



# Y sports: Parents and youth learn the philosophy together



Under the hat and the oversized T-shirt is batter David Miller, one of the 400 youngsters on the Y T-ball fields this summer.

By Loraine McClish  
staff writer

**A**T 6 P.M. FOUR nights a week youngsters spill out of cars, spread out to the baseball fields on the grounds of O. E. Dunkel Middle School, and get ready for the umpire to yell "play ball."

The game is T-ball for the 400 kindergarten-to-third graders who make up the largest enrollment of a physical sport ever offered by Farmington YMCA.

"We schedule the play to begin at 6 p.m. because I am a big advocate

of parent involvement," said Mike Montemurri who came to his job as director of the Y's physical programs three months ago. "When the season ends (in mid-August) we'll be working to get a soccer clinic started for the 3-5-year-olds this fall and it will be a clinic as much for the parents as it is for the players."

"It is important to us that parents learn quick what our ideals are, what ideals they will be following," Montemurri said. "It is important that they know up front that we are not interested in making champions."

**EMPHASIS** in sports participation at the Y is learning while having a good time.

"It's an educational process," Montemurri said. "We create a positive feeling on what sports are, while teaching team work and sportsmanship. There is no expectation put on the player. We don't keep standings and we don't give trophies. Nobody is bribed or threatened. Winning is down-played in all of our youth sports."

The Y also follows an all-play rule. "All players are going to play," he said. "If it's baseball a player is not

allowed to sit out more than one inning. If it's basketball, a player is required to play at least two quarters. We stick to the all-play rule in all the youth sports, and we get the parents involved at every possible opportunity."

Montemurri grew up in Southfield, graduated from Central Michigan University, and took his first job at a YMCA in Houston, Texas. When he returned to Michigan to work here one of the first things he did was up the T-ball enrollments in large measure by juggling the schedules to include the parents.

This fall he will work for expanded leagues and expanded competition in connection with Novi and Walled Lake schools and parks and recreation departments for "at least the floor hockey, basketball and soccer programs," he said.

Another area that will be expanded concerns the middle-school-age child.

"Youth leagues generally stop at age 12-13 and that makes a two-three year gap before the student gets into high school sports. In that time some lose interest. And if he/she doesn't make a high school team, sports might just stop for them altogether. I intend to fill in that gap," he said.

**BROCHURES** listing the full fall agenda of Y programs, classes and offerings will be mailed out to all members, and to all Farmington and Farmington Hills residences the third week in August.

The Y, on Farmington Road north of 12 Mile Road, is open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

"The swimmers and the joggers are here at 6 a.m. The pool is full all the time. The joggers are back at noon and then again after work," he said.

While he talked he was moving out of the way to make room for a group of day campers going out and a group of preschoolers from First Step, the Y's day care center, coming in amidst the bustling activities in the building.



Three-year-old Meredith Carruthers (at left) is not a T-ball player. She spends time on the field with her father, Dale, an assistant team

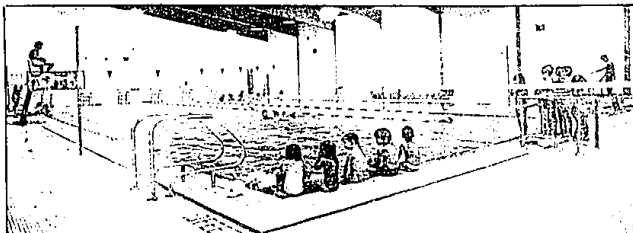
coach, who is giving some tips to the runner on third base, Mike Jennings.



Yuko Salkawa (at left) and Yuki Matehuro wear the fruits of their labors, paper hats, while more creative work is pursued in Pat Camp. The summer camp is for the 3-5-year-old set.



An everyday swimming class is part of day camp at the Y. A quick swish with the brush and 6-year-old Cindy Plozia is ready to hop on the bus for a field trip with fellow campers.



The Y's pool is open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and it is not unusual to find three or four classes going on simultaneously at any given time.

Staff photos  
by  
Randy Borst