

# Sports

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PREPS ■ RECREATION ■ OUTDOORS

## Falcons anticipate successful season in OAA



Junior Maggie Vaillancourt (right) is a returning varsity player and starter on defense for the Falcons.

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

With a veteran team led by two-time, all-state Erica Rose, Farmington High coach Steve Montgomery foresees a good year for the Falcons in girls soccer.

For starters, Farmington is no longer in the shadow of the bigger Livonia and Plymouth-Canton schools in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

"The Falcons, who return 11 players from a team that was 6-6-3, will compete in Division II of the Oakland Activities Association.

"Every game we play in the OAA we stand a good chance of winning," Montgomery said. "We just have to play good soccer, and that's a nice feeling."

"We have only 16 players, but they're all going to play. We have experienced players and we're at least two deep at every position."

"I think we're going to have a really good season. It could be one of the best we've had if everything goes as planned and the girls play hard."

Rose, who has committed to

play at Grand Valley State University next year, will be a four-year starter, playing center midfield and sometimes forward.

She earned all-area honors last year after scoring 11 goals and assisting on seven others.

"She's basically a play-maker who controls the ball for us," Montgomery said. "She has a great understanding and

knowledge of the game."

"She is (the glue that holds the team together), but we have a strong junior group and good, incoming freshmen. We should have a good team all the way around."

Rose will provide leadership along with fellow captain Meghan Stewart, the team's only other senior who plays forward and outside mid.

Playing alongside Rose at center mid will be her sister, Joyce, a sophomore and returning

starter who scored eight goals and had a handful of assists.

"Her role will be more passing and distributing the ball, but she'll also be one of the go-to people for scoring," Montgomery said.

"We should have six or seven people who can score. If they work together and help each other, we should have a lot of goals and assists."

Among the team's six returning juniors, Erin Deroo moves back to defense after playing the last two years at midfield and forward.

"She's back at a comfortable position, playing defense," Montgomery said. "She scored some but was really out of her element, because she's really a defender. She played forward to help team."

"The outside defenders will be juniors Maggie Vaillancourt and Mallory McGee."

Vaillancourt has improved dramatically and stepped up her level of play, according to Montgomery. McGee will have a bigger role to play this year as a starter.

PLEASE SEE SOCCER, D4

## Sidelines

### Soccer champs

Aaron Helleck of Farmington High School is a member of the Canton Crossfire under-17 premier soccer team that won the Early Bird Classic last weekend in Columbus, Ohio.

The other team members and their schools are Peter Bierzynski and Dan Curmi (Catholic Central), Ian Bryant (Southfield Christian), Philip Callega (Franklin), Andrew Davis and Roger Saks (Stevenson), Jacob deVries and Brandon Noble (Lutheran West), Greg Ekmelein (Wayne Memorial), Stephen Grickl and Michael Newton (Salom), Joe Hess, Ross Harty and Matt Tomasso (Canton), Sam Kocsis (Garden City) and Jeff Kusch (Country Day).

The team is coached by Jim deVries and Pete Alexander.

### Softball signup

The City of Farmington Hills is accepting new adult team registrations for men's, women's and coed softball.

Registration is based on a first-come, first-serve basis. Leagues will play one night per week.

For fees and nights of play call (248) 473-1860. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### Rockets football

The Farmington Rockets are in need of varsity football players (ages 12-14) and cheerleaders (ages 8-14).

Football players should call Dick Heist at (248) 478-9341 to register, and cheerleaders should call Rick Curtis at (248) 470-6997.

### Skating finals

The 2003 Michigan High School Figure Skating State Championships will take place at Novi Ice Arena (42400 Arena Drive) on Saturday. The event is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The number of districts encompassing Michigan High School Figure Skating was expanded to five for the 2003 season. The schools in each district continued to field separate high-level and low-level teams. Skaters participated in four initial-round competitions within their own district, and the champions from each district advanced to the state finals.

The United Farmington and Farmington Hills Mercy teams competed in District 3 with Plymouth, Brighton, Northville, Novi, Walled Lake and Livonia Ladywood.

## Hills swimmer wins 12-under state title

Ashley Cohagen of Farmington Hills, won one event, was second in two others and placed among the top 20 in six overall at the United States Swimming state meet March 7-9 in Rockford.

Competing for the Ann Arbor Swim Club Y, Cohagen won the 12-and-under championship in the 50 backstroke with a time of 30.12 seconds.

She was the runner-up in the 100 backstroke (1:04.65) and the 200 backstroke (2:18.57). Cohagen also was 12th in the 100 individual medley (1:10.15), 16th in the 100 freestyle (1:02.04) and 19th in the 200 IM (2:30.43).

She was also the lead swimmer for Ann Arbor's winning medley and 200 freestyle relays.

Cohagen's victory in the 50 backstroke was her fourth consecutive USS state title.

At the YMCA state meet in February at Dondero High School, she finished first in the 50 backstroke for the fourth year in a row with a time of 31.34.

Her top times for the 50 and 100 backstroke qualify her for the 15-state Mega Central Zone USS meet in August.

Cohagen has also qualified for the 50-meter backstroke at the National Long Course YMCA meet in Maryland in July.

She has qualified for the 50 and 100 backstroke and the 100 and 200 IM for the seven-state Great Lakes YMCA Zone meet this weekend in Canton, Ohio.

## Whalers begin pursuit of OHL championship

BY C.J. NISAK  
STAFF WRITER

There are a couple of good reasons to think this year's postseason won't be like last year's for the Plymouth Whalers.

Remember that one? A lot of Whalers fans don't want to. After completing the regular season on cruise control, finishing with the Ontario Hockey League's best record, the Whalers were shockingly eliminated in the first round of the playoffs by the London Knights.

### OHL HOCKEY

On Saturday, the Whalers will renew their quest for an OHL championship and a shot at the Memorial Cup, starting with a best-of-seven series against the Owen Sound Attack.

The differences between this year's team and last year's? Well, for one, the Whalers were not the OHL's best team in the regular season this year. They were second

PLEASE SEE WHALERS, D6

## Hockey community helps ailing dad

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

The area's ice hockey community is scoring the equivalent of a hat trick in the Stanley Cup Finals by way of its participation in a program to financially help a hockey dad who needs a heart transplant.

High-profile events and activities organized by the non-profit "Hockey has Heart" foundation in tandem with the Farmington Hills Hockey Association will take place Friday and Saturday. It is hoped the event will be successful enough to assist 50-year-old



Terry Gould, a father of five who is at the top of the National Heart Transplant list.

Even though still-active FHLHA member Gould has medical insurance, it is estimated costs to keep him alive and in adequate physical shape to

accept his new heart will reach the \$500,000 mark.

One of the high school teams fully behind the initiative is Orchard Lake St. Mary's. According to head coach Brian Klanow, members of the Eagles will volunteer for a full day of activities Saturday at Farmington Hills Ice Arena.

"We're going to be donating services and time," Klanow said. "There's going to be a skills competition, and we'll be donating our time for that, too. It's whatever we can do."

PLEASE SEE HEART, D4

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