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sophomore Beth Danielewicz, the third all-area player.

She had an outstanding rookie season, going 22-8 with 191 strikeouts and 28 walks in 206 2/3 innings. Her earned run average was 0.91.

"She stepped right up and acted like a senior last year," Brubaker said. "She worked quite hard in the off season, so she should improve on what she did as a freshman."

The only concern Brubaker has is at first base where he must replace Kristy Reinhardt. Senior Lauren Zakalik and Juniors Alissa Melvin and Sarah

Reading were battling for the starting job.

"I told the girls I might put their names in a hat and pull one out," Brubaker said. "I told them 'You're the ones making out the lineup; I'm just observing what you do out here.'"

"You take it for granted some times, but first base is very important."

Otherwise, the Raiders have a rock-solid infield with seniors Christina Colombo, who is the backup pitcher, and Alyssa Stanbridge back at second and third base, respectively.

"(Stanbridge) has improved

immensely," Brubaker said. "She's gotten a lot stronger defensively. I don't have any concerns over there."

The outfield remains intact with senior Staci Russell in center, sophomore Jehan Hinds in right and junior Lindsey Taub in left.

"That was our starting outfield last year," Brubaker said. "It was pretty young. This year they have more experience, and they're looking a lot better."

Completing the roster are junior outfielders Stephanie Karros, Allison Goldberg and Mauna Kessler and senior outfielder

Lindsey Goldfine.

Brubaker said the Raiders look like a real good team on paper, but they still have to produce the results.

"With the experience Danielewicz got and leaders like Colombo, McComb and King, we have the makings for a pretty good ballclub," he said. "But the game is not played on paper. It's on the field."

"We have to show up and play. Hopefully, that's what our team does — show up and play to our ability and expectations."

Brubaker said the Raiders will do their best to defend the



Beth Danielewicz
N. Farmington pitcher



Jasmine King
N. Farmington catcher



Samantha McComb
North Farm. shortstop

WLAA title, but he isn't concerned about who the preseason favorite is.

"I'm concerned about my team

and not whoever has whatever else on their team," he said. "I just get our team out there and play the ballgame."

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tainly eases the pain of losing that senior class from last year," Falvo said.

"That senior class was a special group that bonded well together and united for a common goal, but they left a legacy that has inspired this team to try and get back to Battle Creek."

"It will take us a little time and we'll have some rough spots, but I'm sure by the end of the season we're going to be a pretty good team."

FARMINGTON HARRISON

The Hawks, who were 17-11-1 and district champions for the second time in three years, have a new coach.

Cassidy Munger, a former center fielder at Ferris State University and first-year teacher at Harrison, replaces Mike Teachman, who guided the program for the past two decades.

"I don't know who's more nervous — me or the girls," Munger said as she approached her coaching debut Friday at Livonia Clarenceville.

Junior Kristin Schrock, who was the backup to All-Observer Lindsey Emmett last year, becomes the No. 1 pitcher. She has plenty of experience, however, and pitched well when she had the chance.

"She worked hard in the off season and is doing a good job," Munger said. "She has a good attitude toward the game, and she has leadership skills that

will pay off for her as well."

Other key returning players are senior Kelly Taylor and Gayle Ternes.

Taylor will start again at shortstop but might be called on to do some catching when junior Jacquie Smiley needs a rest.

"I watched (Taylor) in basketball and volleyball, and I'm excited that I get her next," Munger said.

"She really knows the game. She can read situations, and she's very relaxed and calm out there. She makes the plays that need to be made."

Ternes played in right field last year but moves to center to take advantage of her ability and experience. Ternes, Taylor and senior Vanessa Osiecki are tri-captains, too.

"She does a great job with leadership," Munger said of Ternes. "She knows where to be at what times. She has a good sense for where everybody should be, so she's a great communicator on the field and off."

The rest of the starting infield consists of Ellen Doughty at first base, Megan Springer at second and Heather Sinawi at third. All are juniors who played on the JV. Sophomore Abbey Cleland is the backup shortstop.

"It seems they always want to learn more," Munger said. "That's been fun as a coach, because you can keep throwing things at them. They accept challenges well."

Osiecki and senior Ellery Diem will share playing time in right field, and sophomore Merrill DeRose will start in left field.

The varsity also includes junior pitcher Beth Leeb and junior first baseman Jenny Chism. Both played on the JV last year.

Munger told her players they are the pioneers for the future of Harrison softball under her leadership, and she has high expectations for them.

"We talk a lot about fundamentals and doing what we need to do — catching, fielding and hitting the ball," she said. "It comes down to just those things."

FARMINGTON COACH

First-year coach Kristen Harmsen takes charge of the program, replacing Jerry Osborn, who retired after six seasons with the Falcons.

Farmington has a handful of veteran players back from a team that was 9-14, but it also lost some good ones to graduation, most notably pitcher Melissa Kytty.

Her career was marred by a recurring back injury, but she was good and well enough to make the all-area second team last year.

The Falcons also lost catcher Meghan O'Brien, infielders Julie Rotenheiser, Jessica Brown and Becky DePottier and outfielder Tricia Krause.

Juniors Kelsey Guisbert, who

did some pitching the last two years, and Amy Paquette, who played in the outfield, will take turns at the No. 1 position.

"They don't have a lot of experience but, hopefully, they'll improve game by game and in practice," Harmsen said. "We just have to play defense behind them. I look for them to be consistent."

Guisbert and Paquette will share the catching position, too, so both will always be in the lineup.

Senior Danielle Lewis will be a four-year starter, returning to first base where she played the last two seasons.

She was one of the team's top hitters and will be a team captain with senior right fielder Sarah Goetke.

"She'll be one of our top players," Harmsen said. "We look for

her to be a leader and come through when we need her."

Juniors Meghan Young and Julie Kimmel started in the outfield but move to the infield this year. Kimmel will play second base and Young shortstop.

Either sophomore Melissa Patterson or junior Ashleigh Bartlett will play third base.

"(Young) has a very strong arm, and her athletic ability and softball knowledge will enable her to do a fine job there," Harmsen said.

Junior Randin Brown moves from left field to center in place of Young. Junior Lindsey Abbott and sophomore Brooke Knox are the possible left fielders.

"(Brown) has good speed and a good arm," Harmsen said. "She's a leader by example. She's a good person to have in center field as far as communicating

and leading the outfield."

The other varsity players are sophomore outfielders Jayme Vainer and Adrienne Shaw, sophomore infielder Catherine Shaw and freshman catcher/infielder Carolyn Kirschke.

Harmsen, who hopes to gain a full-time teaching job in Farmington, was the varsity coach at Edwardsburg High School the last three years. She played softball at Portage Northern High School and Western Michigan University.

"We're pretty young," Harmsen said. "I'm hoping we improve our fundamentals and skills and just our knowledge of the game."

"I hope we improve and get better as the season progresses. Hopefully, along the way, we can compete with some of the better teams in the conference."

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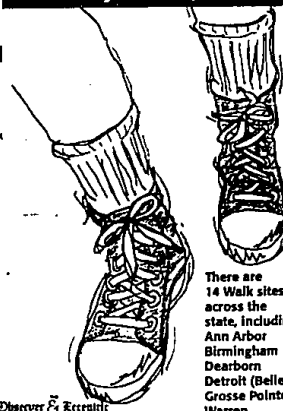
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