

# Hear Scampers shout: 'Barry, Barry, Barry'

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STAFF WRITER

Barry Sanders was undeniably the star of the show Tuesday morning as more than 100 developmentally disabled kids all but swooned to obtain his signature following the Lions' daily practice.

"I love Barry Sanders," said Orchard Lake resident Grace Dila, who sported a Detroit Pistons cap, courtesy of friend Shane Luxon, as she solicited Lion autographs.

Luxon, an avid sports fan, said, "I like the Lions a lot and hope they win." Then turning to someone trying to interrupt him, he said, "We're trying to get in the newspaper."

Adam Shannon came into possession of several autographs, including that of Sanders, then said, "I'm going to cherish his the most."

As the Lions franchise, err... running back, walked from practice to the locker room, the kids lined the barriers and competed for Sanders' attention. "Barry, Barry, Barry," they shouted.

Peter Shaw of Bloomfield Township noted that, "I've got a Barry Sanders picture in my room." He now has an autograph to go with it.

The kids, each with some sort of disability, were able to attend the football practice courtesy of Scamp, a six-week summer camp program for "exceptional children with special needs," according to a Scamp document.

Run by the Bloomfield Hills School District, Scamp is a non-profit organization with 150 staffers, 400 students and an annual budget of about \$300,000, raised through tuition and donations.

The kids spent just one hour at the Silverdome Tuesday, but seemed to get a major thrill from the experience nonetheless. "This is a dream come true," said Dan Schenrock, who was later permitted to occupy the stadium's end zone for a brief period with the rest of the children.

Using faux autograph books created by Scamp staff, the kids petitioned anyone who seemed like he might be with the Lions for an autograph.

David White, a Troy youth, was asked what he would do with his poppourri of John Hancock. "I don't know," he said. "Probably keep them."

Another kid, Josh Owens, was not so awed by the gridiron gods that he lost his sense of priorities. When a particularly large and well-muscled player was slow in returning Owens' writing instrument, the boy said, "Can I have my pen back?"

Other local Scampers at the event included Michael Ficara of Livonia and Tim Aluse of Bloomfield Hills.

Adult supervision was provided, in part, by Christine Murphy of West Bloomfield, Gretchen Keating of Birmingham and Leslie Eller, head administrator for the 10-to-13-year-olds.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DAN DEAR

Barry scores: A coveted autograph and conversation from Barry Sanders is a moment to treasure.



Goal met: Kevin Venit, 10, of Farmington Hills thanks one of the Lions for autographing his football.



Oh wow!: Lions' place kicker Jason Hanson signs autographs for SCAMP campers Tim Ainsie, 13, of Bloomfield Hills and Jamie Woodward, 15, of Highland.

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