



**'Silly' season**  
Columnist says spring sports are almost a joke in these parts. D5

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## Whalers, Rangers play for series lead in Game 5

BY BRAD MONASTIERE  
STAFF WRITER

The best-of-seven series between the Plymouth Whalers and Kitchener Rangers has morphed into a best-of-three series, which starts tonight. After four games in the OHL Western Conference Finals, the Whalers and Rangers find themselves deadlocked at two games heading into tonight's Game 5 at Kitchener.

That also guarantees another home

game for the Whalers. Game 6 is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Saturday night at Compuware Arena. If necessary, Game 7 will take place at Kitchener Monday. All games will be broadcast at Talk Radio 1010 WXDX. Plymouth knotted the series with a dramatic 3-2 win Tuesday night at Compuware. Chris Thorburn and Chad LaRose each scored third-period goals to breathe new life into the Whalers. The Whalers are a battle-tested group

this playoff year, having won a seven-game series against the London Knights in the West Semifinals. The Game 4 win also ended Plymouth's first two-game losing streak of the playoffs.

Whalers coach Mike Vellucci used an old coaching axiom when describing his team's approach to the next two or three games.

"Hey, we'll just take them one at a time," he said.

Plymouth has outshot Kitchener 85-49 in the past two games, but Rangers

coach Pete DeBoer said his team's approach would be simple entering Game 6.

"If we win our home games, we know we win the series," he said. "We won't come out any different in the next game. Shots on goal don't really mean anything. We've had just as many quality scoring chances as they have in the series."

The winner of this series will take on the winner of the Toronto-Ottawa series for the OHL championship.

## Sidelines

### Marathon runners

Nine men and women from Farmington and Farmington Hills competed Monday in the annual Boston Marathon.

Dave Peterson of Farmington, 36, had the fastest time among the men at three hours, five minutes and 10 seconds. He was 901st overall, 860th among all male runners and 607th in his age group.

Tom Butler, 54, finished the race in 3:08:10. Tom Stamboulan, 26, 3:21:58; Brian Silver, 35, 3:51:11; Stephen Bouwkamp, 51, 4:17:31; and Jim Caporali, 61, 4:25:44. Butler finished 117th overall, Stamboulan 2,521st, Silver 7,828th, Bouwkamp 12,781th and Caporali 13,587th. Butler was 371th in his age group and Caporali 289th.

Kim Deraroy of Farmington, 34, finished in 3:16:35. Nicole Moudros, 19, 4:11:12; and Jennifer Bouwkamp, 50, 4:17:31. Deraroy was 1966th overall, 132nd among women runners and 102nd in her age group. Moudros was 3,775th on the women's list and 2,553rd in her age group. Bouwkamp was 4,318th and 211th, respectively.

### Vikings sign up

Registration for NWB Vikings football players and cheerleaders will be 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 10, in the North Farmington High School cafeteria.

The program offers boys and girls (ages 8-13) participation at one of three levels: freshmen, Jayvee and varsity. In addition, there is a flag football team for younger children (ages 6-8).

The Vikings are part of the Oakland-Macomb Youth Football Association. The seasons run from August to October, plus any playoff games.

Games are played either Saturday or Sunday; practices are Tuesday through Friday.

The fee is \$150, plus limited fund raising to cover the balance of the program cost. For more information call either Jeff Hunter (553-0059) or Charlie Fleetham (476-7577) for football, Shari Gambill (427-0003) for cheerleading.

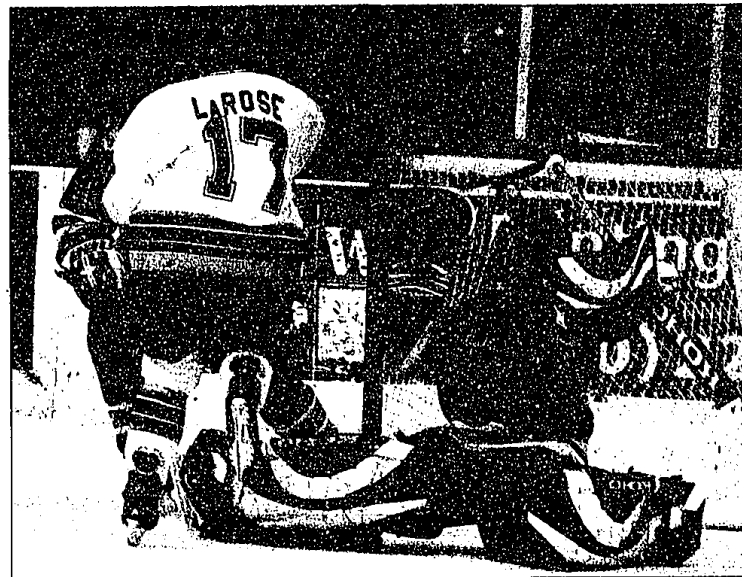
### Academic honors

Charlie Stamboulan of Farmington Hills (North Farmington) was honored as the top student-athlete at the Wayne State University men's cross country team banquet March 23.

Stamboulan was also the recipient of the 2003 Dean's Award from the Wayne State College of Education. The award is given each year to the student-athlete with the highest grade point among all student-athletes enrolled in that college.

### Clarification

Regarding coverage of the 2003 all-area hockey team in the April 10 edition of the Observer, Farmington Unified Junior LeFebvre should have been listed as an honorable mention goaltender, not a forward. LeFebvre's name also was spelled incorrectly, as was that of teammate Victor Calagas.



The Whalers' Chad LaRose (17) beats Kitchener goalie Scott Dickie for the game-winning goal late in the third period.

PAUL HORSCHMANN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Late score by LaRose breaks tie

BY BRAD MONASTIERE  
STAFF WRITER

For the second-straight game, a winner wasn't decided in the OHL Western Conference finals until the final two minutes Tuesday. But the result was one that had Plymouth Whalers fans giddy with excitement. Forward Chad LaRose backhanded in a beautiful goal with 1:27 left in the third period to lift the host Whalers to a thrilling 3-2 win over the Kitchener Rangers at Compuware Arena.

The win ties the best-of-seven series at two games apiece, with Game 5 set for tonight at Kitchener.

In Game 3, the Whalers appeared to have scored a goal just as time expired in the third period that would have sent the game into overtime. But the officials ruled the puck did not cross the goal line before the game ended. LaRose made sure no such review was necessary this time. LaRose scored his ninth of the

PLEASE SEE WHALERS, D3

## Farmington awaits end of vacation

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Poor weather and spring break have delayed not only the season but also coach Mike Mehall's evaluation of the Farmington United girls lacrosse team.

Farmington has played just one of five games to date and is idle this week. Its next scheduled game is April 30 against Bloomfield.

"We're stepping into the season without much real play," Mehall said. "Until we play other teams, it's hard to figure out what's going to happen."

In its only competition so far, Farmington defeated Grosse Pointe North, 13-9. That hadn't happened since the program was started four years ago.

"I'm hoping that momentum will carry us when we get back," Mehall said. "It's hard to evaluate a team with only a scrimmage and one game."

Farmington was 12-6-1 last year as a member of the Michigan Women's Scholastic Lacrosse Association C Division.

It reached the semifinals of the post-season playoffs, losing to eventual division champion Flint Towers.

Due to the growth of the sport, Farmington has moved up to B Division East with Harrison Township L'Anse Creuse, Bloomfield, GPN, Farmington Hills Mercy and Troy Athens.

PLEASE SEE LACROSSE, D3

## Lady Raiders stay unbeaten in league

### SOFTBALL

Chalk up two more wins for the Oakland Community College women's softball team.

The Lady Raiders are 16-0 in the MCCA Eastern Conference and 30-5 overall after sweeping a doubleheader Tuesday from host St. Clair County Community College, 12-4 and 9-1.

Emily Bell went 4-for-4 in the first game, hit two home runs (her third and fourth of the year) and drove in seven runs; she also scored three times.

Julia Hall was 3-for-4 and scored three runs; Toni Salo, Jamie Seaman and winning pitcher Kelly Nilson had two hits apiece. Seaman hit her 13th

double of the season and Bell her ninth.

Nilson pitched five innings of the six-inning game, striking out 12 and walking one. OCC outhit St. Clair, 17-4.

Rachel Raciold worked an inning of hitless, scoreless relief.

Kristi Marszalec pitched four innings of no-hit softball in the nighttime to earn the victory. Raciold again threw an inning of relief in the five-inning contest.

Salo, Nilson, Raciold and Jackie Peplinski led the Lady Raiders with two

PLEASE SEE SOFTBALL, D4

## Unified girls golf team eyes success in 2003

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Based on early results, the Farmington Unified girls golf team can expect to do well this year.

The team won its only dual match thus far, defeating Milford at Mystic Creek, and finished fourth in the Oakland County Division 1 and Hartland Best-Ball tournaments.

Farmington is idle this week due to spring break and will resume play Monday against defending state champion Rochester on the latter's home course at Great Oaks.

Coach Ann Marie Sopha was anxious about the county tournament, because her team had only one competitive event prior to it.

Farmington had five events

either cancelled or postponed in late March and early April due to bad weather and poor playing conditions that resulted.

The Oakland Activities Association pre-season tournament was one of the casualties.

The league decided to count the county scores for that purpose, too. Farmington's strong performance put to rest Sopha's fears.

Farmington, which won the Western Lakes Activities Association tournament last year, will have to contend with 2003 Oakland County champion Rochester in the OAA but should fare well against the other Division 1 opponents.

Farmington returns last year's team MVP, senior Andrea Mazanka, who averaged 47.2

PLEASE SEE GOLF, D2



Senior Andrea Mazanka, last year's team MVP, returns to lead the Farmington Unified girls golf team.

BILL BOESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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