advantage during the first period.

The Storm had nine penalties for 18 minutes.



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