

Sidelines

Bucks topple Rough Riders in U.S. Cup match

BY BRAD MONASTRIE
STAFF WRITER

It wasn't quite like the Toledo Mud Hens beating the New York Yankees, but that didn't make Wednesday's win any less sweet for the Mid-Michigan Bucks.

Buoyed by a raucous home crowd at Berkeley's Hurley Field, the Bucks advanced to the third

round of the U.S. Open Cup with a 2-1 upset win over the Long Island (N.Y.) Rough Riders.

The Bucks, a Premier Development League (Division IV) team, will now play the New York-New Jersey MetroStars of Major League Soccer, the highest professional league in American soccer, on July 16. The site of that game against

SOCCER

the MetroStars, the Eastern Conference leader, has yet to be determined.

Bucks coach Don Gemmell said his Bucks did a great job of keeping its focus throughout the match to come from behind to get the win.

"We knew we would have to

stay on task and pass well against this team," he said. "One thing we try to instill in our training is to be a strong team at the end of games, and we finished the game very well tonight. We want to make teams work the full 90 minutes to beat us."

The Rough Riders, a Division III team, had only lost one of its previous 24 pro games. It

appeared that one-loss streak would remain intact after Long Island's Darrell Etienne scored in the 56th minute to put his team up 1-0.

But as they had in their previous game, the Bucks quickly rallied from the one-goal deficit. After regaining control of play, the team generated sev-

PLEASE SEE SOCCER, B2

Baseball all-state

Division I state runner-up Birmingham Brother Rice put four players on the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association's Dream Team.

Senior pitchers Mike Kirschenheiter and Matt Petry, junior catcher Doug Pickens and senior shortstop Dan Lenz made the team. Petry and Lenz are Farmington Hills residents. Brother Rice's Bob Riker was named Coach of the Year. Warren Mott senior first baseman Nick Thurman was named Mr. Baseball.

Kirschenheiter, Petry, Pickens, Lenz, Farmington Harrison senior catcher Kevin Zerbo and Brother Rice junior outfielder Cody Nolen made the Division I all-state first team.

Senior pitcher Mark McDaniel and senior outfielder Jeremy Leber of Division II state champion Orchard Lake St. Mary's made the D-II second team.

Whalers add size

The Plymouth Whalers added more size to their defensive corps Thursday by selecting 17-year-old Czech Republic blue-liner Vaclav Mejd in the 2003 Central Hockey League Import Draft. Mejd checks in at 6-foot-4 and 195 pounds and combines the team's off-season emphasis of adding big, strong defensemen to the roster.

The team also traded away defenseman Martin Cizek to the Guelph Storm for a fifth-round pick in the 2005 CHL Priority Draft. Cizek also hails from the Czech Republic.

Golf with Tiger?

A chance to play golf with Tiger Woods is among several items available to the public in a special auction to benefit Buick Open charities.

The items will be available for bid on eBay from July 9-19 with the winners contacted on July 19.

Among the items available are an all-expense paid trip to meet Woods at the Buick Scramble Championships in Orlando, an autographed golf bag and a one-day clinic at the Dutch Harbor School of Golf in Las Vegas. There is also a package that includes airfare, hotel for two and one spot in the 2004 Buick Invitational Pro-Am in San Diego. Other items are also available.

For more information on the auction and the items, visit the Web site at www.buickopencharities.org.

Flyers golf event

The third annual Farmington Flyers Golf Outing will be Sunday, Aug. 3, at Fellows Creek Golf Club in Canton.

There will be a shotgun start at 1 p.m. The fee is \$100 per person or \$400 for a foursome. The cost includes golf, lunch, dinner, door prizes and a raffle.

Hole sponsorships are available and needed. The money raised will offset some of the cost for the pay-to-play Flyers high school hockey program.

For more information or to register, call Terry Laird at (248) 473-4457.



Dr. Brian Nocella, a Farmington chiropractor, was one of a select number of golfers who were chosen to participate in a Nike program, testing and evaluating the company's golf equipment and apparel.

'A golfer's dream'

Farmington doctor enjoys role as Nike staff member

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Being an avid golfer, Dr. Brian Nocella thought he hit the jackpot when he was chosen to be a Nike golf players staff member.

Nocella is part of a new Nike program in which a select group of golfers from across the country test the company's golf equipment and provide feedback.

"It was like buying a lottery ticket and winning," Nocella said. "I couldn't believe it. It's a golfer's dream."

The 43-year-old chiropractor, who practiced in Farmington for the last 13 years, read about the program in *Travel & Leisure Golf* magazine.

He was one of approximately 1,600 applicants - a number that was eventually whittled down to 88. The country is divided into 11 regions with eight participants in each one.

Nike, which sponsors Tiger Woods on the PGA Tour, is best known for its line of athletic shoes, but recently entered the golf equipment and apparel market.

"The program came about because Nike wanted to know what people think," Nocella said. "They have the No. 1 player in the world using their stuff, but sales were not what they anticipated. Why? That's what they're striving

to find out."

To be eligible to participate, a golfer had to have a single-digit handicap, play at least 10 rounds a year outside his home state and be knowledgeable about golf and golf equipment.

Nocella, a 5-handicap who has played golf since he was 13, met the requirements, but he went a step further to set himself apart from other applicants.

He included a photo of a friend had taken of him during a trip to the legendary course at St. Andrews, Scotland.

In the picture, Nocella is held upside down by the ankles by two fellow golfers as he tries to hit a shot out of Hell's Bunker, a 14-foot-deep sand trap.

"I sent that in and that was my hook, so to speak, to get them," Nocella said. "T&L saw the picture and said, 'This is a guy we want. We know he's serious about golf.'"

During a phone interview, a Nike representative quizzed Nocella about his golf background and knowledge.

"She was asking questions a lot of people wouldn't be able to answer," he said. "She wanted to know what the difference between this club and that club was. Because I've been playing a long time, I came up with the answer right away."

"She asked why I thought I would be good for this program. I said, 'Because I'm not afraid to tell the truth, and I'm not afraid to talk to people.'"

PLEASE SEE NOCELLA, B2

Area golf pro wins his second Michigan Open

West Bloomfield golf professional Bob Ackerman won the Michigan Open on Thursday on "The Bear" at Grand Traverse Resort.

Ackerman, 50, who teaches at the Bob Ackerman Golf Academy in West Bloomfield, earned about \$14,000 for beating Bryan Snyder (Detroit Golf Club) in a one-hole sudden death playoff. Both finished the fourth round tied at 7-under 281, after Snyder rallied from

four strokes back in the back nine.

"It hasn't sunk in yet," said Ackerman, whose first Michigan Open victory was in 1975 as a 22-year-old amateur. "I'm a dedicated, passionate golfer. I love to play and practice. This is what I've been doing since I was a little boy. It's

moments like this that make it all worthwhile."

Those winning moments are occurring on a regular basis for Ackerman. Earlier this month, he captured the Michigan Senior Open at Bedford Valley Golf Course in Battle Creek.

"Bedford Valley is well-defined because of the trees and the doglegs," Ackerman said. "The Bear is more of a links-style course. To win on two differ-

ent venues like that is great."

Ackerman began Thursday's blustery final round at 9-under-par with a two-stroke lead after opening with rounds of 73-65 and 69. Then, after the 15th hole of the fourth round, he looked up at the leader board and saw that Snyder was 7-under-par.

"I thought, 'Man, now I've got to play

PLEASE SEE WIN, B2

Players like St. Mary's Castine don't wait long to have impact

Remember when ninth-graders basically were nervous, unassuming types who almost worked at not being noticed by juniors and seniors?

There even was a chain of command in terms of playing high school sports. You had freshman teams, then junior varsity and varsity. And although players often made the move up one step, never did it seem a freshman jumped up to the top step.

Well, in this age of dedicated young athletes who train throughout the year and have their eyes on goals well beyond earning varsity letters, it is a jump becoming rarer than ever.

For exhibit A, look no further than catcher Jon Castine of Farmington, who literally stepped up to the plate as a ninth grader at Orchard Lake St. Mary's, sparking the Eagles' baseball team on offense and behind the plate, en route to a Division II state championship.

Not only did Castine make the varsity as a freshman, he was an integral reason why the Eagles were one of the Cinderella teams of postseason play. He hit about .400 after his early season call-up to the varsity, and kept on hitting in the tournament.

"He's just a gamer, he's a kid that waits for a pitch that he can hit hard and that's what he's been doing all year long," said St. Mary's head coach Jeff Willis, without a trace of surprise.

PLEASE SEE CASTINE, B2



Tim Smith



Lacrosse leaders

Team captains Lindsey Hirzel (left to right), Brittani Kokko, Jenny Adams and Kristie Boskey led the Farmington United girls lacrosse team to a runner-up finish in the Division B state playoffs of the Michigan Women's Scholastic Lacrosse Association May 31. See the team photo inside today's sports section.

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