

# Standing Pat

## Is Franklin team to beat in WLAA?

By Brad Emons  
staff writer

### softball

Some sports fans say statistics are for losers and preseason polls are for guessers.

But there's no denying Livonia Franklin and Garden City are two talented softball teams entering the 1988 season.

Franklin was rated No. 1 in a coaches poll released last week. Garden City was ranked No. 6.

The lofty rankings are based on last season's statistics.

Franklin was last year's state runner-up and returns seven of their 11 top players, including the main ingredient, senior pitcher Tracy Lecia.

Garden City finished 16-4 overall last season, losing three close games to Franklin, including a 20-inning 2-1 count.

"They only thing it (the ranking) means is that everybody will be shooting for you," said Garden City second-year coach Jim Lentic. "It means if Franklin is that good, then we must be pretty fair ourselves."

THE COUGARS also have an outstanding pitcher in junior Shelly Malone, but the key to their state

title hopes will be hitting.

"This one of the things we've worked on," said Lentic. "We want to get the bat on the ball. We've emphasized that as much as you can emphasize any part of the game. Last year we hit only about .220 as a team."

Although Franklin lost a pair of All-Area players in second baseman Carolyn Smith and catcher Jill Phillips, the Patriots played a number of underclassmen last season in key positions last year.

Coach Joe Epstein was out of town last week and could not be reached for comment during the spring break.

Lentic was working his team out, trying to get an edge on his Franklin counterparts.

"My assistant (Barry Patterson) and I went to an NAIA (softball) clinic in January in Chicago, and who do you bump into but Joe!" Lentic recalls. "I said, 'What are you doing here?'"

er: Kelli Koss, sophomore shortstop.  
● Promising newcomers: Julie Gallagher, senior first baseman/outfielder, transfer from Ferris State; Lisa Rockefeller, freshman outfielder.  
● Roy's '88 outlook: "We have a lot more good players this season. We should be a better team; we'll be very young though. We'll hit better. Definitely, we're not bad and the team hopes to be better. We'll need to come up with a backup pitcher and try to eliminate the young mistakes."

### NORTH FARMINGTON

● Coach: Dennis Motil, fifth season.  
● Last year's overall record: 11-9.  
● League affiliation: Western Lakes.  
● Notable losses to graduation: Patti Kozlowski, transfer from Ferris State; Lisa Rockefeller, freshman outfielder.  
● Leading returnees: Mo Paradis, senior outfielder; Libby Shaw, senior second baseman; Aron Kurcho, senior outfielder; Julie Vignor, senior catcher; Robin Weatherford, junior pitcher; first baseman; Jill Hiller, junior first base-outfielder; Leah Damiani, junior shortstop.  
● Promising newcomers: Stephanie Knapp, sophomore third baseman; Eric Elm, sophomore outfielder; transfer from Ferris State.  
● Mike's '88 outlook: "Our pitching is untested, and catching is a big concern of mine. But I'm optimistic. We're stepping up into a new league, but I'll let you, the Northwest Suburban League, be the best of their league (Franklin and John Glenn) with us. I really don't know what to expect. I'd like to think we could finish at least .500."

### FARMINGTON HILLS MERCY

● Coach: Suzanne Brown, first year.  
● League affiliation: Catholic League Central Division.  
● Notable losses to graduation: Sue Scott.  
● Leading returnees: Michelle Fryett, senior shortstop; Terri Nakodka, senior pitcher; Jean Wassenaar, senior utility; Lisa Krumm, center fielder; Linda Raymond, junior left fielder.  
● Promising newcomers: Amy Edwards, freshman pitcher; Holly McWood, sophomore second base; Nikki Fraser, sophomore catcher.  
● Brian's '88 outlook: "We're very coachable and I think we'll do fine. The general consensus among the players is that they've learned a lot. Now they have to put it to use. We have the talent to go far; I'd be surprised if we didn't."

### LIVONIA FRANKLIN

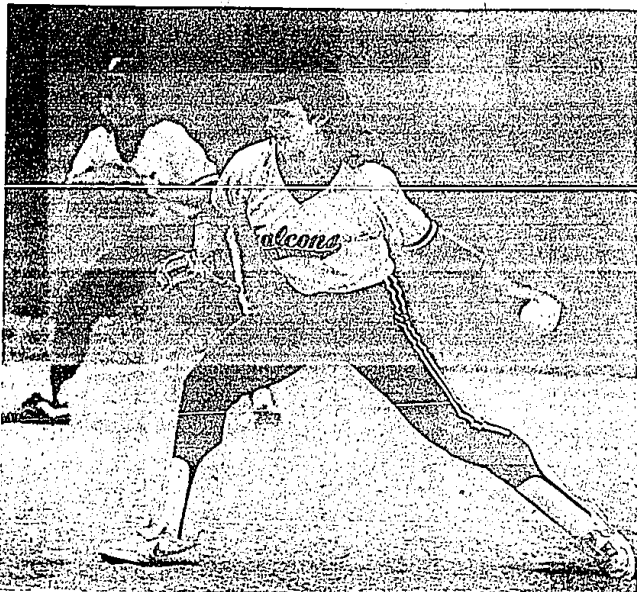
● Head coach: Joe Epstein, third season.  
● Last year's overall record: 25-4.  
● Titles won last year: Livonia City Tournament, Northwest Suburban League, district and regional championships; and Class A state runner-up.  
● League affiliation: Western Lakes (Western Division).  
● Notable losses to graduation: Carolyn Smith, All-Area second baseman (.421); Jill Phillips, All-Area catcher (.308); Sue Penz, first baseman; Beth Stewart, right fielder.  
● Leading returnees: Tracy Lecia, All-Area pitcher (22-4 record, 0.82 ERA, .908 batting average); Mistia Vassellou, junior shortstop, second team All-Area; Kris Roman, junior left fielder; Cherie Masonello, junior right fielder; Terri Obey, third baseman; Patty Wilson, junior third baseman; Gayle Cheseda, junior shortstop; Sue Pyle, junior catcher; Karen Schoelger, junior second baseman; Rose Obey, sophomore pitcher; Carolyn Williams, sophomore shortstop.  
● Promising newcomers: Mary Wagner, pitcher; Cathy Cruz, sophomore third baseman; Shelly Lankford, junior right fielder; Phonda Rutkowski, senior left fielder; Kathy Currow, sophomore left fielder.  
● Franklin's '88 outlook: Last season, using a variety of off-speed pitches, Lecia lanned 158 batters in 178 innings. Smith and Phillips will be tough to replace, but the Patriots have

### FARMINGTON HARRISON

● Coach: Mike Tschann, sixth season.  
● Last year's overall record: 9-14.  
● League affiliation: Western Lakes.  
● Leading returnees: Tracy Lecia, senior shortstop; Dana Dokins, senior catcher; Dana Radzicki, senior left fielder; Heidi Royat, junior pitcher-third baseman; Theresa Spitz, junior center fielder; Dawn Culbertson, junior pitcher; Barb Dickner, senior first baseman.  
● Coach's '88 outlook: "We went with two sophomore pitchers last year. Hopfully that will help this season. The pitchers attended Wayne State camp this summer and seem to be improved. We have the heart of our batting order back from last year."

### FARMINGTON

● Coach: Richard Roy, fifth season.  
● Last year's overall record: 4-18.  
● League affiliation: Western Lakes.  
● Leading returnees: Lisa Edwards, senior pitcher-first baseman; Junior Becky Phip, junior catcher; Tracy Schreier, junior outfielder-catcher.



photos by IAN DYBOST/Staff Photographer

Lisa Edwards tends two years of varsity experience to a youngish Farmington softball team this season. The Falcons hope to improve on a dismal 1985 season.

plenty of firepower offensively with the return of Vassellou, Roman, Obey and Wilson.  
Defense could be the key to Franklin's success.

### GARDEN CITY

● Head coach: Jim Lentic, second year.  
● Last year's overall record: 16-4.  
● League affiliation: Northwest Suburban.  
● Notable losses to graduation: Tracey Templeton and Jennifer Young.  
● Leading returnees: Karen Bandman, junior center fielder, first team All-Area (.213); Shelly Malone, junior pitcher, second team All-Area; Mikey Gorak, junior shortstop; Sherry Burton, catcher; Tracy Richards, right fielder; Denise Kokowicz, junior second baseman; Mary Hebert, junior right fielder; Nancy Cargle, infielder.  
● Promising newcomers: Terri Paul, junior first baseman; Amy Thompson, sophomore infielder; Tonya Wiestek, infielder; Tracy Sullivan, sophomore third baseman; Tonya Windick, utility; Shannon Walsh, junior infielder; Kristen Wiala, sophomore pitcher.  
● Lentic's '88 outlook: "Shelly (Malone) is basically a power pitcher, but she is going to try to vary her speeds this year. 'We've got some speed. We're going to do a lot of hitting.'"  
"All some of the key positions we're stronger. We'll get our share of wins."

### WESTLAND JOHN GLENN

● Head coach: Linda Jimenez, first season.  
● Last year's overall record: 15-7.  
● League affiliation: Western Lakes.  
● Notable losses to graduation: Missy Lundy, Julie Pucal (first team All-League) and Karen Dubick.

● Leading returnees: Dawn Williamson, junior pitcher (second team All-League); Carol Hax, shortstop/first base; Kelli Watts, second baseman; Karen Crocholik, first base, first baseman; Kristi Crocholik, third baseman (will miss two weeks with a broke collarbone).  
● Promising newcomers: Lynn Moxey, junior pitcher; Becky Wilson, sophomore pitcher; Cheryl Hawley, sophomore pitcher/DH; Katy Clauer, catcher; Patty Dossager, junior catcher; Jennie Smart, junior first baseman; Jenny Gronostalski, junior third baseman; Jenny Olson, junior outfielder; Robyn Stokewick, outfielder; Julie Hanson, outfielder; Liz Gorecki, junior right fielder.  
● Jimenez's '88 outlook: "Our strong point is speed and a strong mental attitude. We have very competitive players."  
"Our weakness is a lack of power hitting except for Carol Hax."  
"We've had too many injuries already."

### LIVONIA STEVENSON

● Head coach: Lee Caple, sixth season.  
● Last year's overall record: 13-4.  
● Titles won last year: Western Lakes Activities Association (15-1).  
● Notable losses to graduation: Lisa Bokoy, three-time All-Area pitcher (15-4, 0.41 ERA); Jean Finlayson, All-Area shortstop; Shannon Snyder, catcher; Cathy Gage, first baseman.  
● Leading returnees: Donna Casperent, second team All-Area outfielder (and first baseman); Janet Mitchell, junior catcher (third baseman); first baseman.  
● Promising newcomers: Bentley transfers Kory Kowalski, pitcher/infielder; Concha Allen, junior shortstop/pitcher; Lori Bailey, first baseman; first baseman; and Denise Vince, junior infielder; Dorie Rau, utility.

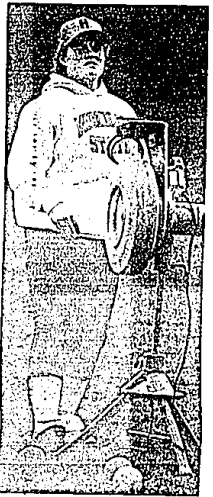
● Caple's '88 outlook: "We have a good JV unit that has moved up to the varsity level. What this group lacks is experience."  
"We'll lose a few games, but we'll be a quality team by the end of the year if we pull together as a team."  
"Without pitching, it doesn't matter what you do offensively or defensively."

### WAYNE MEMORIAL

● Head coach: Lew Caves, first season (replaces Mary Crocholik).  
● Last year's overall record: under .500.  
● League affiliation: Wolverine A.  
● Notable losses to graduation: Unknown.  
● Leading returnees: (All seniors) Debra Swapp, first baseman; Kary Galbreath, catcher; Brenda McArthur, shortstop; Chris Diato, third baseman; Kathy Koss, left fielder.  
● Caves' '88 outlook: "We don't have any experienced pitching. We're going to rely on two 10th graders."  
"I took the job because I enjoy it. I played a lot of ball in the Army."

### LIVONIA CHURCHILL

● Head coach: Bernard Puk, second season.  
● Last year's overall record: 3-16.  
● League affiliation: Western Lakes.  
● Notable losses to graduation: Terri Schreier, All-Western Division first baseman; and Beth Conpton.  
● Leading returnees: Beth Mikalbitz, Lisa Vooz and Leigh Anne Zabala.  
● Churchill's '88 outlook: Bleak.  
"Catcher pitchers had new problems getting the bat over the plate last year. Newcomers will have to pick of the slack."



Heidi Royat, a junior, will see action both on the mound and at third base for the Hawks.

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