

Bloomfield eyes Legion playoff

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Norm Kaplan has one goal in mind

for his Bloomfield Hills Legion baseball squad this summer — to participate in the post-season Legion tournament.

Bloomfield Hills has never qualified for the legion playoffs in its first two years of affiliation with the 18th District American Legion Baseball League.

Kaplan's squad is currently in second place behind league-leading Ferndale, and the top two teams in the 12-team league qualify for legion playoffs. The next three teams are delegated to various Connie Mack District playoffs around the state.

"Two years ago we finished two games out of first place, and last year we were one game out of first (Royal Oak, Troy and Berkley tied for first place)," said Kaplan, whose team played Ferndale in a key league showdown yesterday afternoon at Andover High School.

"We'd really like to make the legion playoffs. But, we won't be unhappy in Connie Mack play. It's just that we'd like to go to the legion tournament for the first time.

"THIS IS OUR third year in the legion league, and we've always qualified for the (Connie Mack) playoffs. Two years ago we won the Pontiac District tournament, and last year we lost in the district finals at Saginaw.

"We've made our reputation in Connie Mack play, and we'd like to have strong reputations in both (Connie Mack and Legion playoffs)," he said.

Bloomfield Hills has mustered a fine 48-20 overall record in two years of regular-season and playoff action. Last year, Bloomfield Hills was 20-6 during the regular season and 4-2 in the playoffs.

Kaplan's squad was 14-6 before the start of last weekend. The season ends this week, and barring a complete collapse, a berth in the Connie Mack playoffs virtually is assured.

"This year we didn't get off to the kind of start we did in the previous years, but we've made a strong comeback so far," said Kaplan, who's assisted by sons Joe and John and Lahser high graduate Dave Mitchell.

"This year we've had the best depth we've ever had — it's our strongest team. We are well-balanced pitching-wise, and we have more power than we've ever had.

"IT'S JUST THAT errors — both physical and mental — have cost us. Errors are uncharacteristic of our team. The hallmark of our past teams is that we don't beat ourselves. And, that has happened this year.

"We're still capable of playing good ball," he said. "And, if we do it on a consistent basis, there's no limit to what we can do."

Last Wednesday, Bloomfield Hills defeated Rochester, 8-4.

Joe Sheeran allowed all four runs in the first inning but got stronger as the game progressed and picked up the win. Pat Sementkowski hurled 3½ innings and was tagged with the loss.

Rochester's first inning featured run-scoring hits from John Brosnahan and John Schwegman. Dan Springer also picked up an RBI on an infield out.

But Bloomfield Hills reared back with two runs in each of the first, third and fourth innings. Hills received single tallies in the final two innings.

The winning runs scored on designated hitter Dave Kuntzman's two-run single to right field in the fourth inning.



Photos by DICK KELLEY/staff photographer

Joe Sheeran of Bloomfield Hills survived a shaky first inning and posted an 8-4 victory over Rochester Wednesday evening.



Rochester's Ron Fox had a key base hit in a four-run first-inning surge.

Heights triumphs

Troy's Beach-Wood Swim Club defeated Orchard Valley in a recent North Suburban Swim League meet, 309-263.

Michelle Belo and Chris Gurzick each set new team records for the Beach-Wood Barracudas.

Belo placed first in setting her 50-meter backstroke record of 42.95 in the 11- and 12-year-old division. She also won the 50-meter breaststroke.

Gurzick, swimming in the 15-17 division, broke her own team record in the 50-meter backstroke with a time of 34.76. She also won the 50-meter butterfly.

In other 15-17 action, Kim Neeb took the 100-IM and 100-yard freestyle, while Bill Neeb placed first in the 100-free and broke a team record in the 100-IM with a time of 1:08.34.

Brad Scott placed first in the backstroke.

For the 9-10 group, Kristen Tenneswood took first in the butterfly, and Mandy Reynolds won the backstroke. Tracee Belo won the freestyle.

Jodi Deller, Bobby Bernstein and Dave McKimmon were each double winners for the 11-12 division. Bernstein won the backstroke and 100-IM, while Deller took the freestyle and butterfly events.

Gretchen Witte, Eric Neeb, Chris Scott and Jon Bernstein were winners in the 13-14 division. Trip Dixon won the 25-meter backstroke for the 7-8 girls.

Beach-Wood won five events, including both the girls' and boys' 64-year freestyle teams of Sarah Nagel, Kathy Desmond, Gurzick and Kim Neeb and Karl Semowitz, Brad Shively, Bill Neeb and Scott.

ORCHARD VALLEY was led by Sheri Vitale, who placed first in the 25-meter backstroke and set a new team mark in the 7- and 8-year-old division with a time of 24.12. She also won the 25-meter backstroke in 22.26.

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