

Basics

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tochkin and some of the sprinters, particularly Woods and Shabazz, could help in that area.

Harrison has two solid high jumpers in seniors Matt Elsey and Jeff Ross with backup from Laird and sophomore Scott Campbell. The Hawks are young and rebuilding in the throwing events.

The first dual meet is Wednesday, April 10, at home against Westland John Glenn. If all goes well, Harrison could be looking at another big finish and back-to-back state titles in two months.

That's something we talk about and is within our sights, but our goal is to stay focused on the day-to-day basics," Reed said. "If you don't do the things that got you there last year, you won't be there this year."

"We're going to try to have a good year. We ran at the Hurdle Relays Friday, and the kids looked great. We're just very conscious of doing the things we did last year and going one day at a time."

North Farmington

An experienced and talented senior class has coach Jeff Simpson thinking optimistically about the upcoming season.

"We're looking for good things from this group, and I think the senior leadership has been very good," he said.

It's been so good Simpson named eight seniors as team captains, because he believed that many deserved to have the role and title.

"We have 16 seniors and a lot are four-year guys," he said. "They've put in a lot of time, and they know what it takes to compete in track and field."

The top senior athlete would be Mike Leach, the WLAA champion and first-team, all-Observer choice in the 300 hurdles and the team's best high jumper, too.

A three-sport standout who also earned all-area honors in soccer and basketball, Leach plans to continue his track career at the University of Michigan as a preferred walk-on.

"I definitely think a big year is ahead for Mike," Simpson said. "He's focused on what he does, and he knows what his goals are."

300 hurdles at the regional last year and missed going to state by one place.

"His goal is to reach the state meet, and we're going to do everything in our power to get him there," Simpson said.

Senior Brian Sinar is an experienced hurdler, too, and sophomore Matt McManus will help in those events, according to Simpson.

Junior Will Hathaway is one of the top throwers, competing in both events. Senior Eugene Franklin returns in the discus after placing sixth in the WLAA, and senior Darwin Young specializes in throwing the shot put.

Junior Jared Kirksey is a new thrower who will help, as will sophomores Safet Cunniffaj and Kyle Goldman.

Senior Justin Cook will participate in the long jump again after skipping that event last year following knee surgery.

The long jump has the potential to be one of North's strong suits with the return of seniors Brian Johns and Andy Zak and Sinar. Cook, Johns and Zak have jumped at least 19-5 in their careers.

The Raiders have one of the area's best pole vaulters in senior Dan Perach, a regional champion who placed sixth in the state at 13-6. But the only other experienced vaulter is junior Doug Anderson.

North is solid in the high jump with Leach and junior Drew Roberts, who jumped 6 feet last year.

The Raiders will hold their own in the sprints with Cook, Johns, Perach and Zak, and Simpson looks to junior Marcus Thornton and sophomore Ken Uy to help there.

Senior Jeff Shumer will do well in the quarter- and half-mile races. The top distance runners are senior Mike Buchwald, juniors Eugene Furman, Ben Gannon, Jeff Mataya and David Mayseles and sophomore Samit Patrawala.

Freshmen who could play bigger roles as the season progresses are Selwan Barbat in the 800, James Lladia in the longer distances and Matt Leach in the high jump and hurdles, according to Simpson.

The Raiders, who had 92 boys

out for early-season practices, start Thursday, April 11, with a dual meet at Northville. North was 3-2 in the WLAA Lakes Division last year and 3-3 overall.

"If we stay injury-free, I think we could challenge for the division title again," which the Raiders won two years ago, Simpson said.

"We got through the hard part of the season without any meets before spring break. Once we get into the meets, I think we'll come together. We're looking for good things from this group."

Farmington High

The Falcons have talent in some areas, most notably the distance events, but overall it's the most inexperienced team Chlp Bridges has had in five years as coach.

"We're not throwing away this year by any stretch of the imagination," Bridges said. "We're going to do some good things."

"Our expectation is we'll be competitive in every meet, and we'll improve tremendously as the season goes on."

A veteran distance crew includes seniors Chris Tobe, Tom Eason, Ryan Chatman and Kevin Heist and juniors Ryan Kiblawi and Drew Martin.

"The distance group is solid; we have talent," Bridges said, adding some hard jobs and commitments during the winter that limited their training time.

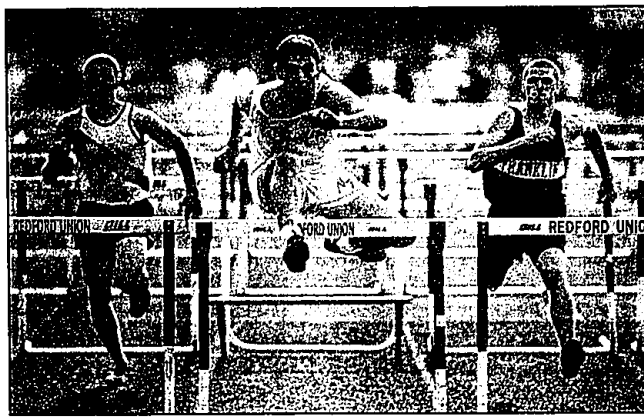
"The only question is 'When are we going to get them into shape?' Obviously, the sooner the better."

"We're looking for that group to score points on a pretty consistent basis, especially as we move into the second half of the season."

Farmington has solid sprinters in senior Pat English and junior Eric Gaughan, who is the lone returning member of the 400 relay team that went to state. Jeremy Mazes, David Peterson and Javonia Spinks have graduated.

"Pat and Eric are fantastic leaders for us," Bridges said. "We can use Pat in a lot of different situations. This year he's looking forward to being the man; he's looking forward to that challenge."

"Then we have a lot of young guys around them, and you just don't know. Some guys get fast real quick and sometimes it takes a couple years before it comes



Champion hurdler: North Farmington senior Mike Leach was the Western Lakes Activities Association champion and first-team, all-Observer selection in the 300-meter hurdles last season.

together for them."

Led by senior Delano Turner, the Falcons should be good in the throwing events with a number of second- and third-year athletes.

"Last year we were young and inexperienced," Bridges said. "Now we're really looking for them to score points."

Farmington has no one who has ever made an opening height

in the high jump or pole vault — two traditionally strong events for the Falcons.

Following the loss of Mazes and Layne Bodily in the high jump, "Now, all of a sudden, we're brand new," Bridges said.

With Gaughan leading the way, Farmington is in good shape in the long jump, but it has no returning hurdlers.

The Falcons, who were 1-4 in the WLAA Lakes Division and 1-5 overall, start the season Thursday, April 11, at Livonia Churchill.

"We're going to set small goals, and we're going to set them as we go," Bridges said. "We have so many new guys on the team, we're going to set our goals gradually."

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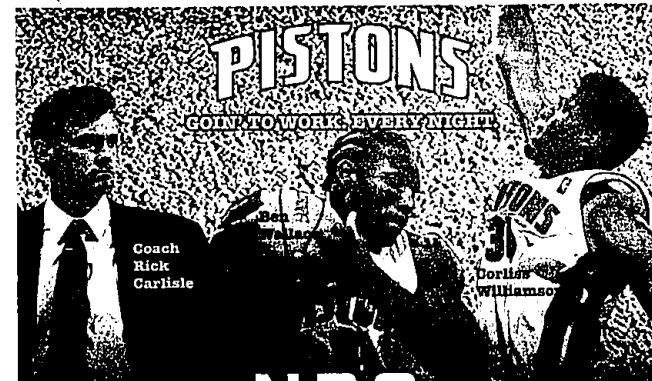
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