

## Farmington threesome scores in Oakland meet

Nobody can say Troy's Keith Wheeler didn't do all he could. Wheeler, the junior sprinter/hurdler, broke one meet record and tied another en route to a four-win performance at Friday's 40-team Oakland County boys track and field meet at Hazel Park.

Wheeler scored 40 points himself, which is more than any team but champion Pontiac Northern, which won with 84 points. Rochester, which placed second with 53, and his own Troy squad, which finished third with 46.

Other local teams to place among the top 20 were Farmington, fourth (3); Troy Athens, seventh (27); Birmingham Brother Rice and Rochester Adams, tied for eighth (26); Auburn Hills Avondale, 12th (14); Bloomfield Hills Andover and Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook, 13th (12); and Southfield and Orchard Lake St. Mary's, tied for 18th (seven).

**WHEELER'S PERFORMANCE** was easily the best individual effort of the meet. He won the 110-meter high hurdles (14.5), then came right back to win the next event, the 100 dash (10.7).

Wheeler also captured the 400 in 48.4, tying the record set last year by Southfield's Torin Dorn, and then broke his own county record in the 300 hurdles of 37.3, established last year, by blazing to first in 37.0.

Still, Wheeler was not the only shining star at the meet. Farmington's Craig Petersmark won twice, taking top honors in the discus (155-0) and the shot put (52-6 1/4). The Falcons also got a first from Alan Stebbins in the 800 (1:54.6) and a second from Chris Inch in the 1,600 (4:18.2).

Rochester, which surprised several opponents by winning its state regional meet, turned in another fine performance. The second-best county team got firsts from Nate Childers in the long jump (22-3 1/4) and

Chad Findley in the 3,200 (9:29.6).

**OTHER TOP-THREE** scorers for Rochester were Doug Gaudle, third in the 3,200 (9:33.2); Jeff Scott, third in the 400 (50.2); and the 800 and 1,600 relay teams, which each placed second (1:31.8 for the 800, 3:24.1 for the 1,600).

The only other local county champion was Dan Weinert of Rochester Adams, who was tops in the high jump (6-5). Teammate Andy Diller also placed fifth in the event (6-3).

Top-three finishers included William Fitzpatrick of Rice, second (152-5), and Greg Cameron of St. Mary's, third (152-1) in the discus; Tom Allen of Rice, second (22-0), and Delbert Littlejohn of Adams, third (20-9 1/4) in the long jump; Tim Fairman of Troy, third in the shot (50-0); Jeff Scott of Avondale, third in the 110 hurdles (15.1); Allen of Rice, third in the 100 (11.3); Mike Wirthlin of Andover, second in the 3,200 (9:31.4).

Athens was second in two relays — the 400 (44.3) and the 3,200 (8:02.4) — and third in another, the 800 (1:51.9). Southfield placed third in the 400 relay (44.5).

The Class A state track finals are Saturday at Flint Northwestern. Field events start at 10 a.m., with track events following at 1 p.m.

## NSL's curse? WLAA monster out of control

**T**HIS HAS easily been the most grueling prep spring sports season I have ever dealt with.

What in the world is going on? There are meaningless Western Lakes soccer matches being played well into the state tournament. The Western Lakes league track meet is scheduled the Wednesday prior to the state meet. (The Oakland County meet was the Friday before that, and the regional meets were the Friday and Saturday before that — to say nothing of the final dual meets of the season.)

And what about baseball and softball? Yeah, that's what I want to know — what about them? Can anybody give me complete and final standings in the Western Lakes? I doubt it. Well, just crown Westland John Glenn champs in baseball and Livonia Franklin champs in softball and leave it alone.

**YOU KNOW** what this is, don't you? It's the curse of the old North-west Suburban League. Oh, those paybacks.

You see, the Western Lakes used to be this cozy 16-team conglomeration, and the NSL was an old-time six-team league. Everything was fine. You had your Western Lakes baseball-softball on Monday and Wednesday, the NSL on Tuesday and Thursday, Friday was for



Chris McCosky

makeups and non-leaguers. Track meets never got in the way, all nicely scattered throughout the six-week spring season. Soccer had its place. A busy six weeks for sure, but no real hassles.

But then Livonia Bentley closed its doors, and the Western Lakes people had to readjust the conglomeration. It reached its long arm out toward the NSL and snatched Livonia Franklin, Westland John Glenn and North Farmington.

"Welcome to the new 12-team Western Lakes."

Redford Thurston, Redford Union and Garden City were left for dead.

Well, guess what? Those teams didn't die. A new NSL was formed by Redford Union and Garden City. Thurston sought refuge in the well-established Tri-River League.

And all three schools must be having a dandy time watching the Western Lakes struggle to administer the monster it has created.

**THERE WILL** have to be

changes before next spring. That much has to be clear to all concerned. The strain the Monday-Wednesday-Friday Western Lakes baseball schedule placed on the young arms alone should merit a re-evaluation.

There are so many events crammed into the six weeks that coaches and athletes are finding it impossible to set priorities. Yes, the league title comes first. But what about the city title? What about the old rivalries? What about the Observerland events? These events, the fun events, get placed on the back burner and soon will cease to be fun.

Changes have to be made. But the minute you say that, somebody takes offense. Those in charge of setting up the spring sports schedules in the Western Lakes immediately take a defensive stance against the critics.

Well, there are no culprits here. Nobody had a crystal ball. Who could have foreseen the headaches of this spring? When the new Western Lakes structure was announced, I was gung ho for it. I thought it would increase the competitiveness of the league. I thought it was going to make my job easier.

Wrong. So live and learn. But let's fix it up before next year. Or else fit me for a straight jacket.

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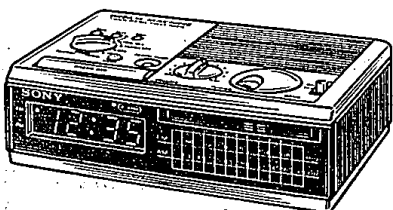
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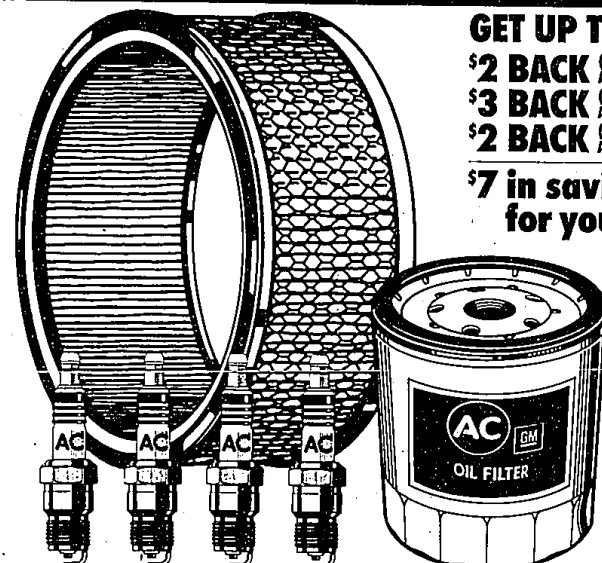
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