



## Cranbrook, Country Day leads list

# 14 top-notch netters chosen to talented all-area team

By DAVID SAUNDERS

Because of the tennis-laden talent in the Observer & Eccentric area, the coaches decided to name 14 players instead of 10 to the all-area team.

Twelve of the 14 players went to the state finals, and 13 of them went with their teams. Dave Epstein, a senior at North Farmington, was the only player to go without his team. He was a first-flight finalist at the regionals. Two other players chosen for the all-area team, Dave Gary and Scott Wilkinson of Birmingham Seaholm, who won their region but didn't make it to state because they weren't in the first flight. This was because the top two teams in each region go to state, plus the finalists in the first flight. Seaholm placed third in its regional.

The private schools dominated the talented Observer & Eccentric team, which was chosen by six area coaches who responded to invitations and attended the selection meeting. Three private schools placed seven of the 14 players on the team.

Cranbrook and Detroit Country Day topped all the schools with three players named from each school. Brother Rice had one player chosen for the team.

West Bloomfield and Seaholm each had two players named to the team. Rochester Adams, North Farmington and Southfield-Lathrup each had one player chosen for the team.

**FROM CRANBROOK**, sophomore Bill Holmes and juniors Scott King and Mike Stone made the team after helping to guide the Cranes to a second-place finish at the Class B state championships.

Stone and King were state champions and Holmes was runner-up at state. King ousted top-seeded Steve Winner of East Grand Rapids in the finals of the first flight, 6-2, 6-2. King went 13-2 overall and 5-0 at state. The junior has already been approached by 10 schools who want him to attend and play tennis for them. Some of them are the University of Michigan, Clemson and Dartmouth.

Junior Mike Stone, went 17-2 overall and 5-0 at state to become a state champion. Stone was the top player in the second flight. He defeated Mike Leamer of Essexville-Garber, 6-2, 6-2 in the finals.

Stone and King were double partners in 1976, and were champions at

state then. After his senior year at Cranbrook, Stone plans to attend Michigan State University to study veterinarian medicine.

One of two sophomores named to the team, Bill Holmes, was runner-up at the state B finals in the third flight. Before losing to John Willard of Austin, 8-2, 6-3 in the finals, he upset East Grand Rapids' Randy Ford in the semifinal round, 6-4, 6-0. Ford was previously undefeated. Holmes went 17-6 overall, and was 4-1 at state.

**COUNTRY DAY** coach Tim Dornik called his 1-2-3 singles players, "excellent," and all three of them were chosen to the all-area team. Country Day finished second behind the awesome Liggett net squad in the CD state finals.

Named to the all-area tennis team are sophomore Glennys Merritt, junior Randy Jacobs and senior Jeff Collins. Merritt was the only state champion among them.

Merritt won the third flight singles championship over Liggett's Jeff Logan. Collins, playing in the first flight, lost in the semifinals at state to the eventual champion, Jacobs lost to Liggett's second flight singles player,

Paul VanWalleghem, in the championship match, 7-6, 6-1.

Country Day finished third in the Metro Conference behind Liggett and Cranbrook, placed second at the Liggett regional. They went 10-5 overall. Brother Rice's Bill Godfrey is the second player chosen for the all-area team. Godfrey joined the Warrior netters in his senior year, after sitting out his junior year to play in tournaments. He helped lead the Warriors to a fourth-place tie at state.

Godfrey lost in the semifinal round at state to the eventual champion in the first flight, Kalamazoo Lev Norrix's Mike Balkin, 6-1, 6-2. Godfrey and the Warriors won the Southfield Civic Center regional. He finished the year with a 15-3 record.

"Godfrey had a real fine year. I wish I had him earlier," said Warrior coach Don McKecher. "He really wanted to win the state championships."

**WEST BLOOMFIELD** had two strong players chosen for the all-area team. Junior Eric Garber and senior Dan Saferstein played the top two roles for the Lakers all year. They helped to lead the Lakers to an unde-



feated season in the Greater Oakland Athletic League. Both Saferstein and Garber were regional champs at Lahser. Saferstein beat Kurt Heuerman in the final round, 1-6, 6-4, 7-5. Garber won the second flight over Adams' Chip Mitchell, 7-6, 6-2.

Garber placed the highest among all the Lakers at the state finals, going to the semifinals. Garber finished the year with a 20-1 record. Saferstein lost his bid for a state championship after losing in the first round. West Bloomfield tied for ninth in the finals.

Kurt Heuerman of Rochester Adams was another player picked to the all-area team who went to state with his team. Heuerman lost in the first round to Bill Schaefer of Portage Northern, 6-3, 6-0.

"He's tougher than the devil, and he hits the heck out of the ball," said Southfield-Lathrup coach Ed Waits. Heuerman finished the season with a 15-7 record overall.

**SHELDON KATZ** of Southfield-Lathrup was a unanimous selection of the coaches to the all-area team. Katz lost in the quarter-finals at state to

Jay Spering of Ann Arbor Pioneer who was seeded number one.

"He's always been fundamentally sound," said Waits, "and this year he achieved tremendous concentration." Katz lost only once in dual meets, and that was to Heuerman. Plus he only lost once in the regionals.

Katz is 5-8, 140 pounds. "He's another testament that you don't have to be big to play tennis."

North Farmington's only player on the all-area team, Dave Epstein, was the only player to carry its name to the state championship. Epstein lost to Bill Schaefer in three sets in the quarter-finals at state. He lost to Bill Godfrey, 7-5, 6-3, in the regional first flight championship round, and that was enough to take him to state.

Seaholm's Dave Gary and Scott Wilkinson were both regional champs at the Southfield Civic Center, but it wasn't enough to take them to the state championships. Seaholm came in third at the regional for their fourth year in a row.

Wilkinson played with doubles partner, Ralph Richardson, throughout most of the year, but both are strong singles players.

# 3 prep tennis coaches share O. E. Coach-of-the-Year honors

By DAVID SAUNDERS

A coaching "triumvirate" was chosen by the six coaches who attended the all-area team meeting June 9.

Southfield-Lathrup's Ed Waits, Cranbrook's Don Brown and Brother Rice's Don McKecher were picked to share the coach-of-the-year award because the coaches couldn't decide on one of them.

All the coaches picked deserve the recognition. Waits led his team to a fourth-place tie with McKecher's team in the Class A tennis championships. Brown guided his team to a second-place finish behind number-one ranked East Grand Rapids in the Class B tennis championships.

McKecher has been coaching and teaching at Brother Rice for 17 years. From the beginning of the year, he expected his team to have a good season. And they did. They finished second in the Catholic League with a 10-1 record, and McKecher was named coach of the year along with Austin's John Burke. They went on to win their regional (first time since 1973) and a fourth-place finish at state.

He has taught business law, marketing, mechanical drawing and management in his seven years. McKecher believes teaching is placed before coaching.

"I enjoy doing both," he says. "The same concepts are used in both coaching and teaching, except it's different material, and in coaching, it's more on an individual basis."

"You work with smaller groups and you get to know the students better. You begin to build a satisfying relationship."

**MCKECHER BELIEVES** this was the most talented group of kids he ever had. "They're a real fine group of kids. They do a lot but never get mentioned. It's hard to be a good coach without much talent."

"Coach of the year is really a team award," he said. "If it wasn't for the players and their overall record, I wouldn't have been given this honor."

McKecher lost seven seniors to graduation this year, the most he ever lost. So he'll have a lot of work to do in the preseason next year. But he'll draw from a JV team that went 13-0 this year.

"Those who make the team are very strong players. We've been working real hard on our JV program the last four years."

McKecher believes the team concept for the state championships is a good idea, and would like to see it continued.

"It gives you a more representative view of the players, and a better overall view of the team. I didn't run into any coaches who weren't in favor of the ruling."

**ED WAITS**, Southfield-Lathrup's coach, has been coaching at Lathrup for nine years. In those nine years, Lathrup has been league champs for six years—three times each in the



Ed Waits, Don Brown, Don McKecher

Inter-Lakes League and the Metro Suburban Association.

"It's a real honor to be on top in the MSA, it's a top tennis league. Four of the schools are real powers."

Lathrup went undefeated at 16-0 this year, placed second in the regionals behind Rice, and tied for fourth place at state with Rice.

"Tremendous attitude and team depth is our reason for success," he said. "In dual meets, all three double teams went undefeated. Generally, we're a real strong team."

Waits is an honest, straight-forward person who isn't afraid to say what's on his mind. A walk-on on the University of Michigan's tennis team, he became a Big 10 champ.

"I got on the team by beating enough people," he says. "And at South-Lathrup, we expect to win because we've done a lot of it in the last nine years. Winning is a momentum type of thing; it builds on itself."

Waits spoke on the team concept formula used in the state finals. "We love the new format on the whole. It rewards teams like Lathrup, where the depth is there."

"The last 35-40 years the state tournament has been stressing the individual. Now it stresses the team. We like the format because we have a 10-man team."

"Right now there's a move in the Michigan High School Tennis Coaches Association to get rid of the singles competition, and be totally on the team concept."

Waits is referring to the first flight singles competition at the regionals. Currently, the champion and runner-up in the flight get to go to state, even if they don't belong to one of the top finishing teams.

"This honor is mainly a recognition of service," Waits adds, "because of the time I have spent with my teams. You have to make sure you're kids get into tournaments in the summer and play good competition because that's what makes them good."

BEING COACH of the year is not

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All-Area team		
Scott King	Cranbrook	Junior
Mike Stone	Cranbrook	Junior
Bill Holmes	Cranbrook	Sophomore
Jeff Collins	Country Day	Senior
Randy Jacobs	Country Day	Junior
Glennys Merritt	Country Day	Sophomore
Bill Godfrey	Brother Rice	Senior
Sheldon Katz	Southfield-Lathrup	Senior
Eric Garber	West Bloomfield	Junior
Dan Saferstein	West Bloomfield	Senior
David Epstein	North Farmington	Senior
Scott Wilkinson	Seaholm	Senior
David Gary	Seaholm	Sophomore
Kurt Heuerman	Rochester Adams	Senior