

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1992

SPORTS

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FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Stingrays at nationals

Summer swimming came to a satisfying conclusion for four members of the Michigan Stingrays Aug. 6-11 at the Junior Nationals-East in Charlotte, N.C.

"We took four boys to a classy meet, and I think they came home feeling positive about their swimming," Stingrays coach Jeff Cooper said.

The swimmers, all from Farmington Hills, are Chris Knoche, Karl Kozicki, Jon Kershaw and James Leslie. Knoche is a 1992 graduate of North Farmington. Kozicki and Kershaw will be juniors at North. Leslie enters his junior year at Redford Catholic Central.

Leslie had impressive times in his events, placing 10th in the 200-meter backstroke at 2:08 and clocking a fast 4:39 in the 400 individual medley, 4:11 in the 400 freestyle and 1:01 in the 100 backstroke.

Kershaw also swam the 200 backstroke (2:15) and the 100 backstroke (1:03). Kozicki had a 4:50 in the 400 IM.

"Jim's back time, among all competitors including Junior Nationals-West, would have placed him in the top 20 in the United States," Cooper said. "He paced himself well and finished hard to get a very good time."

Knoche swam the freestyle events, clocking 25.0 and 54.7 in the 50 and 100.

"Chris finished up age-group swimming with nice times and, by staying with the sport in college, I know he can go faster," Cooper said.

While Leslie was the only placer in individual events for the team, the four swimmers combined for 17th and 20th places in the 800 and 400 freestyle relays at 8:01 and 3:41, respectively.

The competition was strong, according to Cooper, due to swimming interest being high in this Olympic year and the fact North Carolina was convenient to more teams from the North and South.

"In the 800 free, Kershaw turned in a 1:59 lead-out split, which really got us going," Cooper said. "In the medley, though the time did not place, Karl split 1:00 on the fly leg, a good split for him."

The Stingrays, who swim out of Farmington area high school pools, will open their 1992-93 season with registration at Harrison High Sept. 1-3. The team has been in the area for more than two decades and welcomes all boys and girls.

Keller takes prep post

Mike Keller, a longtime Livonia sandlot baseball coach, will take over the varsity program at Livonia Stevenson High, athletic director Roger Frayer announced Tuesday.

"This is a new challenge for me," said Keller, who spent one season (1981) as a volunteer coach at Stevenson. "It's something I've always wanted to do. We hope to be competitive in the Western Lakes (Activities Association) and bring baseball back to Livonia."

Keller, a 1972 Livonia Churchill High graduate employed by the Livonia Public Schools, succeeds Richard DeVries, who retired after four seasons. The 38-year-old Keller most recently managed Walter's Home Appliances, which finished second Sunday to New Orleans in the prestigious All-American Amateur Baseball Association tournament in Johnstown, Pa. His 20-and-under summer team finished the year with a 27-13-2 overall record.

Vegas night boxing

The Livonia Boxing Club will stage a benefit Las Vegas Night card, featuring top Detroit and suburban amateur boxers, 7-11 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2, at Laurel Manor, 39000 Schoolcraft, Livonia. The event is co-sponsored by Action Distributing Co. (Miller Genuine Draft) in Livonia. Admission is \$20 (includes \$5 gaming chips). Prizes and cash bar will also be available.

Falcons believe title within reach



Defensive dandy: Kris Wiljanen will be one of the key players on the Farmington soccer team, anchoring the defense at sweeper.



With plenty of returning talent, including one of the state's top players in Mike Giese, Farmington High hopes to have a successful season in boys soccer.

By DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

This could be the year Farmington High breaks through in boys soccer and challenges for the Western Lakes Activities Association championship.

The Falcons have traditionally been a middle-of-the-road team, always better than the lower half of WLAA teams but never among the league powers.

But, with 15 letterman and all but one starter returning from a 7-8-2 team, second-year coach Luke Juncaj believes 1992 could be the year Farmington takes a step up.

"I think we'll be a lot more competitive with the Livonia teams this year," he said. "Stevenson and Churchill lost a lot from last year and we didn't."

"If we do well in the district, against teams from this area, I know we can do well against other teams."

A player central to the Farmington aspirations is senior Mike Giese, an All-Observer forward and Olympic Development player who scored 20 goals and had nine assists last year.

"Mike has a lot of skill and is one of the fastest players in our league," Juncaj said, "and our league is the best in the state. He has it all."

But fellow captains and seniors Kris Wiljanen and Aaron Bommarito figure to play roles just as big. The play of senior goalkeeper John Comai and return of sophomore halfback Sean Noble from injury are other positives, according to Juncaj.

The Falcons use a 4-3-3 lineup, and the wingers alongside Giese will be sophomore Ryan Ramirez, junior Chris Meller and senior Jamie Burton. All three started at some point last year.

Ramirez gained varsity experience after a broken leg sidelined Noble for most of the season. Junior Brett Kotrba and senior David Shepherd are reserve forwards who return.

"(Giese) has been working well with (the other forwards)," Juncaj said. "In scrimmages, Meller is scoring a lot of goals because he's getting the ball more from Giese. Teams always put pressure on Giese and make it hard for him to do anything with the ball, so he's been feeding the others."

A healthy Noble will play center-midfielder, with seniors Kevin Yoder and Mark Moffat holding their starting positions on the wings. Juniors Kevin Aflerbaugh and Mark Kurzer also return.

"One reason we put Noble there is that he's so accurate with through balls and can overlap with the forwards and help on offense," Juncaj said. "He has a lot of speed and I expect him to score a few goals. A lot of times he'll be out there attacking like a forward."

The defense is led by Wiljanen, who was a midfielder last year but moves to sweeper. Bommarito replaces Brian Aflerbaugh, the only non-returning starter, at stopper. The fullbacks will be senior Brian Staley and sophomore Eric Deleah.

"Our defense should be much better, and one reason is Kris Wiljanen being back there," Juncaj said. "He's loaded with skill and will be the backbone on defense. He'll be the most important player out there."

Other defenders are juniors Jason Haase and Kevin Murphy and freshman Chris Meyer. Comai, who has become a solid keeper, is backed up by sophomore Steve Scario.

Comai began last season as a reserve "but improved so much and was the No. 1 goalkeeper most of the year," Juncaj said.

Farmington begins the season Friday in the annual Birmingham-Detroit Country Day tournament, which Juncaj believes should give the Falcons an idea of their potential.

Hawks hope last game helps in '92

By NEAL ZIPSER
STAFF WRITER

The biggest "win" for last year's Farmington Hills Harrison soccer team may have been its season-ending loss to five-time defending Class B champion Birmingham Country Day.

The Hawks struggled through the regular season and, after winning their first district playoff game against Auburn Hills Avondale 5-1, faced the Yellow Jackets, a perennial power in boys soccer. Harrison took Country Day into overtime before falling 1-0 and ending the season 3-11-3.

This season, the Hawks hope to continue last season's strong finish and change some of their close losses into wins. But coach Glenn Breuhan knows it won't be easy.

"We've lost two of our top players to graduation and replacing them is a concern," the seventh-year coach said.

The two players Breuhan referred to were goalkeeper Chris Schrowe and stopper Ben Pinsky — both second team all-Western Lakes Activities Association players.

"Chris started for us for three years and was a very good goalie," Breuhan said. Schrowe made 25 saves in the loss to Country Day.

Harrison also lost two starting midfielders in Derek Lenx and Steve Blankenship, but the Hawks do have experience returning at forwards and on defense.

Junior Alex Dzyngel, the Hawks' leading scorer last season, returns at forward, along with his sophomore brother, Andy Dzyngel.

"This is the third Dzyngel we have had, and they have all been excellent players," Breuhan said. "Their older brother, Eddie, played here through 1988."

Two senior defenders who started last season, Brett Harvey and Craig Dixon, allow Breuhan to feel comfortable about his outside defense.

"Our strength this year will be at forward and with our experience returning on defense," Breuhan said.

Also returning at forward is senior Jeff Blankenship. Senior Jeremy Teachman returns to play goalkeeper, sweeper or midfielder.

"Jeremy is a very good player and, if possible, we would like to get him out on the field instead of playing goalie," Breuhan said, adding sophomore Jeff McBride, last year's junior varsity goalie, may start in the nets.

Matt Schrowe, Chris' younger brother, returns to the Harrison soccer program after taking a year off. The senior will start at midfielder. Another familiar name, Junior Marcel Lenx, may also start at midfielder.

Lenz is the fourth brother combination to play at Harrison in the past two years. Sophomore Danny Blankenship, who could make the varsity team, would bring that number to five.

Breuhan is impressed with the early performances of three newcomers. Junior sweeper Anton Welas and junior stopper Cary Cronin both might start. The third newcomer is sophomore Howard Kaye, who will play forward and midfielder.

"We're low on numbers but that's always the case here at Harrison," Breuhan said. "We're scrapping the barrel for players. We're a big football school and usually have only about 25 players on both the varsity and junior varsity teams. After school begins, we usually have an influx of players, though."

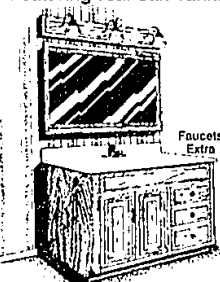
One thing the Hawks do have going for them is that nine of their 13 regular-season games are at home.

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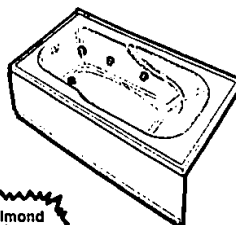
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