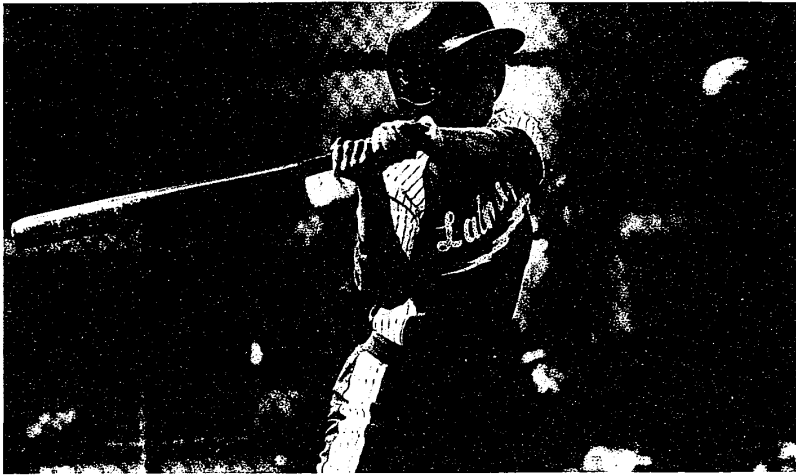


# Softball stars shine in all sports



Lathrup's Missy Thomas, a three-time Most Valuable Player & Eccentric softball team for 1980. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

By BOB GROSS

You couldn't accuse the members of the 1980 Observer & Eccentric All-Area girls' softball team of specializing in just one sport.

Take Southfield-Lathrup's Missy Thomas as an example. Thomas was an all-area first-team selection in basketball and a second-team pick in volleyball this season. She was the Most Valuable Player for Lathrup in all three sports.

Or take a look at Bloomfield Hills Kingswood's Jeanne Gilbert. Picked by area coaches as a first-team outfielder, Gilbert was the Most Valuable Player for Kingswood in four sports, leading the Aardvarks in field hockey, basketball, volleyball and softball.

Birmingham Groves' Karen Crawfis was another all-around athlete who also wound up on the all-area softball team. Crawfis, a second-team all-area volleyball pick, also competed in the shot put and the hurdles for the Groves girls' track team during softball season.

You could go right down the line and list the accomplishments of the rest of the team in other sports, but the truth remains that the nine coaches who came to the meeting picked a 12-member all-star squad based only on their softball skills.

After all, it is the Observer & Eccentric All-Area "softball" team.

MISSY THOMAS

A senior, and one of only two players returning from last year's all-area first team, Thomas started for Lathrup the past three years. She maintained a .403 batting average for the 1980 season, hit three home runs and three triples and had an on-base percentage of .532. Thomas, a shortstop, sparked in the field as well, finishing the year with a .972 fielding percentage. This is the third consecutive year in which

Thomas has been named a member of the all-area first team.

Thomas has accepted an athletic scholarship to the University of Michigan. Based on her performance at a tryout, there is a good possibility that Thomas will start at shortstop as a freshman for the Wolverines.

In addition to Most Valuable Player honors in basketball, volleyball and softball, Thomas also received the 1980 Lawyers Award at Lathrup as the outstanding female student athlete starring for two or more years in two or more varsity sports — indicative of her grade point average of 3.88. She is a member of the National Honor Society and Phi Beta Kappa.

Thomas plans to specialize in physical therapy at the University of Michigan.

JEANNE GILBERT

A senior, Gilbert was a starter on the Kingswood varsity squad for four years and was named to the All-Metro Conference team for the last three years. She batted .545 for the year with 23 RBIs. Included in that average is six home runs, three of which were over the fence. She had 28 stolen bases and scored 17 runs.

Gilbert struck out only one time during the season.

Named to the all-area team as an outfielder, Gilbert also played third base and pitched for the Aardvarks.

Gilbert has received an athletic scholarship to San Jose State University in California to play softball and field hockey — she was the outstanding field hockey player in the state this past season with 41 goals.

Gilbert earned 12 varsity letters in four sports during her four years at Kingswood.

KAREN CRAWFIS

Crawfis, a senior, batted .427 for the Falcons

with 17 RBIs. She is both an All-Oakland County and an All-Metro Suburban Association selection.

The starting shortstop for Groves, Crawfis also holds the Groves school record in the 220-yard hurdles, and she won the shot put at the MSA meet.

Crawfis received athletic scholarship offers from both the track and softball coaches at Grand Valley State College. She turned down the track offer and will play softball for the Lakers.

LINDA BACHE'

Another senior and another shortstop, Bache' started for Farmington Harrison for three years. She handled 101 chances in that time and committed only five errors.

Bache' batted .383 this year and drew 21 walks. She stole 31 bases in 31 attempts and scored 21 times.

A unanimous all-league performer in the Western Six, Bache' will attend Michigan State University.

KAREN ALBOSTA

A senior, Albosta captained the Troy Athens team. She compiled a batting average of .440 and drove in 29 runs. Albosta only struck out three times in 112 at-bats.

A four-year starter, Albosta led the Redhaws to a 21-12 record this year. She was named the team's Most Valuable Player, and was an All-Metro Suburban Association (MSA) first-team selection.

MARY BITKOWSKI

One of the finest defensive outfielders in the area, Bitkowsky was no slouch either with the bat for Birmingham Groves. She hit .455 for the year and had a .739 on-base percentage as the Falcons' lead-off hitter.



JEANNE GILBERT  
Kingswood



KAREN CRAWFIS  
Groves



SANDY DeSILVIO  
W. Bloomfield



LINDA BACHE'  
Harrison



JEAN ZUHORSKI  
Farmington



BECKY TEMMERMAN  
Marian



LAUREN MARAKAS  
B.H. Andover



MARY BIKOWSKI  
Groves



MISSY THOMAS  
Southfield-Lathrup



KAREN ALBOSTA  
Troy Athens



KELLY DEVERS  
Mercy



STEVE CRANE —  
COACH  
Groves

Bitkowsky had a streak going early in the year where she hit safely in 18 consecutive games.

A junior, Bitkowsky is both an All-MSA and All-Oakland County player. She is maintaining a 3.90 grade point average at Groves.

SANDY DeSILVIO

A senior, DeSilvio maintained a .426 batting average. She was an All-Greater Oakland Activities League (GOAL) player and was West Bloomfield's Most Valuable Player.

(Continued on Page 2C)

## 10-year-old Port wins Grand Prix

By BOB GROSS

A 10-year-old chestnut gelding named Port capped a comeback from a year-and-a-half layoff Friday, winning the North American Grand Prix for Open Jumpers at the Bloomfield Open Hunt Club.

It was something of a homecoming for Port — he won the North American Grand Prix in 1978 as well.

Of course, Port got a little help both years from rider-owner Lynn Little of Frederick, Md. Little steered Port through a jumpoff against Gigi Gaston of Santa Monica, Calif., aboard Stacked Deck.

Both Port and Stacked Deck made it through the first two rounds of the \$15,000 event without a fault. Stacked Deck went first in the jumpoff — where the object is to incur as few faults in the least amount of time — and made it through with a clear round in 38.45 seconds.

PORT SAILED around the course in hot pursuit of the time. Little made a strategic decision coming into the No. 8 post-and-rail vertical post, cutting a corner much shorter than did Gaston on Stacked Deck.

Port gathered his legs under himself, then cleared the jump easily. He charged through to the last jump, finishing with the winning time of 38.321. Little made the decision to cut the corner at No. 8 with a world of confi-

dence in Port.

"He can come off turns like that," she said, "and jump them. When he's jumping like he is tonight, there isn't any way you can beat him."

Port was clearly the class of the field Friday. He was clearing fences with plenty to spare.


"He is the most powerful horse that I have ever sat on," said Little. "There isn't a fence you could build that he couldn't jump."

THERE ARE a couple of stories behind Port and his win. He was injured at Madison Square Garden about a year and a half ago, and Friday's Grand Prix was only the second competition he had been entered in since that injury.

And Port came into jumping with a somewhat strange background. He began his competitive life as an English steeplechaser — Port was once the second-leading money winner on the English steeplechase circuit.

That steeplechase experience didn't really help Port, Little said, but it didn't hurt him either.

"I think he's just one of those unusual horses," said Little, "that has the desire to jump clear and the ability to do it. A lot of horses have the desire to jump clear, but not the ability, and he does have both."



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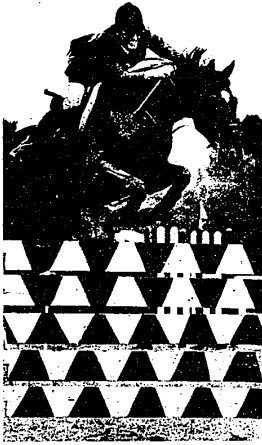
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Merak leaps high and maintains control during jumping act at the Bloomfield Open Hunt Club last week. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)