Free Press, Mack Circuits Grow

Sandlot Loops Start With More Teams

Teenage baseball -- for boys 17-19 -- dead or slipping?

Not by a long shot in the Greater Livonia area.

With the high school and college action now history for 1969, the time has come to switch to the sandlots.

The Class A teams have been in action for a couple weeks and starting Sunday the Livonia-Free Press League hoists the lid with the Greater Livonia-Connie Mack loop commencing two nights later.

Entries are up in both the Free Press and the Mack circuits.

There'll be six teams playing for Free Press honors, compared to five a year ago.

In the Mack loop, the entry has jumped from 14 in 1968 to 17 for 1969.

"IT'S GREAT to see the interest on the upswing," declared Bob Schwarcz of the Livonia Recreation Department, who supervises all the sandlot action.

The leagues, of course, aren't restricted to Livonia teams.

In the Free Press and Mack leagues there are teams from Plymouth, Garden City, Redford Township, Farmington, Northville and Novi, along with Livonia.

How does he explain the rebirth of baseball for the older boys?

Schwarcz offers several reasons.

"The boys have found that we have great leagues out here. They used to go down to Detroit. Now they have fine competition here, with plenty of games.

"The scouts are coming to us in droves. And this is important.

"It also helps that boys like Rick Clark, Harry Kendrick and Bernie Carbo, who played in Livonia, have been drafted high by the major league clubs."

ANOTHER FACTOR, according to Schwarcz, is the success Greater Livonia League teams have had in post-season tournaments.

Redford's Free Press team has won state titles as if they're going out of style. Redford also reached the world series final in the All American tournament in Pennsylvania a year ago.

Redford teams have done well in the senior American Baseball Congress meet at Battle Creek, getting to the title game two years ago. Livonia and Redford teams have made good showings in the state Connie Mack and inter-city meets.

"Add it all together and you can see why we are drawing more teams and players and our fan interest also has jumped considerably," Schwarcz said.

* * *

WHAT EXCITES Schwarcz are the new entries from Farmington.

"A year ago we had one team from Farmington in Connie Mack," declared Schwarcz. "Now we'll have three. We also will have one from Farmington in the Free Press League."

The six-team Free Press league will be comprised of Redford Township, Livonia Cardinal Decorating, Farmington - Keating, Nankin Interns from Wayne and Darin Construction from Garden City.

The Cardinal team again is being managed by Lucky Birkett, long Mr. Sandlot Baseball in Livonia.

Birkett had announced his retirement from baseball after last season, but realized during the winter that he couldn't stay away from the diamond.

So, he'll be back for Sunday's opener with a team comprised of greats from Bentley and Stevenson High Schools.

He'll have a tremendous pitching staff, led by Paul Tonnemacher, ex-Stevenson great; Dave Paden, Ken Gawkowski and Bill Rice.

Others include: Dave Fisher, Rick Horstman, Dave Rice, John Schroeter, Bill Hellstein, Jerry Detter and Tommy Webster.

* * *

THREE DOUBLEHEADERS make up Sunday's schedule. Reese will meet Nankin while Redford takes on Darin at Garden City at 1 and 4 p.m.

In night action, it'll be Cardinal vs. Keating at 6 and 8 at Henry Ford Field in Livonia.

The teams also are booked for action Wednesday at 6 p.m. when Nankin plays Redford at Thurston, Darin engages Keating at Garden City and Reese plays Cardinal at Cass Benton.

The 17 Connie Mack teams are split into the National and American Divisions with nine and eight teams, respectively.

Each champion will gain the right to move directly into a state regional.

* * *

THE NATIONAL CIRCUIT will consist of North Farmington - Coleman Moss, McKay Partyville of Garden City, Plymouth Elks, Northville Reese, Livonia Phillippi Service, Farmington Chelsea, Livonia-Ratigan, Livonia Spartons, and Redford Big Boy.

In the American circuit there'll be Redford Warholak, North Farmington - Holcomb, Livonia - Tom's Service, Garden City Bryant Walker, Livonia Allen Fence, Plymouth-DePonio's, Novi Construction and Livonia Hubert Realty.

In most instances the teams will be virtually the same as represented various high schools during the recent season.

"You might say we have a summer high school league going here," added Schwarcz.

Plymouth, Redford Union, Thurston, Franklin, Bentley, Stevenson, Farmington, North Farmington, Northville, Garden City East and Garden City West "all" will have players in the league, which also will field some from Bishop Borgess, Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Agatha.

By George Maskin

observing sports

Who says youngsters aren't strong-hearted men?

Take a look around when the Little Leaguers are playing and notice who's doing the umpiring.

Usually, it's boys in the 14-16-year-old age bracket.

And what yours truly, who's done his share of calling balls and strikes over the years, admires, the young crop goes at the job the way it should be done.

Take the youngster we spotted trying to hitch a ride down Middle Belt the other evening after he had worked a game involving a couple of North Farmington Little League teams.

There he was with his big chest protector, mask and the shinguards on the outside of his pants legs.

Now, son, umps wear their shin guards under their pant legs. You'll look more professional that way.

* * *

WE REALIZE WITH the type of tight pants the boys wear these days, there's no room to squeeze the shin guards under the pants. But, if you're going to try and copy the Nestor Chylaks of the American League, you MUST also dress the part.

Coming well dressed to handle a game is part of gaining respect from the teams involved.

It's also important to know the rule book and to be able to use good judgment. Also be firm.

If you are, often you can "bluff" yourself out of a tight decision should one develop.

The toughest part we have found about umpiring is that the official isn't supposed to talk back or second guess or make any kind of comments about the way a manager is handling matters or the way his team is playing.

Sure, it's okay for the players, the managers, the coaches—and the fans—to rip apart an umpire. That's part of the game, so they say.

* * *

BUT, HERE YOU ARE the umpire.

You have just been subjected to a lot of guff over a close pitch you called a ball.

Now you see a player handling his defensive assignment improperly . . . or a manager leaving his pitcher in too long . . . or ordering a batter to swing away when a bunt is in order.

Can you, as the ump, utter a sound? Not under any stretch of imagination.

Take the situation we ran into one evening in a championship game.

It involved a pair of Little League clubs and they are always the toughest to handle.

When the final inning began, the team in the field, which also was the home club, was in front by a couple of runs.

A walk, a hit and error got in one and put the tying run on base.

There were two out. But what does the pitcher do? He throws over to third trying to catch the man off base.

The toss was wild, the runner raced home with the equalizer and the man from first streaked around to third.

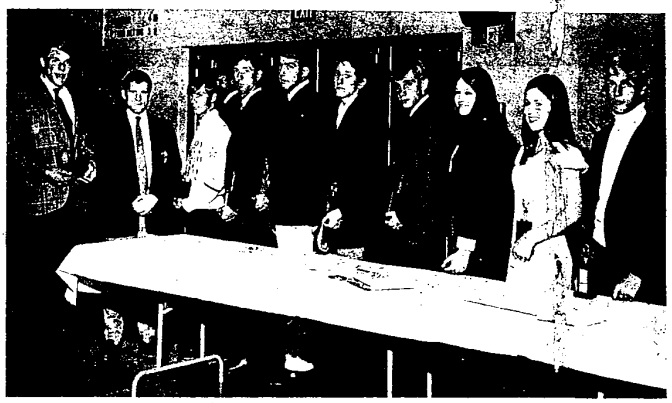
* * *

SO, WHAT DID THE PITCHER do? He threw to third again . . . and once more the ball sailed merrily beyond the sack.

The winning run rushed in . . . and who took the blame for the loss? Nobody else but the umpire.

After all, the angry parents somehow had a notion the ump, not the pitcher, made those wild throws . . . and maybe it was the ump, too, who walked a batter and the first baseman who booted an easy roller.

As we said, it takes a stout heart to survive in umpiring



CLARENCEVILLE'S BEST -- Kerry Rifkin (left) holds two trophies -- one as the most valuable Clarenceville High varsity baseball player and one as the school's outstanding athlete. He received the top trophy from athletic director Chuck Thompson (second from left) at the annual Athletic Boosters Club dinner. Other trophy winners (from left) are Barry Frechette, gymnastics, Bob Ridling, basketball, David Brandenburg, football, Al Hoedle, cross country, Ken Olson, tennis, Debbie Wilson, girls' gymnastics, Janice Mills, synchronized swim, and John Van Auker, track. (Observer photo)

Stevenson Picks Most Valuable

Spring sports athletes at Stevenson High paid tribute to four varsity stars this week, naming each most valuable in one of the four varsity sports.

Honored for their performance during the spring were: baseball - Jim Crum; tennis - Chris Clark; track - Dave Loewe; and golf - Kevin Sidley.

At the same time coaches in the four sports announced those who had won conference honors in the Inter - Lakes League.

Stevenson won the League's all - sports trophy with championships in golf, track and football and a tie for first in basketball.

* * *

NAMED TO THE all-league team in track were: Loewe, 220 yard sprint; Dale Danver, shot put; Rick Avis, pole vault; and Ron Smith in the 440.

Jerry Detter was the one baseballer to receive all-conference first team honors. He was named top third baseman. Jim Crum was named shortstop on the second team and honorable mention went to Catcher Rick Hotsman and Pitcher Rob Sievert.

The golf team, which finished fifth in the state championship meet, won three berths on the first all-league team. Those honored were: Kevin Sidley, Dave Waters and Bill Himm.

In tennis, the double team of Chalo Puente, foreign exchange student from Ecuador, and Gary Pawlovich was given first team recognition.

Sandlot Schedule

CLASS A

Sunday—Northville vs. Plymouth K.C., Haggerty, 2:30; Village Rambler vs. Plymouth K.C., 1:30, Thurston; Redford vs. Hubert, 3:30 p.m., Thurston.

Monday—Northville vs. Redford, 6 p.m., Ford; Village Rambler vs. Plymouth, 8:30 p.m., Ford.

Wednesday—Redford vs. Village Rambler, 6 p.m., Thurston; Plymouth K.C. vs. Hubert, 6 p.m., Haggerty.

FREE PRESS LEAGUE

Sunday — (all doubleheaders), Reef vs. Nankin, Northville, 1 p.m.; Redford vs. Darin, Garden City, 1 p.m.; Livonia-Cardinal vs. Farmington-Keating, Ford, 6 p.m.

Wednesday—Nankin vs. Redford, Thurston; Darin vs. Farmington-Keating, Garden City; Reef vs. Livonia-Cardinal, Cass Benton. All games at 6 p.m.

CONNIE MACK LEAGUE

National

Tuesday — Redford Big Boy vs. Farmington Coleman-Moss, North Farmington; Livonia Spartons vs. McKay's Partyville, Garden City; Farmington-Chesley vs. Northville-Reef, Cass Benton. Games at 6 p.m. Livonia-Ratigan vs. Plymouth Elks, Ford, 8:30 p.m.

American

Tuesday — Livonia-Tom's vs. DePonio's, Plymouth; Garden City-Bryant Walker vs. Livonia-Allen, Haggerty; Redford - Warholak vs. Livonia-Hubert, Thurston; Holkan vs. Northville-H and V, Ford. All games at 6 p.m.

American Legion

Sunday — Farmington-Walker at Clarkston, 2 games, 1 p.m.

Wednesday—Waterford at Farmington (Our Lady of Sorrows Field), 6 p.m.

Horse Show Set To Open

The annual Detroit Horse show will start a week from Monday at the Bloomfield Open Hunt Club on East Long Lake Road in Bloomfield Hills.

The competition, featuring many of the nation's leading horsemen, will continue through June 29.

It'll mark the 52nd renewal of the show.

Hubert Stays Unbeaten, Defeats Redford Again

Is Hubert Realty of Livonia the king of the Greater Livonia Class A sandlot baseball league?

It would begin to appear that the team flying Livonia colors is the one to beat for honors this year.

Two victories this past week, the second at the expense of defending champ Redford, upped the Hubert record to five wins and a tie in six outings.

What's more, the 3-2 conquest Hubert scored over Redford after beating Livonia's Village Rambler, 7-3, the previous day marked the second time in the young season that Hubert had decisioned Redford.

* * *

RICK KRUMM, late of Eastern Michigan University and a high draft choice of the Tigers 10 days ago, turned in a five hitter and fanned nine in beating Rick Berryman and Redford.

Berryman struck out seven and walked six.

Hubert fell behind, 2-0, after Redford scored single runs in the fifth and sixth innings.

Hits by Bill Fahey and Bill Howe produced the first Redford run, the second came when Bill Holmes singled, went to second on a wild pitch, stole third and scored on Barringer's sacrifice fly.

* * *

HUBERT FINALLY got to Berryman in the sixth when Chip Rose was hit by a pitch and scored on Roger Frayer's double.

That still left Hubert trailing, 2-1, when the last of the seventh started. Paul Portney tripled to lead the inning, but was nailed trying to score on Ed Ryan's squeeze bunt.

Roger Coryell then walked and Jay Schwalm singled in the tieing run with Rose drilling another hit to break up the battle.

Harry Swystun worked 3 2/3 innings and Bill Ziegler finished on the mound for Hubert against Village Ramble. Ziegler, who received credit for the victory fanned the first seven men he faced.

Hubert scored four times in the second with singles by Frayer and Don Livedoti and a triple by Schwalm the big blows. In the fifth, Bo Ardell's double, tow walks, an error, a single by Ziegler and fielders choice netted three more runs.

* * *

ALL THREE Village runs were scored in the fourth with hits by Waddell, Baltero, Finlayson and Lamarato getting the job done.

Plymouth K.C. won a 5-3 thriller from Northville when Pete Woodard slammed a homer with one aboard in the seventh to break a 3-3 tie.

Doug DeMakes, who pitched the final three innings and gained credit for the victory, singled before Woodard connected.

Jerry Elisabeth and Woodard singled in the first inning and Kisabeth scored on an error after Northville had gained an early 2-0 lead.

Continued on Page 3B

5 Qualify In Publinx Tourney

Jim Rawlings of Garden City shot a 38-32-70 to finish second in the pre-qualifying for the U.S. Public Links golf tournament.

His round enabled him to advance with 56 others from Monday's competition at the Burroughs golf course in Brighton into next week's 36-hole qualifier on the same layout.

The 10 or 12 low shooters there will move on to the national meet in Erie, Pa., next month.

Rawlings plays on the Hickory Hills team in the Michigan Publinx League.

Right behind Rawlings came Rocky Pozza of Livonia, a member of the University of Michigan varsity.

* * *

POZZA SHOT a 36-35--71 with his round including an eagle and four birdies. He also has an assortment of bogeys.

Pete Owens of Livonia came in at 72 along with Gary Quitiquit of Oakland University.

Owens didn't play golf until he took a course at Wayne State. He was a football player when he turned to the links.

Joe Wilson of Livonia qualified with a 73.

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