

Sports

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Outdoors

THE FARMINGTON HILLS COMMUNITY CENTER
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Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3802
Parker writes about the
Michigan outdoors scene in
column D2

Shamrocks raise their game to higher level

BY PAUL BEAUDRY
STAFF WRITER

Redford-Detroit Catholic Central's coaching staff wanted to give its hockey players a chance to step up a level in competition.

Junior B team on Saturday night.

They did call up five players and a goalie from their affiliate team, so we did get to play all of their best players," CC co-coach Todd Johnson said.

The Shamrocks responded with an 8-3 victory over the London (Ontario) Nationals

nate that they scheduled us. "We're not five goals better than they are. It would have been closer had they played their No. 1 goalie."

CC (7-2) took a 2-0 lead on goals from Drew Kahle (from Kevin Horal and Jason Lewarne) and Brandon Naurato (from Eric Giosa and Andrew Eggert) before the Nationals

led it 2-0.

Nathan Perkovich and Naurato then each scored power-play goals late in the period (both assisted from Giosa and Andrew Eggert) for a 4-2 lead.

CC made it 5-2 in the second on a goal by Hamway (from Burns), then 6-2 just into the third on Naurato's third goal of

the game (from Giosa and Eggert).

After a London goal, Pat Coldren scored a pair of goals, with Horal assisting on his first goal and Bryan Genrich on the second, to close out the scoring.

Jim Blanchard made 23 saves for the Shamrocks in goal, while CC had 34 shots on London's net.

Young Whalers defeat Kitchener

BY C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

Mike Vellucci is tired. He's worn out. He doesn't get a lot of rest these days, not with a two-week-old baby at home and a Plymouth Whalers' team of virtual Ontario Hockey League "babies," a team with the youngest average age (18 years) in the conference.

But like most parents — or coaches — caught in similar circumstances, Vellucci is a happy guy.

He should be. On Monday afternoon at Plymouth's Compuware Arena, he saw David Liffiton's shot from the top of the circle to the right of Kitchener Rangers' goalie Scott Dickie deflect off a defenseman and past Dickie for the Whalers' third goal late in the second period.

And that proved to be the game-winner, with Plymouth goalie Paul Drew shutting down the Rangers after the first period in a 4-2 Whaler triumph.

That makes it 18-straight games without a loss for Plymouth, taking its record to 24-6-5-1 (54 points) — best in the OHL's West Division. The loss was Kitchener's second-straight, leaving the Midwest Division leaders with a 25-6-3-1 mark (54 points).

The last time the Whalers suffered a defeat was Nov. 9, by a 4-2 margin to Sarnia.

"We're playing pretty good," admitted Vellucci. "The kids listen better than the team we had last year. They're younger, but they're listening more to us."

"When you change coaches, the (holdover) players and the new coaches are not always going to see eye-to-eye. The talent's here, that's for sure. I'm very pleased with the way we're playing. I'd be crazy not to be."

Vellucci is in his second season as Whalers' coach, a job he assumed from Pete DeBoer — who



Ryan Ramsay (21) is mobbed by a teammate after scoring one of his two first-period goals in the Whalers' 4-2 win over Kitchener, Ramsay's former team.

now coaches Kitchener. Last season, although he guided Plymouth to the best regular-season record in the OHL, Vellucci could not get a win against DeBoer's Rangers. The Whalers were 0-2-2 against them.

"To tell the truth, that didn't mean all that much to me," Vellucci said of his first win against his predecessor. "I

know some people want to make a big deal out of it, but it just doesn't mean that much to me."

For certain players, it meant a lot. Ryan Ramsay, obtained in a trade with Kitchener prior to the season, proved to be the difference for the Whalers on Monday. After the Rangers took a 1-0 lead with a power-play goal by Petr Kanko 2:31

into the first period, Ramsay knotted it at 1-1 just 2:16 later, pilfering a pass in the Kitchener zone while the Whalers were playing a man short. Ramsay swept behind the Ranger goal and stuffed the puck past Dickie.

It stayed that way for nine minutes. That's when Ramsay

PLEASE SEE WHALEPS, D4

Win a bigger deal than some will acknowledge

It's no big deal.

So what if the guy who coaches the visiting team, the Kitchener Rangers — that would be Pete

DeBoer — coached the home team, the Plymouth Whalers, until 18 months ago? That's all in the past.

It's no big deal. So what if the guy who now coaches the Whalers — that

would be Mike Vellucci — used to work closely with that other guy who now coaches the Rangers? That's all in the past.

It's no big deal. And so what if a dozen or so of the current Whalers were drafted when DeBoer was coach? That's all in the past.

It's no big deal. Then there's a few other things tying these two franchises together. Like Jimmy Gagnon and John Mitchell, current Whalers who grew up in Kitchener, Ontario.

And let's not forget Ryan Ramsay, Plymouth's second-leading scorer and fifth overall in the Ontario Hockey League with 21 goals and 68 points in 35 games (before Monday's game). Ramsay came to the Whalers in a trade before the season.

With Kitchener, Plymouth sent winger Greg Campbell to the Rangers, and although his numbers aren't nearly as impressive (16 goals, 33 points in 29 games), Campbell's the one who was selected for the OHL all-star game. And the World Junior Tournament. Even though he's not among the league's top 20 scorers.

Some people think DeBoer may have played a role in Ramsay's snub and Campbell's elevation. C'mon — that's ridiculous. Both teams surrendered quality to obtain quality.

PLEASE SEE RISAK, D4

Sidelines

Academic honor

Charlie Stambouljan of Farmington Hills is one of three members of the Wayne State University men's cross country team who were named to the 2002 Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference all-academic team. Stambouljan and fellow juniors Mike Busstep and Brian Goodwin were honored by the league office for their work in the classroom.

To qualify for all-academic status a student-athlete must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better, must be a starter or key reserve and must not be a freshman or first-year transfer.

Stambouljan, a math education major who graduated from North Farmington High School, had the highest GPA on the WSU team at 3.86.

Stambouljan placed 55th at the NCAA regional after a 51st-place finish at the GLIAC championship.

Baseball sign-up

South Farmington Baseball will be registering players for the 2003 season in January at the William Costick Center on 11 Mile Road, east of Middlebelt.

Registration sessions will be 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11; 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15; and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18.

New players must have a birth certificate with them. The costs are \$50 for T-ball, \$100 for all softball players and baseball players under age 15 and \$140 for baseball players age 15 to 18.

For additional information, call the SFB Hotline (248-474-3925) or see the Web site at www.sfbmi.com/sfb.

SFB will also enlist team managers, coaches, and volunteers during the registration sessions.

Individuals interested in umpiring league games can sign up at registration or call Lori McCarthy at 248-476-7243.

Titans tryouts

Tryouts for the Oakland Titans, a 17-year-old travel baseball team that plays out of Farmington Hills, will take place at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Upper Deck in Northville.

The Titans play exclusively weekend tournaments in southeastern Michigan in June and July. For more information call Ray Merriman at (248) 626-3034.

Wisniewski stars

The U.S. team at the World Junior Hockey Championships followed its 3-1 win over Switzerland Saturday with an 8-2 victory over Belarus Monday.

James Wisniewski, a Canton native and a defenseman with the Plymouth Whalers, had three assists in the win over Belarus.

Softball camp

The Annual Mercy High School Softball Camp will take place 9 a.m. to noon on six Saturdays in early 2003. The camp dates are Jan. 11, 18 and 25, Feb. 1 and 15 and March 1.

The camp is for girls in grades 5-12. The cost is \$50 for six sessions. For more information call Sue Graves at (734) 951-5455.

MSU rescinds grid offer to Woods

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Marcus Woods will begin this week to seriously ponder the issue of where he wants to play college football.

Michigan State is no longer in the running to get Farmington

Harrison's all-time leading rusher, however, and it's not because Woods wanted it that way.

The Spartans withdrew their scholarship offer last week, because they apparently had reservations about Woods' size and ability to fit in new coach John L. Smith's offense.

Former MSU coach Bobby Williams, who was fired the first week in November, made the offer

PLEASE SEE WOODS, D4



Harrison's Marcus Woods, the all-time leading rusher in school history, runs past a Pontiac Northern defender during a 2002 playoff game

Lakers top Falcons in holiday tourney

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

BASKETBALL

Farmington High's basketball team didn't have enough offense Saturday night, and the result was a 38-31 loss to Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes in the consolation game of the Holly Tournament.

Six-foot-2 forward Jim Hartman scored 14 of his game-high 18 points in the first half to spark Lakes to a 19-11 halftime lead.

The Falcons, who produced just three field goals in the first half, trimmed the deficit to 27-23 at the end of three quarters but couldn't

sustain the effort in the fourth. "Especially coming off a loss the night before (62-42 to Pontiac Notre Dame Prep), it was important to get off to a good start and we didn't do that," Farmington coach Steve Norgrove said.

"We just didn't play well as a team. We were looking for leadership and couldn't find it."

The Falcons were without their leading scorer, Matt Kopny, who is

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