

# Observer Sports

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Observer  
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## FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

### Ambassadors advance

It didn't come easily, but the Compuware Ambassadors survived the first test in their quest to repeat as champions of the North American Hockey League by beating the USA NAHL Team two games to one in their best-of-three series last weekend at Compuware Arena.

The Ambassadors advance to play the Danville Wings in a best-of-three NAHL semifinal Friday through Sunday at Compuware.

All three games against the USA squad were decided by a single goal, with two of them going to overtime. Compuware trailed 2-0 in the series opener last Thursday but rallied to tie it at 2-all with goals from Andy Burnes and Mark Cannon. Michael Smith's goal 7:31 into overtime won it for the Ambassadors.

In the second game, it was the USA Team's turn. Joe Pomaranski got the game-winner late in the second period, and goalie Steve Belanger made it stand up in outdueling Compuware's Craig Kowalski. Ryan Lesneau scored a power-play goal for the Ambassadors.

The deciding third game also went into OT, and Luke Wright completed his hattrick by getting the game-winner at 17:28 of overtime. Ryan Connolly also scored for the Ambassadors, who scored three times in the final period with Wright's second goal of the game giving them a 3-2 lead with 48 seconds left before USA tied it with 30 seconds left.

Wright's performance earned him NAHL Player of the Week honors. In 38 regular-season games, he had six goals and six assists and led the league with 357 penalty minutes.

### Defenseman honored

Andy Burnes, a defenseman for the Compuware Ambassadors, was the only player from the team honored in the NAHL all-league selections.

Burnes was named to the first team; he scored seven goals and had 22 assists in 55 regular-season games. The Ambassadors finished first in the NAHL's Eastern Division.

### Mercy wins golf match

Farmington Hills Mercy's B squad tied with Bloomfield Hills Kingswood in girls golf Monday, 191-191.

The fifth scorers for each team also tied, which failed to break the overall stalemate.

Shawna Currie shot 46 for the Marlins, Gretchen Andersen-Watts 49, Maureen McFawn and Erin Swikart 49 apiece.

### OCC golfers place 3rd

The Oakland Community College men's golf team shot a 324 to take third place at the Henry Ford CC Invitational at the Dearborn Country Club.

Frank Syron (Waterford) and Devon Dobrin (White Lake) carded rounds of 80. Josh Bauer (Waterford) shot 81; John Nolan (Waterford) rounded out the scoring with an 83.

### Comerica impressions

Have you gone to a game at Comerica Park yet? Tell us what you thought of the Tigers' new digs during their first home stand, which runs through April 20.

Let us know what you thought — good or bad — and include your name, address and an evening telephone number where you can be reached. Either fax the information to (734) 591-7279 or e-mail the information to pbenadry@homecomm.net.

### Golden Gloves tickets

Tickets are on sale for the Golden Gloves National Championships, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 6, at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit.

The event, sponsored by the U.S. Army, features five days of preliminary matches beginning Monday, May 1, at the Detroit Marriott. The single-elimination tournament will feature 380 amateurs fighters from 30 regional teams in 12 weight classes. The finals will be broadcast on Fox Sports Net.

Tickets can be purchased at JLA or Fox Theatre box offices, along with all Ticketmaster locations. Ticket prices are \$10, \$15, \$35, \$75 and \$150.

For more information, call (313) 983-6606.



North team leader: Replacing state champion Brad Jaffe at No. 1 singles on the North Farmington tennis team, senior Chris Erickson assumes the role of top player for the Raiders this year.

## Defending champs expect another successful season

North Farmington won't give up its Western Lakes and regional tennis titles without a fight under new coach Mark Shenton.

BY DAN O'MEARA  
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North Farmington enjoyed its best season in school history last year, so what can the Raiders do for an encore this time around in boys tennis?

Well, how about more of the same? Don't expect their performance level to drop much despite the loss of some key players, according to new coach Mark Shenton.

"Even though they graduated some of their big guns, the team is so deep we can just fill in and not miss a step," Shenton said. "I don't see why this team can't be another top contender in the state."

If he's right, look for the Raiders to win their fourth consecutive Western Lakes Activities Association and third straight regional titles. There seems little doubt they will be contenders.

The 23-year-old Shenton, who graduated from Western Michigan University in December, replaces Rick Jones, who is now the principal at North.

He inherits a program that was ranked No. 1 in the state and finished second in the Division 2 state tournament last year.

While in college, Shenton coached tennis at Battle Creek Pennfield High School for three years and played at WMU. A 1994 graduate of Tronton High, he played No. 1 singles for the Trojans. He's a substitute teacher in



Farmington's No. 1: With a year of varsity experience, sophomore Chad Moore takes over the first singles position for the Falcons.

Farmington and Tronton at present. Senior Chris Erickson moves up from No. 2 singles to replace 1999 state champion Brad Jaffe in the top spot.

He was the WLAA and regional champion and a state quarterfinalist.

"He's just coming off shoulder trouble, so he's starting to get back into it with serving," Shenton said.

"The first part of the year he'll be working into game shape. But I expect big things from him as the season progresses, because he's just going to get stronger."

Junior Jay Berman, who reached the state semifinals at No. 1 doubles along with Mark Frankel, takes over at No. 2 singles. He and Frankel also were

WLAA and regional champs.

"He definitely has the ability and the talent to do very well there," Shenton said.

Junior Chris Copeland, who played four singles at Dearborn High and did well in the state tournament, is the new player at No. 3 singles in place of Justin Street.

The Raiders also lost Brandon Finkel to graduation at No. 4 singles after a nice post-season run in which he finished second in the state. Junior Steve Jaffe, who played doubles last year, steps into that position.

"He worked on his game a lot in the

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## Falcons remain perfect

Farmington High continued its fast start in the 2000 baseball season Monday behind the superb pitching of Ian Pardonnet.

The junior right-hander threw a one-hitter as the unbeaten Falcons blanked host Westland John Glenn, 6-0. He struck out 10 and walked two over seven innings.

The victory improved Farmington's overall record to 5-0; the Falcons are 1-0 in the Western Lakes Activities Association Lakes Division.

### BASEBALL

"(Pardonnet) mixed it up well; he had all three pitches going," Farmington coach Pete Finn said. "We knew Glenn could hit the ball, and Ian did a nice job of keeping it low. He's a smart pitcher."

"We also did a job good of shutting down the running game. We threw out two runners and kept them off balance."

Farmington junior Kyle Burcar had two doubles and two RBI. Senior James Clarrahan went 2-for-2 with a triple and an RBI bunt single; he also scored three runs. Junior Brad Baranie had two hits, stole two bases and scored two runs.

Jeff Mitchell was the losing pitcher, giving up three runs over three innings. Glenn is 0-1 and 0-2.

### Hawks humble Mustangs

Pitching wasn't a concern for Farmington Harrison in its season opener Monday.

Junior Tim Doig saw to that. Doig scattered five hits as the Hawks mercifully visiting Northville in six innings, 12-2.

"He struck out five and walked just one, so I thought he did a real good job for so early in the year," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "We were going to let him throw 85 pitches, and he threw 77."

The Hawks ended the game with an eight-run sixth inning that gave them the necessary 10-run differential to invoke the mercy rule.

Doig, Lou Hadley, Marcus Menciotti and Kent Taylor had two hits apiece in the 11-hit Harrison attack.

Jim Kay hit a two-run single; Doig and Taylor also had two RBI, including a run-scoring double each.

Harrison led 4-2 entering the sixth inning when it scored eight runs without giving up an out.

### Vikings defeat Raiders

An inexperienced North Farmington ballclub battled in its season opener Monday but fell two runs shy against Walled Lake Central, 6-4.

The visiting Vikings scored single runs in the top of the fifth and sixth innings to break a 4-4 stalemate.

Central took a 4-1 lead with a four-run fourth, but North tied it with three in the bottom of that inning.

Jeff Vieder hit a bases-loaded triple to keep the Raiders in the game. Paul Kammer and Zach Lowmyer went 2-for-4. Ross Patterson added a double and

Please see BASEBALL, C4

## Whalers take series lead by beating Spitfires, 2-1

BY C.J. RISAK  
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Yep, back on track — but it was no fast-paced ride for the Plymouth Whalers in Wednesday's Ontario Hockey League playoff game against the Windsor Spitfires.

Once again, the Spits slowed the pace as much as possible in an attempt to keep the high-scoring Whaler offense from asserting itself. And the tactic worked, limiting Plymouth to just two goals.

But unlike Monday's game (a 2-1 home-ice win for Windsor), the Spitfires' offense was unable to crack the Whaler defense. The result was a 2-1 triumph for the Whalers, giving them a 2-1 edge in this best-of-seven OHL Western Conference semifinal.

### HOCKEY

"It was ugly, but we'll take it," said Whaler coach Pete DeBoer. "They were running interference and it slowed things down. It was playoff hockey."

The Whalers never trailed and, despite the tight score, they were in control of the play — when they were full strength. From the game's beginning, it was apparent the Spits were going to try to push and intimidate the Whalers.

That, too, seemed to work. Plymouth came into the game with the three top point-producers in the OHL playoff: Shawn Fisher and Stephen Weiss totaled 16 points and Justin Williams had 14, with a league-best eight goals.

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Playoff action: Eric Gooldy of the Whalers gets pushed into the Windsor net to the displeasure of the Spitfires' Craig Mahon.