

Shamrocks, Spartans renew their rivalry in playoffs

BY PAUL BEAUDRY
STAFF WRITER

By now, Livonia Stevenson football coach Tim Gabel knows what to expect from Redford Catholic Central when the playoffs roll around.

After all, the Spartans had three seasons end at the hands of the Shamrocks since 1995 - including back-to-back seasons in 1999 and 2000.

But there's a couple of differences between those teams and the one that will play Saturday afternoon at Kraft Field.

"The first is that they're probably faster in the backfield than in previous years," said Gabel. "Randell Means and Derek Brooks are both real elusive, quick, hard-running, shishing types. They both get equal time at wingback and halfback and it makes it hard to key on."

The other comes from CC's defense.

"They're pretty quick. They've got a couple of kids who are as big as they've been in the past, but run east and west very well," he said.

Don't feel too sorry for Gabel and the Spartans. Very quietly, 7-2 Stevenson has become one of the most consistent teams in the area. The Spartans unceremoniously dumped Westland John Glenn and Walled Lake Western during the season, and it's two losses - including

FOOTBALL

a 30-0 loss to Canton - came without the services of running back Matt McCowan.

"We played pretty decent against Canton, we just had a bad turn of events at the end of the first half," said Gabel. "The effort was good. But we've had a tendency to play to the level of our opponent of late. We've played flat in big wins and well in losses."

All of this hasn't gone unnoticed by CC coach Tom Mach.

"They are a good team," said Mach. "That win over John Glenn gave them a lot of confidence in themselves. They run the ball effectively this year than we've seen in the past and do a better job of controlling the clock and momentum in games we've seen. Their line does a good job of controlling the line of scrimmage and it allows their backs to find holes."

The best of the bunch is McCowan, who missed three games with a high ankle sprain.

"He's a little better than Dan Wilson (who played when the two teams last met)," said Gabel. "Dan was a fine runner forced to play tailback. Matt is more of an I-back, who can hit the hole at 100 miles per hour and has the speed to go with a pretty good chunk of

yards." But Mach will also concede that his backs are a little quicker than CC backs have been in the past.

"We're a little faster," said Mach. "We can do a little more finesse running rather than knock down running. Our backs are capable of breaking one open and with that threat, any play becomes a potential score. Of course, we still like to possess the football and run." Gabel knows his team will have to stop the run, as well as control the football and run the clock on offense.

"We have to take away as much of that straight-forward stuff as possible," said Gabel. "We can't let them run belly and counter for seven or eight yards a crack. If we do, then we'll fall behind and they are a very difficult team to come from behind against."

One thing that Gabel knows his team has to avoid is allowing the Shamrocks to jump out to an early lead.

"The biggest thing with them is not to allow the avalanche to fall on our head or its over," said Gabel. "How we can stop them from doing that is tricky. I've seen their last two games against two disciplined teams in De La Salle and Divine Child and they were over by half."

"That can't happen to us," pbeaudry@oehomecom.net | (734) 953-2106

Halloween costume contest lets bowlers have holiday fun



Ten pin alley

Al Harrison

each year, as some leagues, particularly mixed, encourage their members to come bowling in costume.

It adds more enjoyment to what is already a pretty good time.

"We have seen some very original and off-the-wall stuff on or around Halloween over the years.

Some are clever outfits or costumes and others are just weird."

If you or your fellow bowlers are in a costume, take a moment to send in a photo and names of the bowlers, leagues and what lanes you are in. I will take the best one or two and run it in Ten Pin Alley next week or so.

That could add a bit more fun to the occasion.

Send your entries to: Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251

"Trick or treat" is an old phrase you'll hear repeatedly during the next several days as Halloween falls on Thursday.

This is one holiday that seems to carry over to the bowling scene

We have seen some very original and off-the-wall stuff on or around Halloween over the years. Some are clever outfits or costumes and others are just weird.

Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 - attention: Al Harrison.

Remember, snapshots should show the costumed bowler holding or throwing the ball and/or the lanes in the background.

I will return your photos to you.

Dil Clack, a member of the Senior Men's Classic at Mayflower Lanes came through with games of 215-266-265 for a whopping 746 set, not too bad for a 78-year-old who had been averaging 181.

Too bad it was against my own team. Seems like everybody wants to shoot the lights out to get their name mentioned in this paper whenever they bowl against me.

Really, guys, I will still see your scores, so please do not miss any other team next time, OK?

The 13th Annual Greater Detroit Mixed Doubles Tournament began last Saturday at Mike Lucante's Hazel Park Bowl. It runs for

four weekends finishing on Nov. 10.

The top prize is \$3,000 based on at least 300 entrants.

The entry fee is \$80 per team and there is some room for late entries.

This year's event is dedicated to Dave Bowman, the past tournament committee chairman for the Greater Detroit Bowling Association who has been a driving force behind the mixed and regular tournaments in addition to serving as tournament committee chairman.

Squad times are 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturdays or Sundays, so get your team together and sign up now.

Entry forms are available on the counter at all GDBA bowling centers. For more information, call the GDBA office at (566) 773-6350 or (888) 753-6350.

Al Harrison is a resident of Garden City and director with the Greater Detroit Bowling Association. He can be reached at (734) 422-1609.

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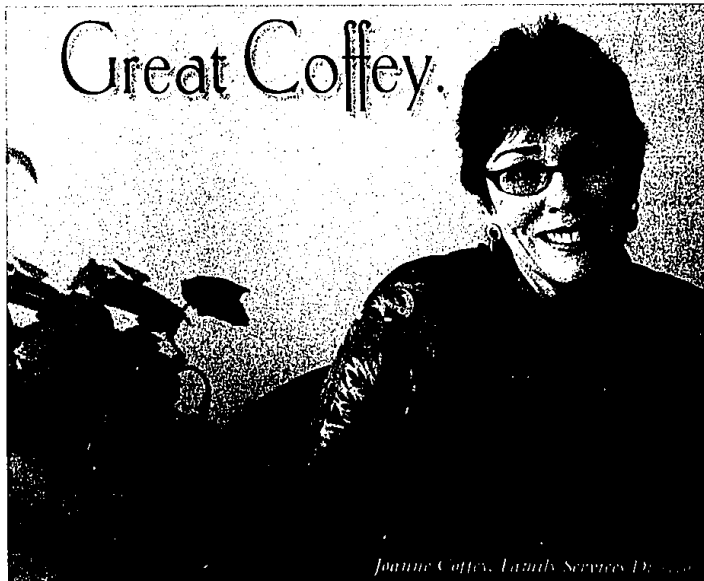
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