



By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Four young men dressed in green and white football uniforms stood in a mini huddle near midfield at Spartan Stadium Saturday.

Bob Wasczenski was there with his old Farmington Harrison teammate John Miller. Dave Yarema and Tom Holba, a pair of quarterbacks, were with them.

The rain was falling but spirits were high. It was picture day and members of the media littered the stadium carpet.

"There it is, the O&E connection," said the wise-guy reporter intruding upon the mini huddle.

This so amused Yarema that he promptly walked away.

"How's it going for you big fella?" was the question posed to Miller, MSU's highly publicized freshman recruit.

"Great. It's going great," Miller said. But you had to wonder what he was really thinking. He wasn't in camp more than three days when a front-page story accompanied by a color photo featuring him and teammate Andre Rison appeared in the Detroit News.

THAT KIND of media exposure can be hard on a freshman. The upper classmen, those who have taken their licks at the college level without much attention, can hold such exposure against a young untied freshman.

"No, everything's been fine. Nobody has said anything to me," Miller said. But then, the upper classmen have yet to practice with the freshmen.

Coach George Perles isn't concerned about any animosity — he's not talking about it if he is.

"Our freshmen class has gotten a lot of publicity," he said. "Perhaps more than they deserve. But they're like first-round draft choices in the pros. They are that good. They have a great chance of making and helping our ball club."

Later, when asked if he felt the upper classmen may hold a grudge against the highly touted rookies, he said, "These freshmen, Miller, Rison, (Maurice) Ware, these guys were Parade All-Americans. It's only natural that they get the publicity."

He didn't really answer the question, which makes you wonder if he's not at least a little concerned about a potential problem.

IT'S HARD to tell if Miller is wor-

ried about it. He says he's not, but after the players disbanded from the team photo to greet reporters Miller stayed in the stands.

He came down later and was besieged by a reporter from the Associated Press and several others.

Most freshmen only have to worry about making the team.

"How are you doing Waz," quipped the reporter to Wasczenski. "I don't see any cast on your hand, any broken bones?"

"Hey Waz, this guy knows you pretty good," Holba joked.

Actually, it turned out to be no joke. Wasczenski had earned a starting wide receiver job with the Spartans last year and caught a touchdown pass in the Cherry Bowl after an injury slowed his early progress.

Waz retained his starting role after spring drills this year. But, in an informal workout, he twisted his ankle. He wore a cast on Saturday.

"I've been going to therapy four days a week," he said. "I think it'll be ready by Wednesday (the first day of fall practice)."

THOSE WHO know Wasczenski know him as a care-free, happy-go-lucky guy — almost to a fault. But, on

the matter of his injury he's dead serious.

"It takes a lot of work to make it at this level," he said. "There are three or four outstanding receivers out here that can take my job in a minute. You have to work your tail off every day and keep getting better or else you won't be here long. I'm practicing Wednesday if this thing (ankle) is ready or not. I have to."

Wasczenski is an amazingly talented athlete. After a rather undistinguished high school baseball career at Plymouth Canton and Harrison, he has become an all-star in Lansing. He led his team to the AAABA World Series in Johnstown, Pa., this summer. He expects to play baseball for MSU this spring.

It appears Wasczenski can do just about what he wants to in athletics. Don't expect an ankle sprain to keep him off the field too long.

Absent from this cast of local characters was another Harrison product slated to be in an MSU uniform: Dave Blackmer.

Blackmer has enrolled for classes at Central Michigan University. He will be athletically ineligible this season, but would have two years of eligibility remaining.

Spartan fortunes lie with Yarema, Bobbitt

By C.J. Rieak
staff writer

Two years ago, Paul Bobbitt and Dave Yarema were part of a rebuilding program at Michigan State University. They aren't any longer.

At least not in George Perles' eyes. After listening to the Spartan football coach at MSU's football media day Saturday, it was evident that much more was expected from his veterans.

Now they are cornerstones in a program counted on to succeed.

That's what happens after a season featuring a win over University of Michigan and capped with an appearance in the Cherry Bowl. Fans are greedy, after years of losing, any glimmer of light at the end of that long, dark tunnel looks like a supernova.

NEITHER BOBBITT, from Southfield-Lathrup, nor Yarema, from Birmingham Brother Rice, would want it any other way, of course. They each occupy particularly difficult roles in MSU's scheme. Any hopes for continued improvement by the Spartans (they went from 2-9 in 1982 to 4-6-1 in 1983 and 6-5 last year) could very well rest on their shoulders.

Consider, too, that the Big Ten will be no cake walk this year, not with quarterbacks like Iowa's Chuck Long, Illinois' Jack Trudeau and Purdue's Jim Everett — all prospective first-round pro draftees returning.

The more mention of their names had Bobbitt, a junior in eligibility, rolling his eyes. The Spartans'

strong safety, Bobbitt was second on the team in minutes played last year, despite a knee injury that required arthroscopic surgery after the season.

"It was giving me trouble during the week of the Cherry Bowl," Bobbitt said. "I took a few days of practice off."

HIS LEFT KNEE was operated on in January and he missed spring drills while rehabilitating it. "It's 110 percent now," he said.

It will have to be if MSU is going to stifle the top-notch passing attacks on their schedule. Also returning in the secondary is free safety Phil Parker, an all-Big Ten selection the past two seasons. But both starting cornerbacks from last year's squad graduated, leaving important holes to fill.

Bobbitt knows the inexperience at the corners — Todd Krumm, a sophomore from West Bloomfield, is the frontrunner to start at one spot — will put added pressure on him.

"Experience is a big factor," he acknowledged. "We have some inexperience, but if I utilize myself, I can help them out."

"While I'm in coverage I can help them, and I can talk to them between plays, help them anticipate what's coming."

A YEAR AGO, Bobbitt was just getting his feet wet as a full-time starter. This year "I feel I can relate to the game better. I'm able to anticipate better."

"I'm more relaxed, more comfortable on the field. And I have gotten stronger. I've worked on my one-on-one coverage, and I feel I've improved it."

Optimism abounded in any football program, particularly before the first game's been played, and MSU's is no exception. But the optimism at MSU has focused more on the highly publicized freshmen recruits than the 15 returning starters.

Which doesn't bother Bobbitt. "I like to see Michigan State get publicized," he said. "Everyone's working for the same goal. As the season progresses, the people playing will get their due."

A PAIR of redshirt freshmen — Tom Holba and Bobby McAllister — have been pushing Yarema at quarterback. A year ago, the junior (in eligibility) started all 12 games for MSU, completing 119 of 222 passes (53.6 percent) for 1,477 yards, with 11 touchdowns and 15 interceptions.

But his poor performance in the 10-6 loss to Army in the Cherry Bowl (11 of 25 for 155 yards, with one TD and three interceptions) brought an avalanche of criticism.

"I try not to think about it," Yarema said. "Competition is good, and there are too many other things to worry about. I'm going to do my best, and whatever happens, happens."

Kings fall short

The Adray Kings had plenty of firepower, but not enough pitching last weekend in the eight-team American Amateur Baseball Congress (AABC) state tournament in Battle Creek.

The Kings opened the double-elimination tournament Friday at Bailey Stadium with a 12-4 victory over the Detroit Americans, clubbing five homers.

But on Saturday, Birmingham turned four double plays and used Joe Maloney's two homers to hand the area-based Kings their first loss, 9-1.

Troy Jet Box then eliminated the Kings later in the day, 9-5.

"I thought Birmingham Lynch had the best team, by far, but they didn't win the tournament," said Kings manager Larry Laidock, whose team finished the season with a 39-6 record.

Ferrari, one of two host teams from Battle Creek, won the tournament and host the AABC nationals this weekend.

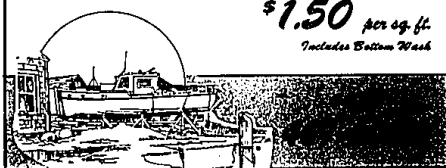
IN THEIR ONLY victory, the Kings were led by Steve Raymond, two homers and four RBI; Doug Allard, two-run homer; Randy Baringer, two-run homer; and Rick Loewenstein, solo homer.

Scott Combs worked all seven innings to pick up his 19th victory without a loss.

In the Lynch game, Adray fell behind 3-0 in the top of the first, but got a run back in second inning on a Mike Williams solo homer.

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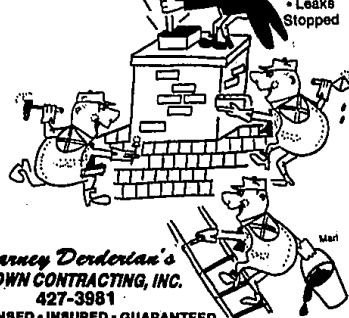
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