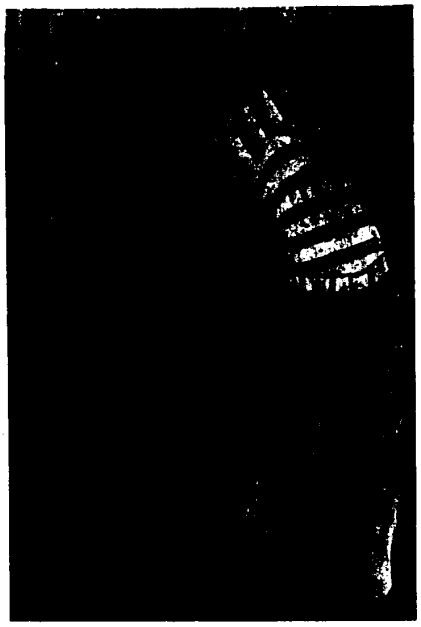

John Van Vleck —the Observer & Eccentric Men's Golf Tournament champion.

At Livonia golf course

VanVleck wins O&E tourney

By DOUG FUNKE

A new course record, a sudden-death playoff and the largest turnout in its eight-year history highlighted the Observer & Eccentric Open Golf Tournament, which was contested over the weekend.

John Van Vleck, a 19-year-old Farmington resident, carded a five-under-par 68 Sunday to set a new amateur record at Livonia's Whispering Willows Golf Course and win the Championship Flight title with a 36-hole total of 144.

R.D. Cumming, a Livonian, and Ted VanThullenar, of Farmington Hills, were deadlocked at 152 after regulation play in Flight I, but the former won the playoff on the second extra hole.

All told, 221 linksmen teed-off Saturday, exceeding last year's record entry total by more than 40.

Van Vleck's sizzling round almost did not come about, as the Oakland Community College student said he was ready to withdraw from the tourney Saturday after shooting a 41 on the front nine and 78 for the round.

However, encouraged by his mother, who caddied for him Sunday, Van Vleck started out with an eagle, a par and a birdie on the first three holes and finished birdie-birdie-birdie to best runner-up Bill Curtis, also from Farmington and a former champion, by two shots.

Defending champion Dave Wall, from Plymouth, and another former titlist, Bud Stevens, from Livonia, tied at 150. The latter matched par on the second day of competition.

"I was three under par after three holes and just kept going," Van Vleck enthusiastically recounted after his round of 68. "My mother came out to caddy and said, 'You can do it.' I got a little hot on the back nine and just missed on many birdie chances."

The Championship Flight competition was not the only one that generated excitement.

Cumming and VanThullenar, tied at 152 after 36 holes, went head-to-head in a sudden death playoff which was eventually won by Cumming in a scrambly manner.

Both birdied the 460-yard par-five first hole and both had trouble on the treacherous second, a 337-yard par-four.

Both golfers pulled their drives into the woods, both safely chipped out and both duffed their third shots. Cumming put his fourth shot on the green, while VanThullenar arched his just off the putting surface.

Cumming two-putted for a six and VanThullenar four-putted for an eight.

Cumming, who said he golfed almost every day during the months of June and July, credited his caddie and friend, Dan McIntosh, for helping him trod to victory.

Brad Lyons, a Plymouth resident, put together rounds of 85 and 82 for a 167, edging Livonian Dick Melow by two strokes for the Flight 2 title. Defending champion Gary Hees skied to a 187 this year.

Walt Kantzler, a Livonian, topped defending champion S.L. Luvisch by three shots with a Flight 3 winning total of 185. Kantzler's 90 on Saturday was the difference because both men carded 95s on Sunday.

The course, described by Club Pro and Tournament Director Gary Whitener as in excellent condition, drew the compliments of most of the contestants.

"The course is in as good condition as any country club now," offered Van Vleck. Whitener credited Dave Montgomery, head greenskeeper at Whispering Willows, for his preparation work preceeding the tournament.

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John VanVleck lines up a put during a practice session before the Observer & Eccentric Men's Golf Tournament, held last weekend at Livonia's Whispering Willows Golf Club. Van Vleck, who lives in Farmington Hills, won the 36-hole tournament with a 144. Van Vleck is a well-known area golfer, having starred on Oakland Community College's team for the past two years. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

Falcon runners take 3d place at Marshbank

Farmington High cross country coach Gerald Young was encouraged by his team's finish in the West Bloomfield Invitational, held last Saturday at Marshbank Metropolitan Park near Orchard Lake.

Farmington, which has won the Inter Lakes League cross country title for the past two years, finished third in the 21-school AA Division at the West Bloomfield meet. The Falcons scored 131 points. Grosse Pointe North, the defending Class A state champion, won the AA team title with 57 points, 59 fewer than runner-up Kalamazoo Loy Norrix.

"Most of the teams we're going to run against, except for Pontiac Northern, were at the West Bloomfield meet, and we beat them all," Young said. "So I guess things look good for another league title for us."

Karry Barnett of Pontiac Central won the AA individual race, covering the three-mile course in 15:22.5. Kevin Savage of Grosse Pointe North was second in 15:25. Farmington's Harold Rutila took third in 15:28, and teammates Hugh Leidlein and Stuart Glatfelter were seventh (15:58) and 10th (16:00) respectively.

Two other Farmington runners provided points. Senior Pete Nuttall finished 46th and junior Dave Otto finished 47th.

"Those two kids (Nuttall and Otto) really made the race for us," Young said. "We knew our top three men would be there, but we had a gap between the third and fourth man. It all depended on those two kids, and they did a good job for us."

FARMINGTON OPENED its dual meet season with a 15-48 victory over Waterford Mott last Thursday. Glatfelter finished first (16:48). Leidlein was next (16:48) and Rutila took third (16:49).

North Farmington and Farmington Harrison also ran in the West Bloomfield Invitational. Both participated in the A division.

Coach Ed Davis' North Farmington team finished eighth with 220 points. Senior Dave Good finished third in the individual race in 15:41. Sophomores Paul Welch (30th in 16:38), Mike Spengler (55th in 17:07), Rick Stumpf (75th in 17:30), and Jeff Temple (76th in 17:35) also provided points.

"It was an encouraging performance by a young team in a big meet with a lot of kids in it," Davis said. "For a young team to finish eighth in such a big meet ... I'll take it."

The cross country program at Harrison was uncertain this season because of the resignation of coach Larry Fortner. But Harrison found a coach, Jack Inch, just in time to run in the West Bloomfield meet.

Harrison finished 18th in the A group with 447 points. The Hawks' fastest man was senior Mark Evans, who finished 10th in 16:18 in the individual race. "Evans has trained on his own, and it seems that he's done very well," Inch said. "He seems to be in shape. I think he's a very talented young man."

Another Harrison runner, Charlie Rogers, finished 56th in 17:08.

INCH HAS a coaching background. He was the assistant track and cross country coach at Detroit Redford High School before taking over as cross country coach at Oakland Community College—Orchard Ridge campus. His coaching duties ended at OCC when the school consolidated its athletic program.

"I took the job Harrison have a team," said Inch, who lives in Farmington. "It's a matter of organizing things and getting as far as we can by the end of the season."

The three Farmington high schools will run their home cross country meets at Orchard Ridge this season. Farmington runs next on Thursday (Sept. 16) at home against Redford Union and Livonia Frank lin. North Farmington also runs on Thursday at Berkley High. Harrison runs on Saturday (Sept. 18) at the Schoolcraft Invitational.

Girls' swimming

Mercy, NFHS on win streaks

By TOM BAER

To say that Farmington Our Lady of Mercy swim swimming teams have established a winning tradition in the Catholic League is an understatement.

Our Lady of Mercy, under coach Dolores Yager, has won 121 straight dual swim meets since beginning the sport in 1966. Last year, Mercy posted an 11-0 record and won its 12th straight Catholic League Meet. And Mrs. Yager's Marlins also have been impressive in the state finals, winning the first state meet in 1972, finishing second in 1973, 10th in '74 and 18th last year.

This year, it will be another successful one for Mercy, which begins its season on Sept. 29 at home against West Bloomfield High.

Farmington's three public schools — North Farmington, Farmington High and Harrison in Harrison — begin their sea son next week. North, coached by Pat Duthie, will be shooting for its 30th straight Northwest Suburban League title. Farmington, which took second place in the Inter Lakes League last year, has a new coach in Mark Holdridge. Harrison, coached by Cathy Suchyta, struggled last season.

Mercy's Mrs. Yager explained the school's swimming success story. "I think we're a little bit more determined than a lot of the other teams," she said. "And we have a lot of spirit at this school. The girls know that the school has winning ways as soon as they walk in the door.

TEAM TRYOUTS began last Monday, so Mrs. Yager isn't sure what this year's team will look like. But she'll have two fine swimmers in senior co-captains Carol Kolon and Kris Johnson. Kolon, who specializes in the 200-yard and 500-yard freestyle events, scored in the state finals last year. Johnson was impressive in the sprints last season.

"I'm expecting good years from both these girls," Mrs. Yager said. "They're both hard workers."

North Farmington, which finished last season with an 8-2 overall record and a 2-0 NSL mark, graduated two good swimmers in Jane MacLaren and Sue Gaiser. Both will swim for Michigan State University this year.

But Duthie is confident that his team will capture another league crown. "Basically, things are still taking shape," he said. "We've been working for three or four weeks but it's been lot and rays with kids taking last-minute vacations and so on."

Duthie is hoping for a good year from Patty Gaiser, a senior who qualified for four events in last year's finals. Debbi Hatch, a junior sprinter, also should be impressive. Cathy Burk, another returnee, "can swim in a lot of events," according to Duthie.

North Farmington has three promising sophomores in Maurine Jewell, Mary Sue Palek and Britta Nielsen. Jewell has been looking good in the early workouts, Duthie said. "We're looking for a lot of fine swims from her," he said. She can swim anything exceptionally well. She did a fine job this summer, swimming long course events. She learned to swim in our program, and then went with the Michigan Sting Rays and the Garden City Parks and Recreation team.

NORTH FARMINGTON opens its season on Tuesday, Sept. 21 at West Bloomfield. The Raiders' NSL season begins on Oct. 12 at home against Thurston High.

At Farmington High, Holdridge is beginning his first year as girls' coach after developing a successful boys' swimming program at Harrison. Last year, Farmington finished with a 5-5 overall record and runner-up status in the Inter Lakes League, which was dominated by Livonia Stevenson.

Holdridge has three returnees in seniors Casey Ratliff, Laurie Dahlstrom and junior Pam Reinke. But Farmington's strength could be in its younger swimmers.

"We have a lot of juniors and sophomores," said Holdridge, who teaches at East Junior High. "We seem to have an especially good crop of 10th graders, so we'll have some talent that'll be around for awhile. A lot of these younger swimmers have Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) backgrounds, some with the Sing Rays and the Clarenceville Swim Club.

"Some promising sophomores include Cathy Gregory, Cathy Lewis, Toni Richardson, Ellen Bunting, Nancy Dahlstrom and Sue Sterling.

"One of our goals this year is to break at least nine of the 11 school records," Holdridge said. "Another goal is to score a couple of points at the state meet. I know we can qualify a couple of relays and some individuals."

Farmington opens its season on Thursday, Sept. 23 at home against non-league Southfield-Lathrup.

FARMINGTON HARRISON had a disappointing 3-11 overall record last year. Things don't look much better for second-year coach Cathy Suchyta, but at least she can count on good years from sisters Karen and Cathy Rudel.

Karen, a senior, was the only Harrison girl to qualify for the state meet last year. She did her best work in the 500-yard freestyle and the 200-yard individual medley.

"The key to her success is that she swims in an AAU program," Miss Suchyta said. "And she works very hard. She's willing to put up with any kind of a workout."

Two Harrison divers, senior Denise Bole and junior Shelly Wood, could have good seasons. "Both those girls went to diving camps last summer, and I hope that means something good for us," Miss Suchyta said. "Shelly had never dived before, so this was her first introduction to it."

Harrison's season begins at home on Sept. 21 against non-league Bloomfield Hills Lahser. The Hawks' Western Six League season starts Sept. 23 at Walled Lake Western.

Swim schedules

FARMINGTON MERCY SWIMMING

VARSITY SCHEDULE — Sept. 30—at West Bloomfield, 7 p.m.; Oct. 7—Detroit Dominican, 7 p.m.; Oct. 14—Detroit Redford St. Mary, 7 p.m.; Oct. 21—Dearborn St. Alphonsus, 7 p.m.; Oct. 28—Grosse Pointe Star of the Sea, 7 p.m.; Nov. 1—at Birmingham Marian, 3 p.m.; Nov. 10—Harper Woods Regina, 7 p.m.; Nov. 15—Detroit Bishop Borgess, 7 p.m.; Nov. 18—at Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher, 3 p.m.; Nov. 30-31—Catholic League Meet at Sacred Heart College; Dec. 3-4—State Finals at Central Michigan University.

MERCY FARMINGTON SWIMMING

VARSITY SCHEDULE — Sept. 21—at West Bloomfield, 7:30 p.m.; Sept. 28—Bloomfield Hills Andover, 7 p.m.; Sept. 30—Farmington High, 7 p.m.; Oct. 1—at Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; Oct. 7—at Livonia Stevenson, 7 p.m.; Oct. 12—Thurston High, 7 p.m.; Oct. 14—at Livonia Franklin, 4 p.m.; Oct. 20—North Farmington Relays, 4 p.m.; Oct. 21—Walled Lake Gibbons, 7 p.m.; Oct. 28—at Thurston High, 7:30 p.m.; Nov. 4—Livonia Franklin, 7 p.m.; Nov. 5—Bloomfield Invitational, 9 a.m.; Nov. 11—at Walled Lake Gibbons, 7 p.m.; Nov. 16-18—Northwest Suburban League Meet at Thurston High; Nov. 30—at Farmington Harrison, 7 p.m.; Dec. 3-4—State Finals at Central Michigan University.

FARMINGTON GIRLS SWIMMING

VARSITY SCHEDULE — Sept. 20—Southfield, Lathrup, 4 p.m.; Sept. 21—at North Farmington, 7 p.m.; Oct. 1—at Westland John Glenn, 7 p.m.; Oct. 7—at Bloomfield Hills Andover, 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 12—Bloomfield Hills Lahser, 7 p.m.; Oct. 14—Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; Oct. 19—at North Farmington Relays, 4 p.m.; Oct. 21—at Livonia Stevenson, 7 p.m.; Oct. 26—at Dearborn Edsel Ford, 4 p.m.; Nov. 1—at Farmington Harrison, 7 p.m.; Nov. 4—at Walled Lake Central (at Walled Lake Western pool), 4 p.m.; Nov. 6—Southfield High, 7 p.m.; Nov. 11—Livonia Stevenson, 4 p.m.; Nov. 16-18—Inter Lakes League Meet; Dec. 3-4—State Finals at Central Michigan University.

FARMINGTON HARRISON SWIMMING

VARSITY SCHEDULE — Sept. 21—Bloomfield Hills Lahser, 7 p.m.; Sept. 23—at Walled Lake Western, 4 p.m.; Sept. 28—West Bloomfield, 7 p.m.; Sept. 30—at Livonia Churchill, 6:30 p.m.; Oct. 5—Northville High, 4 p.m.; Oct. 7—Plymouth Canton, 4 p.m.; Oct. 12—at Livonia Stevenson, 7 p.m.; Oct. 19—at North Farmington Relays, 4 p.m.; Oct. 21—at Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; Oct. 26—at Livonia Churchill, 4 p.m.; Oct. 28—at Northville High, 4 p.m.; Nov. 1—Farmington High, 7 p.m.; Nov. 4—at Plymouth Canton, 7 p.m.; Nov. 11—at Bloomfield Hills Andover, 7 p.m.; Nov. 17-18—Western Six League Meet at Eastern; Nov. 30—Rival Farmington, 4 p.m.; Dec. 3-4—State Finals at Central Michigan University.

Cross country schedules

FARMINGTON CROSS COUNTRY

SCHEDULE — Sept. 16—at Waterford, 4 p.m.; Sept. 18—Bloomfield College Invitational; Sept. 21—Livonia Stevenson, 4 p.m.; Sept. 23—Northville High, 4 p.m.; Sept. 28—at Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; Oct. 1—Oakland County Invitational; Oct. 5—at Milford Lakefield, 4 p.m.; Oct. 9—Oakland County Invitational; Oct. 13—Redford Union Invitational at Cass Benton Park, 4 p.m.; Oct. 16—at Pontiac Northern, 4 p.m.; Oct. 19—at Southgate Invitational; Oct. 21—Inter Lakes League Meet; Oct. 28—Regional Tournament; Nov. 5—North Farmington and Farmington Harrison at Oakland Community College; Nov. 6—State Finals.

NORTH FARMINGTON CROSS COUNTRY

SCHEDULE — Sept. 16—at Berkley High, 4 p.m.; Sept. 18—Bloomfield College Invitational; Sept. 21—Walled Lake Western, 4 p.m.; Sept. 30—at Sept. 30—Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; Oct. 7—at Westland John Glenn, 4 p.m.; Oct. 9—Oakland County Invitational; Oct. 13—at Redford Union Invitational at Cass Benton Park; Oct. 16—Garden City East, 4 p.m.; Oct. 21—at Thurston High, 4 p.m.; Oct. 23—at Northwest Suburban League Meet at Bloomfield Hills Country Club; Oct. 28—Regional Tournament; Nov. 5—Farmington High and Farmington Harrison at Oakland Community College, 4 p.m.; Nov. 6—State Finals.

FARMINGTON HARRISON CROSS COUNTRY

SCHEDULE — Sept. 16—at Bloomfield College Invitational; Sept. 18—Walled Lake Western, 4 p.m.; Sept. 30—at Sept. 30—Walled Lake Central, 4 p.m.; Oct. 7—at Westland John Glenn, 4 p.m.; Oct. 9—Oakland County Invitational; Oct. 13—at Redford Union Invitational at Cass Benton Park, 4 p.m.; Oct. 16—Northville High, 4 p.m.; Oct. 19—at Plymouth Canton, 4 p.m.; Oct. 21—at Livonia Stevenson, 4 p.m.; Oct. 23—at Northwest Suburban League Meet at Bloomfield Hills Country Club; Oct. 28—Regional Tournament; Nov. 5—Farmington High and North Farmington at Oakland Community College, 4 p.m.; Nov. 6—State Finals.