

OBSERVER  
SPORTS  
SCENE

## Correction

In Thursday's Observer, an error was made in the story regarding the new Plymouth Salem football coach. His name is Bob Cummings; his father was the school's former athletic director, Paul Cummings.

## Chiefs football boosters

The Plymouth Canton Chiefs Football Boosters Club will have a Meet the Coaches meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 6 in the Canton HS cafeteria. Parents of all current and future Canton football players (including eighth graders) are required to attend.

For further information, call club president Angela Koerner at (734) 416-9120.

## Ambassador commits

Andy Bozoian, a defenseman with the Compuware Ambassadors, has committed to attend Niagara University and play for the Purple Eagles of College Hockey America in the fall.

Bozoian, a 5-foot-11, 180-pound native of Brownstown, joins his brother Mike, also a defenseman with Niagara. Andy totaled 10 goals and 20 assists for Compuware last season, with two power-play goals and four game-winners in 51 games.

## Fall youth soccer

The city of Plymouth Recreation Department will take Fall Youth Soccer registration during business hours throughout the month of June at the Recreation office, located at 525 Farmer in the Plymouth Cultural Center.

All registrations require a birth certificate. The fee for under-6 to under-8 teams is \$45 for city of Plymouth residents and \$65 for non-residents; for under-9 and older divisions, the fee is \$50 for residents and \$80 for non-residents.

For more information, call (734) 455-6620. Check out more information and download registration forms at [www.ci.plymouth.mi.us](http://www.ci.plymouth.mi.us).

## LPGA clinic

A special feature at this year's St. Joe's Pro Am Golf Classic on Wednesday, May 30 at Pheasant Run Golf Course is a LPGA Clinic for beginner, intermediate and advanced level golfers. LPGA professionals Lynn Waldecker and Patricia Gray along with Patricia Murray, a USGA rules volunteer, will be instructors at the three 50-minute stations focusing on the short games, the swing, rules and etiquette. The clinic is from noon to 3 p.m.

Cost is \$200 per person which includes the three 50-minute training stations, player premium, lunch and dinner. Participation is limited.

For a LPGA clinic ticket call the development department at St. Joe's at (734) 712-4040.

Proceeds from the fourth annual Johnson Controls St. Joe's Pro Am Golf Classic will help to expand and renew the Health Exploration Station in St. Joseph Mercy Canton Health Center.

## PCHA sign-up, sale

The Plymouth-Canton Hockey Association will be accepting membership applications for the 2001-02 season from 10 a.m.-noon Sunday, June 10 at the Plymouth Cultural Center.

Applicants must provide a copy of their birth certificate and proof of residency. Players will be chosen by lottery to fill openings on fall house teams.

Also the PCHA's Used Equipment Sale will be held concurrently at the Plymouth Cultural Center. Tagging of items begins at 9:30 a.m.; the sale starts at 10:00 a.m. The PCHA keeps 15 percent of the sale price.

For more information, check the PCHA website at [www.pchockey.org](http://www.pchockey.org) or call the hotline at (734) 254-9198.

## Baseball camp

The Plymouth Canton baseball staff and players will host the Canton Chiefs Baseball Camp for kids 7-14 years old from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. June 18-22 at Canton's varsity baseball diamond.

Cost is \$85 if received prior to June 9. Registration at the gate is \$90. Lunch and a free T-shirt are included as well. For further information, call Marcy Staley at (734) 416-8375 or Sharon Hanson at (734) 459-8477.

# DeBoer departs Whalers

BY C.J. RISAK  
SPORTS EDITOR  
cjrisk@oe.homecomm.net

It was a stunning turn of events. On Thursday, Plymouth Whalers coach/general manager Pete DeBoer resigned his positions; on Friday, he officially accepted the same jobs with the Kitchener Rangers, also of the Ontario Hockey League, signing a five-year pact with the team.

DeBoer leaves after guiding the Whalers into the OHL championship series in each of the last two years. The Whalers lost in seven games to the Barrie Colts in 1999-2000; this season, they were eliminated in six games by the Ottawa 67's.

The 32-year-old native of Dunnville, Ont., takes with him a 242-125-30-5 record (a .647 winning percentage) through six regular seasons as coach of the Whalers, including a 43-15-5-5 mark in 2000-01.

He guided the Whalers to four OHL West Division championships, two Hamilton Spectator Trophies as the OHL's top regular-season team and two Western Conference playoff championships, and he collected two Matt Leyden Trophies as the OHL's coach of the year (1998-99 and 1999-00).

The question is — why? The Whalers are quite obviously one of the OHL's most prominent programs. The arena they play in is only four years old. Since moving to Plymouth, the Whalers have finished first in the division three times and second once. And the team's owner, Peter Karmanos, also owns the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes.

Kitchener, on the other hand, has reached the playoffs just once in the past three seasons. Last season, the Rangers were dead last in the OHL's Midwest Division with a 26-36-6-0 record.

It is a question that will remain unanswered.



FILE PHOTO BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

**A coach no more: Pete DeBoer won 242 games in six years as the Whalers' coach.**

DeBoer addressed the media in Kitchener Friday, but would not say why he was leaving a winning program for one that has struggled the last few years. And he did not return phone calls.

His only comment was in a Whalers' press release. "My eight years (two as an assistant coach) with the Compuware organization were filled with great success and personal growth. My family and I are excited about the new challenges that lay ahead. I would like to thank (team owner) Peter Karmanos and the community of Plymouth for their support."

He takes his assistant coach/general manager, Steve Spott, with him. A second Whalers' assistant coach, Mark Gowans, was dismissed.

"It's a little bit of a surprise," said Whalers' president Mike Vellucci. "We had an idea he might want to move up, maybe into an NHL position somewhere. But that's a surprise — he made a lateral move."

"He's a great coach, he's done a great job here."

With DeBoer refusing to elaborate, the 'why' question will continue to swirl as the Whalers search for a new coaching staff — and Vellucci could be at the center of any controversy.

Did his being promoted to team president last year, after serving as coach of the Compuware Ambassadors, a member of the North American Hockey League, have an impact on DeBoer's decision?

"Not from my point of view," Vellucci said. "Not on my behalf at all. I'm in charge of the business end of (the Whalers). I stayed away from the team part of it as much as possible."

However Vellucci, who enjoyed a great deal of success as the coach of the Ambassadors, did say he would be interested in coaching the Whalers.

"I'd say yes," he answered when asked if he was a candidate for the job. "I need to sit down with Peter Karmanos and discuss the options with him."

Other possible coaching successors have already been in contact with Vellucci. The position is expected to be filled quickly.



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

**A great day: Canton's Eric Moten shocked the WLAA field by finishing first in the discus. He also placed second in the shot put (above).**

# Coming up big: Chiefs win title

BY C.J. RISAK  
SPORTS EDITOR  
cjrisk@oe.homecomm.net

There was every reason to believe Plymouth Canton's boys track team might not be equal to its clippings.

The Chiefs couldn't win the Western Lakes Activities Association Western Division title, falling well short in a dual-meet loss to Livonia Churchill. And even though they captured the Observerland Invitational, beating among others Redford Catholic Central, when it counted most — at the state regional — the Chiefs finished fourth, behind CC.

"We knew that if we had the kind of meet we had at the regional . . ." said Canton coach Bob Richardson, sizing up the WLAA Championship co-hosted by the Chiefs and Plymouth Salem Wednesday.

"I told the kids we needed something special, something exceptional, someone to step up."

Canton got just that, and as it turned it, it was needed. The Chiefs captured

their first WLAA boys track championship in eight seasons and their third one overall, edging runner-up Churchill 138 1/2 to 127 1/2. Farmington Harrison was a distant third with 98. See statistical summary.

"What a meet," said Chargers' coach Rick Austin. "The whole night it was intense competition. We duled the whole night."

"Last week we became believers (when we beat Canton). To win the championship, we needed PRs in multiple finishes, and the kids did that."

"Our kids left it on the track, for sure."

Canton got the results it expected from its top athletes. Like Jordan Chapman, who won both the high jump (6-foot, 4-inches) and pole vault (14-0), and Jerry Gaines, who was second in the 400-meters (51.0) to Harrison's

Please see BOYS TRACK, B4

# Vikes end Rocks' title run

BY C.J. RISAK  
SPORTS EDITOR  
cjrisk@oe.homecomm.net

What Plymouth Salem needed to repeat as the Western Lakes Activities Association girls track champion was a near-perfect performance at Wednesday's championship meet, co-hosted by Salem and Plymouth Canton.

What the Rocks got was something pretty good — but not good enough.

Beaten by Walled Lake Central 92-45 in its final dual meet eight days earlier, Salem was facing an uphill battle. It proved too steep a climb: Central won the title with 130.5 points, with the Rocks placing second with 97.

Northville was third (84), Livonia Churchill was fourth (66.5) and Livonia Stevenson placed fifth (63). See statistical summary.

"We knew we'd have to be error-free,"

## GIRLS TRACK

said Salem coach Mark Gregor. "We had some good things happening, and we knew what Central was doing."

"It came down to the end and they had a couple of girls step up for them."

Number one on that list for the Vikings was Erica Elliott, who won both the 200-meter (26.6) and 400-meter (59.0) runs. She edged Salem's Michelle Bonior (26.7) and Canton's Meredith Fox (59.8); both finished second.

Other first-place finishers for Central were Jackie Becker in the shot put (34-foot, 4-inches), Bridget Sheridan in the high jump (5-1) and its 4x400 relay team (4:08.1).

Elliott was one of two double-winners in individual events in the meet. The other was Westland John Glenn's

LaTasha Chandler, who was first in the long jump (16-7) and in the 100 hurdles (15.6).

"Elliott really stepped up for them," said Gregor. "We actually had a very good meet. We came out of the field events with more points than we had figured we'd have."

"They did drop in a couple of areas, but they had enough firepower to win."

The Rocks had just one first-place finish: its 4x200 relay team of Autumn Hicks, Vicki Rozalski, Bonior and Melissa Drake (1:47.4).

Leading the field-event champions was Plymouth Canton's Amy Driscoll, who set a meet record in capturing the pole vault (10-4; old record, 10-3, set by Sarah Chrzanowski of Central in 2000). Tarin Dew of Farmington Harrison was first in the discus (106-9).

Please see GIRLS TRACK, B4

# Morrell leads Canton past Salem

BY C.J. RISAK  
SPORTS EDITOR  
cjrisk@oe.homecomm.net

If Plymouth Salem's soccer team runs into Plymouth Canton again this season — they would if both win their respective districts and advance to the state regional final — it should be quite clear what need be done to win.

Stop Anne Morrell. Of course, that's always been easier said than done, for every team in the state, but it's been a particularly difficult chore for the Rocks.

Wednesday's Western Lakes Activities Associa-

## SOCCER

tion crossover match was a perfect example: Salem got two first-half goals from Nicole Anderson, but Canton responded with three goals from Morrell to post a 3-2 victory.

Canton completes its regular season with a 12-3-1 record. Salem is 11-4-1.

"Although Anne was able to get three (goals) on her, I thought Jill Dombrowski played a tremendous game," said Salem coach Joe Nera. "She was able to stone her on three breakaways and one

mini-break. She had saved in the first half when it was 0-0 that was just phenomenal."

"But I guess that's a 3-2 to last year's Anne. In two games she's had six goals (against us), and in the rest of the season we've had just six goals scored against us."

Canton coach Don Smith knew the Rocks had different Salem from the one the Chiefs had defeated a week earlier by a 4-2 count.

"They came to play, they played more aggressively than the last game," Smith said of Salem. "We expected Salem to come out strong, and they did."