

Sports

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'Dream Team' packs a potent kick

Forwards use scoring punch

By Brad Emmons
staff writer

THIS YEAR'S All-Area boys' soccer team certainly doesn't lack scoring punch. The forward line, consisting of four players, combined for 115 goals alone.

The midfield and the defense, however, should not go unnoticed. All played on winning teams with fine records.

Livonia Stevenson, 1982 Class A state champ and 1983 runner-up, placed four players on the first team.

Garden City, which finished with a 15-2 record in only its second year of varsity play, gained a pair of first-team berths along with last year's

Class A runner-up, Livonia Churchill. Area teams again proved their worth statewide as Stevenson made the finals, while Bentley reached the "A" semifinals.

Area coaches gathered recently to select the area's top players. Here are the results.

FIRST-TEAM

Paul Pummill, Garden City, forward: The senior was one of the big reasons for GC's emergence as a respectable soccer program.

He pumped in 30 goals and added 15 assists. He finished with 38 goals and 28 assists for his career.

This season, Pummill earned nine

Player-of-the-Game awards from coach Steve Vakratsis.

Andy Rama, Redford Catholic Central, forward: The 1983 Catholic League Player-of-the-Year scored 29 goals and added 14 assists, both school and league records.

The junior center-forward played on the 1983 Michigan Youth Soccer Association under-16 championship team and has made the Michigan select team three consecutive years.

John Gelmis, Livonia Stevenson, forward: A junior striker, Gelmis pumped home 32 goals, including four hat tricks, while adding 10 assists. His career statistics are 43 goals and 16 assists.

Bob Bowling, Plymouth Salem, defender: Big and strong (6-foot-2-inches, 175 pounds), the senior standout was a mainstay on the Salem backline for three seasons.

"Bob kicks strongly and accurately with both feet," said Salem coach Ken Johnson. "He is the best tackler of an opponent with ball that I've ever seen. His defensive positional sense is excellent and he is very strong in the air."

The All-Lakes Division pick had four goals and three assists this season on kicks from 20 or more yards out.

Chris Banyal, Livonia Stevenson, defender: "Mr. Defense" the past two years for Stevenson, Banyal's absence from the lineup because of an injury took its toll in the final two games of the state tournament.

"Chris was the backbone of our team," Scerri said. "No doubt Chris will be missed."

The first-team All-Western Lakes pick has quite a track record outside the prep ranks. A fullback for the well-known youth soccer club Arsenal, Banyal has been a part of 17 major championships throughout the world, including the North American Youth Soccer Championships in Victoria, B.C.

Mike Duckworth, Livonia Churchill, defender: The senior fullback was durable for the Chargers, playing in every game this season.

The Churchill co-captain was an All-Western Lakes pick this year and the "mainstay of our defense," according to his coach.

"Mike has excellent foot skills, good speed and a knack at being at the right position at the proper time," Neff said. "He was aggressive and hard-working."

Graham Crockford, Livonia Franklin, wild card pick: Playing both mid-field and defense, Crockford was chosen team MVP by his teammates.

The four-year starter and team captain was a "fine all-around player — almost like a coach on the field," according to Franklin mentor Doug Marks.

"Graham plays with intensity while in control of his head," Marks said. "He's very coachable — a fine person both on and off the field."

Crockford, who had three goals and two assists this season, played one year in the Bonanza-Express League and four years on Westland youth teams.

Terry Harshfield, Livonia Stevenson, goalie: His state speak for the last 11 shutouts, 17 goals allowed (in 23 games) and one goal scored.

His true talents were revealed in the state championship game against Troy Athens where he made several spectacular saves.

The first-team All-Western Lakes pick is another player with a fine summer track record. He starts for the BESL Arsenal and has been a part of 17 championships, including three state championships.

SECOND TEAM

FORWARDS — Dennis Patchett, Livonia Bentley; Eric Pence, Livonia Stevenson; Mario Sale, Farmington; Randy Johnson, Plymouth Salem (wild card); Ron Winkle, Plymouth Christian.

MIDFIELDERS — Chris Wiegell, Livonia Stevenson; Abe Yaffai, Livonia Bentley; Mike Jennings, Plymouth Canton.



GC's Vakratsis is area's top coach

Steve Vakratsis, the chef, cooked up a dream season for the Garden City boys' soccer team.

The first-year coach, a native of Greece, led to the Cougars to a 15-2 record in only their second year of varsity competition.

"I didn't expect that kind of record my first year," Vakratsis said. "After the first two weeks I thought we'd never get off the ground, but then the kids started playing together and communicating together."

Vakratsis, an employee at the Tin Lizzy Restaurant in Belleville, was brought up in a soccer family.

"I've been playing since I was very young," he said. "I turned pro when I was 16 over there."

Vakratsis came to the U.S. in 1955 and continued his soccer playing for 10 years, mostly with the Windsor Stars.

WHEN HIS playing days ended, Vakratsis got into coaching, first with the Livonia Eagles and then in the Livonia Family Y leagues, eventually leading him to Garden City.

"A lot of seniors helped me," he said. "They all worked hard. I have to give credit to the whole team. I owe it to them."

Vakratsis loses 10 seniors, including All-Area picks Paul Pummill and Andy Muglia.

"We have a GC Garden City kids. They play with a lot of guts."

DEFENDERS — Dan Divens, Livonia Stevenson; Don Guss, Redford Catholic Central; John Spaccaretella, Livonia Churchill.

GOALIE — Jeff Guido, Garden City.

HONORABLE MENTION

Livonia Bentley — Jim Radeback, Kevin Tuitt, Pete Lomas, Jeff Wilkinson, Brian Schindler and Eugene Pulles. Livonia Churchill — John Neff, Sam Matovski, Scott Hilden, Dave Gluth and Doug Kierevek. Livonia Franklin — Bill Carroll, Gerry McWilliams and Veli-Matti Alppi.

Livonia Stevenson — Steve Karis, Dave Barnes and Joe Novak. Plymouth Canton — Steve Marrell, Brad Neville and John Luce.

Plymouth Salem — Jeff Neschick, Steve Moran, Paul Weber and Mark Flower. Garden City — Bill Trombly, Bill Hyde and Ron Kasperick.

Redford Catholic Central — Bob Tartaglia, Steve DeMatos, Jeff Haslam and Brent Wask.

Redford Bishop Borgess — Paul Slawsky. Farmington Harriers — Dave Quarles, Wainabour and John Sepety. Farmington — Randy Gallinger, John Gregory, Chris Hackman, Andrew McKendrick and Mark Pingree. North Farmington — John Gambe.



Muddy Warriors realize dream with 28-14 win

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Matt Dingsen always had visions of playing in a state championship football game. Brother Rice's stellar, 6-foot-6 senior co-captain now will get the opportunity.

"When I was a freshman, my brother, Greg, was a senior on the 1980 team that won the state championship," said Dingsen along the sloppy, soggy sidelines Saturday at the Birmingham Groves field where Rice had defeated Detroit Henry Ford in the state semifinals.

"We (the Warriors) have been thinking about playing in the state championship game for a long time," he said. "It's been in the back of our minds for the past three years. You know, we won (the state title) in 1977 and '80, and we wanted to get back there again this year."

Dingsen and his muddy Warriors

posted a methodical, 28-14 victory over the Public Schools League champions to the Silverdome. Rice plays East Lansing in the Class A state finals at 1 p.m. Saturday. Rice takes a perfect 11-0 record into the final game while East Lansing is 10-1.

"I'm looking forward to (the championship) game," said Rice's veteran coach, Al Fracassa. "We can now practice in the gym and we don't have to worry about the weather."

"NORTH FARMINGTON beat us in the state semifinals in 1978 and that went through my head about 50 times today. I was worried about this game (against Ford) when I got here," he said. "But we got over the hump and it will be nice to be with the kids for another week."

As it turned out, Fracassa, who has never lost a state championship game, didn't have to worry about the Trojans. Rice expertly mixed its passing game

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—Al Fracassa
Rice coach

with its heralded ground forces and dominated.

There were two key, first-half plays which set the tone for Brother Rice.

With the Warriors up 7-0 early in the game, the Trojans had the ball at its own 35-yard line. Halfback

Warren Bryant ran the ball into the middle of the line for a couple yards. Dingsen, however, stripped the ball from Bryant's grasp, emerged from the pile of players and raced back 20 yards to the Ford 19-yard line.

Rice scored two plays later on a six-

yard, end-around sweep by Mel Farr. Kicker Joe Love booted the extra point and Rice had a 14-0 lead.

Later in the second quarter, Ford fumbled away its best chance to score. The Trojans had the ball at the Rice four-yard line on first down, but then fumbled three straight times. Quarterback Bernard Hall recovered the first two fumbles, but Rice tackle Mike Lodish fell on the third one.

"WE DIDN'T have a fumble (until late in the game), and that's important on a soggy day," said Fracassa.

Oddly enough, Rice, which scored in every quarter, mustered two of its four touchdowns via the slippery passing lanes.

Rice scored in the opening quarter on a 23-yard run from quarterback Allen Szynowski to senior Charlie Lau-rance. In the third quarter,

Szynowski hit Mike Farr with an 11-yard scoring strike.

Rice's fourth-quarter touchdown was scored by Luigi Ivezaj on a one-yard run on the first play after an interception by teammate Paul Konkel.

Ford's touchdowns came in the fourth quarter. Hall scored the first one on a six-yard run to cut the Rice lead to 21-7, and Hall later hit junior receiver Stanford Blue with a 64-yard pass against Rice's second-string defense.

Overall, Rice compiled an amazing 320 yards total offense. Szynowski, a junior, completed eight of 13 passes for 115 yards. The Warriors, led by Mel Farr's 143 yards on 26 carries, rushed for a total of 205 yards.

Ford had 21 yards rushing and 173 passing for 194 yards. Hall completed eight of 32 passes.