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Risak

## Athlete's education may be sacrificed

GIOLARSHIPS, the lifeblood of college sports, are ruining some pretty good kids. Recruiters pound on a high setool star's door, filling his head with often farfetched dreams and waving a scholarship in his face. He kid swallows the bait, and another potential victims to here.

The recruiters know. They're as good as any used car salesman when it comes to making a pitch. College alumni and administration pressure them mercilessly to succeed, often at any cost.

So these coaches and recruiters prey upon a kid's vulnerability — his childhood heroes. "He could be the next Larry Bird," a coach will tell the press after landing a prized recruit — an 18-year-old who's naive enough to belive such talk. Lost in all this is what is truly being offered — a free education. And that's not right. Those often misused and misguided athletes you see running up and down a basketball court on national TV aren't strangers, either. They're hometown boys, all possessed by the same obsession to become a hero in the mold of Larry Bird or Magle Johnson. You probably know some of them.

FUNNY TRING IS, most of their idols don't want to be. Kansas City outfielder Willie Wilson put it best when he said he never asked to be anyone's here. He uttered that Infamous remark after his occaine conviction.

Nor should they be. Really, what does Bird have to offer the world except an extraordinary ability to lay a game?

Nor should they be. Really, what does Bird have to offer the world except an extraordinary ability to play a game?

And yet he, and countless other sports figures, are the role-models for today's youth, whether they like it or not.

Their success is the reason we have Bob Wasczenskis and Mike Whites and Dave Blackmers and Doug Clelands and a whole slew of others in college sports.

Wasczenski attended Plymouth Canton, switched for Farmington Harrison, took a football scholarship at Michigan State, then transferred to Toledo. When last we spoke, he mentioned a possible baseball shot with the Chicago Cubs.

Blackmer, the placekicker from Harrison, went to Wisconsin, then MSU, and is now at Central Michigan. Cleland was a standout swimmer from Rochester Adams who was uttracted by University of Tennessee's biglither reputation. He dropped out early in his first semester and is now at Oaktand University.

Mike White graduated from Plymouth Salem and decided to play basketball at Schooleraft College. Which is all he did at SC — play basketball white's poor grades sidelined him by the start of his second semester.

The list is condess: high school stars who, for

white's poor graues stickined nim by the start of his second semester. The list is endless: high school stars who, for varying reasons, shifted their careers once in col-lege. But as different as their reasons may be for changing gears, one element is common to all.

THAT IS THEIR emphasis on athletics. In each THAT IS THEIR emphasis on athleties. In each of the a forementloned cases, the subjects either made their choice of colleges or switched schools for primarily athletic reasons. Which is wrong. The blame for this ultimately falls on the coach who recruits them. He's the one accused of planting the seeds that sprout into dreams of grandeur. That's unfair. He may nuture those previously planted seeds to satisfy outside forces pressuring him to produce a winning team, but his responsibility ends there.

here. A whining team, but his responsibility ends there. Even if coaches level with athletes, tell them how remote their chances at athletic stardom are, it remains an uphill battic. Five are trying to destroy the American Dream, the studdly entrenched belief that anything's possible. The Dream persists even in junior colleges. "During the '795,' recalled Oakland Community College basketball coach Tom McPhillips, "every player who came here wanted to play provide them. We give them the percentage of players who make the pros every year. "We constantly hit them with the idea that it's OK to have that goal, but get an education to fall back on."

back on."

Education is the sacrificial lamb. Too many athletes consider academics second when making their choice of schools, or when they decide to change schools.

"IN THE BACK of their minds, they feel there's a possibility, even though it is a long shot," asid Schooleraft basketball coach Rocky Walkins. "I tell a kid he has to prepare for a life after basketball. The CBA (Continental Basketball Asociation, a semipro league) is no way to waste your time.

sociation, a semipro league) is no way to waste your time.

"They have dreams of going to Europe, when the pros will see how great they are. I tell them they're wasting their lives."

Most of his players, Watkins said, respect his frankness and listen. Their goals are more modest, to jump from JC ball to Division to rII.

But those already playing at the NCAA's top division are closely attuned to the stardom that could lie ahead. A high school senior being recruited by University of Michigan won't listen to a recruiter who tells him his chances to play pro are silm and none. That isn't what he wants to hear.

And as fine an academic institution as U-M is, that won't be the major reason most athletes choose to become Wolverines.

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## Falcons' cage skid continues



Senior Bruce Kratt scored 28 points Tuesday night at Canton, but Farmington came away with its fifth-straight loss.

## Kratt's 28-point night for naught vs. Chiefs

Both Plymouth Canton and Farmington had their own state-of-the-season addresses to give Tuesday.

And the Chiefs report a moderate And the Chiefs report a moderate with the control of th

EVIDENCE PRESENTED at Tues-day's game brings validity to both statements. Canton swarmed defen-sively and stung Farmington for 25 turnovers. Three players for the Chiefs checked in with double-figures scoring with others contributing some fine de-fense.

fense.
The key, according to Nieml, was making the Falcons play the Chiefs' type of game.
"We forced them to make some long passes, Nieml said. "Farmington was a lot bigger than us. We had to make them play on the full length of the court.

court."

Another part of the Chiefe' strategy
was keeping Bruce Kratt in line by
making him shoot from the line. The
Falcons' 6-1 guard still tossed in a
game-high 28 points, but 14 of those
came on free throws.

Kyle Mutz fired in 20 points for
Farmington. But from there, things fell
off dramatically. The next highest
scorer was Steve Howel!, who netted 10
points.

Tony Racka, who's shooting for \$1 million on Tuesday at the CBA All-Star game in Tampa, Fla, had only four points. The Falcons' sharp-shooting guard was held scoreless in the first half.

"WE'VE GOT to get more scoring from more than just two kids (Kratt and Mutz), said Roy. Two guys cannot carry the load."
Farmington has also been depleted by illness of late. Both Mark Sievens and Craig Petersmark have been out. Petersmark, whose presence was missed under the boards, saw limited action Tuesday.
But added Roy. Those are not excuses (Canton) just outplayed us."
And that was done thanks to some fine outside shooting by Canton guard Joel Miles and Tyrone Receves drives to the basket. Miles led all Canton scorers with 21 points while Receves sent in 19.
In the second half, Revers warms. 19 guard dishit miles a field goal in the span, bitting five-of-five attempts before fouling out.
Mics was seven-of-17 from the floor.

"(MIES) HAS BEEN an excellent.

"(MIES) HAS BEEN an excellent floor leader this season," said Niemi. Dan Olszewski, with 10 points, was Canton's other scorer in double figures.

For most of the game, the Chlefs maintained control. That was due in part to some line shooting. Canton was 31-of-56 for 55 percent from the floor.

"When we did miss, they fouled us," noted Niem.

From the line, the Chlefs were 19-of-

From the line, the Chlefs were 19-of-24. Mies was seven-of-10 on free

Farmington, which didn't miss many shots in the early going mainly because

## Skate champion dons new wheels

Imagine jumping into the ring with homas Hearns without ever having

Thomas Hearns without ever naving boxed before. Imagine competing in the Boston Morathon without ever having run a

Maration without ever having run a race.

These are things that you just don't consider doing — unless you are an unusually gifted athlete. Lori O'Nelli is an unusually gifted athlete. No, she won't be taking on Thomas Hearns or the Boston Marathon in the near future. But she will be taking on some of the world's top cyclists in the Tour of Texas this March.

Lori O'Neill has never competed in a United States Cycling Federation-sanc-

March.

Lori O'Neilt has never competed in a
United States Cycling Federation-sanctloned race in her life.

O'NEILL, A 21-year-old Farmington High grad and Oakland Community College junior, is one of six members of the Cyber-Schwinn Cycling team — the only fully sponsored female team in the state — selected to compete in the Tour of Texas. She is the only one, how-ever, who hasn't had any previous rac-ing experience.

Tour of Texas. She is the only one, however, who hasn't had any previous racing experience.

"When I found out, it floored me," she said. "I said, "Mow, should I go?" I know I was taking a big chance. I'd have to miss school and work. I don't know if I could even compete. I knew I had never raced before.

"But I decided to do it. I know I am physically in shape, all I need is experience. And that's exactly why I am going."

"O'Neill, although a novice to cycling, is no stranger to national competition. For the past ine years he he been for the past ine years he he been discussed in the said of the past ine years he he been exactly all though a novice to cycling. Is no stranger to national competition. Easting games she brought home a silver and two bronze medals. In the 1985 games, she won a gold and silver. Her gold-medal 4-lady relay team established a Sports Festival generation.

THIS FALL, O'Neill became in-

THIS FALL, O'Nelll became in-volved in cycling. It was a logical tran-sition for her since she used to cycle 50 miles a day, six days a week in training for skating compositions.

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"I used to ride with some guys who were with the 7-11 team," she said. The 7-11 team is perhaps the most prestigious sponsor in the sport of cycling. "I



Lori O'Nelli novice cyclist

really enjoyed it. In September, I had my doubts whether to stick to skating or try cycling. I just decided it was time to put my skates saide. Her ridling partners were the sons of Frank Andreau, a key figure with 7-11. Andreau was impressed with O'Nelli's natural ability on the bike and put her in contact with coach Mike Walden. Walden has coached the likes of Stella Young, Roger Young, Connie Paraskaven and Livonian Jeff Pierce—all world-class cyclists. Walden is the coach with the Cyber-Schwim team.

the coach with the Cyber-Schwinn team.

"Milke called me and said he was willing to take me because of my back-ground in athletics and because he got a good word on me from Frank An-dreau, "O'Relli said. "He'd never even really seen me ride."

"THE TRING I like about her," said Walden, "Is that she knows the ground rules of suffering. That's real common in individual sports like cycling and skating. She's a real hearty kid with a

skating. Sne's a real meanty for white lot of spunk."
Walden said that Cyber-Schwinn will race a four-person team at the Tour of Texas, He said that O'Neill has a good

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