

# Maples inexperienced for baseball race

By MICHAEL KERN

Poor spring training weather, a lack of experience, and unproven pitching are posing problems for Birmingham Seaholm baseball coach Don Sackett.

The Maples will be opening the 1974 season with only one starting player back from last year's 14-7 squad. The one veteran is senior first baseman Neil Hanna, who hit .270 last season.

All other positions, says Sackett, "are wide open. We've had a terrific turn-out of 75 kids this spring for try-outs."

"BUT WE'VE only practiced outside about three times because of the weather," he continued. "Inside a gym, it's tough to tell what a boy can do."

Sackett does have three returning players who should become valuable regulars this year — junior shortstop Steve Jeske, senior outfielder Matt Boynton, and junior catcher Tom Foell.

"Foell should be a good one," said Sackett. "Last year he played well as a back-up to our star, Jerry Keller, and he probably could have been starting on any other team."

SACKETT IS also impressed with two prospects for the outfield, juniors Mike Hague and Greg Probst. Hague has looked "as good or better than anyone so far," commented Sackett.

The big question mark remains pitching, however, which Sackett says looks more doubtful now than ever before in his 11 years at Seaholm.

Two junior lefthanders, Jim Kazanski and Tom Forrester, are being counted on heavily as starting pitchers. Kazanski was 1-1 and Forrester 1-0 in limited service last season.

DESPITE THE possible weaknesses of pitching and inexperience, Sackett expects the Maples to challenge once again for the Southeastern Michigan Association (SMA) title.

Last season, Seaholm finished in second place, one-half game behind Hazel Park, while another SMA team, Royal Oak Kimball, went on to take the state title.

"The three of us always seem to be the perennial powers of the SMA," Sackett said, "and it'll probably be the same again this year."

THE MAPLES are scheduled to open their season by hosting Kimball on Monday, but Sackett has doubts the grounds will be ready.

"We need some good weather," he said. "We've got eight positions open and they can't be filled until we get outside . . . but I guess everybody's in the same boat."



Seaholm's Jim Kazanski

## Groves, Lahser in 'show' down

By ANITA CRONE

Metro Suburban Association teams were hampered Tuesday by a total show and the threat of a no-show, but despite the problems, Birmingham Groves and Bloomfield Hills Lahser went on to dispose of their competition and pave the way for their showdown Thursday (April 4) for the league championship.

If defending champion Groves can beat Lahser on Groves' home court, they will share the championship. If Lahser beats Groves the second time this season, the Knights will retain first place by themselves.

DURING THE second game of the match between Lahser and Royal Oak Dondero, spectators and players alike were entertained by a streaking male, showing everything he owned except his clothing.

Although coach Terry Koehler gave chase, the young man ran out the door and wasn't seen again. Despite the interruption, Lahser had little trouble disposing of Dondero.

Spotting Dondero a three-point lead, Lahser went on to win the match in two games, 15-8, 15-8.

THE ONLY trouble spot in an otherwise easy win came when Dondero server Debbie Watton

aced five of seven serves before fouling into the net.

Groves had its own problems Tuesday, having little to do with volleyball. A new bus driver drove the team to Utica Eisenhower almost 10 minutes late.

Under MSA rules, if a team is 15 minutes late, the game can be forfeited.

WITH VERY little warm up time, the Falcons spotted Eisenhower six points before settling down to dispose of the competition.

Led by Sue Stulgross with 21 points, Groves defeated Eisenhower in two games 15-8, 15-4.

## Dan Carolis places first

Birmingham's Dan Carolis took first in white belt kumite during the premiere U.S. Karate Association-sponsored Issinryu Championships last week.

The championships, held at Derby Junior High in Birmingham, drew karate contestants from across southern Michigan. Carolis belongs to the Birmingham Karate Club.

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## TREND Talk

by: Robert A. Sklar



Lavish homes, lavish headlines, lavish salaries . . . "the good life."

The lifestyle for a big league baseball hero.

But there's another less glamorous, less tantalizing side to that lifestyle, too. There's:

- The onerous spring training sessions under a broiling southern sun twice daily.
- The long and lonely road trips away from home.
- The ankle-twisting, cartilage-tearing, shin-bruising collisions on the base paths.
- The numbing bolts of pain when caught by a wildly pitched ball.

OFTEN, EVEN six-figure contracts can't mend battered bodies. So what's the lure? What's the stimulus which prompts players to say of the game, "It has got to be the grandest way in the world to make a living?"

The man with the keenest vantage point in Detroit's memory-marked Tiger Stadium for the past 12 summers, catcher Bill Freehan, says it's an intangible feeling.

"It's the great, glorious glow of gunning for the world series crown," writes Bill in his best-selling 1970 diary, "Behind the Mask."

NOW APPROACHING his 33rd birthday, Bill lives with his wife Patty and three daughters in Bloomfield Hills.

Bill originally grasped the rudiments of the art of backstopping on Royal Oak's sandlots while competing in the local Little League Baseball program.

He proceeded to rise steadily through the amateur baseball circuit's ranks.

His proficiency on the circuit was spotlighted by a two-year stint as starting catcher for Coach Don Lund's University of Michigan Wolverines.

DURING FREEHAN'S brief stay on the Ann Arbor campus in the early 1960s, the Wolverines proved powers to be reckoned with in intercollegiate competition.

After his sophomore semester, Bill accepted quickly a windfall bo-

nus of practically \$100,000 to hitch onto the Detroit Tigers' bandwagon.

The trail he has blazed in the American League since graduating from the U. of M. is studded with accolades. They include:

- ALL-STAR selection for auspicious playing contributions 10 years in a row (1964-73).
- Golden Glove trophy winner for superlative fielding five years in a row (1965-69).
- Serious consideration for Most Valuable Player distinction three times (1963, 67, 68).
- Bill's career totals, as a Bengal

BILL  
FREEHAN  
'Behind  
the Mask'



range from a .260 batting average and .494 fielding percentage to 163 homeruns and 624 runs-batted-in.

SUCH STATISTICS probably aren't quite hall-of-fame caliber. Still, they're good enough to commend. Why?

Because they represent the uncompromising efforts of a person whose singular ambition is to entertain the fans in the stands by excelling on the diamond.

Bill, along with his teammates on the Tigers, has experienced some of Detroit's shiniest moments in sports during the past 10 years.

For the Tigers, that decade crested with the stirring world series victory over Manager Red Schoendienst's St. Louis Cardinals in October of 1968.

IT EBBED with the disputed firing of magnetic Tiger Manager Billy Martin last August.

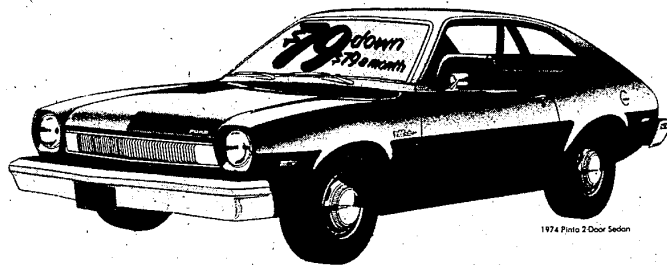
In the pages of his diary, Bill describes graphically how he looks at the obligation of a professional athlete.

"It's absurd the way people think that an athlete, even when he's involved with his personal life, is public property," writes Bill, candidly.

The Tigers will christen their 1974 home campaign at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday when they host Manager Bill Virdon's New York Yankees.

Barring injury, Tiger field general Bill Freehan once again will be situated in his familiar position during the festivities — "behind the mask."

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