

Compuware 2nd in USSSA

The 18-year-old Compuware softball team finished second in the 64-team USSSA World Tournament Sunday at Canon Softball Center.

Compuware was 3-0 in pool play and 8-2 overall, losing to the Colorado Stars from Denver in the final game, 3-0.

In the winners bracket final Sunday morning, Compuware lost to the Stars, 3-1. Beth Busch was the losing pitcher. Laura Ball (Walled Lake) drove in the team's lone run with a double.

Compuware ended the Tacoma (Wash.) Heat's 10-game winning streak in the losers bracket final to earn another shot at the Stars, 1-0.

In the first inning, Andrea Hillsey (Waterford) singled, was sacrificed to second and scored on Jessie Merchant's bloop single.

Kristi Marzalec (Walled Lake) pitched the first 4½ innings to get the win. With the bases loaded and one out, she was replaced by Jessica Brubaker (Waterford), who

SOFTBALL

preserved the one-run lead.

Due to tendonitis, Brubaker has pitched little this summer since leading Waterford Kettering to a runner-up finish in the Division I high school tournament.

Prior to the June regional, she was hit on the right ankle with a batted ball. The right-handed Brubaker uses her right leg as the push-off leg in her pitching delivery.

Her father, North Farmington coach Dave Brubaker, theorizes the injury caused her to rely more on her arm strength, thereby causing the tendonitis.

Brubaker, who will play for Madonna University next year, started the final game against Denver, but she was relieved by Busch after the Stars scored three runs in the first inning.

At the start of the double-elimination round, Marzalec pitched a no-hitter as Compuware whipped the Lady

Irish from Toledo, 8-0.

Hillsey and Merchant were 2-for-3; Merchant had two doubles and two RBI, and Stapf hit a two-run double.

Kristen Martin went 3-for-4 with four RBI in Compuware's 9-1 win over the Fort Wayne (Ind.) Fire. Busch threw a three-hitter, and Marla Stapf had two hits and two RBI.

Martin and Sara McKinney hit two-run doubles in the next game, a 9-0 rout of the Omaha (Neb.) Swingers. Amy Fleming and McKinney were 2-for-2.

Compuware's seventh-straight victory was a 4-2 decision over the St. Louis (Mo.) Illustrious in eight innings. The score was tied after seven, 1-1.

Busch, who relieved Marzalec in the sixth, was the winning pitcher. Stapf was 2-for-4; Martin, Merchant and Ball had one RBI apiece.

Compuware will have tryouts for its 2002 teams Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 8 and 9, at Shell Park in Waterford. For more information call Al Land at (248) 686-1492.

Hippler from page D1

the world to me. Every time I got a piece of mail it made my day."

Hippler was eager to be home, but he knew the plane ride from Amsterdam could be an ordeal.

"I was pretty miserable with my head and stomach problems," he said. "The steroids I had to take for the swelling ripped apart my stomach. It just made it worse."

"I went through quite a few pain pills, but I wasn't looking too forward to flying, but I was glad to get home."

Hippler's recovery is an ongoing process. He's not allowed to drive yet, because there's still a risk of seizures. He lost 15 pounds and his energy level is low, requiring frequent rests.

But he's expected to regain full ability in those areas, as he did his speech, which was a bit slurred following surgery but is now fine.

Hippler has experienced numbness on his left side, but he hopes that will improve through therapy.

"I'm not back in the swing of things," he said. "I'm really quite monitored. But I'm expected to have a full recovery."

"Early on it didn't look that good, but I've been progressing quite well. The doctors said it was a miracle."

Hippler, who read two books while he was hospitalized, and his mother were greeted by family and friends Friday at Metro

Airport.

The welcoming party included U.S. Baseball Stars coach Steve Merriman and his wife, Sue. One of the Merrimans or trainer

Derek McLaugherty was with Hippler around the clock until his mother arrived in Holland, and they continued to check on his progress throughout the stay.

"For the first 35 hours, everything was pretty bleak from the perspective of the doctors," Steve Merriman said. "They weren't sure what was going to happen."

"You hear all the stories of standing next to the bed and letting the person hear your voice, holding a hand or touching a shoulder."

"Maybe those things were effective. When Nick would wake up, he'd know who we were. He was asking, 'Hey, coach, how are you?' when he's the one laying there. That's the kind of person Nick is."

"Nick's determination as a player and a person is what is going to carry him to his recovery. He's just a determined young man."

In the early part of his hospital stay, Hippler was concerned he wouldn't have a full recovery, his life would be completely changed and he wouldn't play baseball again.

"My goals have changed since then," he said. "I know baseball isn't in my near future."

"My main goal is to start a

light schedule of college classes in the fall and to be physically able to rehabilitate myself."

"It's going to be a slow process, but I have to be patient."

Hippler was supposed to attend Henry Ford Community College and play baseball for the Hawks, but he doubts he'll play at the same competitive level he did.

"I know I won't pitch again," he said.

The St. Olaf player who hit the ball that struck Hippler sent Hippler an email, apologizing for the mishap and wishing him well.

He also led a fundraising effort on behalf of the St. Olaf team to defray the costs incurred by the Hipplers. The host Rouben Baseball Club did the same.

As a result of what he has been through in the last month, Hippler said he has a deeper appreciation for life.

"I've grown to appreciate people more," he said. "I've become more sympathetic toward others."

"I got to know a guy who is 18 and had just been paralyzed. I could sympathize with him not being able to walk."

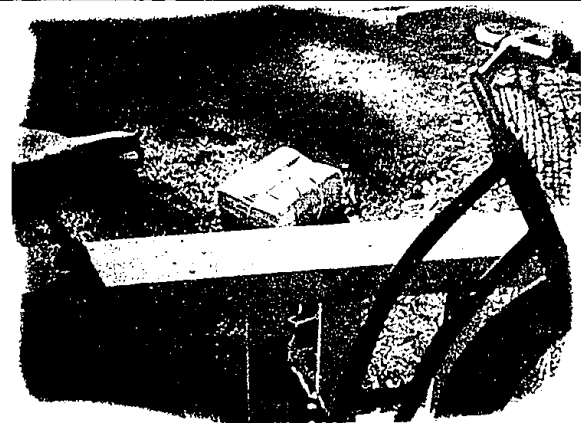
"What (the Farmington community) did for me through fundraising really showed how good people are. I had so much support it was phenomenal."

"I was very fortunate."

Rams in World Series competition



Pee Wee Reese contenders: The 12-year-old Michigan Lake Area Rams are in Puerto Rico for the American Amateur Baseball Congress Pee Wee Reese World Series, which starts today. The Rams are one of eight teams in the World Series, representing the East Central Region, which includes Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. The team members are (front row, left to right) Sean Falvo, Matt Fenster, Derek Fairchild, Jonathon Falvo, Casey Dishman and Steve McCollom; (back row) Jonathon Cervenak, Nick Plinka, A.J. Webb, Drew Davenport, Brady Cooper, Brandon Malinowski, Robby Knight, Thomas Whiting, Kyle Verbeek and Sean Gonzales; and (back row) Ryan Rodriguez.



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