

Club teammates forced to part ways

By DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER
domeara@ecce.com

The establishing of a girls varsity lacrosse team by Farmington Public Schools will put former teammates and friends on opposing sides in the upcoming season.

The Farmington club team has previously consisted of a combination of players from Farmington Hills Middle and mostly Farmington High School.

With the sport being sponsored now by FPS, the Mercy girls are no longer eligible to play for the Farmington team.

FPS Athletic Director Brian Swinehart said the decision to make both existing (boys and girls) club teams varsity sports

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was a matter of gender equity. "There was a concern whether or not we were going to have enough girls in Farmington (public schools) to field a team, and the proponents of varsity lacrosse assured us we would," Swinehart said.

"It's not that we don't want to be involved with Mercy, but we feel we have to have a program that is supported by girls in Farmington schools."

At an earlier organizational meeting for players, Mike Mehall, who started the club program three years ago, said there was fairly equal represen-

tation among girls from the three public schools.

Mercy is expected to have its own club team with Kim Norton, who coached the Farmington girls team last year, as its coach. She's also the Mercy field hockey coach.

"The girls club team won the Michigan Women's Scholastic Athletic Association's B Division lacrosse title a year ago."

"The club team had about a 50-60 Mercy-Farmington mix," Mehall said. "The last three years we've been trying to get everyone not to have a school identity but a team identity."

"All of a sudden we're breaking them up, and some friends are no longer going to be playing with friends."

"The reality is some Mercy girls were real strong players. Farmington girls were major contributors to our team, and now they're going to have to play against them."

Mehall added, while the team matured and got better over three years, the goal was always to make lacrosse a varsity sport in Farmington.

"This is one of the losses we're going to have to go through," he said. "After this year, I don't think it's going to be as severe an issue."

"The girls who played in the unified format will be graduating, and the (future players) won't have that identity as strong as the seniors this year."

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Mehall estimates each team will carry about 30 players. In the boys game, 10 players are on the field at one time, 11 in the girls sport.

"With the pace of the game being much like hockey, you have players who are on the field for a minute and a half, and then you're cycling new players in because of the amount of activity," Mehall said. "In a normal game, you might have 11 goals and maybe 30 to 40 shots on goal."

Boys lacrosse is "substantially different" from the game as played by the girls, according to Mehall. As in hockey, the boys game is a contact sport that allows checking. The rules for girls lacrosse are similar to basketball and don't permit contact.

Therefore, the girls only have to provide their own sticks and mouth guards. The boys will need helmets, shoulder pads and gloves, as well as sticks and mouth pieces.

"Other schools are using lacrosse as spring conditioning for their football teams," Mehall said. "So we're hoping we get some football players as well as hockey players."

"The players we have are typi-

cally players who wouldn't be playing baseball and are looking for a sport that has a little more contact. It's not that we promote excessive contact, but I think they're looking for something that has a little more continuous action."

"We're not pulling players from other spring sports. We're just providing an opportunity for other kids who wouldn't have a sport to play."

"Defensive players are typically larger players. Attackers are smaller in size but more agile. Middies are like soccer players and kids who enjoy running. They initiate plays and carry the ball up and down the field."

"It has skills that accommodate different body builds. It enables kids to play a position based upon what they enjoy."

"Girls who have played basketball will find lacrosse very close in strategy. We're finding girls who haven't played sports fit into lacrosse, as well as those who are looking for an alternative sport."

A team nickname and colors haven't been chosen yet. Mehall indicated the boys and girls will likely share the same nickname and uniform colors.

Home games are apt to be played at Farmington and North Farmington high schools, with the boys and girls having their own locations for practices and games.

"The club teams have used the practice field behind Farmington High, and that will probably continue as a site for one team."

Due to scheduling conflicts with girls soccer, Swinehart indicated the stadiums at each school will not be used for lacrosse, but final decisions haven't been made yet.

"The field size for girls is different than the boys, and totally different striping is needed," Swinehart said.

"The girls game has no official boundaries," Mehall said, adding it's up to the referee to determine when play has gone too far astray. "The girls is a little more free-flowing game."

Lacrosse is growing in popularity across the country, especially as people move from the East Coast to the Midwest, according to Mehall.

"East Coast lacrosse is one of the strongest sports out there," he said. "In the NCAA, it's the second-largest spectator sport. For the guys, I like to tell them

(NFL Hall of Famer) Jim Brown was an All-America lacrosse player at Syracuse."

"We're finding, with the women, it's a sport colleges are adding because of Title IX, and there are more scholarships available at the college level."

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LACROSSE REUNION: The Farmington boys team will belong to the Michigan Scholastic Athletic Association; the girls to the Michigan Women's Scholastic Athletic Association. The girls will play with U.S. Lacrosse, the national organization for girls.

There are three divisions in the boys league, led in the girls MISAA. The Farmington boys will compete in Division C, the girls in Division D.

RECORD CONTACT: Central and Birmingham players are in their senior year. Less than 50 weeks in Farmington after lacrosse and a sport. There are other pockets of lacrosse in Michigan and surrounding areas.

BOYS' OPPONENTS: The boys lacrosse team will play 15 regular season games against Hazelton, Lincoln, Grand Haven, Westland, Warren, Auburn Hills, Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Livonia, Canton, Utica, Romeo, Ann Arbor (Team Michigan B) and Jackson. All except Ann Arbor are Division C opponents.

BOYS' SCHEDULE: The Farmington boys will play Ann Arbor Central, Hazelton, Romeo, Cassia Park, North, Brighton, Gray, Albion, Steady, Troy, Bloomfield Hills and Macomb Valley. As in the case of the boys, the girls will play each team twice during the regular season.

SEASON STARTS: The Farmington teams will begin preseason practices on Monday, March 6, and the season will run through the end of May.

"Even though we're not affiliated with the Michigan High School Athletic Association, we follow the established rules of that association," Mike Mehall said.

LACROSSE HISTORY: The sport has a long history in the Farmington area, according to Mehall, who said the game was played 2,000 years ago by North American Indians, including the Potawatomi of Farmington.

"The Potawatomi played it pretty extensively," Mehall said. "It was part of their religious activity. Their native lacrosse was given to us by the gods, and it was up to them to teach people how to play it."

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had a lot of injuries.

Dan Mooney and Brad Heraghty missed the game with shoulder injuries, Karl Maus with the flu and Brett Ramsey while he recovers from minor surgery.

"We're in a tough regional, so we'll have to be healthy and on top of our game," Bruhan said. Farmington routed visiting Walled Lake Central in another WIAA game Wednesday as Temerowski had a hat trick, 9-5. The Flyers struck early in that

game, too, leading 3-0 after one period on goals by Mike Payne (Pieurd, Glen Hearn), Temerowski (Patterson, Marion) and Close (short-handed).

The first two goals were scored in the first 37 seconds and just 17 seconds apart.

Both teams scored four times in the second period—Patterson (Heraghty), Temerowski (unassisted), Lee (Eric Zelman, Heraghty) and Temerowski (Lee) for Farmington; Lee Gironen, Andrew Naylor, Chris Pyzik and

Nick Borg scored for Central.

In the third period, Marion (Heraghty) and Mike Lautenbach tallied goals for the Flyers, and Borg scored his second for the Vikings.

Greg Diven was in goal for Farmington.

"The team played very well in the first period, sloppy in the second and better in the third," Bruhan said. "Again, we had a balanced attack with six different players scoring."

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