

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1992

# SPORTS

## FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

### Double winners

Posting their first double victory ever, a brother and sister from Farmington Hills both won their age divisions at the Seaway Short Track Ice Speedskating Championships Sunday, Dec. 13 in Cleveland. Josh Sklar, a Warner Middle School sixth grader, and his sister, Elyse, an Eagle Elementary third grader, each won every race en route to a championship trophy in the Ohio Speedskating Association-hosted event. The Sklars skate with the Berkeley-based Metro Detroit Wolverine Speedskating team.

### NFWB Sign-up

The North Farmington-West Bloomfield Baseball and Softball for Youth registration will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 6 and 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 14 at the North Farmington High School cafeteria. Boys ages 7 through 18 are eligible for baseball registration. Girls ages 8-17 are eligible for softball or softball registration. Parents can only register their own children and new players need to show birth certificates. If a registered family has health insurance, the identification number also must be provided.

### Soccer camps

The Schoolcraft College Winter Soccer Camps will be held in two sessions during January and February. Each course meets once a week for four weeks. Session I will be held Jan. 4 through Jan. 27 and Session II is Feb. 1-24. Boys and girls ages 6 through 14 are eligible to register. Cost per individual is \$40 or \$400 per team. Camp Director is Schoolcraft College coach Nick O'Shea, who led the Ocelots to the 1987 national championship. O'Shea is assisted by Lars Richters, a Livonia Stevenson graduate who plays for the Detroit Rockers. Call 462-4400 or 421-7533 for more information or a brochure.

### Making the grade



DILL BRESEER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Career capper: Farmington Hills Harrison senior center made the All Observer girls basketball first team, featured in today's section on 5B. North Farmington's Carey Perkins and Farmington Hills Mercy's Katie Hefernan made third team.

## New Falcon coach has deep roots



BY STEVE KOWALSKI  
STAFF WRITER

For a guy who's never been a head coach, Lauri Niskanen sure carries impressive credentials.

Niskanen, who has been an assistant coach at the high school, college and professional levels, is the new varsity football head coach at Farmington High School, Farmington schools athletic director Ron Holland announced.

Niskanen, a physical education instructor at Dunckel Middle School, takes over for Bernie Call, who resigned after three losing seasons. Niskanen was one of Call's assistant coaches last season and the previous two seasons helped Niskanen coach the junior varsity and freshmen at North Farmington under head coach Jim O'Leary.

"I think anyone who has worked with Lauri had the opportunity to see how well he works with kids," Holland said. "He has a great grasp of what the game is about, is very sensitive to kids at the high school level and knows kids like discipline and being organized. He'll be a strong asset to what we're starting to establish at Farmington High."

Niskanen was a well-traveled college and professional coach throughout the '70s. He was a linebackers coach at Eastern Michigan University

('70) and University of Minnesota ('71), a receiver coach at Kent State University under Don James ('72-'73) and an offensive and defensive line coach at Ferris State ('74-'77).

Niskanen also was an offensive line coach in the Canadian Football League in '78 for the Hamilton Tiger Cats and in '79 for the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Neither one of those stints was memorable. "I went to Canada and it was either 'Be good or be gone,'" said Niskanen. "We didn't win (as a coaching staff) so we were fired."

Niskanen gave up coaching to work as a sales representative in the Detroit area from 1979 to 1980 before becoming a physical education instructor in the Farmington schools.

Niskanen and wife Karol have a son, Matt, who is a freshman football player at Farmington and two daughters, Kathryn (12) and Sara (9).

"I'm old, age-wise, but young as far as coaching goes, and I have a young family," Niskanen said. "Most people my age are involved with grandkids. I'm involved in raising my own kids. I talked to (the Farmington players) Friday and told them I prepared for this day and I'm excited about the opportunity to be a head coach. We'll teach them and make them players."

The Falcons finished only 1-8 last season, Niskanen said of the eight losses. "We were in four, out of four."

Several sophomores saw action on the Farmington varsity last fall and

See COACH, 3B

## North swimmers seeking a repeat of '92 success

BY NEAL ZIPSER  
STAFF WRITER

Jon Teal is no stranger to success.

When Teal swam in the mid-1980s at Redford Catholic Central, the Shamrocks won three consecutive Catholic League titles and once finished eighth in the state.

Now Teal is taking over another traditional swimming powerhouse — North Farmington. The Raiders concluded another successful season last year by placing seventh in the state.

With his knack for success, Teal has no reservations about this season's Raiders, as he has set some lofty goals.

"Our goal for dual meets is to

### SWIMMING

be undefeated," he said. "And our ultimate goal is to finish in the top three in the state. The team is behind me on these goals."

How could a rookie coach expect such high achievements from a team that lost all-Western Lakes swimmers Mike Drelles (100 butterfly) and Chris Knoche (100 freestyle)?

Easy. The Raiders return a talent-laden squad, led by juniors Jonathan Kershaw and Karl Kozicki, both first-team Observerland performers.

Kershaw finished 11th in the state in the 200-yard freestyle last season, as well as placing sixth in

the backstroke. Kozicki holds the North record in the individual medley and the 500 freestyle, the latter which placed him second in the state.

"I have been impressed with both of them," Teal said. "I like Kershaw because of the fact he reminds me of myself — his stature and his build. I like Kozicki because of his great work ethic."

The large supporting cast includes freshman Jason Speer who will swim the backstroke and the sprint freestyle.

A trio of senior tri-captains give Teal a deep senior class. Adam Kammer, who was on the Raiders' school record and All-American 200 medley relay team (1:36.28),

See SWIMMING, 4B

## Martin's long 3 lifts OCC

BY C.J. RISAK  
STAFF WRITER

No fault can be assigned for the game's final, decisive points.

Trailing 89-88 — Schoolcraft College went in front when point guard Vincent Turner converted one of two free throws with 1:02 remaining — Oakland Community College's options were dwindling. Myron Banks, the Raiders' best inside threat, had fouled out with 2:50 left.

Now SC was forcing the play by going into a zone (the Ocelots had played man-to-man defense throughout the game). That compounded OCC's problem, if indeed coach Lynn Reed wanted to pound the ball inside.

Instead, he called Craig Martin's number, from long range. "We wanted him to take the three," said Reed.

SC was not caught unprepared. Their all-conference center, 6-foot-6 Jarvis Murray, was stationed at the top of the key in the zone, his sole purpose to bother Martin. "It had to be an outside shot, and (Martin's) their best outside shooter," said SC coach Dave Bogataj.

Bogataj had witnessed Martin's shooting prowess during pregame warmups. He knew what was

coming. And there was no stopping it.

Murray was there, but his arms were down to deflect a pass. With 20 seconds left, Martin simply backed up a few more feet — he was well behind the three-point stripe, nearly 30 feet from the basket — and let it fly.

"I thought it was good when he shot it," said Reed, long after Martin's shot had arched through the basket, lifting OCC to a 92-89 victory Wednesday at SC.

The Ocelots had played valiantly, if not always brilliantly. Steve Whitlow's three-point shot at the buzzer missed, however, and the Ocelots were stuck with another loss, their seventh straight. SC is 3-9 overall, 0-3 in the Eastern Conference. OCC is 4-7 overall, 1-1 in the conference.

The Ocelots were ahead by a point with 3:25 left in the first half, but OCC finished with a 10-3 upset and led 60-44 at the intermission.

SC started to make its move with 16:21 left in the game. A 10-2 run tied the game at 58-58; OCC recaptured the lead temporarily, but then the Ocelots heated up again.

Their second streak lasted 3:13; SC outscored the Raiders 14-2 and led 72-64 with 9:11 left. The Ocelot lead grew to 10, 76-66, with 7:53 left.

But now, it was the Raiders' turn to rally. Which they did, beat Tony Coleman (10 points in the last 7:37). Banks (eight points in that stretch, six coming on vicious slams) and, of course, Martin. It was Martin who scored OCC's final five points.

Whitlow — who led SC with 27 points — converted a rare four-point play when he sank a three and was fouled. His free throw gave the Ocelots an 86-82 lead.

The Raiders clawed back to tie it with 1:11 left on Martin's baseline jumper. Turner's free throw gave SC the lead with 1:02 to play, setting the stage for Martin's long-range heroics. Coleman led OCC with 27, with Martin getting 22 and Banks 12.

SC got 20 from Bryant Markowicz and 17 from Murray. "I'm telling you," said Reed of Martin after the game, "he can shoot the ball."

No one among the Ocelots need be convinced of that.

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