

Sports

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Gaul, Shively rate with best

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

Livonia Ladywood's Rebecca Willey finished a standout high school athletic career by being named Observerland's Trackwoman of the Year.

Willey won a Class A title in the high jump and recently returned from Indianapolis where she competed in the Midwest Invitational Meet of Champions.

The Coach of the Year is Plymouth Canton's George Przygodski, who guided the Chiefs to their second Western Lakes Activities Association championship in the last four years.

Przygodski, a former tight end on the University of Michigan football team, also coached Canton to a win at the Stafford Relays, and second place showings at the Lady Chief and Central Michigan relays.

Following is a profile of each member of the 1991 All-Observer first team.

(Sharing the honor as the first-team 100-meter hurdle representative are Redford Union's Sarah Percy and Farmington's Shelli Gaul. The coaches who voted could not choose between the two, so the honor was given to both.)

FIELD EVENTS

Teresa Sarno, shot put, Stevenson: Sarno, in her first year of throwing the shot put, stayed at or near the top of the individual standings in Observerland all season. She had a personal best throw of 37.4 inches and was undefeated in eight meets. Sarno won the Warren DeLaSalle and Clarkson Invitational and was third in a Class A regional. Also at that event at the state meet.

"This was Teresa's first year of shot putting and she worked very hard perfecting her style," coach Paul Holmberg said. "She was often the first one at practice and the last one to leave. She will be one of the best throwers in the state next year."

Debbie Wroblewski, discus, Stevenson: A Class A regional champion, the senior also won three separate invitational. Wroblewski was second at the WLA meet and overcame a back injury to finish seventh at the state meet.

Her personal best toss was 128.7, by far the best in Observerland.

"Debbie has been one of the area's best throwers for four years," Holmberg said. "She is a real student of the event and willingly spends hours each day to improve herself."

Rebecca Willey, high jump, Ladywood: The multi-talented senior finished her career with a Class A state championship in the high jump, clearing 5-5. Willey, who jumped 5-3 or better on five different occasions, won the high jump, discus and shot put at the Catholic League meet and took fifth in the long jump. She was first in the high jump, second in the shot and third in the discus at the Operation Friendship Meet.

Her best leap came at the Chippewa Relays where she cleared 5-7. Willey is headed to the University of Detroit-Mercy on a basketball scholarship.

Akua Hammons, long jump, Wayne Memorial: Hammons won her third-straight Wolverine A League long jump championship, and she also captured a league title in the 400-meter dash. Hammons' best jump was a 16-9½ effort, while her best time in the 400 meters was 1:13. Hammons, who placed second in the long jump at a Class A regional, also anchored Wayne's 1,600 relay team.

"Akua is and always was a hard working runner who carried a heavy load because everyone depended on her," coach Floyd Carter said. "She is going to be a success wherever she goes to college."

RUNNING EVENTS

Sarah Percy, 100-meter hurdle, Percy: Percy's list of honors take a while to review. IU's co-athlete of the year for 1991, she was named the Panthers' co-most valuable player along with senior teammate Kellie Watkins. Percy set school

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Observer photo

Shelli Gaul, a senior at Farmington High, was named to the all-area track team in the 110-meter hurdles.

NSSL enters 30th season

The Northwest Suburban Swim League, viewed by many as the premier summer league for boys and girls age 6-18, begins its 30th year of competition Friday night.

Sixteen clubs, stretching from Livonia to Rochester and spanning nearly the entire Observer & Eccentric coverage area, comprise the league.

"We enter 1991 with a strong membership of approximately 2,000 boys and girls," NSSL president Dan McMahon said. "We offer competition for the beginner to the very skilled swimmer, and that makes for enjoyable swimming at all our clubs."

The league has two divisions with eight clubs in each. Kickoff meets in Division A feature Village Athletic Club (Southfield) at defending champion Woodside Athletic Club (Birmingham), Kendallwood Club (Farmington Hills) at Bloomfield Hills Surf, Orchard Valley (West Bloomfield) at Forest Hills (Birmingham) and Beechwood Recreation (Troy) at Heart of the Hills (Rochester).

Division B meets have Farmington Glenn at Huntington Woods, C.B. of Livonia at Cranbrook (Southfield), Beverly Hills Club at Woodbrooke Hills (Farmington Hills) and Pleasant Ridge at Beechview Swim Club (Farmington Hills).

Meets in both divisions start at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free.

THE LEAGUE began in 1961 as Oakland County subdivisions developed with many having their own 25-meter pools.

"Competitive swimming started to take hold because of the accessibility to so many pools," McMahon said. "That good foundation has led to the increasing popularity of our league and the fact more and more of our swimmers compete year

swimming

round with area USS clubs."

The basis for success can also be traced to coaches who were former swimmers. Three of them are Mike Rado of the Surf, Darrin Abbasse of Woodside, Jeff Cooper of Orchard Valley.

Rado swam for Orchard Valley, coached the team from 1978 to 1981 and has been the Surf's head coach since 1986, winning the league that year and in 1987.

Abbasse, who began coaching at Orchard Valley, and Cooper are former champion swimmers at Oakland University, and their knowledge of the sport has paid for their teams, too.

Woodside, under Abbasse, scored 74½ points in 1990 to capture the league championship while Cooper, in his third year at Orchard Valley, led The Tide to a third-place finish with 567. Both were the most points ever scored by both clubs.

COOPER, KNOWN for his enthusiasm and spirited approach to training swimmers, views a head coaching position in the NSSL with prestige.

"I was fortunate to find swimming success at a young age and carry it through to be on some great Oakland teams," he said. "Coaching kids today, especially those we attract in this league, makes this a fun and rewarding job."

Cooper also recently was named head coach of the Michigan Slo-grays, the USS club based in Farmington Hills.

Other former OU swimmers head-

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Umps' decision to work can be difficult to call

IT'S RARE that I'll side with umpires.

Actually, I'm usually indifferent toward the stripe shirts or men in blue.

I can only remember criticizing the job performed by two sets of officials in my 13 years on the beat.

But there is an issue that has been in the back of my mind for quite some time that I'm willing to explore.

It's not about competency of officials, but about leaving yourself open to controversy.

This issue was brought home to me over the weekend.

Basically what has transpired is that Dearborn High athletic director Gene Snell recently fired a letter to Bill Bupp, assistant director and supervisor of officials for the Michigan High School Athletic Association, charging that umpire Charles Sorrentino "breached ethics" for accepting an assignment to call balls and strikes behind the plate during Saturday's Class A regional baseball semifinal between Redford Catholic Central and Dearborn in Wyandotte.

Snell also charged that Sorrentino, a CC graduate, former assistant baseball coach and ex-teacher at the school, left himself open to "partialities and biased umpiring."

He went on to say that Sorrentino should have notified the MISAA and been reassigned to another regional.

"No question it was unprofessional not to disqualify themselves," Snell



Brad Emons

added. "He created a situation by taking the game."

What was the situation?

DEARBORN, ranked No. 1 in Class A and rated among the top 20 teams in the nation by USA Today, was one strike away from reaching the regional final.

With a two-strike count in the bottom of the seventh inning, CC's Bob Kummer lined a two-strike pitch over the left field fence for the game-winning three-run homer in a 6-4 victory.

Earlier in the inning, Dearborn complained about a balk called by Sorrentino (which ultimately had no bearing on the game-tying or winning runs).

Stunned after blowing a 4-0 lead, coupled with Kummer's dramatic shot, Dearborn players reportedly did not take the sudden turn of events well.

Witnesses say one Dearborn player had to be restrained from going after Sorrentino, who did not take kindly to the post-game harassment.

"I'm not responsible for their feel-

ings," Sorrentino said. "When things don't go your way, somebody else is responsible."

"If they (the Dearborn AD) had a problem, why did they hire us on April 18 for the Dearborn-CC game (won by Dearborn 4-1)? They were happy to hire us for their football games, too. They can't have it both ways."

ADMITTEDLY, I had questions in my own mind when I arrived at the Wyandotte regional and discovered that Sorrentino was working a CC game.

By taking the game, regardless of the outcome or calls, didn't he leave himself vulnerable to be second-guessed?

I was even more surprised to learn that Frank Core, the former CC head coach who led the Shamrocks to the state Class A baseball championship in 1979, was also part of the rotating three-man crew which worked the three games. He was on the bases during the championship game between CC and Plymouth Salem (won by Salem 5-3).

During my tenure as a sports writer, I've often questioned in my mind whether it was proper for athletic directors to hire ex-players as officials. Should they hire former athletes, including those they may have coached or enjoyed close relationships with at one time?

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Paulin chooses Madonna

By C.J. Plesek
staff writer

There's been a change in direction — not unexpected — in Madonna University's volleyball program.

It's in recruiting. The Lady Crusaders are headed for their fourth season; they have surpassed the building-a-foundation stage.

When their season starts next fall, their aim will clearly be to capture the NAIA's District 23 championship.

Sure, it was always the goal in the past. But with everyone returning from last season's 30-16 squad (second place in the district), the 1991 Crusaders will expect to be champions.

It shows in coach Jerry Abraham's recruiting. He's not looking for franchise freshmen to transform his team.

"To be honest, we're looking to get some depth," he said before revealing his recruits. "We're just looking for some good athletes to fill in depth positions."

OF COURSE, Abraham didn't get what he wanted. The players he signed won't want to be just fill-ins; according to Abraham, "We were fortunate to

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