

Central proves: Gold medals do come to the exceptional

By RICHARD GOLD

"They're the best in the world in their division and few people can make that claim."

The voice of a proud coach? Yes. But Steve Wilcox, coach of the Rochester Special Olympic swimmer also has reason to be proud. Two of his team members took gold medals at the International Special Olympics, held Aug. 8-11 at Central Michigan University.

More than 3,300 athletes from 50 states and all over the world came to Mt. Pleasant to compete, and only a few walked away with gold medals.

JIM SCHORNAK and Chris Saddler

of Rochester were two who did. Saddler and Schornak took first in the 50-yard dash in their respective age divisions, and Schornak was first in the 220-yard dash, outdistancing his closest rival by some 40 yards.

Saddler, 13, might have been a Rochester Special Olympic swimmer also. If it weren't for one false step inches from the finish line in the 220. He tumbled and fell just before the tape and had to settle for an eighth place finish. "Chris was really disappointed when he fell," explained Wilcox. "The next event was the 50 and just got up off the ground and told me he was going to win it. He did."

Both Schornak, who is 15, and Saddler turned in the best times of their Olympic careers.

They had to qualify by winning two golds apiece at both the regional and state competition. They saved their best, however, for the finals.

SADDLER ran an 8.1 in the 50-yard dash, while Schornak turned in a 7.2. In the 220, Schornak was clocked in an impressive 28.9.

"They were decent times," smiled Wilcox. "They were competitive for anyone that age."

"They were so happy, they couldn't stand it. Chris just sat there and stared at his medal."

Saddler and Schornak were two of several special education students in

the Rochester school district who participated in the Special Olympic competition. Two others, Kevin New and Patricia Johnson, advanced past the regional and went to the state. But only Saddler and Schornak made it to the finals.

They won by defeating seven other athletes in the final heats of each event.

Wilcox said he hopes Rochester students will do even better next year. "We only had a week's notice before the regionals this year. That's not much time to get ready. We're going to start preparing for next year right now."

"We'll start training for the regionals around Christmas. They're held in April and that should give us time to be prepared."

KE ADDED, "I'd like to see the program enlarged for next year. I'd like to get a swimming team together, and I'd like to see more kids come out."

This year's squad included approximately 15 students from eight to 15. Although winning a gold medal was hard to match, Wilcox said that Saddler and Schornak got the biggest charge over meeting participants from other countries. Said Wilcox, "They just couldn't get over that."

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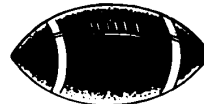
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Simpson signs Central letter

Reid Simpson, an All-Oakland County golfer as a junior at Seaholm High School last year, was one of five state recruits to sign national letters of intent with Central Michigan University last week.

Simpson placed Seaholm to a regional golf championship last fall, then helped the Maples to a fourth-place, Class A finish in the state championship.

The local golfer joins Kim Tilkson of Mt. Pleasant High School; Steve Partensio, Muskegon Catholic Central High School; Mike Nuremberg, Port Huron Northern High School, and Mike Horton of Iron Mountain High School as Central Michigan's newest athletic recruits.

OCC women's sports expands

In compliance with federal regulations, Oakland Community College will add women's varsity tennis and bowling to its sports program.

The college's athletic director, Prentice "Pip" Ryan said the OCC Intercollegiate Athletic Board has recommended that two women's sports be added per year until there are seven men's sports and seven women's sports, along with coed swimming by the 1977-78 academic year.

The women's teams are seeking players and interested women should contact the athletic office.

Seaholm has golf tryouts

Seaholm High School has set Aug. 27 as the initial day for its varsity golf team tryouts at Springdale Golf Course in Birmingham.

Tryouts will be held over two days and will involve a total of 30 holes of golf. All prospective team members are asked to report to the course by 9 a.m.

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