

Crusaders to christen new diamond

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

Now, all the Madonna University baseball team needs is the snow to melt.

After waiting four years for a home baseball diamond, the Crusaders finally have one with the \$30,000 renovation of the old Livonia Bentley facility now named Madonna Park.

If Mother Nature cooperates, the Crusaders plan to practice on their new grounds after returning from their spring trip March 6-11 in Cocoa Beach, Fla.

The home opener is March 27, a doubleheader against the College of St. Francis, Ill. One of the highlights of the road schedule includes a game April 7 at Ohio State University.

"Madonna Park is certainly a big, big part of it (the MU program)," said Madonna coach Mike George, who pioneered the program in 1989. "We've played 171 games in our history, 151 as road games, and have had 20 so-called home dates (at sites like Redford's Capitol Park). And the only thing that made it a home date was we paid the umpires. The new field is a piece of the puzzle, just like the Florida trip is."

The Crusaders literally worked for Madonna Park; just ask returning third baseman Jeff Pendell (Livonia Churchill) who laughs at the pollen that he's ready to work on the grounds crew at Tiger Stadium. Pendell was one of several Crusaders who spent weeks raking the new grounds last fall.

"We've never had a home-field advantage so this will have to help us this year," said Pendell, who batted .255 with a team-high 35 runs scored as a sophomore.

Can they improve mark?

The Crusaders, who finished

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29-22 overall and qualified for the NAIA District 23 playoffs for the second year in a row in '92 at 14-8, will take a mix of veterans, youth and transfers to Cocoa Beach, also the site of the Florida Marlins' spring training.

Madonna has to replace seven seniors, including first baseman/designated hitter Ernie Bowling, the Crusaders' all-time leader in at-bats (470), hits (160), home runs (29), doubles (40), walks (77) and RBI (139). Bowling batted .303 last year with a team-high 136 hits, 50 RBI and 10 doubles.

"For the last two years, Ernie was the most dominant hitter in the league, not just a power hitter," George said.

Also graduated are the Crusaders' top two pitchers, right-hander Chris Kloc (Redford Thurston) and left-hander Mike Hocking, the Crusaders' all-time wins leader with 16. Kloc had a 1.70 ERA and a 5-2 record, tying returnee Jeff Kugelmann (Plymouth Canton) for the team lead with five wins. Right-hander Dennis Hamilton, who was 4-2 and had a year

of eligibility remaining, decided not to come back for a fifth year, George said.

"Hocking was one of our originals and Kloc was with us three years, they've been mainstays. It seems forever," George said. "Hamilton would have helped us but he lost the desire to play. I respect the fact he's not going to come out and go through the motions."

A good mix

Kugelmann, a sophomore left-hander who led the Crusaders with a 1.36 ERA and was 6-1 with five complete games, is the returning ace. Another pitcher George counts on heavily is junior right-hander Sean Henkel, who had no decision. Other returnees on the staff are junior right-hander Louie McKaig, junior right-hander Mike Coleman and sophomore right-hander Mike Grahl of Farmington.

An impressive newcomer is 6-foot-4, 205-pound right-hander Shaun Hayward, who has a year of eligibility after transferring from Concordia College.

Hayward will also help in the outfield, as will transfers Craig Overaitis (Livonia Franklin and Henry Ford Community College), Jim Solak (Hillsdale), Jeff Miller (University of Detroit-Mercy) and returnees Rich Roy (Livonia Clarenceville), and T.C. Rapla, A freshman. Scott Anderson, also was impressive in fall ball.

"We have some tough, good calls to make (concerning who starts) in the outfield, meaning we have an abundance of talent in the outfield for the first time ever," George said. "Our transfers are impact players — add those guys to anybody and you're going to be good. We can't live on our past. It's important for us to put big numbers up and win the district."

Infield strength

The Crusaders return experience in the infield. Pendell returns at third base, leadoff hitter Joe Brasseur is back for his fourth year at second base and senior Bill Teraki will handle first base most of the time.

Brasseur batted .309 with a team-high 13 stolen bases and Teraki had the Crusaders' top batting average at .338 with a team-high 46 hits.

Miller could be the starting shortstop and the catching duties are split between senior Steve Coffell (Garden City and Redford Bishop Borges) and junior Chris Gensert.

Despite it being sunny and the temperatures hovering in the 40s Tuesday afternoon, Brasseur said he couldn't wait to step on Saturday morning's charter flight to Florida.

"I always look forward to getting away," Brasseur said. "It's always a big start. Every year we say we've got a great team, go to the district playoffs, no problem



State runner-up: Elyse Sklar of Farmington Hills finished second in state speedskating competition.

Local skater 2nd in state

Fifth-year racer Elyse Sklar of Farmington Hills was the runner-up in the Michigan Speedskating Association short-track championships for pony girls (ages 8-9) at Bolknap Arena in Grand Rapids Feb. 27.

Eight-year-old Sklar is a member of the Wolverine Sports Club ice speedskating team (based at the Berkley Ice Arena)

and a third grader at Eagle Elementary School in the Farmington school district.

Sklar received friendly pointers from Olympic speedskater Cathy Turner, a 1992 gold medalist who was in town to promote her March 16-21 appearance with the Ice Cadets at The Palace of Auburn Hills.

Rice skaters rout Birmingham

BY MARTY BUDNER
STAFF WRITER

Birmingham's inaugural high school hockey season ended Thursday night at the Oak Park Community Arena. Most officials connected with the youth program were satisfied with the first-year results.

Birmingham, a combined squad composed of players from both Groves and Seaholm high schools, finished with an overall 12-10-2 record. Birmingham beat Bloomfield Hills teams Lahser and Andover twice, and won its first ever state playoff game (7-2 overall Lathrup) early last week.

The team's season came to a rather dignified conclusion Thursday when they were eliminated from the Class A tournament

by defending state champion Birmingham Brother Rice, 6-1. It was the first ever meeting between the two schools on the hockey rink.

Despite the loss, co-head coaches Bill Reepmeyer and Del Schroeder were proud of the way their first-year team blended together this year.

"We had hoped for a 500 record when we started, but I actually thought we did a little better than what I had anticipated," said Reepmeyer. "We beat Lahser and Andover twice, and our kids were just great. I thought we played very well this year. We faced some pretty tough teams."

"I thought we kept getting better and better as the season progressed," he said.

In Thursday's playoff game, Rice scored twice in the opening period and three times in the second to take control.

Birmingham cut the lead to 3-1 early in the second period on a goal by Erik Eger, assisted by Kyle Friesen. But Rice scored two goals within 57 seconds late in the period to take a 6-1 lead.

Brother Rice, a much quicker, stronger and experienced team, had a balanced scoring attack against Birmingham as six different players scored.

Dale Rominaki and Matt Kozarz each scored first period power-play goals, and captain Larry Lee netted the eventual game winner 1:50 into the second period. Rice's other goals were registered by Josh Fryer, Pat Dakhl and Matt Riker.

CC boasts 3 regional champions

BY MARTY BUDNER
STAFF WRITER

A couple veteran wrestling coaches — Troy's Gary Harlan and Catholic Central's Mike Rodriguez — couldn't contain their excitement at the results the Feb. 27 individual regional wrestling tournament at Hazel Park High School.

Troy and Catholic Central combined to send 11 wrestlers one-fifth of the regional total — to the state meet March 12-13 in Battle Creek.

"It was an outstanding day for us," said Rodriguez. "It's the time of the year for wrestling fever and the kids are now just starting to perform. I'm really excited for them."

Harlan was equally thrilled. Seniors Chris Veluz (125) and Carl Barnes (135) led the Colts

with second-place honors.

Veluz lost his regional championship match to a familiar foe, Lahser's Luis Ortiz, decisively 10-2. Veluz, a three-time state qualifier who placed at state last year, owns a 40-5 record this year with three of his losses to Ortiz.

Barnes was pinned by Catholic Central's Phil Bocho at 5:20. Barnes, a two-time state qualifier, takes a 39-5 mark into the state competition.

While the Colts entered the individual regional on a high note, it was just the opposite for the Shamrocks. CC, hit hard by injuries this year, suffered through a mediocre 9-7-1 dual season then absorbed a tough team tournament

defeat to Redford. But CC's individual regional performances compensated for those disappointments.

Catholic Central led all schools with three individual champions.

Senior Jason Krueger, who placed third in last year's state meet, won the 171-pound regional crown with a 4-2 victory over Lance Sanders of Royal Oak Kimball. Krueger hiked his overall record to 42-1 with his three wins on Saturday.

Jason's brother, Dan, a sophomore, surprised a few people by winning the 160-pound title. The younger Krueger (22-12 overall) defeated Andy Migliano in the title match, 5-4.

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FARMINGTON SCHOOLS INVITATION TO BID

Farmington Public Schools will accept sealed bids for removal of underground storage tanks until 10:00 A.M., Thursday, April 8, 1993 at the Lewis Schulman Administration Center, 32500 Shilawassoe, Farmington, Michigan 48336, addressed to Beverly Hausman at which time they will be publicly opened and read for presentation to the Board of Education at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

The Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or to waive any informalities therein; or for reasons of establishing uniformity, to award the contract to other than the low bidder.

A bid bond or certified check for 5% of the bid must accompany our bid proposal form which may be obtained from our purchasing department.

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A bid bond or certified check for 5% of the bid must accompany our bid proposal form which may be obtained from our purchasing department. Bid specifications will be available on March 8, 1993 at the above address. Any questions should be referred to Mr. Dick Hollowell at 489-3440.

JOSEPH A. SVOKE, Secretary
Board of Education

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The City of Farmington Hills reserves the right to accept, reject any or all bids, either in part or in whole, to waive any formalities and to accept the bid which it believes to be in the best interest of the City.

KATHRYN A. DORNAN, City Clerk

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FARMINGTON SCHOOLS INVITATION TO BID

Farmington Public Schools will accept sealed bids for door replacement until 1:30 P.M., Monday, March 15, 1993 at the Lewis Schulman Administration Center, 32500 Shilawassoe, Farmington, Michigan 48336, addressed to Beverly Hausman at which time they will be publicly opened and read for presentation to the Board of Education at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

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