

# Pendell swings hot bat for surprising Walter's

By Brad Emons  
staff writer

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. — Jeff Pendell approaches baseball the same way he plays hockey — he makes contact.

The recent Livonia Churchill High grad is as adept hitting a baseball as he is delivering a slap shot.

During the winter, the right winger was a standout for the Chargers' hockey squad and one of the Suburban Prep League's leading scorers. (He made second-team All-Observer honors.)

And this week at the All-American Amateur Baseball Association Tournament, Pendell, an infielder and designated hitter, is providing some additional punch in Walter's Appliance offense, collecting six hits in 15 trips, a 400 average (through four games), facing college pitchers who are often three years his senior.

"I just try to hit the other way, I'm not a power swinger," said the right-handed hitting Pendell. PENDELL'S SUMMER amateur exploits are even more amazing due to the fact that he skipped his spring high school season.

Pendell forfeited his eligibility at Churchill when he played last March in the Michigan All-Stater Hockey Game at the Redford Arena.

Because the game was not sanctioned by the Michigan High School Athletic Association, he was forced to make a decision.

"I looked at it as a once in a lifetime thing," said Pendell, who was sanctioned game. "But I decided the pros outweighed the cons. I discussed it (with Churchill baseball coach Herb Osterland), but he left the decision up to me."

Pendell was the offensive stand-out in the lopsided all-star game,



Jeff Pendell enjoyed summer in sun

scoring four goals for the victorious team.

BUT PENDELL ADMITS he missed playing for the Chargers' baseball team.

"It was hard, especially when the guys came in all excited after a win," said Pendell. In late May, Pendell still had the baseball bug and decided to try out for coach Mike Keller's team in the Livonia Collegiate Baseball League.

"I hadn't picked up a ball all year," Pendell said, "and the first day of tryouts I couldn't pick up the ball, but 'Stuck' (Keller's nickname) said he understood. He told me that if I worked hard, I would maybe get to play a little bit here and there."

Pendell started the season playing shortstop, but moved to second when Ken Driepielski (Wayne Memorial High and Henry Ford Community College) earned a spot in the starting lineup.

PENDELL'S OFFENSIVE output remained consistent throughout the season. He finished with a

.301 batting average, third highest on a Walter's team which finished third during regular season before winning the LCBL playoffs, qualifying for the prestigious AAABA Tournament.

Over the summer, Pendell managed to play Connie Mack League baseball and also in the Metro Summer Hockey League.

And in another twist of irony, Pendell admitted he hit Collegiate League (.89 and under) pitching better than high school-age hurlers.

"In Connie Mack (18 and under) the pitching confused me," Pendell said. "It was wild and slow. It seems like I hit better when the pitching is better."

Because of his modest success here in Johnstown, Pendell is wondering what sport he should try when he arrives Aug. 25 on the Western Michigan University campus in Kalamazoo.

"RIGHT NOW I don't know," said the walk-on candidate, who plans to major in business. "I haven't had any contact with the coaches. I wrote a letter to the baseball coach, but I just got back the normal response ('Thanks for your interest'). I may have a better chance in baseball because they carry more people, whereas the hockey team lost only two guys."

But his first experience at the AAABA tournament has been a fruitful one.

"I didn't know what to expect at this place, but it's great," Pendell added. "I thought my baseball career was over, but since my summer has gone so well, I've started thinking more about baseball. It's made me think about it."

Of course, hockey season is just around the corner for Pendell, too.



Observer file photo

Rick Karcher (right), who was out on this play during a regular-season game, provided some

key hits for Walter's Home Appliance in the national tournament at Johnstown, Pa.

## Karcher's homers create stir at Johnstown tourney

By Brad Emons  
staff writer

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. — Rick Karcher needed a wake-up call.

And once he answered the alarm, his baseball career was back on track.

The 6-foot-5, 210-pound slugger out of North Farmington High is making his presence known this week at the All-American Amateur Baseball Association Tournament.

During the first three days of play, Karcher, entering his second year at Henry Ford Community College, was 6-for-11, but the falls centered around a pair of towering homers he clubbed, one against host Coca-Cola and the other on the first day of play against Youngstown, Ohio.

His three-run blast Monday sparked Detroit Adray Appliance to an 11-6 victory Monday over host Pepsi of Johnstown.

But it was only a year ago that Karcher wondered where he was headed and in what direction.

Recruited late in the summer of 1987, only months after graduating from North, Karcher was signed as a pitcher-outfielder by Indiana University.

"I had to do it all over again. I'd go to a junior college," Karcher said. "Basically I wasted a year at Indiana. It was definitely a lot different than high school. For a lot of kids I'd recommend junior college first."

ADMITTEDLY a mediocre high school student with average study habits, Karcher found himself over his head in Bloomington.

"I was living on my own and making my own decisions for the first time... being away from home was tough," he said. "I didn't know anybody and it (IU) was highly structured academically. And to boot I was committed to baseball three to four hours a day. Indiana was a disciplined, structured program. I needed to budget my time better."

When he couldn't carry his weight in the classroom, Karcher came back home, enrolling for coach Stu Rose at Henry Ford.

"All I thought about was playing Big 10 baseball, but I wasn't ready for what went along with it," Karcher said. "Since the grade trouble, I think I've matured a lot and now I know what I want. Getting to Henry Ford helped me tremendously."

KARCHER enjoyed a fruitful year with the Hawks. He led the team in homers (7) and RBI, while also putting a 3.0 grade-point average. He carried 15 credits last semester, taking such courses as biology and math.

And with his bookwork rounding into form, Karcher's powerful hitting carried over to the sandlot ranks this summer as he led the Detroit Adray League in RBI. He also boasted a respectable .333 batting average.

Karcher, a left-hander who normally plays left field

and occasionally first, drew the interest of pro scouts during the JC season, but was passed over in the Major League amateur draft in June.

"I talked to scouts and I said I would be drafted, but it didn't happen," said Karcher. "There was even talk I could sign as a free agent."

"But if I can have a great year next year with Henry Ford, I think I'll go."

"It doesn't hurt me right now (not being drafted). I'm not going to rush it, but I want to play pro ball some day."

THAT DAY MAY come sooner than expected as Karcher's power stroke has intrigued a slew of scouts who've converged on Johnstown.

The pros like his potential, a cleanup batter with decent speed. Entering his third year of college, Karcher is still young and still has room to gain weight and strength. (He does not turn 20 until September and will have another season of eligibility in Adray League.)

"I may have to decide between a Division I school or the draft," said the lanky Karcher. "After next year at Henry Ford, I'll have two extra years (of school). I'd have to think about it. Will it help make me a better player, or should I sign now? If I decide to play pro ball, I could have it written into my contract that they would pay for the rest of my schooling. I'll have to think about it when the time comes."

As a high schooler, Karcher was labeled as a pitcher, a tag which was hard to shake.

"I didn't really have an outstanding fastball and I had some mechanical problems with my delivery," he said. "But I've always loved to hit the ball. I've batted fourth all my life."

A three-sport athlete at North (he also played football and basketball), Karcher said that "I was always active."

But Karcher wasn't active or serious enough about his sports or academic career during his prep days.

"I WAS JUST a guy who carried a 2.2 (GPA) and really didn't think much about it," he said. "I learned a lot when I was at Indiana. I also matured in my attitude toward sports. I'm more serious about my work habits because I know I'll possibly make it (baseball) a career. In that way it was beneficial."

Ironically, another North grad, Joe Sturtz, another hard-hitting left fielder playing in the AAABA Tournament for Walter's Appliance of Livonia, is headed this fall for Indiana on a baseball scholarship.

Karcher said he has talked to Sturtz, a longtime sandlot teammate, about pitfalls of living on a big campus and playing in a big-league program.

"If he develops good study habits, he'll be all right," Karcher said. "And he'll know some of the upperclassmen that are already there like Marty Wolfe (a Walter's player from West Bloomfield). He'll have somebody to follow and he'll know what they expect. He can do it. I learned the hard way."

## LCBL rep made strong showing

Continued from Page 1

Detroit hit three homers, including Karcher's second of the tourney.

But it was Livonia's 6-5 comeback behind win Monday against Youngstown that had Point Stadium buzzing.

Right-hander Mike Brincko had the Livons through six innings, allowing just six hits and one run.

Manager Robert Mingo, however, made a curious move, lifting

the Akron University pitcher to start the eighth.

Using left-handed reliever Robert Sakey, who was bounced around in Saturday's 12-0 loss to Detroit, Livonia rallied for five runs after trailing 5-1.

George and Gotts each knocked in runs, cutting the deficit to 5-3.

Sturtz followed with another big hit, ripping a single to left to tie the game. Dave Houghby's single then broke home the go-ahead run, scoring Gotts with the game-winner.

## Buff Whelan rebounds to win Series

First impressions — how misleading. Buff Whelan Chevrolet manager Dr. Joe Arends' early impression of his team's chances in the National Amateur Baseball Federation College Division World Series in Dayton, Ohio, would be slim.

Who could blame him after Whelan lost its opening game in the four-team, double-elimination tournament 17-10 to Miami of Ohio last Friday? Whelan's chances for success faded further Saturday. They trailed the host team, the Dayton Yankees, 5-1 going into the eighth inning.

"We were six outs from elimination," said Arends. "I was thinking about checking out and paying our hotel bill, and stopping for burgers on the way home."

But Whelan, which won the NABF regional at Livonia's Ford Field Aug. 6, rallied. The Detroit-based League team scored nine runs in the eighth inning against Dayton to win 10-6.

"The 3-2 pitch was too close to take," said Sturtz, Livonia's lead pitcher in the tourney. "With a 3-2 count and the bases loaded, the ball came high and in. I just got my wrists out from."

Livonia scored its other run in the seventh on an RBI single by Joe Mackiewicz.

Joe Mackiewicz worked the first six innings on the mound for Livonia before giving way to Buchler, the Hillsdale College sophomore, who pitched the last three innings, allowing one run on three hits to pick up his second win of the tourney.

WHELAN FOLLOWED that with a 13-9 victory over New York City Saturday, setting up a two-game championship duel against Miami on Sunday. Whelan needed wins in both games, and they got them, 11-4 in the first and 4-0 in the second, thanks to a pitching gem by Kevin Knoche.

Knoche hurled 5 1/2 innings of no-hit ball in the finale before allowing a bad-bounce single. His performance earned him tournament most valuable player honors.

Also honored were Dave Arends, who captured the tournament batting champion trophy by hitting .429, and Tom Yorkston and Craig Mayes, who were named to the all-tournament team.

Whelan committed nine errors in its opening-game loss to Miami. But against Dayton, they battled back and scored a two-run double by Yorkston and a triple by Dave Peps and a single by Brad Thompson, each scoring a run.

## Decision to sanction league carries benefits

With the new bowling season approaching, many league meetings are taking place around town. Decisions are made, questions arise and rules are discussed. Among the hot topics usually is whether to seek sponsors for the teams, and whether or not to allow non-sanctioned teams. As for sanctioning, the moderate (50¢ per person) fee goes a long way and is without much room for argument, a vital part of bowling. Remember, bowling is more in more than one sanctioned league, you only pay once, so let your secretary know.

The ABC/WIBC sanctioning also includes bonding for the league's officers, permanent records of all averages, recognition of honor scores, the official record sheets, the rule book and guidelines for operation of the league. Of course, if someone bowls a 300 game they receive a ring also, and there are rings given for 295 and 288 games and 200-000 men and women participating in ABC or WIBC leagues. This number is far greater than that of any other city in the USA. If you bowler the youth bowlers, to that number, plus some non-sanctioned leagues, there are about a quarter of a million bowlers in this area. That is why we are really called the "Bowling Capital of the World."

Each secretary gets the annual yearbook which lists all local leagues and each individual average. In metropolitan Detroit there are approximately 200,000 men and women participating in ABC or WIBC leagues. This number is far greater than that of any other city in the USA. If you bowler the youth bowlers, to that number, plus some non-sanctioned leagues, there are about a quarter of a million bowlers in this area. That is why we are really called the "Bowling Capital of the World."

This pre-season is also a time to go out and find sponsors, that is if you league is the type that has sponsors. If you have to look for a sponsor, here are some advice. If you personally know

someone who has a business, this would be the easiest approach, or if you are a regular customer of a particular business, don't be afraid to ask. The cost of sponsoring a team is quite reasonable, and the benefits include: A good advertising format; Goodwill in the community; The cost can be "expensed" by most businesses; The company name is displayed all season long. Team members will usually patronize their sponsors more, thus resulting in extra business. In some instances, the sponsor may elect to pay the sanctioned fees in addition to the cost of their.

The ABC/WIBC sanctioning is a very important aspect of the bowling scene, and a vital part of the youth program is the availability of good coaching. It takes a lot of patience and understanding to work with the kids so when Ed Wright of Farmington Hills was awarded honors from YABA as "Coach of the Year" recently, it is only fitting and proper that he be recognized for an excellent job. Ed is the coach of the Saturday Youth Classic League at Country Lanes, the Wednesday high school league, he teaches the Monday Nite Pro Shop Youth Doubles at Drake's Lanes and is director of the Sunday Youth Travel League. Ed bowls in three leagues and has coached in the Greenfield Mixed League with his wife Pat. This is a real bowling family as daughter Julie and son Scott are avid youth league members.

Ed Wright is a member of the greater Detroit city board of directors of the YABA, state of Michigan YABA, Director of the greater Detroit youth league and assistant director of the State of Michigan Youth League for youth bowling. If he isn't a busy coach, he is a teacher at North Farmington High School and Coach/Instructor for the state of Michigan YABA. As a school teacher,

## 10-pin alley



Al Harrison

Ed has been named teacher of the year three times in the last 10 years. He teaches accounting, business law and psychology. Ed is also an avid golfer, fisherman and does some time for basketball as well. He is available for private bowling lessons, for information call him at 477-5047.

There are still two tryout sessions going on for his Sunday Youth Traveling League, on Tuesday, Aug. 15 at Taylor Lanes and Sunday, Aug. 16 at Drake's Lanes in Farmington Hills. This league is open to any youth bowlers from ages 11 and up and averaging 120 or more. For details, call Ed at the same number.

At Bel Aire Lanes on Orchard Lake Road, the Tuesday triol league had a 265 high game from Daryl Rollins and a 694 high game from John King. In the Un-Mixed League Nick Acito led the way with a 245 while the top lady was Jean Roubenstam at 228. The Family Twosome had Gary Burgess 89 plus over average. Bel Aire has some good league openings particularly with the west side men's league expanding. They start at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and the team average is 850 to 975. They bow a split season and the jackpots are usually worth shooting for. The Tuesday Nite Junior House League has openings for four-man teams at 9:30 p.m. The

during the weekdays for ladies and senior bowlers. The Saturday youth program, with Ed Wright and friends has some bowling fun, offering quality coaching for the juniors and lots of good fun.

Wonderland Lanes on Plymouth Road in Livonia has some openings in the Tuesday Nite Classic League at 6:30 p.m. with a 240 minimum team average and 240 minimum individual average. There are handicapped format and can use a few more good bowlers or teams. The Wednesday Nite Moose Mixed League at 6:30 p.m. has some openings as well as a 240 minimum team average and 240 minimum individual average. There are handicapped format and can use a few more good bowlers or teams. The Wednesday Nite Moose Mixed League at 6:30 p.m. has some openings as well as a 240 minimum team average and 240 minimum individual average. There are handicapped format and can use a few more good bowlers or teams.

Things are getting all "revved up" again at Country Lanes as the new season approaches. There are plenty of good league openings for whatever suits you. There are weekly mixed leagues seeking more bowlers at 8 and 8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays with open regular week leagues also running on weekends. The Monday Nite Men's League with a 6:15 p.m. start has openings for five-man teams with plenty of quality competition. Tuesday Night the Little Ball's Classic at 9:15 p.m. has some openings as well as the Ladies Classic at the same time slot. There are more openings on Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. for five-man teams, and the Junior House League at 9:15 p.m. has some room.

The Thursday Mixed Classic League can use some good bowlers with team averages 825 and up. The Friday Ladies Nite Classic has some open spots at 7:30 p.m. The Ladies Nite League with a 6:15 p.m. starting time. There are lots of openings

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The Family Twosome League men's results were: Randy Tuttle 231, Paul Nagel 229, Bill Jones 816 series; women: Nancy Lanes 214, Judy Tuttle 210 and Colleen Nagel 269 series; boys: Derek Tuttle 223/252, Charles Bowden 193/

505; girls: Lori London 184 and Faith Talbot 179/168.

The \$30,000 Ladies Pro Bowlers Tour Michigan Classic has just taken place at Satellite Bowl in Dearborn Heights. This turned out to be one of the most exciting bowling events in recent memory. More great games and matches than anyone could expect.

The winner turned out to be the local star of the Ladies Tour, Alecia Sill, who beat another area bowler, Dede Davidson. The final will be aired on TV locally on PASS Cable on Sept. 9 and again Oct. 1.

Each match had its thrills as Sill and Davidson were all tied after nine frames. Alecia's turn was first and she filled the frame with a strike and spare, giving Dede the chance to double with her first shot in the 10th. Dede's first ball was high pocket hit leaving the 7-10 split, and Dede went the match and first place to Alecia, the top money winner on the ladies pro tour.

Sill is a former resident of Westland and Canton, and currently lives in Dearborn. Davidson is from Southgate. Davidson was outstanding in her matches, reaching the finals by defeating Debbie Romeo, 244-238; Lorrie Nichols, 238-235; and in a terrific match, winning a 2-1 split against John Johnson, 219-245. Highlights during match play were a 250 game by none other than Alecia Sill, her 12th perfect game in her career, a 239 by Lita Wagner who finished 9th and a 298 game also by Alecia.

Other local area bowlers who finished in the 35 cash positions were Cheryl Slipack of Canton in 18th place, Darlene Marrow also of Canton, 31st; Dawn DeVitis of Livonia, in 33rd place and Cheryl Daniels, of Detroit, 36th.