

Men's golf tournaments sponsors: O&E/Whispering Willows

Men's 36-hole medal play: Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17-18. Entry fee is \$35 (includes golf gift). Handicap maximum is 36.

Entries close at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10. Shotgun start on Saturday, Sunday mornings. For pairings and starting times, call 476-4493 after noon Wednesday, Sept. 14. Rain make-up dates are Sept. 24-25.

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U.S.G.A. handicap or six 18-hole score cards are required.

Send entry blank with check (no cash) payable to tournament director Gary Whitener, Whispering Willows, 20500 Newburgh, Livonia 48152.

Pairings will be made by the tournament committee. No requests for individual pairings will be taken. No changes will be made.

Open to all residents of Livonia, Plymouth, Canton, Garden City, Westland, Redford Township, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin, West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Township, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Rochester and Avon Township.

Past O&E champ on streak

By C.J. Riasak
staff writer

If the Observer & Eccentric mens golf tournament goes to a playoff, one past champion should be the heavy favorite.

John Van Vleck of Farmington Hills has won titles in 1976, '77 and '83, and the way he's playing this summer, there's reason to believe he might win again. Not that Van Vleck is playing all that well, but luck can be just as important a deciding factor.

"I haven't been playing that outstanding," admitted Van Vleck. "It's not that I'm winning these tournaments. I just keep squeaking them out."

What Van Vleck has "squeaked out" is more than remarkable. It proves the value of luck. He has been involved in four important tournament playoffs, and he has come away a winner — of sorts — all four times.

THE LATEST was Aug. 8 in the U.S. Amateur qualifier. Van Vleck shot a 72 at Western Country Club in Redford, then drove to

golf

Meadowbrook Country Club in Northville and shot a 75. He no sooner finished his second round when he was notified he would have to return to Western for a playoff.

This was no ordinary playoff. Six others, including such state golfing stalwarts as Josh Mondry (from Birmingham), Pete Green (from Franklin) and John Morgan, were all vying for a chance to play in the U.S. Amateur. On the fourth playoff hole, Van Vleck sank a 30-foot putt to earn the last spot available.

He leaves for Hot Springs, Va., this weekend. The tournament, which will be played at the Homestead, begins Wednesday.

"For me, this is like getting to the World Series," said Van Vleck. "Sure, I'd like to win, but getting there is the thing. The work is done, this is fun."

HIS QUALIFYING should have

come as no surprise. Earlier this summer at the Golf Association of Michigan qualifier at West Bloomfield's Wabec Country Club, Van Vleck shot an 80 and found himself in a playoff. Four extra holes later, he had qualified for the GAM (at the GAM tournament, he shot 80-75 and missed the cut).

The Michigan Open qualifier at Salem Hills in Northville provided another setting for a miracle. With two holes to play, Van Vleck figured a strong finish might get him into the tournament. He got two birdies for a 77 that landed him the final qualifying spot. In the Open (played at The Bear in Acme), Van Vleck was 10th among amateurs.

Want more? How about the Michigan Amateur qualifier, played at the Country Club of Lansing. Van Vleck knocked in a 30-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole to get into a playoff for one of three spots still open. Nineteen others were also vying for a berth. Van Vleck's birdie on the fifth hole got him the last spot.

"When I've gotten close to making it or not making it, the ball's gone in the hole," Van Vleck, who holds the

O&E tournament record (70-68/138), said.

SAME FORMULA worked, though not quite as well, at the U.S. Open qualifier at Toledo's Inverness Country Club. Van Vleck shot 77-75 and got into a five-man playoff. He ended up as the first alternate, but didn't go.

There were some other "minor" miracles for Van Vleck, too. In Michigan Medal play at Detroit Golf Club, he dropped in a hole-in-one on the 71st hole, and at the Syron Tournament at Pontiac Country Club he strung together five birdies to card a 30 on the back nine.

"If it weren't such a quirky type of thing," said Van Vleck of his incredible streak. So what would top off a summer like this? "It sure would be nice to win the Observer the last time I play in it," he said, referring to the Sept. 17-18 tournament. Van Vleck is moving to Brighton, outside the O&E's coverage area, next spring and won't be eligible to play the O&E again. Which, considering his recent hot streak, probably won't bother too many of the challengers for the O&E title.

Weddle likes Trojans' speed

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Ralph Weddle, embarking on his 22nd gridiron season at Livonia Clarenceville, doesn't mince words when talking about prospects for the 1988 season.

"The potential is there, but a lot of people have to come through," he said. "If they don't, it will be a long year. But everybody is working hard and coming to practice and that's all I can ask. It's going to be more difficult this year because last year we had a veteran team."

Clarenceville was hard hit by graduation after winning seven of nine games last season. The Trojans lost several standouts including quarterback Gregg Buell and tight end and defensive end Bubba DeRoche. Both have moved on to Saginaw Valley State.

"We lost our whole backfield, all were three-year lettermen, but our greatest concern is replacing the line," Weddle said. "We have a lot of underclassmen (in the backfield), but they have very little experience."

The players put on the spot will be

football

senior halfback Eric Konright, junior fullback Jay Larson and junior tailback Andy Weighill.

BUT ACCORDING to Weddle, Larson should alleviate the some of the voids left in the backfield.

"He's a good athlete," he said the Clarenceville coach. "He'll do the punting, handle the kickoffs and play linebacker. He's one of the guys that has to come through for us to do anything."

If Clarenceville hopes to challenge perennial Metro Conference power Auburn Heights Avondale, the Trojans must utilize their quickness.

"This is the fastest backfield we've ever had with Larson and Weighill," said Weddle. "Larson runs a 4.6 (in the 40-yard dash) and that's as good as anybody we've had."

Another speed merchant is 5-foot-9, 145-pound sophomore tailback/wide receiver Kendrick Harrington, an Anthony Carter-type who is a game breaker. As a freshman last year on the varsity, Harrington averaged 22 yards per play every time he touched the ball.

"He's kind of wiry, but a good blocker and a good defensive back," Weddle said. "He can do anything and this year he's a little more polished."

Another question mark is at quarterback, where Derrick Herr, Buell's backup last season, and Chris Foss, up from the JV team, are contesting for starting time.

WEDDLE SAID the two juniors "should push each other."

"Talent-wise they're even," said Weddle. "They can throw, but can they throw under pressure?"

"I believe in a balanced attack. They're both quick and can run the Veer (offense)."

Returning on the line are two monsters, 6-6, 255-pound Darrin Dunn and 6-5, 282-pound Scott Pyle.

Pyle played some at fullback and tight end as a junior, but appears to be ticketed for the line this season, according to Weddle.

Pyle has also been slowed by a trick knee, while Dunn is hampered by a bad back.

"Pyle's got great hands, but I told

him he has to be down to 250 if he's going to play tight end," Weddle said. "Right now we're waiting for a knee brace so I don't know if he'll be a factor the first couple of games."

"Dunn is going to be fine if his back holds up."

Another veteran is nose guard/center Rusty McIntyre, who will be flanked on the line by 6-2, 195-pound senior Rex Agar, an offensive tackle/defensive end, and 6-1, 185-pound senior Scott Trombley, who will play guard on offense and end on defense.

"DEFENSE SHOULD be our strong suit," said the Clarenceville coach. "Right now I'm less concerned with the defense than the offense. And we're not going to have the kicking game as we had in the past, but it won't be bad."

The Trojans were hurt by the loss of linebacker Carlos Perez, a second-team All-Metro Conference pick. Weddle said Perez is academically ineligible.

But Weddle wasn't moaning Monday during the first day of practice because the Acito brothers, Nick and Adam, had shown up unexpectedly.

They are transfers from Spring High School near Houston, Tex. "Maybe they can help us," said Weddle, who opens the season Sept. 2 at home against Redford St. Mary's of Redford. "It can't hurt to find out."

Little Caesars bumped from Johnstown early

Livonia Little Caesars got in its licks last week at the All-American Amateur Baseball Association Tournament in Johnstown, Pa. Unfortunately, the opposition collected more than its share of base hits as the Livonian Collegiate Baseball League champions went out in two straight.

Tuesday at Point Stadium, NORD Boosters of New Orleans (La.) collected 21 hits against four different Caesar pitchers in a 12-8 triumph.

The loss eliminated Caesars from the double-elimination tournament.

JOE BURNETT sparked New Orleans with four hits, including an inside-the-park homer in the eighth inning. Chris Turpin added a two-run shot in the sixth, while Dan Louque contributed a solo homer.

Caesars, which left eight runners on base got three hits from catcher Derrick Dowling and two each from Kevin Ritter and Steve Looney.

Looney, who shared team-high RBI honors with teammate Art George (two each), smashed a solo homer in the eighth.

baseball

Steve Witt was the losing pitcher. He was followed by Rob Jamula and Joe Mackiewicz.

IN THE TOURNAMENT opener Monday at Roxbury Field (No. 1), Buffalo, N.Y., trimmed Caesars, 8-5, building leads of 6-0 and 8-1. Dave Bankoske keyed a five-run second for Buffalo, socking a two-run homer. Rich Torgalski also homered for the New Yorkers.

Caesars got three back in the fifth as Ritter, Looney and Dowling had consecutive hits.

Livonia was out-hit 15-11. Looney went 3-for-3 in a losing cause, while Kloe and Dowling added two hits apiece. Kloe contributed a solo homer in the third inning.

John Knittel, who was the losing pitcher, collected two RBI. Caesars left 13 runners stranded. The Johnstown (Pa.) Tribune-Democrat contributed to this report.

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