

Sidelines

■ OCC coach retires

Paul Grinnell announced he is stepping down after 22 seasons of coaching women's softball at Oakland Community College - the last 12 as head coach. He cited his growing landscape business as the reason for his decision to leave coaching.

Grinnell is the winningest coach in OCC history - in any sport, not just softball. He departs with a career record of 369-213-1.

His teams never had a losing season and made it to the regional or district tournament every year. In 2002, the Lady Raiders won the district and finished fifth at the NJCAA Division II national tournament with a final record of 39-13.

OCC won six MCCA Eastern Conference titles and was either a regional or district runner-up three times. Grinnell coached three All-Americans, 25 All-Region II players, 15 All-MCCA players and 27 All-Eastern Conference players. The Lady Raiders were 41-9 this year, won conference and state titles and finished second in the district. Grinnell was named conference and MCCA Coach of the Year.

"I hate to leave coaching, but my business is getting too busy," Grinnell said. "I still plan to stay involved and help the program in any way I can."

■ Spree tournament

Over 100 boys and girls soccer teams, ages 9-18, will meet Saturday and Sunday at Schoolcraft College and the Dickinson Center for the third Livonia Spree Invitational 2003.

Action begins each day at 8 a.m. at both sites and runs through the early evening. The tournament is sponsored by the Livonia Soccer Club, a nonprofit organization dedicated to positive coaching and training for recreational, selection and premier level players.

A majority of the teams are from Michigan, but representatives are also expected from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Canada. Approximately 4,000 players and family members are expected.

■ Hockey tryouts

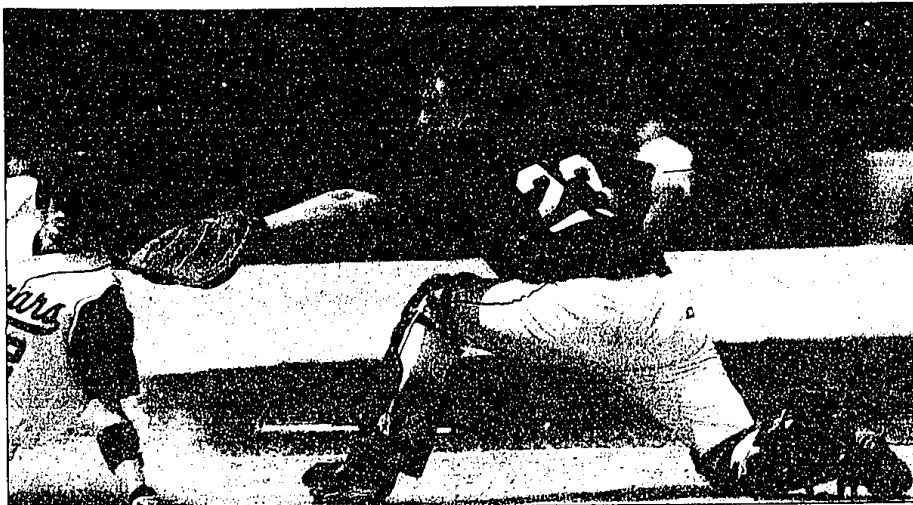
Tryouts for the Farmington Unified high school summer hockey team will be 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, June 19, and Friday, June 20, at Suburban Training Center.

Athletes entering the ninth through 12th grades at one of Farmington's three public high schools are eligible to participate.

For more information, call coach Mark Velucci at (248) 733-2233.

■ Bicycle tour

Applications are available for the 33rd Annual Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw Bicycle Tour, which takes place in late August. More than 1,600 riders participated in the 2002 tour. For more information, call (517) 882-3700. Applications are also available at local bike shops.



TON HARLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Orchard Lake St. Mary's freshman catcher Jon Castine of Farmington tries to put the tag on Ross Westdorp of Grand Rapids Catholic Central in the fourth inning Saturday of the Division II state baseball final. Westdorp tied the score.

Eaglets tame Cougars to capture state title

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

With one exception, the post-season ride for Orchard Lake St. Mary's was turbulent with plenty of sudden twists and turns along the way. But that lone exception to the norm - a 17-2 pasting of Comstock Park in a Division II baseball state semifinal Friday - set the table for a wild, see-saw, 12-6 championship victory

Saturday over Grand Rapids Catholic Central at C.O. Brown Stadium in Battle Creek.

When the crazy tournament finally came to a glorious conclusion for the Eaglets, head coach Jeff Willis was on Cloud Nine.

"Are my feet still on the ground here?" Willis asked. "It feels great. As a coach, this is what you work for. Fortunately, I was given a great group of kids who were there to work

hard, and they didn't give up all year."

To indicate how crazy the game was, consider three plays:

■ St. Mary's gave up the lead in the fourth when a CC runner scored despite the Eaglets maintaining time had been called.

■ In the fifth, the Eaglets scored the winning run on a missed squeeze bunt attempt that should have backfired but didn't. Brandon Wilkins scam-

pered home during the ensuing rundown after the CC catcher inexplicably vacated his position.

■ The Cougars, trailing 7-5 in the top of the sixth, also tried a squeeze play to try to even the score. But the CC batter missed the pitch and runner Sean Command was tagged out.

With that threat behind them, the Eaglets (21-11) led the title with a five-run surge in the bottom of the frame.

Starting and winning pitcher Brandon Larson (2-for-4, one RBI) got it started with a single and, following a walk, junior shortstop Kyle Miller (2-for-3, two RBIs) smacked a run-scoring double.

Senior outfielder Jeremy Leber and sophomore designated hitter Chris Rachfal delivered a run each with singles, and senior second baseman

PLEASE SEE EAGLETS, B6



JOHN STORZENZO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Farmington Harrison's Andy Wingert pitched for the East all-stars in their 3-1 victory over the West Monday at Comerica Park.

Hawks' ace helps team to all-star win

BY BRAD MONASTIERE
STAFF WRITER

Marco DiMichele saved his best for last.

The recent Garden City High School graduate took center stage among the best senior baseball players in the state Monday afternoon.

DiMichele was named the East MVP in the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association All-Star Game at Comerica Park in helping his team to a 3-1 victory over the West.

DiMichele pitched three superb innings, striking out seven of the nine

batters he faced. He started on the mound for the East and set the tone for the game, which became a rare pitchers' duel.

"I was nervous when I was warming up before the game, looking around at the ballpark," DiMichele said. "But once we got started, I put my nerves aside and decided that no one on the other team was better than me. I just got into my groove and went from there."

DiMichele, a first-team, all-state selection, struck out the first four batters he faced. Only two West players

PLEASE SEE ALL-STARS, B6

Farmington's Badynee gets O&E accolade

BY MARTY BUDNER
STAFF WRITER

Matt Christian, a four-time state champion, highlights the 2003 Eccentric All-Area Boys Tennis Team.

The Birmingham Brother Rice senior is one of 10 singles players and two doubles squads recently selected to the team by a panel of area coaches. It marks the first of seven all-area teams that will be published over the next few weeks by The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Bloomfield Hills Lakeshore leads the all-area team with four representatives, including one doubles tandem and two singles players. Other schools represented besides Lakeshore and Brother Rice include Clarkston, Bloomfield Hills Andover, Detroit Country Day, North Farmington, Rochester Hills Stoney Creek and West Bloomfield.

Farmington's Carl Badynee is the 2003 Coach of the Year after leading the Falcons to their first state tournament appearance.

Following is a brief summary of each player:

SINGLES

ANDREW BROWN: Brown played No. 1 singles at Clarkston all four years of his prep career, finishing with a 74-28 overall record. He set a school record for wins, breaking the previous mark of 75. Brown captured the No. 1 singles title in Oakland Activities Association Division I play and was named all-league all four years. Andrew is

PLEASE SEE TENNIS, B3

Panthers upset Warriors in state final

BY CHRIS HAYER
STAFF WRITER

Just how good was Birmingham Brother Rice's baseball team this season?

The Warriors' pitching staff frustrated, at times overwhelmed, opposing batters. Their hitters could produce enough hits and runs to overcome any deficit. Their fielders were adept at making the routine plays and handling the difficult chances. And they won 36 of 40 games.

In other words, the Warriors were an exceptional ballclub. Brother Rice's ability to remain focused, utilize its talent and consistently play at a high level landed them in the Division I championship game Saturday.

Head coach Bob Riker's squad seemed poised to acquire Brother Rice's first state baseball crown since 1994 and third overall, but

it was Holland West Ottawa's time to shine.

The fourth-ranked Panthers parlayed an early scoring attack and junior right-hander David Nykerk's complete-game effort into a 5-2 victory at C.O. Brown Stadium in Battle Creek.

Second-ranked Brother Rice, which scored fewer than three runs for only the third time, went 1-for-10 with runners in scoring position and left nine runners on base.

"As far as effort goes, I think the kids each and every day have given me an effort," Riker said. "And I think they gave me the most they could possibly give me today."

"You never want to be content with the way you played, especially when you come out on the short end of the stick, so I'd like

PLEASE SEE WARRIORS, B5



TON HARLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Brother Rice third baseman Max Kohnigman of Farmington hits a ground ball during the Division I state final Saturday.

TIGERS

tigers vs. diamondbacks

saturday, june 20 • 7:05pm • live coverage on sportsnet