

# Observer Sports

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Observer  
INSIDE

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## FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

### Youth hockey tryouts

Tryouts for Bantam level players looking to play spring hockey for a select house team at Redford Ice Arena will be from 9:30-10:30 p.m. Friday, March 31.

Most positions are open for the Spring Shootout 2000. The cost for the tryout is \$10. For information, call Art Rolston at (248) 332-3499 or Mark Rhodes at (313) 638-4366.

### Michigan Open golf

Western Golf and Country Club in Redford is among eight sites around the state chosen to host qualifying for the 56th Detroit Newspapers Michigan Open.

The fields at all sites will be limited to 104 golfers and assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

On May 22, qualifying will be at Greystone Golf Club in Romeo, Forest Akers Golf Club-West in East Lansing, Gull Lake Country Club in Richland and Meadowbrook Country Club in Northville.

Applications are available at the qualifying sites and the Michigan Section PGA office by calling (734) 622-2323. The \$200 entry fee and application must be received at the Michigan PGA Office by 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 9.

### Girls 12-under hockey?

Suburban Hockey is conducting preliminary inquiries as to the feasibility of a fall hockey league for girls 12 and under. All games would be played at the Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills and the Novi Ice Arena.

The league would adhere to all Michigan Amateur Hockey Association and USA Hockey rules, which means there would be no checking.

Girls interested in such a program should call Amy Jones at Suburban Hockey (248-478-1600) and indicate their interest by April 16. If there is enough interest, a registration period will begin immediately.

### Spring Baseball Camp

Total Baseball's Spring Break Baseball Camp (ages 7-17) will be from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, April 24-26, at Powers Park in Novi.

The cost is \$100 per player.

University of Detroit Mercy assistant coach Lee Bjork and former Montreal Expo farmhand Aaron Knieper will be the instructors for the camp, which covers fielding, hitting, pitching and base running.

Drills will be run to help improve each individual's game.

Registrations will be taken by phone at (248) 668-0166 or via mail to: Total Baseball, 30990 S. Wixom Road, Wixom MI 48393.

### Stampede of Races

The second annual U-M Heart Care/Domino's Stampede of Races will be Saturday, April 8, at Domino's Farms in Ann Arbor.

The first entry deadline is March 13. Fees are \$15 for the 20- and 10-kilometer races, along with the 5K run/walk. Cost is \$5 for the Mitral Mile and Mini-Mitral (400 meters). Entries may be printed off the event Web site at [www.AthleticVentures.com](http://www.AthleticVentures.com) or enter online with a credit card.

For more information, call (734) 332-3981.

### Blues baseball tryouts

Tryouts are planned for the South Farmington Blues 13-year-old baseball team 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 25 and 26, at Drake Park, field No. 1. The field is on Drake Road south of Grand River.

The Little Caesars Federation team has all new players and managers this year. For more information call coach Ed Laabs at (248) 478-3393 or assistant Len Clapp at (248) 476-1028.

### Softball teams needed

Madonna University has two openings remaining for its 2000 high school softball tournament, which will be May 20-21 at the Canton Softball Center.

All teams are guaranteed three games. Call Madonna softball coach Al White at (734) 432-5763 for more information.



Returning players: Senior Lisa Berenholz (foreground) returns to play soccer for North Farmington as does junior Abbey Hauser (rear) for Farmington Harrison. Both teams start their seasons Friday.

## Remaining injury-free is key for North squad

**6** North Farmington coach Tim Russell believes his girls soccer team can have a successful season as long as the Raiders avoid injuries, which have plagued them in past years. North starts the season Friday.

BY DAN O'MEARA  
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After losing key players to injury in recent years, North Farmington girls soccer coach Tim Russell is keeping his fingers crossed as the Raiders avoid injury for a new season.

With 12 players returning with varsity experience and everyone healthy entering the 2000 campaign, Russell is optimistic about the prospects for North.

"I think we have not only a good chance to be 600, but I plan on us having a winning season," he said. "I'm

going to knock on wood all year long. Hopefully, we're not going to succumb to injury again.

"There are just so many good attitudes on the team; I don't see us getting down after mistakes, and I think that's going to make a significant difference in our play."

The Raiders, who were 4-11-1 last year, have their first game Friday night on the road at Milford. The start time is 7 p.m.

Senior Ali Edwards is a key player who missed games due to injury as a freshman and junior. She still managed to return and win North's most

valuable player award for the second year in a row last season.

Edwards, a two-time, All-Lakes Division player, has been the team's sweeper but will have a new role for the first time as the center midfielder.

"I'm hoping she's going to have a strong season," Russell said. "She came back and made a significant difference, and we're counting on a lot of good things from her again. She makes a huge difference."

Edwards is one of four returning seniors and will captain the team along with Lisa Berenholz and Jackie Tate.

Berenholz, Tate and Lindsay Berbiglia begin their third year on the varsity. Berenholz plays defense, Tate midfield and Berbiglia forward.

"Lisa worked hard in the off-season and improved her skills," Russell said, "and Jackie has worked hard to be

## Whalers prepare to chase '00 title

BY C.J. RISAK  
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Well, maybe this can be classified as a payback of sorts.

After all, last season everyone connected to the Ontario Hockey League figured the Plymouth Whalers — the regular-season champions and one of the Canadian Hockey League's premier teams — would be a favorite to win the Memorial Cup.

### HOCKEY

Then along came the London Knights in the second round of the OHL playoffs and, in an agonizing seven-game series that included three overtime games, the Whalers were eliminated.

This season, no one expected the Whalers to be much of a contender for anything outside of a playoff berth. Four players from last season's team — David Legwand, Harold Druken, Paul Mara and Jason Ward — graduated and are currently playing in the NHL. Several others had also moved on.

So what happened? How did the Whalers achieve the impossible by repeating as winners of the Hamilton Spectator Trophy, presented to the OHL's regular-season champion?

"We didn't expect it," said Whaler coach/general manager Pete DeBoer. "It's been real surprising. Coming into the season, we were just hoping to make the playoffs."

The Whalers' season goals started to be reshaped in December. Early in the month they were struggling to remain at the break-even plateau. But that changed; as the younger Whalers adapted to the game, the team started making strides — small ones at first, then bigger and bigger, culminating in a 17-game win streak that was stopped last Friday by Guelph.

Plymouth was in third place in the OHL's West Division and struggling to maintain that position in December. By mid-February, they were first in the division and climbing.

"We made very few changes," said DeBoer, when asked if the team made some sort of blockbuster move. "We just have such a young team, there was room for improvement."

Improvement is one thing. But developing the kind of consistency that leads to a 33-5-1 record since Dec. 1 (which the Whalers are) is usually something reserved for a veteran squad.

DeBoer credits the players who did return for providing the necessary leadership. "We have four key guys who turned down a chance to play in the pros," said DeBoer, referring to team captain Randy Fitzgerald, Shaun Fisher, Eric Gooldy and goalie Rob Zepp.

Much was also expected from others who played smaller roles on last season's star-studded team. Fisher, a

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### All-Observer swimming & diving team



Farmington students: North Farmington junior Adam Farber (left) and Farmington Harrison senior Davin Hopper are repeat, first-team selections on the All-Observer team. See Page C7 for details regarding the area's top swimmers and divers.