

# NF-WB Little Leaguers seek state crown

By TOM BAEZ

Manager Brian Rudd enjoys taking up his North Farmington-West Bloomfield Nationals. A Little League baseball team which has earned a berth in the state tournament in Alpena this weekend.

Rudd is confident that his squad has a good chance to win the state Little League title. So far, the Nationals have justified their manager's confidence. The Nationals, an all-star team of 11 and 12-year olds from the North Farmington-West Bloomfield National League, have won six straight games in district and sectional tournaments held recently at the Southfield Civic Center.

"Our kids have developed more confidence with each game," said Rudd, a part owner of American Bar, a meat wholesaler in Detroit's Eastern Market. "To tell you the truth, we're very nervous, very hard to beat in that state tournament. Our confidence has grown once we got

past that first (post-season) tournament game," he said. "Confidence is the key to success in baseball, or in anything that matters. Once they found out that they're just as good or better than anyone else, they loosened up and played free baseball."

Good pitching and "infield defense" have carried the Nationals through the district and sectional tournaments, according to Rudd. The pitching staff, which has given up just three earned runs in the five tournament games, is led by Dale Sklar, a right-hander.

SEKLAR PITCHED a one-hitter and struck out each batter in the Nationals' 1-0 victory over Harper Woods in the sectional tournament. Sklar has tossed two shutouts in four games, and has won four of four tournament games. "He has a good fastball — strike. If you know what I

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mean," Rudd said. "He can throw the ball as hard as any kid his age."

Kevan Shaw is another front-line pitcher, and also "the best shortstop you'll find in the Little League," according to Rudd. "Shaw has won every game he's pitched in the tournaments, and I think he's given up

only two runs," the manager said.

The Nationals' hitting attack is led by first baseman Matt Rudd, the manager's son. A leadoff batter, Rudd collected 12 hits in 18 trips to the plate in the tournament games. "That's hard to believe," the manager said. "I can't believe it myself. Plus,

he hasn't struck out in a tournament game." Catcher Scott Williams has been another hitting star in the tournaments, going three for three in one district contest. Centerfielder Matt Stuffer and third baseman Chip Greer are also keys to the Nationals' offense, according to Rudd. Five Nationals starters — Rudd, Shaw, Greer, Mark Gentry and Scott Garfield — played for the NF-WB Major League Cardinals, which Rudd managed. "Basically, we have no weaknecks," Rudd said. "And that's the truth. We play very strong defense. Our starting nine hasn't been equally consistent in the hitting department, but they have managed to carry the load."

THE NATIONALS road to the state (finals) started last week when they defeated Novi, 4-1, in the district opener. Then the NF-WB team stopped the Birmingham Americans, 6-1. The Nationals won the next game by blanking NF-WB Americans, 4-0. Shaw had a three-run homer. The losing pitcher was Steve Stanley, son of the Detroit Tigers' Mickey Stanley.

The Nationals won the district crown by beating Davison, 15-1. In the one-game sectional tournament, the Nationals nipped Harper Woods, 14-0, on Sklar's one-hit pitching performance. Matt Rudd, who had two singles and a walk, scored the winning run in the fifth inning on a wild pitch. Losing pitcher Derryl Chauvin allowed just four hits.

Pitching depth could be a problem for the Nationals in the state tournament, according to Rudd. "We didn't draw a bye, and that may create a problem with our pitching," he said. "In order to win the tournament, we'll have to win three games on three consecutive nights. You can't use the same pitcher on consecutive nights."

## Hills golfer shines in Links tourney

By CORINNE ARATT

"I'm known as a greasy golfer," said 18-year-old John Van Vleck of Farmington Hills.

That means that he's sometimes erratic, but has a great ability to recover. He's not your average seven-iron, but he's got the typical of his game is a 40-foot put for a par after blasting out of the woods or rough.

Van Vleck, a graduate of Farmington Harrison High School, has been a member of the Oakland Community College golf team for the past two years. He was the youngest competitor to make the cut in the United States Public Links tournament in

Coon Rapids, Minn. earlier this summer. Close to 400 Michigan golfers played a 36-hole qualifying tournament, and the top 18 advanced to the national tournament. Van Vleck's back-to-back 1975 were good enough to qualify, but he was matched in his first round against Gary Hinch, of Vinton, Ohio. Most of those favored to win, I didn't know the guy was expected to win, and I couldn't figure out why all those people were following us around and clapping. I made a good drive or sank a good putt," he said. After 13 holes, Hinch was the sure winner and the match ended, but Van Vleck won the match on a hole-in-one. THIS WAS the first big tournament ap-

pearance for Van Vleck, who is a pro shop assistant at a Royal Oak golf course, and is lucky to play one or two rounds of golf a week. "I never really liked amateur golf until this year when I started to play in the public links tournaments," he said. Now, he converted his wants to play an amateur for several more years, at least until he completes four years of college. The next tournament on his list is the Observer & Eccentric Golf Tournament, scheduled for early in September at Livonia's Whispering Willows Golf Course. He has 13 more months to finish at OCC and plans to take care of that next spring. In the meantime, he plans to work

and polish his game. Van Vleck admits to loving the game. He loves to play, and he loves to win. "I like to be the best and I'm always trying to be the best," he said. He's also an enthusiastic fan. "When I went to the Canadian Open in Windsor, I started following Palmer at the 18th hole. He birdied three of the next four holes. All of a sudden, I was part of Arm's Army, and I loved watching him. He's a charming guy. "Then I watched Nicklaus hit balls at the lesson tree for about 40 minutes. He's a real pro. "Van Vleck is equally enthusiastic about the people who have helped him develop his game. He mentioned his father, who started his interest at age nine. He also credited several others, including Pat Ryan, the OCC athletic director and golf coach.



John Van Vleck gets in some "rough" practice in his own backyard. (Staff photo by Harry Maute)

## Farmington Reds fall in Mack tournament

The Farmington Reds have been out-battling their Conant Mack District Tournament opponents by wide margins, but manager Jack Maroon's Farmington squad has been coming out on the short end of the final scores. Those facts meant elimination from the post-season tournament for Farmington.

Farmington, which won the Pontiac Class D Conant Mack League with a 18-1 record, opened its Mack tournament bid by dropping a 3-1 decision to Livonia last week. The Reds outlasted Livonia, 9-4.

And then Detroit Westland's Jostens eliminated Farmington, 6-1, in a close struggle in a game played Aug. 6 at Pontiac's Joyce Park. Once again, Farmington produced more hits than the opposition.

"We had a real good season up until the playoffs," Maroon said. "And even our tournament games weren't bad as far as the hitting goes. Any team that gets hits in two games isn't doing badly."

Detroit broke a five-run lead by scoring a run in the bottom of the sixth inning. The winners loaded the bases when Dave Jennings and William Dillon drew walks, and Ken Garcia beat out a ball. Then Dan Martin singled, and Jennings came home with the winning run.

The Reds grabbed a 3-1 lead, scoring two runs in the second inning, two in the third and one in the fourth. Van Vleck walked to start the second-inning rally. He moved to third on Bill Looman's double, and both runners scored on Dan Maroon's double.

Farmington added two more in the third. With two out, Mike Scobon reached first on a bouncer's choice, and came home on Chris Curtis' triple. Curtis scored on Ray's single in the fourth inning. Bob Jenko singled, advanced to second on a wild pitch and scored on Kevin Kamanian's single.

DETROIT CAME back with two runs in the fourth, two in the fifth and the winning run in the sixth. The two Farmington pitchers, starter Mike Jenko and reliever Gregg Matlack, added Detroit's cause by issuing a total of nine walks. Farmington had a rally cut short on a controversial play in the top of the eighth inning when the score was tied, 3-3. Maroon started the comeback with a single. Jenko then singled on a hit-and-run play. The Detroit right fielder threw the ball to the shortstop, who pegged the ball over the third baseman's head in an attempt to nail Maroon.

Maroon collided with the Detroit third baseman, got up and tried to race home with what would have been the go-ahead run. But the third baseman blocked Maroon's progress, according to Farmington coach Jack Brown, who watched the play from the third base coaching box. "He (Maroon) had to push the third baseman out of the base path, but the umpire said he was watching the ball and didn't see the interference," Brown said. Maroon was tagged out at the plate to end the threat. Matlack, the losing pitcher, worked 3 1/2 innings, allowing three hits, striking out three and walking three. Matlack pitched the first 4 1/2 innings and didn't allow a hit until the fourth when he was tagged for three hits. He fanned six and walked six. Winning pitcher Ron James, working in relief of Scott Boyd, allowed five hits in five innings, struck out two and walked none. In the tournament (finals) Berkley's Americans Legion defeated Detroit, 3-0, to advance to the state tournament in Marshall, Mich. this weekend. The winner of the Marshall tournament will advance to the national Conant Mack tournament in Farmington, N.M.

## Farmington Legion falls

Farmington's American Legion baseball team began ended its Conant Mack tournament by losing to Taylor. Taylor, a four-time champion Taylor, whipped Farmington, 6-2, in the tournament final played last Sunday morning at Oakland University.

Taylor stopped Farmington, 14, in the tournament opener last Friday. But then manager Wally Christensen's Farmington defeated Warren, 14-1, and St. Clair County, 6-1, to set up the final game with Taylor. Farmington finished its semifinal season with a 14-12 record, including tournament games.

"I thought that was a pretty good season considering what I started out with," Christensen said. "Most of our players showed great improvement, and a lot of them will be back next summer. We should be a lot tougher next season."

In the tournament final, Taylor scored four runs in the seventh inning to break a two-run tie and won the game with two out. Nelson reached first on a bouncer's choice, and Schuck was safe on shortstop Bruce Sher's error. Taylor pitcher Bruce Fournier was walked intentionally walked to load the bases.

Then Pearson hit a sharp grounder to third baseman Dick Radatz. The ball bounced off Radatz's glove and two runs scored. "I called a 4-4," Christensen said. "It was a sharply hit ball, and our infield was pulled in for a play at the plate."

Two more Taylor runs came home when the next batter, Flores, singled. Fournier, the winning pitcher, struck out three Farmington batters — Rick Milbourn, Mark Pomorini and Radatz — in the bottom of the seventh.

FARMINGTON HAD five hits off Fournier, who struck out eight and walked two. Farmington scored two runs in the 14th in Jay Cummings walked and scored on Sher's single. Sher came home when Fournier uncorked a wild pitch.

Farmington's starting pitcher, Kevin Delo, lasted two innings and was relieved by Chris Algeo, who pitched for Waterford. Chief Pontiac during the regular American Legion season. Algeo, who also lost the opening game against Taylor, fanned six and walked two during his six-inning stint in the final game.

In the Farmington-Warren game, Farmington scored three runs in the first inning on a three-run homer by Tim McKay, who also pitched for Chief Pontiac. Warren led 4-3 at three-all by scoring three runs on two hits in the bottom of the first.

Farmington went ahead to stay by scoring two runs in the second. Terry Hall and Mark Pomorini singled, moved along on a

passed ball and scored on Radatz's single. Warren added another run in the fourth. Cummings, who pitched for the Farmington-Troy team during the Legion season, was the winning pitcher against Warren. The right-hander from Birmingham Grove High worked five innings, striking out six and walking three. Larry McKee pitched the last two innings. McKee was the winning pitcher in Farmington's victory over St. Clair County, 6-1, last six innings, allowing one run on two hits, striking out five and walking two. The St. Clair County team scored a run in the fourth to take a brief lead, but Farmington came back with two runs in the bottom of

the fourth. Farmington loaded the bases on singles by Cummings and McKay and a walk to Rob Patrick. Terry Hall then singled to drive in Cummings and McKay. Farmington loaded the bases again in the sixth. McKay and Sher singled, and Patrick walked. McKay scored on McKee's ground out. Radatz's single drove in another run, and the fifth run scored on Tom Harmon's sacrifice fly.

Taylor will advance to the state Conant Mack tournament at Marshall, Mich. this weekend. The champion of that tournament will play in the national Mack tournament in Farmington, N.M.

## Farmington softball results

| INDIVIDUAL A LEAGUE    |    |   |   |
|------------------------|----|---|---|
| Don Schuchman          | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Farmington Schuchman   | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Lee's Drywall          | 9  | 0 | 0 |
| Lee's Drywall          | 9  | 0 | 0 |
| Farmington Jaynes      | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Lee's Drywall          | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Larson & Sons Building | 11 | 0 | 0 |

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Smith-Lee's Drywall 11, Larson & Sons Building 11, Lee's Drywall 9, Farmington Jaynes 11, Farmington Jaynes 11 |  |
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| RESIDENT A LEAGUE        |    |   |   |
|--------------------------|----|---|---|
| Orlando Lumber           | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Don Schuchman            | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar              | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Michigan Cooled Concrete | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar              | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar              | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar              | 11 | 0 | 0 |

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| Smith-Lee's Drywall 11, Don Schuchman 11, Lee's Drywall 9, Farmington Jaynes 11, Michigan Cooled Concrete 11, These Craft 11 |  |
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| INDIVIDUAL B LEAGUE |    |   |   |
|---------------------|----|---|---|
| A-Tech Lumber       | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar         | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar         | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar         | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar         | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar         | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Smith's Bar         | 11 | 0 | 0 |

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| Smith-Lee's Drywall 11, Don Schuchman 11, Lee's Drywall 9, Farmington Jaynes 11, Michigan Cooled Concrete 11, These Craft 11 |  |
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- MT. CLEMENS: 1216 S. Grant (1/2 Mile N. of 16 Mile)