

Pesci from page D1

Pesci hit .361 with 22 doubles, 21 homers and 67 RBI. He scored 63 of 86 runs this year.

Pesci, who briefly attended Oakland Community College and made stops at Eastern Michigan, Yavapai College in Arizona and Henry Ford Community College, said he couldn't be happier about his two years at UDM.

"Coach (Bob) Miller is a good coach, but he gets a lot of players who are considered rejects," he said.

"For us to go to Michigan, Michigan State or Eastern and show them we can play baseball down here, too, that was great. A lot of times you get taken for granted. I had fun playing for coach Miller."

The pro scouts have been taking Pesci seriously, however. He most likely will be drafted Monday or Tuesday; the only question is in what round?

Pesci, who could be compared to former Detroit Tiger Kirk Gibson because of his team-first, play-to-win attitude, was taken

in the 30th round a year ago and has a wait-and-see outlook this year.

"I'm trying to keep it in perspective; I'm not getting myself all worked up," Pesci said. "I know I won't be a top-round pick or anything. I'm confident I can compete wherever I go, but if it doesn't happen I'm not going to lose any sleep over it."

"A lot of players would trade their sister for a chance to get drafted. If I got drafted, it will be an honor to play baseball again; if I don't, it won't affect my life-long goals."

Pesci signed papers, allowing Arizona to select him again if it wants. The Reds gave him an eye test, and the Pirates asked for medical records regarding supposed knee surgery. Pesci said he had a cyst removed from the knee, "and it was made out to be more than it was."

If he isn't drafted, Pesci said he won't try to catch on as a free agent or play independent ball. But he will continue to play Class A ball this summer with

Birmingham Lynch.

"If I'm going to go, I'm going full out to make the Major Leagues," he said. "I'm not just going to kick around in the minor leagues, so I can tell stories someday."

"If I'm going to play baseball, I'm better off staying here, making money and getting treated better than I would anywhere playing in the minor leagues."

People might have forgotten Pesci was an all-state linebacker on Harrison's 1991 Class BB championship team, but football is now just a sport he played long ago.

"It is until I see my brothers (Joe and Dave) out there playing," he said. "I get the itch back in my shoulder to get out there and hit somebody."

"Baseball runs you down enough. If I had played football four or five years in college, I can't imagine where I'd be today. But it will always be a big part of what I did."

And so will baseball.

Collegiate from page D1

Selects and Downriver Adray.

The new league gives the three teams remaining from the LCBAL a new lease on life. Teams dropping out in recent years left the league's future undecided before the merger.

Lyle Trudell of the Livonia Parks and Recreation Department is glad those troubles are past tense. The new league also has dropped some of the residency requirements for each team.

"Past troubles I think were not so much reality as they were created by individuals just talking, trying to find problems," Trudell said. "Most of those individuals are gone now."

Each team plays a 26-game round-robin schedule and each game counts in the final standings. The winner of the Collegiate Division will be eligible for a berth to the All-American Amateur Baseball Association national championship in Johnstown, Pa., according to Trudell.

There will be no league playoffs, Trudell said.

Ford Field will be the site of double-headers on Wednesday and Fridays and four games on Sundays.

The Rams' first weekend of play is a busy one for Berryman,

whose high school team was to play in a Class A district 24 hours earlier.

Berryman said it's a dream, not an inconvenience, to have two seasons overlap.

"To me, I've died and gone to Heaven," Berryman said.

The road trips to Windsor will be nothing new for the Rams, who made the trip several times last year. It's hard to go the entire season without visiting the east.

They better remember to have enough change left to cross the bridge.

"My wife June said 'I thought we were just stopping for a minute,' I lied," Berryman said. "I love those Canadian games, but I donated to the Canadian economy about 100 bucks."

Berryman's son, Brian, a Redford Union graduate and University of Michigan player, is on the Rams' roster. His status is uncertain, however, since he just got picked to play in a wooden bat league in Columbus, Ohio.

John Moraitis, the long-time Little Caesars coach, has the same title with Livonia Adray.

Mike George, the former Madonna University coach, coaches DCL Hines Park again

will be coached by Dave Carroll. Moraitis hopes the new teams bring the league recognition.

"I'm not doing hand springs, but I like baseball and I'm competitive and like to be around good ballplayers," Moraitis said. "There are more teams to play. Everyone has to play the same amount of times. I have a decent team. We'll be competitive. I got about seven or eight pitchers."

Berryman played as a collegian in the late 1960s for a team sponsored by Redford Township in the Detroit Free Press League, which played some of its games at Ford Field.

He hopes some of that excitement from his youth returns. He'd also like to see this become a wooden-bat league, but also knows you must crawl before you can walk.

"It was big time baseball back then," Berryman said. "My recollections are the hill would be lined with people in chairs. My hope is that you're going to see some of the best local college players in the area playing baseball. My team is a hedge podge from all over. From Division I, II, and III those are good college ballplayers."



STAFF PHOTO BY ELLISON LEONARD

Going over the game plan: Dan Petry reviews certain aspects of the game with his players during a Cobras practice session at Pioneer Park.

Petry from page D1

through the decade.

He went 18-8 in 1984 and 15-13 the following season. Then elbow problems cost his slider some of its famed bite.

But, while Petry won't be enshrined at Cooperstown, he's definitely a member of the good guy's Hall of Fame.

He will also look back in about 15 years — if he doesn't already — and think maybe the premature end to his career wasn't the worst thing that has happened to him.

Petry is getting to watch and take an active hand in the growing up of his kids.

Coaching, though, wasn't part of the game plan. "I didn't plan on it," he said. "I kind of wanted to let them grow up, watch them."

"But the league kept asking me, I kept putting it on the back burner, saying I'd help out."

"They wanted me to manage a team, but I told them I'd be happy to coach. So they said that would be fine. So they chose another manager and I helped him out."

But coaching your kids is kind of like getting a low-grade virus. It gets into you and sort of takes over before you know it's there.

So Petry coached two seasons. "I got to the point where I felt a little more comfortable in the community," he said, "and they

got me to take over the team."

"Two only done it one time, last year, but things went pretty well. That's not to say I might not want to shift gears, go back to the younger one and let the older one go on."

As a pitcher, Petry was a competitor without being nasty about it. He wanted to be the best he could be, but without stepping on somebody else's toes in the process.

Guys what? He's the same way as a youth league coach, according to those in the know.

"I thought it would be a great thing to work with kids," he said. "It is. It's all the political garbage that you have to deal with — but we've done a pretty good job."

"To be a minor league pitching instructor would be a fantastic job. Except that you have to leave your family."

The next best thing is to be a Little League coach. They become your friends. I look forward to it all year long, all day before a game and mapping out a practice.

"Fun. That's what it's all about."

It gets in your blood, which is why another thought is planting itself in the back of the ex-major league pitcher's mind: that he continue coaching even when his sons reach high school age.

'The next best thing is to be a Little League coach ... I look forward to it all year long.'

Dan Petry
former Detroit Tiger pitcher

"I'm not so sure I wouldn't want to stay active," he said. "Just because they're gone, I'm not so sure I wouldn't take another team. That way you wouldn't have any conflicts (of interest)."

Petry doesn't have any conflicts. He's probably harder on his son than any other player, just to show there's no favoritism.

But what else would you expect from a guy who also wants to make sure his sponsor and assistant coaches get the credit due them.

He's been coaching with Randy Rodriguez of Novi, who grew up in Redford and played collegiately at Texas Christian, since he began coaching Matt's team.

His other coaches are Terry Lamb, Joe Falletti and Jim Darga while the sponsor is Bill Clark, whose Quadrant, Inc., a construction firm based in Wixom.

Petry wants to make sure they get the credit they deserve. And that's a credit to him, too.

Cobras trounce 3 straight opponents

The North Farmington-West Bloomfield Cobras 13-year-old travel baseball team opened its travel season with three consecutive victories in late May.

The regular-season debut resulted in a 22-0 rout of Garden City on May 20 as Wingert, Petry and Vitans combined for a three-hit pitching performance.

The offensive punch was provided by Vitans, who went 4-for-5 with five RBI. Zerbo was 2-for-2 with three RBI and Clark 2-for-2.

The Cobras defeated the South Farmington Bombers two days later, 18-7. Darga, Falletti and Lamb handled the pitching.

Petry led the NFWB hitters, going 5-for-5 with two RBI. Vitans and Wingert had three hits apiece. Vitans had a pair of doubles and two RBI.

BASEBALL

The Cobras defeated Concealed Security 15-3 on May 27. Darga and Falletti held the Concealed hitters in check with their pitching.

Zerbo went 3-for-4 with a home run and four RBI. Rodriguez, Petry, Pickens and Darga chipped in two hits each. Grossman played solid defense at shortstop after rebounding from an injury.

The team's record is 10-3.

The Cobras started the season by winning a tournament in Clarkston in early May, sweeping five games by a combined score of 55-7.

In divisional play, the Cobras defeated the Anchor Bay Angels 16-0, the Rochester Angels 10-0

and the Clarkston Riverdogs 11-1. The games against Anchor Bay featured nine consecutive strikeouts by Cobra pitchers.

NFWB defeated the Oakland Sox 7-4 in a semifinal game. Darga and Lamb combined to shut down the Sox hitting attack, and Clark stroked a key bases-loaded double.

In the championship game, the Cobras defeated the Shelby Sharks, 12-2. Wingert and Vitans handled the pitching duties while Petry sparked the offense with a bases-loaded triple.

The tournament hitting attack was paced by Wingert (.700), Clark (.643), Vitans (.656) and Darga (.545).

Clark led the team with 13 RBI; Zerbo and Petry knocked in seven runs each. Darga scored 11 runs, Zerbo eight.

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