

## Sports

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Monday, May 16, 1988 O&amp;F

(F1C)

## Wenson earns high marks in minors



Paul Wenson's arsenal includes a lively fastball and a hard-cutting slider. The Farmington High grad jumped from single-A to the Detroit Tigers double-A farm team this season.

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Paul Wenson doesn't need to watch "Sesame Street" to find out what the letter A means.

For the average baseball player, toiling in the depths of the minor leagues, the A takes on a whole new meaning. Simply, it's another jungle to conquer. And the more A's there are, the tougher it gets.

Wenson knows. He made the jump this season from single-A to the Detroit Tigers double-A farm team in Glens Falls, N.Y.

"Primarily, the difference between A ball and double-A ball is that you can get away with more mistakes," said Wenson, who is a graduate of Farmington High School. "Like throwing a fastball down the middle of the plate. In A ball, a batter might swing and miss or foul it off.

"Here, they hit your mistakes over the fence."

The fences have been safe this season with Wenson on the mound. In 21 innings of relief work, he's 1-0 and has a 1.29 earned run average, ranking him third among pitchers in the Eastern League.

SINCE SIGNING with the Tigers as a free agent after his junior year at U-M in 1986, he's shot up the minor league chain from Bristol (rookie), to Lakeland (single-A) and currently Glens Falls.

"The jump from single-A to double-A and then there's triple-A. After that, we're talking the big

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— Paul Wenson

Tigers minor league pitcher

with a locker at Tiger Stadium next to Guillermo Hernandez and Jack Morris, a Kroger commercial and, most importantly, a chance to borrow Jim Walewander's Dead Milkmen records.

Wenson slams on the brakes.

"I'm just concentrating on pitching here in Glens Falls," he said.

Things, nonetheless, are encouraging. Last season with the Lakeland Tigers, Wenson was 9-6 and had a 2.72 ERA. He ranked sixth among relief pitchers in the Florida State League.

Wenson's arsenal includes a lively fastball and a hard-cutting slider. This season, with the help of Glens Falls pitching coach Jeff Jones, he's added a straight change up.

But more than what he packs in his pitching repertoire, some say Wenson has the right frame of mind.

"The jump from single-A to double-A is the biggest jump for a player," said Ken Lipshetz, general manager of Glens Falls. "It separates the men from the boys. What claims a lot of pitchers is a lack of confidence.

"That's not a problem with Paul."

WENSON DIDN'T opt for the easy road. He had enough faith in his ability to sign after his junior year at U-M instead of waiting to see if he would be drafted in his senior year.

As a result, Wenson had to start at the bottom of minor league chain at Bristol, Va. College players that are drafted start at single-A or even double-A.

The minor league life for Wenson hasn't been the eternal exile it's often painted to be.

"It's not as bad as they say it is," he said. "The money could be better. I'm moving up faster than I expected. A lot of the guys have been around a lot longer than I have.

"I just wanted to play pro ball," he added later. "The chance to sign was there after my junior year. I didn't know if it was going to be there after my senior year. So I took it."

Wenson is used primarily as a set-up man with the pitching-strong Glens Falls Tigers. Former Oakland A's thrower Dave Beard and Bob Link have been the closers for the Tigers.

Often the role of the middle relief man is to clean up the mess the

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starter leaves behind and set up the short reliever to come in, throw three pitches and get the save. Credit it usually misses the mop-up man.

"EVERYONE HAS their role," said Wenson, who has never started a professional game. "It's a role I've been in before. It's not that new."

At U-M, Wenson was primarily used in relief. He had a perfect 6-0 record in his three years with the Wolverines.

Wenson had problems harnessing his wicked slider, often plagued by control problems. He settled down in his junior year, compiling a 4-0 record. He picked up a key win against Minnesota in the Big Ten tournament in 1986.

He's eight credits shy of a sports management degree, which he plans to complete in the fall.

His strength as a pitcher is certainly enhanced by the addition of an off-speed pitch. He said it's a necessity in double-A to keep the hitters off balance.

Wenson is keeping hitters guessing with a straight change instead of the nouveau split-finger fastball.

"I tried it (the split-fingered pitch)," he said. "I just can't control the thing."

Which is the only thing he hasn't been able to master in the minors.

## Comeback clips Canton, keeps Hawks flying high

The momentum gained from an amazing, come-from-behind victory Wednesday carried over to Friday's baseball doubleheader for Farmington.

After rallying to beat Plymouth Canton 11-10 at midweek, the Hawks won two games from Livonia Churchill, 9-2 and 11-7. Harrison is 5-4 in the Western Division and 8-5 overall.

The teams completed a suspended game in the opener. The Hawks led 6-0 when it was halted. Jason Lichtman continued on to earn the pitching win.

In the nightcap, Rob MacDonald and Millard Coleman had two hits and two RBI apiece. Leo Devine and Sean Murray also had a pair of hits.

Devine was the winning pitcher, also, coming in relief of Craig Murray and pitching 3 1/3 innings. Lichtman went the last three for a save.

**HARRISON 11, CANTON 10:** The Hawks dug a hole for themselves early in their Western Division game with Canton last Wednesday, and it took them the rest of the game to dig their way out.

But they eventually did, holding on until two were out in the bottom of the seventh inning to take an 11-10, victory from the first-place Chiefs.

Harrison, which trailed 6-0 after two innings and 10-8 at the end of five, scored four runs in the last inning to hand Canton its third defeat in 15 ballgames.

"It was really happy when we came back like that," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "I was even kind of surprised when we did."

"If we hadn't lost the doubleheader to Franklin, we'd be right in the thick of the (division) race."

With the win, the Hawks improved to 3-4 in the division and 8-5 overall. Canton, to Harst lost twice to Harrison, 1-3 and 11-3. The Chiefs were scheduled to

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play two games Saturday with Franklin, the other contender.

Mike Sulak pitched five innings for the Chiefs and turned over a four-run lead to Chris Kennedy in the sixth. He gave up a run in the sixth and was one out away from ending the game in the seventh when Harrison rallied.

Sean Murray started off with a pinch-hit double and scored on a wild throw after an error that allowed Jason Lichtman to reach base.

Leo Devine, one of the team's big hitters, doubled to put runners at second and third and set up Jason Hicks to hit a game-tying, two-run double. Then, with two strikes on him, Rob MacDonald hit an 0-2 pitch to drive in Hicks with the winning run.

Canton jumped in front when Derek Humphries hit a two-run homer in the early innings. Scott Browne's two-run single in the fourth and two more runs in the fifth made it 10-4. Joel Riggs drove in a run with a bunt single, and Humphries drew a bases-loaded walk.

But the Hawks came to life in the seventh, scoring twice to tie the game, and then won the third and fourth times in the fourth.

Hicks, Devine and Jeff Skinner slammed two-run doubles.

Hicks was the last of four Harrison pitchers and the winner. He went the last 5 1/3 innings, allowed two hits and held the Chiefs scoreless. He walked two and struck out three.

Lichtman started and was followed by Bryan Wauldron and Craig Murray. Sulak gave up five of Harrison's 11 hits, walked six and struck out eight.

At the plate, Devine ended up 3-for-5, scored twice and had three RBI. Hicks was 2-for-3 with two runs and four RBI, and MacDonald and Skinner were 2-for-4 with one and two RBI, respectively.

Riggs, the lead-off batter for Canton, walked three times, scored twice and had one RBI, and Jamie Slater had two hits and two runs.

**N. FARMINGTON 5, FARMINGTON 4:** Jose Sturtis slammed a solo home run in the bottom of the seventh inning to break a 5-3 tie and give the Raiders a victory Thursday at North.

Sturtis was 2-for-4 and scored three runs. Jay Marcoux contributed a two-run single for the winners, and Mike MacCie and Rick Rachner drove in one run apiece.

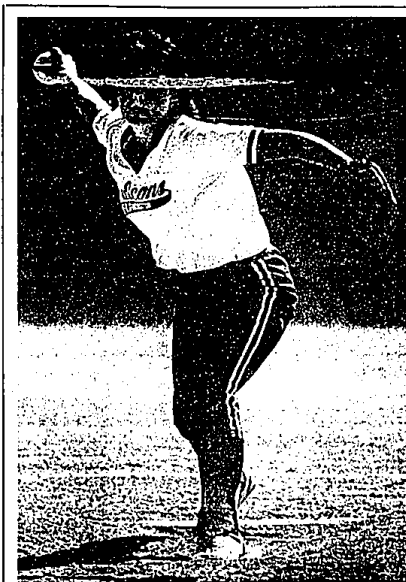
Farmington's Scott Seabolt was 2-for-3 with an RBI. With two runners on and his team down 4-1 in the fifth inning, Seabolt's single got past the center fielder and enabled him to race home with the tying run.

Both pitchers went the distance, with North's Bob Bullach getting the win. While scattering four hits, he struck out five and walked one. The Falcons' Chris Schmidt allowed seven hits but didn't walk anybody. He had three strikeouts.

On Wednesday, Livonia Stevenson scored nine runs in the last two innings to defeat the Raiders 14-4.

Simon was 2-for-3 and scored two runs for North, and Vasey Hill and Brian Miller had RBI singles.

Starting pitcher Andy Drake worked 9 1/3 innings and suffered the loss. The Spartans led 5-2 after five innings.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

## City teams split

Lisa Rockefeller pitches for Farmington High School in the first game of a softball doubleheader Friday against North Farmington. The Raiders won the first game 7-2, but the Falcons rallied in the bottom of the seventh inning to win the nightcap 11-10. Please see Page 3C for game details.

## Mercy unbeaten streak reaches 9

Farmington Hills Mercy saw one streak come to an end in soccer Thursday while keeping another in tact.

The Marlins settled for a 2-2 tie with Harper Woods Regina, snapping their eight-game winning streak. But the draw enabled Mercy, 8-2-1 overall, to extend its unbeaten streak to nine games.

The Marlins were fortunate to do that much after trailing the Saddielites 2-0 at halftime.

Coach Gene Fogel decided to move Stacy Nolla, the team's leading scorer last year, from sweeper to forward at halftime to pump up the offense.

"I figured it didn't matter if we lost 10-0, because a loss is a loss," Fogel said. "She played a great game at forward."

"(The Saddielites) have a strong defensive team and a good goalie," he added, "and being down 2-0 was really cause for concern."

Nolla responded by scoring Mercy's first goal five minutes into the second half. Carrie Bowler's pass went up the middle of the field, and Nolla clipped the ball over the goalie's head as she came rushing out to meet the play.

The Marlins tied the score midway in the half on a cross from Colleen Rattery to Michelle Geyer, who headed the ball into the net.

Mercy outbroke Regina 12-10 in the first half but failed to get any quality shots, Fogel said. The Marlins gave the opposition a bonus when a Mercy fullback accidentally headed the ball into her own goal to open the scoring.

**Churchill 20, NOLA 20:**

Mercy dominated the second half, however, with 19 shots to the Saddielites' five. The Marlins might have won the game, but a couple Rattery shots hit the post and the referee, due to an error in time keeping, terminated the game well in advance of its scheduled conclusion.

Mercy was scheduled to play a make-up game Sunday against Blahney, with the outcome determining the Catholic League playoff pairings.

The winner will face fourth-place Regina, and the loser will draw first place Birmingham Marian in the first round Tuesday. The championship and consolation games are slated for Saturday, May 21.

Prior to Sunday's action, Marian was 7-1 in the league, Mercy and Foley 5-1-1 and Regina 5-1-2.

**FARMINGTON 6, W.L. WESTERN 1:** Carrie Maier scored three of her four goals in the first half as the Falcons took a comfortable 6-0 lead into halftime last Wednesday.

Maier accounted for Farmington's first two goals, and Stacy Schalm assisted on both. Heather Glennie and Amy Trunk scored before Maier closed out the first-half scoring.

Maier made it 6-0 in the second half with Jennifer Miasara getting her second assist of the night. Schalm finished with three assists and Trunk one.

Laura Cull scored for the Warriors with two minutes left in the game. The Falcons, controlling the play throughout the game, outshot West-

ern 16-3 in the first half and 12-5 in the second.

In Friday's playoff game, Farmington lost to Northville 1-0. The Falcons, who dropped a 5-2 game to the Mustangs a week earlier, were outshot 11-6 in the first half but turned that around for an 8-4 advantage in the second.

"It was a good game, a very tough game," coach Ed Bartram said. "We played much better than in last week's loss. The whole team played pretty well tonight."

Northville scored as a result of a mix-up in the goal area in the first half, Bartram said. He cited goalie Debbie Westerkamp and fullbacks Katie McDonald and Tonya Slicker for their exceptional play.

Farmington is 7-4 in the league and 8-4 overall.

## Harrison runs past Northville

Farmington Harrison had no trouble getting past Northville in girls track Thursday, while Farmington and North Farmington pulled out victories under tougher circumstances.

The Hawks, 3-0 in the Western Division, ripped the Mustangs 78-50 at Northville. Harrison faces Plymouth Canton, also unbeaten in the division, in a dual-meet showdown Wednesday at Canton.

Farmington came on strong in the late going to edge Plymouth Salem 66-62 Thursday and remain atop the Lakes Division with a 3-0 record. The Falcons are 4-0 overall.

The Raiders, 2-1 in the Lakes Division and 2-2 overall, won the 1,600-meter relay and hold on for a 68-60 victory over Westland John Glenn.

**HARRISON 78, NORTHVILLE 50:** Tracey Radke, Jane Peters, Maria Chalagiotis and Kamala Malosh won individual events and helped the Hawks take three of four relays.

Malosh was a double winner with first place in the 100 and 200 dashes, recording 13.4 and 28.1 times. She also started off the winning 400 and 800 relays.

Radke captured the high jump (5-0). Peters the 100 hurdles (18.0) and Chalagiotis the 300 hurdles (50.0). Harrison also leads in the shot put by Almee Jarpava (31-4½) and the 800 run by Tracy Delbuso (2:44.1).

Malosh, Nivn Hakim, Stacy Roemer and Radke won the 400 relay in 33.8. Malosh, Peters, Roemer and Chalagiotis the 800 relay in 1:53.3.

In the 1,600 relay, it was Peters, Hakim, Roemer and Chalagiotis combining for a first-place effort of 4:23.5.

**FARMINGTON 68, SALEM 62:** The Falcons played unbeaten but had to come from behind late in Thursday's meet to remain so.

Farmington is 3-0 in the Lakes Division, 4-0 overall. The Rocks are 0-3 but have lost those contests by an average of nine points.

The Falcons trailed 53-52 with two events left, but they went ahead with a sweep of the 200-meter dash. Carrie Maier won that race in 27.1. Jo Fox was second and Nicole Toeroch third.

That gave Farmington a 61-51 lead, and the Falcons locked it up when Jennifer Kiel took first place in the 3,200 run (12:15.3), putting the Falcons out front 66-57.

The Rocks closed the gap by winning the 1,600 relay. Shelley Bohlen, Jennifer Smith, Tracy Thomas and Amy Hobgood posted a 4:24.4 time.

In the field events, Farmington's Kristi Devine broke her own school record in the shot put for the third time this season. Having thrown a record 35-4 a week ago, she bettered that with a 35-5½ effort Thursday.

The Falcons won the high jump with Julie Lawton going 4-10, but the other field events went to Salem. Shelley Bohlen won the discus at 108-11 and Kim Pioscha the long jump at 14-9.

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