

Defending WLAA champs try to fill gaps

By C.J. RISAK
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The losses are formidable indeed. Plymouth Canton, the defending Western Lakes Activities Association champion in boys track and winner of the last two Qs overland meets, enters this season without three notable state qualifiers: Jordan Chapman, Jerry Gaines and Marty Kane.

"It was one of the finest senior classes (in boys track) we've ever had at Canton High School," said

BOYS TRACK

Chiefs' coach Bob Richardson, noting the additional losses of Brian Page, Eric Moten, Scott Gillen, Jon Mikos, Mike Parker and Kevin Palmer.

So how does Richardson plan to mount a defense to Canton's league title with such devastating absences to contend with?

It won't be easy, but it won't be impossible, either.

"We don't have the big-name guys we were talking about, but we have some talent," said

Richardson.

Returning are 40 lettermen on a team that numbers 65, more than were on the squad last season. Of that total, 25 are seniors and more than half are freshmen and sophomores.

Indeed, five of the Chiefs' top 10 scorers do return, including senior co-captains Ken Page (who will be in the sprints, the high jump and the long jump) and Aaron Schmidt (middle distances).

The other top scorers are senior Dane Kobus (hurdles, long jump, throws), senior

Shardale Hearn (sprints) and junior Corey Walser (jumps). Canton's third team captain is senior Ricky Singh (300-meter hurdles, discus, 400), who missed most of last season with hamstring problems.

Despite the heavy losses which will affect nearly every event, the Chiefs remain formidable enough across the board to challenge any WLAA rival.

The field events remain a strength. Sophomores Brad Weidmann and Mike Lanius and senior Jerome Garrison anchor the high jump, with Page, Kobus and Lanius the leaders in the long jump. Jon Chapman, a sophomore, and Dan Driscoll and Steve Killianczyk, both juniors, are best in the pole vault.

Singh (discus) and Kobus (shot put), together with Weidmann, junior Bryan Frawley and senior Brandon Wright (both for all three), will work the throwing events.

In the hurdles, sprints and distance runs, Richardson has plenty to choose from. Kobus, Page, Killianczyk, senior Pawel

Paskowski and sophomore Corey Stewart are the top choices in the hurdles.

Walser, Hearn, Garrison, senior John Szlinis and juniors Brandon Wilcox, Brian Soash and Matt Trevanthen lead the sprint group. Schmidt and fellow seniors Pat Pruitt, Steve Debin, Brandon McClellan and Ross O'Hara, along with junior Aaron Lanning, give the Chiefs a formidable distance crew.

Indeed, the distance events look to be stronger this season than in several years. The Chiefs won the WLAA boys cross country title last fall, building their self-confidence.

"They know the distance events have always been our question mark," said Richardson. "They're excited about stepping up and leading our team, not just helping."

The Chiefs may need it, considering the loss of so many contributors, particularly in the field events. "So many meets last year, we came out of the field events leading 30-6," said Richardson. "We can't do that this year, but we'll still be good."

"We're a better balanced team.

Everybody's going to chip in. There are so many contributing athletes."

Richardson believes last season's success will provide the building block for this season. "They'd certainly like to defend the WLAA title, get back-to-back," he said. "Their attitudes are excellent. They know what hard work did for us. Their work ethic is tremendous — they're willing to put in whatever it takes."

And yet, despite their talent level and attitude, and Richardson's cast of coaches (Paul Bedford, Matt Kilpelinen and Darrell Burton), repeating won't be easy. Farmington Harrison is very tough, particularly in the speed events, and Livonia Churchill — which handed Canton its only dual-meet defeat last season — returns a solid group. Then there's Walled Lake Western and Plymouth Salem.

The Chiefs open their dual season against Salem at 4 p.m. today in the annual Bolger-Mangan meet. It should make for an interesting start to an equally interesting season.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

YMCA STINGRAYS SIGNUP

The Farmington Family YMCA Stingray swim team is registering swimmers for its "Spring Tune-Up," a competitive swim program that runs from Monday, April 8, through Friday, May 31.

Team participation is open to anyone between the ages of 6 and 18. Participants do not need to be YMCA members during the Spring Session only. Depending on ability, participants will swim either at the YMCA or local high school pools.

For more information, call Cathy Warnick at (248) 553-0276 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 8 p.m.

S/CRAFT GIRLS HOOP CAMPS

Schoolcraft College women's coach Karen Lafata and assistant Maria Christian will stage two sessions of summer girls basketball camps, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday, June 17-20 (grades 1-6); and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, July 22-Aug. 1 (grades 7-12).

The cost for grades 1-6 (half day) is \$75. The fee for grades 7-12 (full day) is \$115.

Schoolcraft is located at 18600 Haggerty, located between Six and Seven Mile roads (just west of I-275) in Livonia.

For more information, call (734) 462-4400, Ext. 5249.

WARRIORS SEEK SPONSORS

The Southfield Warriors AA Midget hockey team is heading to San Jose, Calif., to compete in the USA Hockey National Tour-

namment beginning Tuesday, April 3.

But assistant coach Jason Trzcinski said he team needs help to take care of extensive travel costs. Trzcinski, a Redford Township resident, said corporate sponsors for the non-profit organization are being sought. Those who might be interested should contact Warriors head coach Rob Lupe, at (248) 475-1050.

Hotel costs alone for the Warriors' contingent will be approximately \$10,000, Trzcinski said.

The Warriors, a travel team with teenage players from suburban communities, is based out of Southfield and plays home games at the Southfield Civic Arena.

Adam Chornoby, Victor Calagias, Danny Zeldes and Ian Chornoby of Farmington Hills are members of the Warriors team.

BREAST CANCER FUNDRAISER

The Farmington Tennis Club will host a charity fundraiser 6-11 p.m. Saturday, April 27, for the benefit of the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade.

Two employees of the Farmington Tennis Club, Sally Delacy and Linda Suspeck, are participating in the three-day Avon Breast Cancer Walk from Ann Arbor to Detroit May 31 to June 2.

More than 2,000 people will walk 60 miles to raise funds for breast cancer awareness and early detection. All of the proceeds raised at the April 27 event will go to the Breast Can-

cer Crusade.

Proceeds fund medical research and clinical care, a national financial assistance program for medically underserved women, advocacy training and community-based breast health programs.

The April 27 fundraiser will include tennis, food, silent auction, raffles and door prizes. Advance reservations are required.

Ticket prices are \$30 per person, \$50 per couple or \$20 per person without tennis. Checks made payable to Avon Breast Cancer 3-Day should be mailed with name, address and phone number to Breast Cancer Benefit, P.O. Box 610891, Livonia, MI 48151.

The tennis club is located at 22777 Farmington Rd., between Nine Mile and Grand River. For more information call Delacy at (248) 476-3246.

OCC SPONSORS HOOP CAMP

The Oakland Community College women's basketball team will have a basketball camp for kids in the third through eighth grades 6-8 p.m. Monday, June 17, through Thursday, June 20, at the Highland Lakes Campus.

The cost of the camp is \$40 per person. Each camper will receive a T-shirt for attending the camp, which will be run by OCC women's head coach Marv Allen and assistant coach Christine Nordstrom.

For more information or to receive an entry form call (248) 942-3179 or (248) 942-3170.

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