

Sports

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Rich Bagdasarian returns for his senior season of track and field with the Raiders and will be their best entry in the long jump.

BILL BREDEKER/staff photographer

Farmington teams set goal to improve

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The primary goal for Farmington's boys track/field teams is improvement after all three finished in the second division of the Western Lakes Activities Association last year.

Farmington was seventh in the 12-team league, North Farmington eighth and Farmington Hills ninth.

How much the teams improve, as far as their WLAA standing, could be determined as much by their opponents. Defending champ Westland John Glenn and the Livonia and Plymouth-Canton teams, which combined to take the top six places, are expected to field strong squads again.

To help the Farmington schools obtain the objectives, however, are a number of individual standouts: Harrison's Tony Shantz, Blazo Sarcicich, Farmington's Ben Goba, Joe Miller and Chris Marting, North's Todd Pawloski and Tony Catchings.

A preview of each Farmington team follows in the succeeding paragraphs.

FARMINGTON

Goba, a senior and All-Midwest runner in cross country, tops the list of returning trackmen in Farmington Hills.

He is the defending WLAA and Oakland County champion in the 3,200 meter run and finished sixth in the Class A meet.

Goba also was fifth in the league over 1,600 meters. His best times last year were 9:37.3 and 4:31.9.

"He should be one of the best in the area, if not the best," veteran Farmington coach Jerry Young said.

Supporting Goba in the distance

boys track

runs are junior Dave Clinard, also a state qualifier in cross country, junior Mario Nordin and freshman Kevin Afflerbaugh. Nordin is sidelined with a knee injury, but Young is hopeful he can recover and help the Raiders.

Farmington suffered losses in the middle-distance runs when Matt Langdon and Don Sweeney graduated and Dave Link gave baseball a try instead, but it still returns a number of prospects.

Senior Steve Walter and juniors Ryan Adams, Eric Kirwin and Kevin Koskowsky have experience. Walter competed as a sophomore but not last year.

One of the Falcons' strong suits will be the hurdlers. WLAAs were strong in the high hurdles, and Young believes he will be among the best in Overlander this year, too.

Miller also was fourth in the regional meet and had a good indoor season, finishing fifth in the state indoor championships earlier this month. Senior hurdler Todd Wright placed in a number of dual meets, and junior Dale Worthington had a good first year in 1990, according to Young.

Young's spring could be a different story. Farmington lost Dave Winey, who was sixth in the league in the 1,600 and also placed in the regional. The Falcons will pin their hopes on seniors Eric Meyer and Charles Starkey and sophomore Corby Laverty.

"You're always hoping some speed demon comes out of the bushes, but (the sprinters) are not one of our strong points," Young said.

Meyer and Miller are the team's top jumpers, and junior Jason Tucker returns in the high jump and could be ready for a big year after reaching 6-0.

Marting was fourth among pole vaulters in the WLAA and had a season best of 11-4. Young believes it should be a solid event for Farmington with junior B.J. Richardson backing up Marting.

The Falcons lost an all-area athlete in the shot put with the graduation of Jason Gutting, the WLAA regional champ, and Derek Mehrahan was eighth in the WLAA. Senior Jeff Finney is the top prospect in the shot put, senior Parth Gandhi in the discus.

Farmington's 3,200 relay of Eric Crawford, Don Sweeney, Matt Langdon and Link went to state last year, but everybody is gone from that team. Without a lot of speed, the Falcons could find it difficult being competitive in the relays. Young thinks the mile relay could be the best and adds "Some of the hurdlers are going to have to run and help."

"We'd like to get into the upper echelon of the WLAA, but the last couple of years that's been a problem," Young said. "We should be solid in the field events, hurdles and distance runs."

NORTH FARMINGTON

Pawloski returns after winning a Class A regional title in the discus last year with a toss of 139-5. He was second in the shot put at that meet with a 46-11-1 effort.

Junior Eric Meyer, who earned a football scholarship to Northwestern, had a season best of 142-8 in the discus and 48-11 in the shot. He was fourth in both events at the WLAA meet.

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Heather Noll of Mercy is the defending Catholic League champion in the 1,600- and 3,200-meter races.