

SPORTS



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STEVE KOWALSKI

Super fan makes rounds year-round

Westland's Bob Kurashige, the undisputed super fan in Farmington, answered my first two questions with questions.

Who is your favorite coach, I asked. "Which sport?" he replied. "How far have you traveled to see a game?" "Which way?" he asked. "North or west?" "I should have known I'd get answers like these, and not because Kurashige was being sarcastic. Kurashige, a 1979 Westland John Glenn graduate, is a fan of all sports, mostly those played in high school, and he'll go anywhere to watch.

Kurashige says he's been as far north as Midland and as far west as Grand Rapids to watch a high school game but he hasn't considered crossing the Mackinac Bridge. "Not yet," he said. "Give him time. This guy has made the rounds, year-round for 13 years.

Kurashige never misses a major state championship game and estimates he drives 60,000 miles each year to watch sporting events. Imagine all the oil changes for his 1989 Chevy Cavalier. Kurashige says he watches at least 1,000 games per year, despite there being only 365 days. This includes Junior varsity games, double-header baseball and softball games in the summer and volleyball tournaments every Saturday in the winter.

I hope I'm covering them all. Kurashige's Tuesdays and Fridays are booked each season with high school games, whether they be football, girls or boys basketball, softball, or uh, my favorite, soccer.

He's even been spotted on Saturday night in the dead of winter far away from Detroit. Just ask Chuck Gordon, the Glenn football coach who taught Kurashige in science class at Stevenson Junior High in Westland and also referees high school basketball.

"I was officiating a basketball game in Saline one night a few years ago," recalls Gordon. "It's Saturday, a cold winter night. The gym is packed. I look up and there's Kurashige. I said 'What are you doing here?' He said it's the only game in town. The only game in southeastern Michigan. He's a great guy."

Kurashige subscribes to several newspapers and he's an especially avid Observer reader, stopping at our office Mondays and Thursdays to buy most of our editions.

Kurashige, who works during the day as a medical supplies driver, determines which game to attend by following the schedules in the Observer. For schools out-of-state, he sends letters to athletic directors, requesting schedules.

And he goes. Kurashige is one of the first fans to arrive at a game, in case "there's a sellout," so he has a seat. He's one of the last to leave, prompting many coaches to sometimes wonder if he's a sports writer.

Farmington Hills Harrison is one of Kurashige's favorite football teams, no harm intended, Chuck Harrison coach John Herrington remembers one of the first times he met Kurashige.

"The coaches and I were sitting up near the locker room after a game and Bob came up to talk," Herrington said. "I thought he was a Hawk fan, I guess he likes all the teams."

Most coaches don't know Kurashige by name but they recognize the face, the one with the thick brown hair, glasses and a big smile.

I called Bob the other day to do this story and he said he didn't have time.

"I'm going to Garden City City Park to watch a game," Kurashige said. I convinced him to meet me at a restaurant in Livonia.

Kurashige agreed and two hours later there he was, waiting for me while sitting with a group of coaches who knew him. Surprise, surprise.

Another favorite fan The Redford Union softball team has an avid fan, a fair-weathered fan, if you will.

Nora DeRoche, the 77-year-old mother of RU coach Gary DeRoche, is out there every spring to cheer on her son's team. Nora and her husband of 55 years, Richard, attend most of RU's games and she doesn't sit on her hands.

Nora, who wears the blue-and-gold RU cap to every game, has more energy than some of the players.

"She's 77 years young," Gary said. "I always tell Gary to get the girls to yell on the bench," Nora said. "One time he said out loud, 'Hey, girls my mom wants to hear you holler more, more and they did.'"

The elder DeRoche's don't get out as much in the winter and Nora spends a lot of time indoors watching her favorite team, the Red Wings. "Some of our friends will ask us if we watched the Bob Hope Special last night and I'll say, 'No, we had the Red Wings on,'" Nora said.

Pilots beat Shamrocks to take Catholic League title, 5-1

Redford Catholic Central and Warren DeLaSalle met for the Catholic League baseball championship for the second straight year and this time the outcome was reversed.

By STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER



The Madonna University baseball program is getting a pitcher who is undefeated at Tiger Stadium.

Warren DeLaSalle senior right-hander Kurt Wilczynski, who signed last week with Madonna, tossed a four-hitter Friday as the Pilots beat Redford Catholic Central 5-1 for the Catholic League A-B championship at Tiger Stadium.

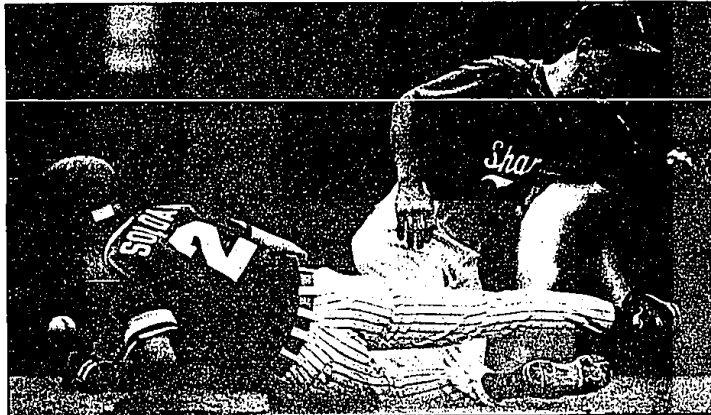
Wilczynski, who played third base when DeLaSalle lost 3-2 to CC in last year's A-B final, allowed only one runner to reach second base after the second inning.

Wilczynski struck out five and walked four and also contributed two hits and two RBI. He is 3-0 in starts against CC and 8-1 overall.

The Pilots are 23-8 overall. "Kurt can pitch, play second base, third, is a great hitter and a hell of a competitor," said DeLaSalle coach Brian Kelly, who would have trouble finding more adjectives in Webster's Dictionary. "He's been hot lately (allowing only one run in his previous three starts)."

The Shamrocks' top four batters were a combined 1-for-13, and Wilczynski also received strong defense. Third baseman Derek Brackton made two consecutive plays on tough ground balls in the fourth, and right fielder Matt Mlynarek made the play of the day when he made an over-the-shoulder catch near the warning track to rob Jeff Gutt of extra bases in the sixth.

"With the defense I have, I don't



GUY WARREN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Safe: DeLaSalle's Ryan Soldan dives safely into second base as the ball gets away from CC's Mike Brusseau. The Pilots rounded the bases five times in the victory, helped along by three Shamrock errors.

worry about anything," said Wilczynski, who added he got stronger as the game progressed. "If I give up many runs, it's in the beginning. That's when I'm getting (in the late innings) CC took a 1-0 lead in the second inning and the Shamrocks almost had two runs, had it not been for a controversial call at home plate.

With two outs, Dave Susalla singled to score Aaron Babicz from third base. Eric Justice, who led the Shamrocks with two hits, also tried to score on the hit but was called out after elbowing catcher Andy Rama in a collision at home plate.

Rama dropped the throw but Justice was ruled out for interference. "It looked to me like Eric didn't have enough room (to touch home

plate)." CC coach John Salter said. "It changed the momentum, but we still didn't play that well."

Susalla, the first of four CC pitchers, suffered the loss in three innings of work. Susalla won his previous start against DeLaSalle to clinch the regular season Central Division championship.

But after holding DeLaSalle scoreless in the first two innings, the Pilots scored two runs in the third, thanks to a pair of hits and two CC errors.

Susalla's error on a sacrifice bunt attempt by Brackton put two runners aboard and Wilczynski delivered a two-run single with one out.

Senior right-hander Brian Paluk relieved Susalla but got in trouble in the fifth. Leadoff batter Jim Kerr doubled and came home one out later on a single by shortstop Don DeDonatis to put the Pilots ahead 3-1. Paluk was replaced by Jerry Noszewski and the first hitter, Ryan Soldan, hit into a fielder's choice to force DeDonatis at second.

After a walk to Greg Peterson, Soldan came home on an error by Babicz, CC's first baseman, for a 4-1 lead. The Pilots scored a run in the fifth without the benefit of a hit. Rama walked, was sacrificed to second and came home on consecutive passed balls for a 5-1 lead.

"They're a good hitting team and we gave them extra help," Salter said. "Give them credit. Their third baseman made two good stops and the right fielder made a great play."

Gundry sparks Hines Park with hot bat

The sound of aluminum is ringing loud and clear off the bat of Gundry, who has sparked Hines Park Lincoln/Mercury to a 4-0 start in the Livonia Collegiate Baseball League.

Gundry, a third baseman, is 12-18 with five triples, two homers and 13 RBI.

The former Plymouth Salem High prospect, who helped the Rocks win the 1991 state Class A championship, went 5-for-6, including a triple, homer, three RBI and four runs scored in Hines Park's 12-5 triumph Wednesday over Little Caesars at Livonia's Ford Field.

Tracy Ewald contributed two hits and three RBI.

Winning pitcher Steve Ross went six innings, scattering six hits and two walks before giving way to Chris Kirkey, who pitched the final inning.

Loaing pitcher Dave Roman, who

COLLEGIATE

went 3 1/2 innings, suffered the loss.

Jerry Shippe had a two-run triple for Caesars.

On Monday, Hines Park pitcher Jeff Paluk (Saginaw Valley State) went the distance, scattering four hits with nine strikeouts in a 7-4 win over Caesars at Concordia College.

Mark VanAmejde suffered the loss.

Offensive leaders for Hines Park included: Jason Riggs, two hits and two RBI; Scott Kapla, 2-for-3 with two runs; Gundry, triple, homer and two RBI; and Gary Pierce, 2-for-3.

Lawrence Scheffer had a two-run double for Caesars. Roman tripled and later scored on a groundout.

Hines Park opened its season May 23 by sweeping Del-Wal in a double-

header, 12-0 and 11-6.

Kapla, a freshman at Eastern Michigan, buried a three-hit-trip in the opener. He struck out four and walked only one.

Ewald (College of Ozarks) homered, while Gundry knocked in four runs. Pierce went 3-for-3 and teammate Kevin Craggs contributed two hits.

Andrew Margolick pitched six innings of five-hit baseball to give Hines Park the victory in the nightcap. Margolick relieved Scott Rodgers, who walked seven batters during the opening inning.

Craggs went 3-for-4 with two RBI and three runs scored, while Ewald and Gundry each contributed two hits and three RBI.

Westland Federation

Westland Federation, a newcomer in the LCBL, ran its record to 3-0

with a 4-3 eight-inning victory over the Tocumseh, Ontario Green Giants in a game played Wednesday at John Glenn High.

Chad Griveau belted a solo homer, while pitcher Bobby Arliano earned the victory.

Griveau also socked a three-run homer and was the winning pitcher in relief as Westland beat Wendy's in the May 21 season opener.

Westland also defeated Walter's Appliances, 6-4, as Jeremy Jablock (Central Michigan University) struck out 12 and scattered seven hits and seven walks in going the distance.

Peta Gallagher, who worked five innings, took the loss.

Walter's losses

Lance Stepaniak struck out 12 in See COLLEGIATE, 3C



JOHN STORAZLAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Falcon finish: Kim Coleman anchored Farmington's 400-meter relay team, which won its heat and finished fifth overall.

Salem girls repeat as track champions

By DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

There was a little more suspense to the Western Lakes Activities Association girls track meet Wednesday, but the outcome was still what everyone expected.

The host Plymouth-Canton schools dominated the meet again, winning 11 of 17 events between 10-0-5-4-3-2-1 partially accounted for that.

But the team finish was nearly identical, with Livonia Stevenson (96), Walled Lake Western (53) and North Farmington (51) rounding out the top five once again.

"It was a great team effort this year, because we scored in places we were not real sure of our scoring potential," Salem coach Mark Gregor said. "On this team, everybody wants

to make a contribution even if it's one point. You win championships with a team and not a group of individuals."

The winner was not decided until the final event, which made every point more valuable and the contest more suspenseful.

Going into the 1,600-meter relay, the Rocks led 132-130 1/4 over Canton. A first-place finish for the Chiefs would have given them the title, but Salem won the race and Canton was third.

"We had a shot; we gave them everything we could and just came up a little short," Canton coach George Frygodaki said.

The Chiefs were leading by several points midway in the meet, but Salem had a strong finish in the final seven events. The Rocks won three of them and scored a lot of points in all but the 3,200 run.

"We came to the meet to win and we were not surprised at all to be in that position," Frygodaki said. "See WLAAs MEET, 2C