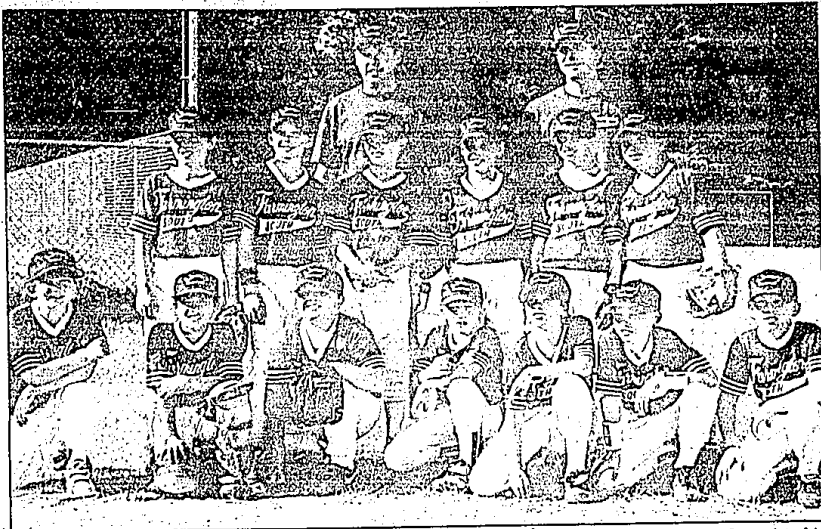


Devil Rays are No. 1 in league



Baseball champs: The Devil Rays baseball team won the South Farmington Mustang Division championship with a 10-3-1 record. The members of the Devil Rays team are (kneeling, left to right) Matt Saxe, Justin Simpson, Matt Watson, David Starling, Harrison Silverman, Jimmy Brady, Michael Ellis, (standing, from left) Andrew Warnick, Keaton Mette, Ryan Gendron, Steven Kay, Andrew Mateer and Evan Silverman. The coaches are (back row, from left) Jim Brady and Ted Mette.

Grid coaches from page D1

with the 6-2 defense. "I'm a firm believer in educational athletics," he said. "I really believe football is just a mirror of life and, hopefully, the kids can learn from the experience and take those lessons with them when they graduate."

Bechtel takes charge

Bechtel knows the Farmington High personnel and WLAA opponents well, having been the defensive coordinator under Niskanen for five seasons and, before that, Bernie Call for two years.

"I'm a workaholic; I love this game and I love being with these kids," said Bechtel, 42, who decided to seek the head coaching position when Niskanen resigned in January.

"My situation changed a little bit, because both my kids are in college. The offseason requires an incredible commitment of time. It's really the heart of the season since I left Orchard Lake St. Mary's that I'm in a position to do that. You have to devote 11 to 12 months to the program, because that's what it takes."

Bechtel played football at Livonia Churchill for legendary coach Ken Kaestner and, after graduating in 1974, attended

Michigan State University, earning a degree in marketing.

He got his start coaching the Westland Rockets, a Little League team, while he was still in college. Since MSU started classes in late September, for the last three games, Bechtel would go home on weekends, conduct practices on Friday and Saturday and head back to school after the game on Sunday.

When he was done with college, Bechtel became an assistant coach at St. Mary's and was head coach for one season in which the Eagles were 2-7.

"A new principal came in and, even though we got along well, he let it be known his football coach was going to be a teacher, too," Bechtel said.

Bechtel, who runs the marketing department for the Guardian Life Insurance Company, was then an assistant at Madison Heights Bishop Foley for six years before joining the Farmington staff.

"(Foley head coach) Ed Maloney went to Harper Woods Notre Dame just before the season started," Bechtel said, "and I wasn't in a position to make the move because of my work commitment. I started looking

around and Farmington gave me the most responsibility."

When he became head coach, Bechtel spent the early part of this year working on organizational changes, which included putting in a new offense.

"I couldn't wait for practice to start, so I could put the whistle around my neck and go back to coaching," he said.

The job now is to move the program ahead. Under Bernie, the kids believed they had a chance to win some games. Lauri took it to the next step. Now we have to win championships and that's our goal."

Bechtel plans to stay with the same defense but will switch to the wing-T offense instead of the I-formation.

"That's something we probably would have done even if Lauri was still coaching," he said. "There were things we needed to do to move the football successfully in our league."

Bechtel will become the offensive coordinator and turn the defense over to Tim Schafer. The varsity staff also includes Pete Finn and Nick Colson. Finn and Schafer are Farmington teachers, and Colson was a varsity player last year.

"My philosophy has always

been: If you're going to be good on defense, you have to have a pretty thorough understanding of what's going on an offense," Bechtel said.

"We've been working in the offense on the progression of play calling and understanding what the defense is trying to do to us. In our offense, we've tried to develop a system where the defense can't be right."

"So far, on paper and the gym floor, it looks OK. We'll see what happens when we line up against Novi (Sept. 4) and see what they think of it."

Concealed Security
11-year-old ballclub
places 4th in Series

Lou Pirronello has coached travel baseball teams for more than a decade and none came closer to a national championship than this year's Concealed Security 11-year-old team.

Concealed finished fourth at the Continental Amateur Baseball Association World Series in Tulsa, Mo., bowing out with an 8-4 loss to Baltimore Aug. 7.

The loss came 24 hours after Concealed suffered a heartbreaking, 13-12 defeat to eventual champion San Diego, which rallied for three runs with two outs in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Pirronello's 17-year-old team in 1995 finished fourth at the Connie Mack AAU national championships, but that team had to fight through the loser's bracket to reach the final four. Concealed and San Diego were the only two unbent teams remaining in the field when they met Aug. 6.

Jeff Richard (West Bloomfield) and Ryan Shay (Garden City) were named to the all-tournament team for right field and shortstop, respectively. Each batted over 500.

"We won eight in a row, beat all the big boys from Texas, Puerto Rico, Tennessee and Mexico, southern teams that notoriously dominate the World Series," Pirronello said. "This and the 17-year-old team with (J.J.) Putz, (Brian) Berryman and (Mike) Corvenak were the closest we've come, but this was a little different because we were in the winner's bracket."

Trailing 12-10 with two outs and the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh, San Diego tied the score with an infield hit. The next batter followed with a line drive down the left field line that fell in for a base hit, scoring the tying and go-ahead runs.

Concealed learned the hard way baseball is a game of inches. "The line drive tipped off the

BASEBALL

third baseman's glove - another half inch and it's in his glove, game over," Pirronello said. "And the winning run was a bang-bang play at the plate after a great throw from the outfield."

Casey Sargent, the third of three Concealed pitchers, suffered the loss. Ryan Shay (Garden City) started, pitching the first 4 1/2 innings before Eric Drieselman (Garden City) came on for one inning.

Concealed had 12 hits, led by Chris Rusin (Canton), who was 3-for-3, including a double and an RBI. Eric Vojtkofski (Wayne) and Drieselman each went 2-4, including a home run.

Concealed enjoyed leads of 5-1 and 8-3 before San Diego's comeback. Concealed, still staggering from the heartbreaking loss, fell behind 8-0 to Baltimore before threatening with four runs in its last at-bats. A double by Shay, single by Vojtkofski and walk to Scott Szpyrka loaded the bases with two outs.

Alan Hagedorn and Sargent followed with RBI singles and Andrew Stafford had a two-run double to cut the deficit to 8-4. With two runners aboard and the tying run in the on-deck circle, Baltimore ended the threat with a strikeout.

"Everybody was amazed at the comeback. The other team was sweating bullets," Pirronello said. "I couldn't be prouder of the team. It was like two heavyweights going at it for 10 rounds and then asking the one who lost to come back the next day."

Team members included Phillip Mabey (Livonia), Matt Rogier (Farmington Hills), Mark Pirronello (Livonia), coaches Pat Rusin, Al Shay, Frank Stafford and Bill Szpyrka and bat boys Tyler Rusin (Canton) and Jeremy Shay (Garden City).

Wolverines from page D1

taste of victory makes you want to go on to bigger and better things," he said. "And we don't like losing."

Carr calls Bryant "tremendous kid with a wonderful attitude, who's also tough."

Meanwhile, Bryant's contemporary on the defensive side, free safety Brent Washington of Westland John Glenn, hasn't been able to shake a lingering injury.

A sore lower back limited summer workouts for the 6-foot, 183-pound red-shirt senior.

"It started in the spring and it's still irritated," said Washington, a backup and special teams member who wears No. 16. "I'm just going to have to go out there and go through practice, and hopefully it will cease."

His lack of running showed up on Friday when he ran 10:12 in the 1.5-mile run.

"My weight is down because I haven't been able to go into the weight room," Washington said. "I've just done light exercising the last few weeks because I don't want it to worsen."

Despite his personal plight, Washington remains upbeat about the Wolverines' chances

heading into the Sept. 5 opener at Notre Dame.

"We push each other and that's what it's all about," he said. "And it starts with senior leadership. Then, everyone else will follow."

"Right now it's hard to say, but the character of the team, from way I'm looking at things, looks pretty good."

While Washington and Bryant have been around the block, for walk-on freshman Kirk Moundros of North Farmington it's been a real eye opener.

The 6-foot-2, 210-pound All-Observer linebacker-fullback had planned all along to enroll at Michigan and pursue a degree in engineering.

His high school coaches sent him to UM recruiting coordinator Bobby Morrison and he liked what he saw.

Moundros is wearing No. 53, a linebacker's number, but he hopes to fill a void at fullback left by Chris Floyd, who has gone on to the new media Friday that depth at fullback was a concern.

Ray Jackson, a true sophomore, will most likely be the

■ **'Draw Henson; he's everything they say and more. What makes him so impressive? His accuracy. I couldn't believe it.'**

Kirk Moundros
— U-M freshman griddler

starter, but backup Demetrius Smith came in overweight at over 261 pounds.

Over two days of preliminary practice, Moundros was a little overwhelmed by it all.

"It was weird," he said, "going from one of the better players in high school to starting here from the bottom. I was supposed to play linebacker, but now I'm going to run at fullback."

And which freshman has impressed Moundros? "Draw Henson; he's everything they say and more," the ex-Raider said. "What makes him so impressive? His accuracy. I couldn't believe it."

Let the college football season begin.

the Jewish Community Center at 6600 West Maple Road in West Bloomfield. Admission is free to all of the events and the public is welcome.

For more information call the Jewish Community Center at (248) 661-7722.



Be There!

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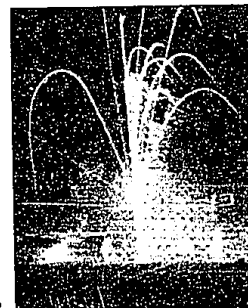
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Who is the Tigers' new power-hitting rookie 3rd Baseman?

Answer:

Name

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Daytime Phone Number

Mail this form to:

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We'll pick 30 winners for each game from all entries with the correct answer. Each winner will receive four (4) Lower Deck Reserved Seat passes. Passes will be mailed to each winner. Winners announced in paper Thurs., August 27 in the Classified section.

Employees of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, the Detroit Tigers, Inc. and their families are not eligible to win.

Maccabi from page D1

into an annual event in 1986 and have remained that way ever since.

The Maccabi Games got started tonight with opening ceremonies scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at the Palace of Auburn Hills. Southfield resident Jeff Gruen has the honor of lighting the

Maccabi Games torch, which officially marks the opening of the Games.

The final event, a cross country race open to all participants in the games, precedes the Closing Ceremonies, which are scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 23, at the Kahn Building at