

Title contenders?

Livonia schools look to move up the ladder

By Rich Swenson
staff writer

Livonia high school girls track teams hope to rebound from an "off season" last year in Western Lake Activities Association (WLAA) competition.

Last season, traditionally strong Livonia Stevenson and Livonia Churchill were upstaged by two Farmington schools — Farmington High and Harrison — which tied for the league title. But with a few breaks, both schools could make a run at the championship this year. Livonia Bentley, entering its last track season (the school is closing) just hopes to improve on last year's dismal season, in which the Bulldogs won only one dual meet.

The Spartans gave the best Livonia showing last season, finishing a respectable fourth. But perennial contender Livonia Churchill limped in a disappointing eighth while Livonia Bentley came in dead last, unable to record a single point.

The 1985 season should be different, however, according to coaches. The previewed will be Livonia Clarendonville of the Metro Conference.

LIVONIA CHURCHILL

With 80 team members, Churchill boasts one of the larger teams in the area. Depth could be the key to a successful Charger season.

The long distance and throwing events will once again be Churchill's strengths, according to coach Audrey Kather. Key performers from last year's team include shot putters Deanna Rochette and Kelly Smith, who also heave the discus. Last year

girls track

as a freshman, Rochette placed a respectable third in the league meet. Smith finished sixth in the same event as a junior. They will be joined on the throwing team by a sophomore Amy Weaver, Nadine Wleczek and Lisa Devlin.

The long distance team, made up of runners Carol Sulick, Amy Manternak, Becky Kinczkowski and Stacy Wolf, should also rack up some points.

Other returnees include seniors Colleen Conrad (relays and long jump), Kate Stewart (sprints) and Niki Otto (distance and hurdles), and juniors Melanie Franklin (high jump) and Beth Nosakowski (middle distance). The Chargers also have a fine crop of freshman, according to coach Audrey Kather.

"We should be decent — maybe not the top, but decent," she said. "We hope to finish in the middle of the pack."

LIVONIA STEVENSON

The core of Stevenson's team is found in the long distance, hurdles and field events, where a number of team members excelled in last year's league meet.

League 800-meter champion Sheila Taormina returns, but she won't begin competing until she finishes her AAU swimming season.

Hurdler Karen Millen, who finished third in the 300 meter hurdles last year, also is back. So is Chris Schemanske, who took a fourth-

place last year in the discus.

The long jumpers are led by Amy Rozman, who finished fourth in the WLAA league meet last year, and Kim Smith.

Rozman also took second-place honors in the 400 meter dash at the league meet. She'll be joined by Cinda Abidin, giving the Spartans a formidable middle distance running team.

Other key returnees include Michele Economou, who finished fourth in league in the 3,200, and Sue Tatigian, who captured fifth in both the 1,000 and 3,200.

Shot putter Shawn Snyder will add depth and experience to the throwing teams.

LIVONIA BENTLEY

Bentley had a disastrous season last year, but the Bulldogs are already showing signs of improvement, losing their season opener Tuesday to Garden City, 68-64, in a close encounter.

The young Bulldogs have 28 girls out for this year's team, which isn't bad, considering 17 girls from last year's team didn't return.

The long distance, sprints and relays will be the Bulldogs' strengths this year, according to third-year coach Dennis Kaittel. But to improve on last year's mark, Bentley will need some help from its freshman.

"I think we're already ahead of where we were last year," Kaittel

said. "We have a lot of ninth-graders that have performed very well."

"I'm looking to improve over last year record-wise — we should be better. But we won't be winning any league titles."

Senior Liz Gordon will lead the sprint team. She'll be joined by junior Kathy Long and promising sophomore Katie Ebel, who'll run sprints and anchor the sprint relays. Long will also handle the high jumping chores. Junior Sue Brookshire returns to lead the hurdlers while sophomore Kris Kett heads the contingent of middle distance runners.

The Bulldogs will rely on newcomers Karen Habersett (shot put), Cheryl Crandahl (sprints), Kerry Craig (sprints), Amy Ritter (discus) and Sue Fawor (long jump) to pick up the slack.

CLARENCEVILLE

The Trojans may have a tough time fielding a team this year, according to first-year coach Dick Davio. Only 15 girls have signed up for the team thus far, and Davio is unsure where the team stands at this point.

"We're having a real participation problem," he said. "It's looking dismal, but we're going to stay with it to see what happens. Hopefully, we'll have more girls come out."

Clarendonville has virtually no returning members, Davio said. Most of the girls out for this year's team are freshmen.

"Several kids that ran last year have given me verbal promises, but they haven't shown up for practice," he said.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Lynn Johnson of Livonia Stevenson, running the first leg of the 3,200 relay in a meet against North Farmington, hopes to give the Spartans depth so they can improve on last year's fourth place finish in the WLAA.

High diving

Wantuck earns places at NCAA's

By C.J. Riasak
staff writer

Mike Wantuck proved the ability that made him an All-American as a freshman at Texas as an abundant now, two years later at Ohio State.

Now the only question still needing an answer is how much that ability can be honed and if it will be enough to carry him to the highest platform among NCAA divers.

Wantuck, an Ohio State sophomore athlete and a Bloomfield Hills Andover graduate, partook in the NCAA diving championships last weekend, a competition that OSU diving coach Vince Panzano said was "better than it's ever been." Wantuck placed fifth on the 3-meter board and ninth on the 1-meter.

"He dove extremely well," said Panzano of Wantuck's performances, both of which earned him All-American designation.

WANTUCK HAD done well at the Big Ten championships last month, but he was even sharper at the NCAA's, hosted by his former school, Texas. Wantuck scored 582 points on the 3-meter board last weekend, compared to his 555 total at the Big Ten meet. On the 1-meter, he had 479.10 points at the Big Ten and 500 at the NCAA's.

Three Buckeyes earned All-American status. Senior Mark Bradshaw finished second on the 3-meter and fifth on the 1-meter, while sophomore Pat Jeffry was sixth on the 1-meter and eighth on the 3-meter. The trio scored all 78 of OSU's team points, enabling the Buckeyes to finish 14th in the NCAA, best among Big Ten teams.

IT ALSO earned Panzano Diving Coach of the Year honors. Wantuck and Jeffry are the only underclassmen among the top 8 finishers on the 3-meter board.

"It indicates they definitely have a good chance (to win an NCAA title)," Panzano said. "And that's certainly one of (Wantuck's) goals."

Wantuck's showing "wasn't surprising," said Panzano. "He took a year off from NCAA competition (after transferring), but he was training real hard for the Olympic Trials."

"He learned some new dives and it took some time for him to adapt to them, and to adapt to a new system and environment. But I definitely think before he graduates he can be an NCAA champion."

WANTUCK LEFT Texas after his freshman year because he didn't agree with the

Longhorn training program, which dwelled more on mental conditioning than physical training. He wanted to enroll at Michigan but diving coach Dick Kimball made it known he didn't want Wantuck on the team.

That's when Panzano got in contact with him. Panzano had met Wantuck when the pair were part of a team travelling in Europe.

"I told him he was welcome to come and join our team," Panzano said. "Mike was a bit concerned with the quality of education here, so I had him talk to some people in the academic program. He found out that if you do well in the undergraduate program here you can go to any graduate program in the nation."

WANTUCK IS interested in pursuing a career in law, Panzano said. He is currently enrolled in OSU's English honors program and has a better than 3.0 grade point.

His grades have been just as high athletically, and they should go even higher, according to Panzano.

"He's definitely going to improve," the Buckeye coach said. "Even though he's been diving a long time, he's still learning. His list of dives won't change much, but he has to develop those dives to a higher level, and he has to do them with more consistency."

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