

Homegrown Hawks

Area players dot Henry Ford roster

By Brad Emons
staff writer

For coach Stan Rose, the transition from high school to junior college baseball has been an adjustment.

The former Redford Union coach, now the manager at Henry Ford Community College, has faced a few thorns along the way.

Rose is the team's biggest critic. He would like to see the Hawks play a little more to their potential, even though they recently completed their regular season at 17-11-1 and tied Macomb CC for the Eastern Conference title (at 12-4) in the Michigan Community College Athletic Association.

"I'd like to see us play better," said Rose. "We made 12 errors versus Macomb in a doubleheader. I'm critical because I know what they're capable of. We've had some people who have had off years."

After Sunday's sweep of Grand Rapids JC in the regular season finale (6-4 and 4-3), the Hawks, made up primarily of Observerland players, can now focus their attention on the NCAA Region 12 Tournament this weekend in Battle Creek.

THE EIGHT-TEAM, double-elimination tournament will consist of junior college teams from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

Henry Ford will take on Western Conference champion Southwestern CC at noon on Friday. A pair of former Observerland standouts will lead the Hawks in their tournament quest.

Pitcher Bill Barber, a lefty from Westland John Glenn, has been the biggest surprise.

Barber, a sophomore, came to Henry Ford after dropping out of Michigan State as a scholarship player where he acquired a reputation for being undependable and moody.

But under Rose at Henry Ford, Barber's career has blossomed.

"He's been a real plus and has drawn all our tough assignments," said the Henry Ford coach of his ace. "He's been terrific in what we've asked him to do. He's just been a model citizen."

ON ONE OCCASION, one scout clocked Barber's fastball at 87 MPH, according to Rose. That kind of speed will draw the attention of any major league scout.

On the season, Barber has fanned 72 batters and walked only 16 in 54 innings of work. His record is



5-3 with a 1.10 earned run average.

Rose predicts Barber could go anywhere from the 15th to 20th round in the June draft.

The other Hawk with pro potential is North Farmington product Rick Karcher, a transfer from Indiana where he red-shirted as a freshman.

The 6-foot-3 outfielder is the team leader in RBI homers and runs scored.

Although his average (.233) is not up to par, Rose said the left-hand hitting slugger "has been terrific in the clutch."

"He's just a hard-working kid and the other day he hit one of the longest homers I've ever seen," said the Henry Ford coach. "It was just a colossal shot. They (the scouts) like his power."

Henry Ford's outfield has been steady all season.

CENTER FIELDER Mike Wozniak (Livonia Franklin) is one of the team's fastest players along with being team's most consistent hitter with a .349 mark. He's made only one error in the field.

Mike Kaczmarek, a product of RU and Franklin, has filled in at right field after transferring from Eastern Michigan. He hit .290 during the regular season.

"Our outfielders can go get 'em," Rose said. "I was in a situation where I went with the best defensive players and it turned out they could also hit."

Pitching has also carried the Hawks this season.

Behind Barber is No. 2 starter Travis Labell of Riverview.

Dave Houghtby (Livonia Stevenson) has become the No. 3 man. His record is 2-4 with an ERA of 2.43.

"Dave has done a good job, even though his win-loss record doesn't reflect it," Rose said.

DAVE WILKIE of Dearborn Edsel Ford has been tough out of the bullpen, while Kevin Walker (RU), sporting a 3-1 record, has been a good spot starter.

Livonia Clarenceville grade Joe Zentzer (1-0) and Joe Whitefoot give the Hawks depth on the mound.

Zentzer is currently bothered by a bad back, while Whitefoot is just coming around after an early-season illness.

"Overall the pitching has been good, better than I envisioned," said the Henry Ford coach.

But as good as the pitching and the outfield have been, Henry Ford has had its share of infield problems.

Going into this weekend, the team's most consistent infielder has been first baseman Rick Rutledge (RU), whose 3-run homer gave the Hawks a share of the Eastern Conference title.

Rutledge leads the team with a .373 average and was voted All-Eastern Conference.

SOPHOMORE Ken Droplowski (Wayne Memorial) has moved to shortstop, while Dave Urban (RU), who hit .213 in league play, has moved from short to second base.

Third base slot has been taken over by freshman Todd Fracassi (Livonia Stevenson), who has started the last 18 games after sharing time with freshman Joe Leszinski (RU).

Fracassi has upped his batting average to .373 since starting.

"He's been a pleasant surprise," said Rose of the Stevenson product. "We've given him an opportunity and he's proven he's a heady player. And defensively he's been steady."

The catching ranks were depleted when two of Rose's recruits dropped out, leaving the chores exclusively to Doug Florn of Wayne Memorial.

The team's top academic student sporting a 3.3 grade-point average, Florn has proven to be an adequate receiver.

ROSE IS HOPEFUL, but knows his team faces an uphill battle Friday in its opener against Southwestern, a team with several potential draft picks.

"Defensively, as bad as we are, we're a longshot," Rose said. "Our infield has been suspect and we've hit with less than authority. But the team that gets the hottest will win."

Rose has had to make several adjustments in his coaching style.

"It's different on this level because it's much tougher to pitch to kids here than in high school," he said. "But overall I've enjoyed it. I'll be back next year."



RANDY THORST/Staff photo

Jeff Reje of North Farmington walks on the field to attempt a putout on Western's Paul Windel. The baserunner managed to steal second base, however.

Fast start gives Falcons 3-2 win

Farmington pushed across three first-inning runs Monday and held off Plymouth Canton for a 3-2 victory in the first game of a baseball double-header.

The Falcons improved to 6-5 in the Western Lakes Activities Association and 9-6 overall. Canton, which won the second game 10-2, stood at 11-5 following the twinbill.

Farmington got the jump on the Chiefs with two walks, their only hits (0) off losing pitcher Scott Kennedy and a sacrifice fly.

The inning started with walks to P.J. Green and Kevin Van Ord, and Kevin Young's single loaded the bases for winning pitcher Scott Lakatos, who hit a two-run double. After Chris Schmid reached on a fielder's choice, Eric Miller made it 3-0 with a sacrifice fly.

Lakatos allowed four hits and walked one while going the distance. Kennedy, making his second varsity start, didn't allow a hit after the first inning but walked seven.

Geoff Allen knocked in both Canton runs with a pair of sacrifice flies. The Chiefs pulled within a run in the fourth when Mikko Tanaka singled, went to third on one of Farmington's five errors and scored on Allen's flyout.

Mike Culver scored the first Canton run after he doubled and advanced on Tanaka's sacrifice bunt. Canton left seven runners on base.

"We had a number of chances, but we couldn't get a key hit," Canton coach Fred Crissey said.

The Chiefs had the first start in the second game as Derek Humphries blasted a two-run homer in the first inning. Canton locked up the victory with a seven-run sixth in which Tanaka hit a two-run double and David Makara a two-run single.

Brian Paupers was the winning pitcher, turning in a complete game and scattering six hits. Farmington's Young had three of them in three official at-bats. Paupers struck out five and walked one.

Eric Miller went 5 1/2 innings for the Falcons and took the loss. He was relieved by Schmid, who finished the game.

Jeff Kugelmann, who is hitting over .450, was 3-for-4 and had two RBI. Ron Groh had two hits for the Chiefs, who had nine.

On Saturday, Canton split a dou-

ble-header with Northville but won the important first game 8-0. The Mustangs defeated Paupers and the Chiefs 7-5 in the second game.

Kugelmann threw a three-hitter and earned his second shutout victory in the opener, and he also made a contribution at the plate. Kugelmann was 2-for-3 and had one RBI, and he struck out seven from the mound.

Kugelmann was supported by a six-run first inning in which Culver hit a bases-loaded double. Jamie Slater later hit a two-run homer.

SALEM 4-10, HARRISON 3-16. J.P. LaRoche had a pair of doubles while going 3-for-4 and driving in two runs for the Rocks in the first game Monday.

LaRoche, who hadn't played baseball the three years he was talking into playing this year by coach John Gravin, is leading Salem in runs scored, batting average and stolen bases.

Kevin Beatz was 3-for-4 and had one RBI for the Rocks. Brian Rudolph had two hits and scored twice and Eric Sheehan added an RBI single.

Horrie Blanchard was the winning pitcher with relief help coming from Rob Kowalski. Blanchard scattered seven hits and walked one in five innings. Kowalski allowed the Hawks just two hits in the last two. Jason Lichtman was touched for 10 hits and issued four walks in a losing cause.

Harrison's Rob MacDonald was 4-for-4 and hit a home run in the second game. Kowalski was the losing pitcher after giving up two homers on back-to-back pitches to Lichtman and MacDonald.

Gary Devine got the win, but Salem's Chad Johnson and Kevin O'Leary had success hitting against him. Johnson was 4-for-4, which included two doubles and a homer, and had four RBI, and O'Leary was 3-for-4 with three RBI.

N. FARMINGTON 4-2, WEST-ERN 5-7. The Hawks won the game that counts in the league standings as Tim McEvilly got the pitching victory in relief and also swung the hot bat for North.

McEvilly replaced starter Jeff Reje in the fourth inning and surrendered only two hits and no walks over the final four innings. He struck out four. McEvilly was 3-for-4, knocked in two runs and scored one.

North's Chris White and Jack Herberich had one hit and one RBI apiece for the Raiders, 7-9 overall after splitting the twinbill.

Paul Anders went the distance and was charged with the loss in the nightcap. Dale Turken knocked in both runs for North with a two-run single that scored T.J. Orman and Anders.

Weather factor in deciding title

ASK A QUESTION like this in a crowd of baseball people and prepare yourself for a lengthy debate.

What is the most important factor in building a championship team?

The argument would begin immediately. A major contingent would support pitching as the key element, but there would be a segment that would insist defense can make or break a team. And there would also be those backing the bat-swingers, ready to chime in with the "you can't win if you don't score" theory.

Trying to find an answer to such a question would be like trying to find the end of a circle. Unless, of course, you asked the question in a crowd of Great Lakes Conference baseball people.

A GLIAC crowd would, in all probability, come up with a quick consensus.

Their answer: the weather.

SOUND SILLY? It should, because it is. Unfortunately, it also happens to be true.

A team could actually capture the GLIAC championship by winning one game, if the weather were bad enough. No kidding. Unless someone else went unbeaten in the league and



C.J. Rlsak

played more games, a 1-0 team could be champ.

The reason is the league has no clear-cut rule for making up rainouts. The games are just canceled. "With the number of games they play and the number of rainouts, it's almost impossible to get (makeups) in," said GLIAC commissioner Vern Norris.

"They want to play lots and lots of games, but they don't leave much room for error. They don't take into consideration the greatest predictor, the weather."

With rules (or lack thereof) like that, I can't imagine why Northern Michigan doesn't have a team. Heck, most of the Wildcat's home games would be snowed out (the GLIAC baseball season, in case you didn't know, ended May 7 — last weekend).

If NMU could win just one game, then that poor weather kept them from playing the rest of their

schedule, the title would be theirs.

I'm sorry, but I always thought teams vying for the same championship should be competing on equal terms. Like playing the same number of games, against the same number of opponents. That just isn't the case in the GLIAC.

Oakland University finished 10-7 in the conference. Ferris State won its second-straight title by going 11-7. Until last Wednesday, the Bulldogs had played one fewer game than OU, but Norris allowed Hillsdale and Ferris to make up a double-header because it wasn't canceled by poor weather, but by a breakdown of Hillsdale's bus.

OTHER GLIAC schools lost games the same weekend as the Ferris-Hillsdale double-header to the weather, but these two — both battling for the title — got to re-

schedule. Ferris swept Hillsdale, and that gave the Bulldogs the title.

OU was in a no-win situation. Had Hillsdale split with Ferris, the Chargers would have been champs. As it is, they finish third at 10-8.

It isn't fair, to be sure, particularly for OU, which was slicker by two league members.

Here's another example of how unfair the policy is. What if OU has four games against Wayne State — the GLIAC's weakest team — washed out and Ferris has four games with Hillsdale canceled? The Pioneers would lose a chance to win three, perhaps four, games while Ferris would struggle to split.

Sport should be decided on talent, not fortune. Other major conferences — the Midwestern Collegiate and Big Ten — schedule Mondays as automatic make-up days. If a weekend double-header is canceled, it's rescheduled for the following Monday.

At Monday's GLIAC baseball coaches meeting, several plans dealing with rainouts were submitted to the conference's executive committee for consideration, including making Monday an automatic rainout date.



Orthopaedic Surgery
Martin L. Weissman, M.D.
Kenneth W. Gitlin, M.D.
Harry N. Herkowitz, M.D.
Jerry Matlen, M.D.
Thomas J. Ditkoff, M.D.

Hand Surgery
Thomas D. Maggill, M.D.
Michael E. Pochron, M.D.

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Ronald S. Taylor, M.D.

Neurosurgery
Stephen E. Boodin, M.D.

Neurology
Raina Ernstoff, M.D.

Rheumatology (Arthritis)
Jerald Shigrin, M.D.

In cooperation with William Beaumont Hospital, a broad range of Physical Therapy services are now available at the new location, weekdays between 7-AM and 7-PM, and on Saturday from 9-AM until 2-PM. Call (313) 855-7411.

Michigan Bone and Joint and Rehabilitation Institute is pleased to announce it has moved to the new Beaumont Medical Building, West Bloomfield, 6900 Orchard Lake Road • Suite 103 (313) 855-7400

CELLULAR USERS!

- Do You have questions about the new rates?
- Are you confused about your phone bills?

FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS EVALUATION CALL:

DRIVE-IN CELLULAR

mobiltronics

—west—
31051 Stephenson, Madison Hts. Just North of 13 Mile 585-4520

—east—
32825 Northwestern, Farmington Hills Just South of 14 Mile 626-8480

AMERITECH® SERVICE

- Automatic roaming in every North American cellular city
- More cells for greater call capacity.
- Free Roaming in Windsor - pay local cellular rates only.

an authorized CELLNET agent a member of TRAC COMMUNICATIONS INC.

AMERITECH COMMUNICATIONS