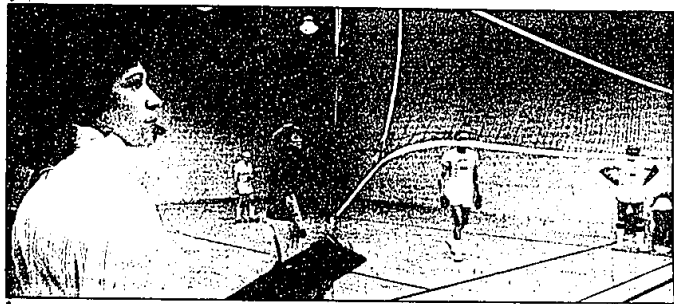


Ken Hill, (right) a member of the Farmington Fireballs, returns a serve to his opponent across the net. The 18-member Fireballs belong to the seven-squad Northwest Parks and Recreation Senior Citizen Co-Rec Volleyball League. The Farmington team compiled a 28-6 won-lost record through Thursday when it beat the Oak Park entry, 15-4, 15-2, 15-7. Referee Clare Schmidt (below) keeps a close eye on the game. Two special rules apply to senior, or "bounce," volleyball. The ball can bounce on the floor up to three times on one side of the net before it must be returned. The team of six must include at least two women.



Staff photos by
Randy Boret



Senior spikers

Age can't stop these athletes

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Age is seldom mentioned around the gym where aging volleyball players spike and set.

"We don't think age," said Loretta Conway, who coordinates senior activities like the volleyball team at the Mercy Center in Farmington Hills. "We're all 35, and I'm long past that."

Volleyball — a special kind with adaptations for seniors — is the in-season sport around the center, where the Farmington Fireballs play.

The 18-member Fireballs belong to the seven-squad Northwest Parks and Recreation Senior Citizen Co-Rec Volleyball League. The Farmington team compiled a 28-6 won-lost record through Thursday when it beat the Oak Park entry, 15-4, 15-2, 15-7.

"The thing that surprised us is the competitiveness," Conway said. "Some of these people are mild-mannered until they get on the court. And then . . . wow."

Two special rules apply to senior, or "bounce," volleyball. The ball can bounce on the floor up to three times on one side of the net before it must be returned. The team of six must include at least two women.

"The bounce makes the game more accessible, even to some people with serious handicaps," said Maggie Loris, senior adult specialist at Mercy Center.

"And the two-women rule was an effort to keep it a team sport and to get more women involved. Some of the teams were putting together strong, all-male teams, and a lot of people who wanted to play were being excluded."

THE FIREBALLS can thank their coach, retiree Ginny Loesche, for much of their success this winter. A Farmington Hills resident and a former physical education teacher with Detroit Public Schools, Loesche can both teach and play the game.

"She retired and decided that she would be a super volunteer — and she is," Loris said. "She got her certificate in aging, so she'd understand what she was getting into. She's shown that she's willing to spend the time and the money to gain experience in the field."

Volleyball has become popular for the seniors, who must be at least 55 years of age and residents of Farmington or Farmington Hills.

"I think you'll be seeing more of these kinds of activities," Loris said. "People are retiring earlier and perhaps in better health. They're more interested in physical things like swimming and volleyball, rather than Bingo or cards, which seem to be the stereotype activities for seniors."

Added Conway, "The term senior citizen sometimes gives the idea that people get old and just lie around. If some people want to do that, fine. But lots of older people want to be active."



Doris Vassiliakos concentrates as she prepares to return the ball to her Oak Park opponents.

"One thing I like about this volleyball program is that it helps destroy some of the myths about senior citizens. Some people won't come to our program because they think it's all cards and sitting around."

The Fireballs begin play in the league playoffs this week. After the competition, players from all the teams will get together for lunch at the Waterford senior citizen center.

"Along with the competition, there's a good deal of socialization," Loris said.

INSIDE ANGLES

Know someone doing something notable? Let us know. Write: Inside Angles, Farmington Observer, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024.

THE FARMINGTON AREA Republican Club will kick off its '84 Recruitment Drive. All area Republicans are urged to attend this informative meeting. Plans and goals for this year's election will be presented and discussed. This year's plans will include candidate nights, social, fund-raising activities, and supporting Republican candidates. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 28, in Botsford Inn. For information, call Terry Sever, 478-1851 or 477-6816.

SENIOR CITIZENS CENTERS and apartment complexes are on the list of camera location sites for the month of March for the Oakland County Senior Discount Program. The camera location for the Farmington area is: Farmington Hills Senior Center, 28600 11 Mile, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1-3 p.m., 478-9167. Persons who would like to have their business used as a camera location may telephone 858-5125. Seniors have their photographs taken at the sites and laminated into plastic identification cards. Discount Directories advertising the participating merchants honoring senior citizen identification cards are available at each of the camera sites for 65 cents.

KENWOOD DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB will hold a Club Championship at its regular weekly meeting place at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 29, in the American Legion Building, 31775 Grand River. All area bridge players are welcome. Refreshments will be served. Master points awards and cash prizes are offered. The Kenwood Club offers a unique program of "Silent Bidding" that is available nowhere else in this area. Ten tables of players can compete using this system, and those who wish to be assured of playing in this section, can make reservations by calling 626-2109.

THE CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION in cooperation with K mart Corp. presents the 1984 Bowl for Breath with Bob Strampe, pro bowler, ABC Hall of Fame. Win prizes and help strike out cystic fibrosis, the nation's number one killer of children in America. "The Bowl for Breath is for everybody — boys, girls, men and women of all ages," Strampe said. "It doesn't matter how well you bowl. Whoever you are, you can take part — and win." Prizes will be awarded at each bowling center based on the number of sponsors — friends, relatives, schoolmates, co-workers — who pledge a certain amount of money for each point scored. In the Farmington area, Belaire Lanes, 478-1850, and Norwest Lanes, 626-2412, will hold "Bowl for Breath" on March 11. After the games

are completed, players collect their pledges and turn them in on Sunday, March 25, to receive varying prizes.

NORTH FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL will hold a Booster Barn Bonanza at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 3, in the school cafeteria. From 7-8 p.m. there will be a silent auction; 8-10 p.m. is the main auction. Square dancing begins at 10 p.m.. Admission donation is \$2 per person. For more information, call 855-2352. Come and bring your friends.

QUILTERS WANTED. The staff of Farmington Community Center is looking for quilters who will join Mary King, an instructor for the center, in a workshop to put together a "friendship quilt." The quilters will gather from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays, March 27 and April 3, in the center at 24705 Farmington Road, to make a quilt that will hang in the center's upstairs hallway. Linda Cole asks quilters to sign up for the sessions by calling her at 477-8404.

JOSEPH LOPERENA, son of Mr. and Mrs. Raul Loperena of Farmington Hills, has received an appointment to the Air Force Academy. Joseph has been a student at Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose, Calif. He also excelled in football, earning the Outstanding Lineman Award last season.

SOME OF MICHIGAN'S fastest young swimmers will have an opportunity to learn about the true meaning of sports competition from a real champion — Olympian John Naber, winner of more individual medals than any other athlete at the 1978 Olympic Games in Montreal. Naber will be in Michigan Thursday and Friday, March 15 and 16, in connection with McDonald's Junior Olympic Swim Meet to be held at Clarencville High School. On March 16, he will hold a swim clinic for meet participants from 2:30-3:15 p.m. where he will demonstrate strokes and techniques and discuss motivation and achievement. The clinics are being sponsored by McDonald's restaurants. The meet will begin at 5 p.m. Friday, March 16. Saturday and Sunday morning events begin at 7:45 a.m.; afternoon events begin at 1 p.m. Boys and girls will compete separately in four age group competitions: 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18. Proceeds from the swim meet will go to Clarencville Swim Association. For further information, call American Sports Management at 557-2520.

SIGMA THETA TAU, a national honor society for nurses, inducted Mary Abunasser of Farmington Hills and a student at Marquette University into its Delta Gamma chapter. New members are admitted to the organization on the basis of superior achievement and leadership qualities.

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