

You can wine and dine, spend to your heart's content, sip some very special brew and basically, see what's up in a Kalamazoo. Crooners of old sang about having a gal in Kalamazoo, but there's more there than pretty women. Find out on Page 6D.



JIM ROBERTS/staff photographer

Michael Veillette of Rochester resident has won the Michigan state table tennis singles championship six times. He'll be trying for number seven Saturday at the University of Michigan-Dearborn fieldhouse.

## A table top affair with tennis . . .

By A. Girall Bedford  
staff writer

Under the bright lights of the gymnasium, the player swings his racket. He drives the ball, sending it spinning across the table. In a fraction of a second, his opponent hits it back to him.

The player is tense and in control. His muscles seem ready to explode, but instead the energy is channeled to his arm. His eyes are fixed on the ball as if hypnotized by it.

The player is table tennis state champion Michael Veillette. The Rochester resident has won the Michigan state singles championship six times and is listed among the top 40 players in the country. He will be defending his title in play Saturday, March 31, at the University of Michigan-Dearborn fieldhouse.

"I've been doing it all my life," said Veillette, whose father was coach for the table tennis club that met at Cobo Hall. "I think I like it because I had some success. I got a chance to travel a lot and it's good exercise. I have an office job and sit all day."

Veillette, an engineer for Rockwell International, is a member of the Detroit Table Tennis Club. The club has some 200 members who play at one or more of four centers in Auburn Heights, West Bloomfield, Royal Oak and Southgate.

The club has some of the best players in the state. Detroit David Skrzypek represented the United States in the 1988 Paralympic games in Seoul, Korea. He had a couple of wins and played against the winner.

HE ALSO is proof that table tennis is a suitable sport for people with physical challenges. Skrzypek wears an artificial leg. He started playing table tennis six years ago. He also plays tennis and throws the javelin.

"I like table tennis better because I've reached a higher level in it," he said. He won a gold medal at the 1988 U.S. Amputee Athletic Association Games. He hopes to represent the U.S. again in the 1992 Paralympic games in Barcelona, Spain.

The object of table tennis is simple — hit a small white ball over a net and into your opponent's field in such a way that either your opponent misses the ball or hits it only after it has bounced twice on his side, so you score a point. The person who scores 21 points, with a two-point lead, wins the game.

The racket is extremely important to the game. Players choose which kind of rubber sheet they want on each side, depending on their playing style. The same swing will have a totally different effect depending on the type of rubber. Some rubber sticks to the ball, while others repel it.

Under international rules, one of side of the paddle surface must be black, and one side red. Prior to the game, the player must show his opponent the racket to see what kind of surface it has. Thanks to the colors, the player knows which surface is hitting the ball and what kind of spin it will have.

PLAYERS HOLD their rackets two different ways. With the shake-hand style, used here and in Europe, the player holds the racket as if he were shaking somebody's hand. With the Oriental or pen-hold style, favored by Asian players, the player holds it as if it were a pen.

According to Veillette, a good player has "speed, agility and brains."

"It's all concentration," he said. "You have to keep your eyes on the ball and it's hard because it is so small."

As far as what to look for, "the two most important things are speed and spin, a forward spin in the ball," Veillette said.

Players must pay constant attention to the ball and to the side of the racket being used. They have to read the speed of the ball as it is coming toward them, one reason why it is so hard to watch table tennis on television. The image on the screen cannot reflect the speed and spin of the ball. It may look as if it were traveling slowly, when in fact it is going very fast.

"It is much quicker than any of the other racket sports," Veillette said.

While some people may not think of table tennis players as all-around athletes, many of them play other sports. The majority play tennis during the summer and table tennis during the winter. Veillette plays tennis, golf and softball. In winter, he goes cross-country skiing.

CLUB MEMBER Bill Byrnes said most people play the game for fun and practice. Once popular during the Depression, table tennis isn't as much now, partly because "Americans go for expensive sports like golf and tennis."

Most people start playing the game in their basements; others "play at the YMCA or at a youth center," Byrnes said. "If they get good they start looking for better competition and find it in a club like this."

The Detroit Table Tennis Club has centers in Auburn Heights, Southgate, West Bloomfield and Royal Oak. For information, call George Scheinper at 354-5240.

The state table tennis championship will start at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, March 31, at the fieldhouse at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Entry is free and open to the public.

## 'On your mark'

### Mixing fast-paced fun with fitness

By Joan Borum  
special writer

It was what the Irish call a "soft day." In other words, it drizzled. And sometimes, it rained. But to the 1,000 or so participants in the eighth annual Motor City Striders St. Patrick's Day run/walk, 1990's bone-numbing dampness was a great improvement over 1988's blizzard.

"Actually, it's the best weather we've ever had for this race," Dr. Ed Kozloff, president of the Motor City Striders, told the crowd.

Mention running club and what comes to mind? Masochism, right? "No pain, no gain" and similar mantras? Well, maybe some running groups, but not the Striders.

Sure, there are dedicated lean-and-mean marathoners, but many members are more casual runners or walkers who just like to exercise and enjoy the camaraderie that characterizes Striders' meet. There are even a few hardcore sloths, eating sticky buns, while presiding over the registration tables.

"We welcome anybody who wants to join us for regular exercise," said Kozloff, who has been president since 1975. "We try to have a mix of race types so everybody can participate and enjoy. The Belle Isle run is a pure killer, while the St. Patrick's Day run is a family event."

The Detroit Dietetic Association one mile and 10-K is somewhere in between.

(For those of us who don't know how far 10-K is and didn't know who to ask, Kozloff offers the answer. A 10-K equals 6.2 miles.)

CERTAINLY, there seemed to be something for everyone at the St. Patrick's Day race.

There was a 440-yard run for children 12 and younger, which drew about 20 entrants. The youngest runner was 3½-year-old Allison Simms, who ran accompa-

nied by her father. An even younger, anonymous participant was disqualified because his father carried him the entire quarter-mile.

"All finishers get ribbons and certificates," said Kozloff, "to discourage the 'Little League Syndrome.' We don't want parents pushing their children to win."

There was a 2-K (1½ miles) walk, with ribbons and certificates to all winners, and the main event, the four-mile run. The first 100 men and the first 150 women each received medals and all finishers picked up certificates. The top five men and woman got awards.

The team spirit of the Striders is reflected in the fact that almost every participant gets some recognition for their efforts, and that times are not officially recorded. It's the duty of every finisher to remember his or her own time as displayed on a large digital clock at the finish line.

Had justice been served, there would have been an award for best costume. Naturally, green was predominant, in every possible genre of clothing, including a well-muscled adult male in an elf suit.

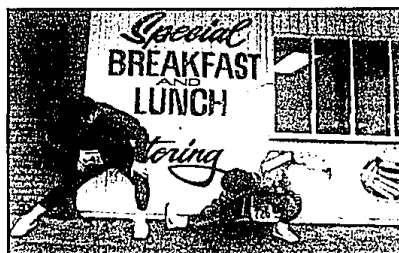
"This event is almost as colorful as our Halloween run, although the New Year's run comes a close second," said Tom Fraser.

Like some other Striders, including Kozloff, Fraser spends more time officiating than running at events. Both men do most of their running on their own time.

THERE MAY be such a thing as "runner's high," but most of the Striders, whatever their endurance level, emphasize the general sense of well-being that comes from regular exercise.

Up until four years ago, Rosemary Brockelhurst's idea of

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Hank Glorienne and Ebel Socha, both of Rochester, do their warm-up stretches under the overhang of a Michigan Avenue restaurant.



Sandy Smith walks along with Mike Simms during the race. Simms used a specially designed stroller to take daughter Allison along.



One of the fringe benefits of racing in the streets of Detroit is the chance to literally run the stop light.



Children take off for a 440-yard Motor City Striders' race.

## Getting in stride with these races

Interested in trying your luck at a Motor City Striders' event? Well, here's a few races coming up in the next few months:

• The sixth annual American Dietetic Association 10-K, around run 9:30 a.m. Sunday, April 1, at Hart Plaza, Detroit. Voted most nutritious post-race refreshments (whole grain Twinkies). Free race packets include information on sports nutrition and high carbohydrate recipes.

• Bobo Island Fun Run 10 a.m. Saturday, May 19. Kids race one- and four-mile. Race course is a loop through the beautiful grounds of Bobo Island.

• Third annual Run for Your Life 8:30 a.m. Saturday, July 8, Southfield Civic Center. Two-mile run, 8-K and non-competitive two-mile fun walk.

Entry fees for races average around \$10 (more for Bobo, of course) and include a commemorative T-shirt.

For information on joining the Motor City Striders or on individual events, call Dr. Edward Kozloff at 544-9099, or write him at 10144 Lincoln, Huntington Woods 48070.