Without Michigan Travelers

Pro softballer ponders future

By MARTY BUDNER

Cathy Irvine doesn't really know where, but she is definitely going to be playing professional softball this summer.

Irvine was the seventh of 32 players drafted last year by the Michigan Travelers—the state's first professional women's fastpitch softball team. However, her contract expered, the financially-troubled franchise has folded and she has become a free agent.

"The word I received was that the team folded and the league held a dispersal draft," said Irvine, a volleyball and basketball coach at Rochester's Van Hoosen Junior High School.

"Four other players and myself were picked up by other teams, but as of Jan. 30 I became a free agent and I have the right to any team I want. I'd really like to stay in the east and play somewhere like Chicago or Buffalo because it would be close to home.

"I would have liked the Travelers to stay as a team because they had a good draft this year and I think we could have had a good team," she said. "They (the Travelers) drafted five players who made the national all-star team in amateur ball."

The pig-tailed outfielder was somewhat of a heroine on the Michigan squad last season. After her crowd-pleasing debut on opening day when she made some outstanding offensive and defensive plays, Irvine remained a favorite.

Her constant hustle and desire eventually netted her a birth in the initial International Women's Professional Softball (IWPS) all-star game conducted in San Jose. Irvine only played an inning-and-a-half, but it was one of the highlights of her brief career with the Travelers.

"It was quite a thrill being in the all-star game," said Irvine. "I was playing with heroes that I looked up to since I was 10 and 15 years old . . . people that I had always admired in women's sports.

"But, I have to say the biggest thrill was opening day. It was the most exciting because it was my first day as a professional athlete, and I never expected to play as well as I did."

IRVINE IS A FORMER Highlander who graduated from Adams in 1970. At the Adams and Tienken road school she lettered in basketball, volleyball and softball.

After a year's work as a dental assistant, Irvine went back to what she likes the most, playing sports. She began her five-year hitch with the Rochester Ramblers in 1971, and played well enough to make the professional ranks.

Irvine's first year as a pro was rewarding. The 23-year-old athlete batted .318 (sixth in the league), hit five home runs and smashed 116 hits in 111 games.

She started her career as a left-fielder, but eventually transferred to her natural centerfield position in mid-season after a coaching change. Irvine was one of only 10 players who stayed with the Travelers to the very end.

"There's a tremendous amount of difference between amateur and professional ball," said Irvine, who started playing organiized ball at nine. "Self-pride is probably the biggest motivator because you had to make a personal commitment to play the best ball you could every day.

"There were times when it was really hard, like toward the end of the season. It was hard to get yourself up, but I knew I had to finish out the year the best way I could.

"We got paid $100 a week plus traveling expenses," she said. "It took a lot of dedication on the part of the girls, and a lot of sacrifices . . . we were sort of like pioneers in the game."

IRVINE WOULD LIKE to see the league stay an entity. She believes that it will take at least three to five years to stabilize before it becomes an accepted venture by the public.

"We were forewarned that it might take a while for the league to catch on," she said. "One of our biggest problems was publicity . . . we just never seemed to get enough.

"I also felt we had a bad location (East Detroit). We were in a slow-pitch area. If we had a more central location—like Troy—things might have worked out better."

Even though the Travelers folded as a team, star players like Irvine will be around for as long as the league exists.

Area's best swim times

200-YARD MEDLEY RELAY

Bloomfield Hills Andover (Jordan Kleber, Terry Meter, Mitch Ferguson, Doug McIntosh) . . . 1:39.4
Birmingham Groves (Tim McCarthy, Mark Hanson, Mark Hesskamp, Doug Agarwal) . . . 1:40.6
Southfield-Lathrup (Dave Cowan, Scott Mansfield, Dave Smith, Bill Dunn) . . . 1:41.4
West Bloomfield (Kevin Schmidt, Tom Moser, Kevin Wiekal, Brad Braun) . . . 1:41.9
Birmingham Seaholm (Tony Grant, Don Worsley, Jon Hanson, Bret Behm) . . . 1:42.0
Rochester Adams (Rob Hildum, Scott Phillips, Wolfram Bratz, Tom Hauswirth) . . . 1:42.5
Troy Athens (Steve Hahn, Dan Hahn, Eric Henning, Brian Saylor) . . . 1:45.3
Birmingham Brother Rice (Jim Biehl, Mark Ward, John McNulty, Tom Lynch) . . . 1:48.7
North Farmington (Scott Levine, Doug Campbell, Todd Knock, Tom Lynch) . . . 1:49.6
Bloomfield Hills Lahser (Mark Slater, Bob King, Clay Molitor, Mike Peters) . . . 1:51.5

200-YARD FREESTYLE

Jim Kizer (Groves)	1:43.1
Tim Murphy (Andover)	1:44.4
Gordon Geheb (Brother Rice)	1:46.6
Dave Erickson (Seaholm)	1:48.1
Dan Batchelor (Groves)	1:49.5
Tom Hauswirth (Adams)	1:49.9
Paul Blunden (Lathrup)	1:50.8
Peter Doane (Seaholm)	1:50.9
Eric Overhardt (Seaholm)	1:51.2
Rob Hildum (Adams)	1:51.3

200-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

Dan Batchelor (Groves)	1:59.1
Eric Overhardt (Seaholm)	2:01.5
Tom Hauswirth (Adams)	2:02.8
Tim Murphy (Andover)	2:04.8
Jim Kizer (Groves)	2:05.4
Dave Smith (Lathrup)	2:06.3
Dave Hoisington (Seaholm)	2:06.3
Dave Erickson (Groves)	2:07.2
Jeff Link (Seaholm)	2:07.3
Rick Cozad (Adams)	2:08.7

50-YARD FREESTYLE

Bill Dunn (Lathrup)	22.1
Doug McIntosh (Andover)	22.1
Kevin Wiekal (West Bloomfield)	22.2
Brian Keating (Brother Rice)	22.6
Jon Hanson (Seaholm)	23.0
Scott Phillips (Adams)	23.0
Gordon Geheb (Brother Rice)	23.0
Brian Saylor (Athens)	23.0
Brad Braun (West Bloomfield)	23.2
Tom Hauswirth (Adams)	23.2

DIVING

Ken Vigiletti (Groves)	294.75
Bart Connors (Brother Rice)	288.94
Don Mason (Andover)	273.40
Jim Barnthouse (Lathrup)	271.56
Kevin Schmidt (West Bloomfield)	249.60
Tom Temmerman (Brother Rice)	246.35
John Ling (Seaholm)	245.90
John Howard (Seaholm)	233.00
Bob Wetterholt (North Farmington)	232.61
Karl Ring (Seaholm)	231.50

100-YARD BUTTERFLY

Dan Batchelor (Groves)	53.6
Mitch Ferguson (Andover)	53.6
Dave Smith (Lathrup)	54.0
Mark Hesskamp (Groves)	54.3
Jordan Kleber (Andover)	54.4
Wolfram Bratz (Adams)	55.3
Jim Pogue (Farmington High)	55.8
Mark Kraus (Seaholm)	55.9
Kevin Wiekal (West Bloomfield)	56.4
Jon Hanson (Seaholm)	56.5

100-YARD FREESTYLE

Gordon Geheb (Brother Rice)	48.3
Tim Murphy (Andover)	48.4
Doug McIntosh (Andover)	49.1
Brian Keating (Brother Rice)	49.4
Dave Erickson (Groves)	49.7
Tom Hauswirth (Adams)	49.7
Jim Kizer (Groves)	49.9
Jack Gray (Seaholm)	49.9
Jon Hanson (Seaholm)	49.9
Kevin Wiekal (West Bloomfield)	50.1

500-YARD FREESTYLE

Jim Kizer (Groves)	4:39.8
Dave Erickson (Groves)	4:48.0
Bob Kizer (Groves)	4:53.0
Tim Murphy (Andover)	4:56.4
Clay Seawcroft (North Farmington)	4:57.1
Shawn Keating (Brother Rice)	4:57.2
Kevin Cockendall (Lathrup)	4:58.3
Dan Batchelor (Groves)	4:58.3
Glen Hummon (Lathrup)	5:06.2
Peter Doane (Seaholm)	5:07.2

100-YARD BACKSTROKE

Tim McCarthy (Groves)	55.8
Rob Hildum (Adams)	56.5
Rick Cozad (Adams)	56.5
Dan Batchelor (Groves)	58.0
Jay Emerson (Farmington Harrison)	58.2
John Mittenthal (Groves)	58.7
Tony Grant (Seaholm)	59.1
Bill Vincent (Seaholm)	59.6
Kevin Schmidt (West Bloomfield)	59.8
Mark Kraus (Seaholm)	59.9

100-YARD BREASTSTROKE

Terry Meter (Andover)	1:00.6
Scott Mansfield (Lathrup)	1:02.5
Scott Phillips (Adams)	1:02.6
Mark Thaeler (Andover)	1:02.8
Mark Hanson (Groves)	1:03.6
Steve Payne (Andover)	1:03.7
Dan Batchelor (Groves)	1:03.8
Don Worsley (Seaholm)	1:03.8
Shawn Wery (Adams)	1:04.2
Bob Hommel (Seaholm)	1:04.9

400-FREESTYLE RELAY

Bloomfield Hills Andover (Doug McIntosh, Dean Ottati, Mitch Ferguson, Tim Murphy) . . . 3:15.3
Birmingham Groves (Jim Kizer, Dave Erickson, Dan Batchelor, Karl Heck) . . . 3:16.1
Birmingham Seaholm (Dave Hoisington, Jack Gray, Eric Overhardt, Peter Doane) . . . 3:17.5
Birmingham Brother Rice (Brian Keating, Dan McNulty, Shawn Keating, Gordon Geheb) . . . 3:17.7
Southfield Lathrup (Paul Blunden, Dave Smith, Steve Berggruen, Bill Dunn) . . . 3:21.9
Rochester Adams (Mark Howell, Wolfram Bratz, Rob Hildum, Tom Hauswirth) . . . 3:21.9
West Bloomfield (Kevin Wiekal, Brad Braun, Kevin Schmidt, Jerry Carp) . . . 3:22.0
Troy Athens (Jim Olsen, Randy Eller, Brian Saylor, Greg Herbart) . . . 3:33.4
Farmington High (Jim Pogue, Brian Gore, Dave Uzelac, Terry Inch) . . . 3:33.7
Bloomfield Hills Lahser (Mark Slater, Clay Molitor, Mike Peters, Chip Preysler) . . . 3:36.7

Farmington's Mark Churella

U of M matman hopes for title

University of Michigan wrestling standout Mark Churella managed two major accomplishments this season, but the Farmington sophomore is looking toward a higher goal.

Churella produced the quickest pin in Big Ten tournament history recently by dropping Minnesota's Mark Obryeki in 29 seconds. Churella won the Big Ten 150-pound championship, leading the Wolverines to a fourth-place finish, just 15 points away from second place.

"Winning a Big Ten championship has been a goal of mine all along," Churella said. "But I also look at it as a step to a greater goal — winning an NCAA championship."

Churella will begin pursuit of that goal next Thursday in Norman, Okla., where he figures to be seeded in the top four with his overall record of 24-2. He finished third in the NCAA meet last year as a freshman, capping a 35-7 season in which he was named "Freshman Wrestler of the Year" by Amateur Wrestling News.

Michigan coach Bill Johannesen feels Churella has an outstanding chance to win the national title.

"He is definitely right there," Johannesen said. "This is probably the most competitive weight in the country this year, but I know Mark can hold his own.

"He lost to Joe Zuspann of Iowa State, 10-2, in a dual meet earlier this season on a day when Mark was ill, and to Roy Oliver of Arizona State, 5-4, on a last-second reverse in the East-West All-Star Meet. Mark is a very dangerous wrestler and has the ability to turn a pin as quickly as anyone I've ever seen."

A year ago, Churella placed second in the Big Ten behind Iowa's Chuck Vagla and then was third in the NCAA meet, where he dropped a 4-3 decision to Arizona State's Oliver early in the competition. Churella, however, came back to win the consolation brackets.

"I feel real good going into the NCAA's this year," Churella said. "Last year was my first trip to the nationals, so it was a little new to me. This year I feel much more confident. I've been looking forward to this all year."

Churella is one of seven Michigan wrestlers going to the NCAA meet.

Area runners shine

There were 142 runners who started the West Bloomfield Marathon and 114 who finished the 26-mile, 385-yard race.

Following are the top three finishers in each group at the West Bloomfield Marathon.

18-29 Age Group: Des Jardine 2:29.53; Tom Zarzycki (Mt. Clemens) 2:32.53; Ed Strobach (Southfield) 2:35.40.

30-39 Age Group: Norman Patenaude (Sudbury, Ontario) 2:31.08; Lou Putnam (Huntington Woods) 2:36.56; Gary Andrus (Huntington Woods) 2:38.33.

40-49 Age Group: Brian Harris (Royal Oak) 2:37.30; Bob Paklaian (Detroit) 2:49.48; Fred Holappa (Plymouth) 2:54.03.

50 and Older: Max Nemazi (Livonia) 2:54.35; Brian Turner (Sarnia, Ontario) 3:04.53; George Mugianis (Pontiac) 3:35.10.

Women: Alexa Kraft (Detroit) 3:13.37; Sue Cuthberson (Linden) 4:03.11.

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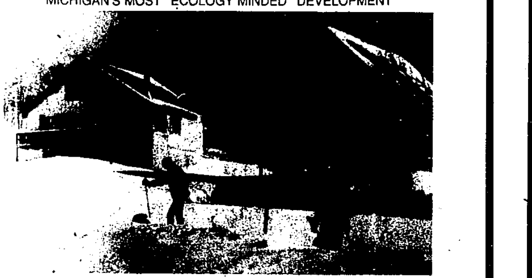

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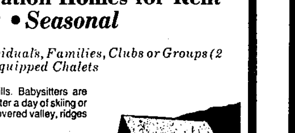

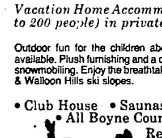

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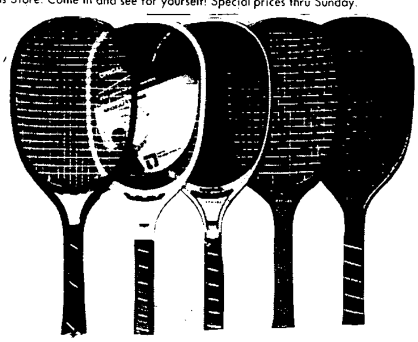

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