

HIGH SCHOOLS

No team dominates track this season

By DAN McCARVILLE

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Bucking what had been a recent trend, the search for the top boys track teams in Oakland County is somewhat murkier in 1994.

"Unlike years past, I just don't think there's a dominant team in the county," Troy coach John Bancroft said. "Trying to select a top 10 list of teams will be more difficult than before. There are a lot of teams with good individuals, but powerful teams are not in plenty. You'll be flipping coins at the Oakland County meet."

That may be true, but it's still Bancroft's squad which has gotten the most favorable reviews as the 1994 season gets under way. A combination of perennial powerhouses and relative newcomers make up the county's top 10 list.

1. TROY — Though the Colts might not be as spectacular as in the past, they're still a team without any weaknesses. Outstanding depth is another factor that helps Troy. Senior Mike Murduff has gone under 50 seconds in the 400, while discus thrower Mark Ziemke and high-hurdler Dave Cheek were league and regional champs in their respective events last year. Dan McMillan has jumped 6-4 in the high jump and other contributors will be long jumper Ralph Kelly, distance runners Kevin Anderson, and Joe Semany. "We'll be tough," Bancroft said. "We've got two quality guys in every event."

2. PONTIAC CENTRAL — This could be one of the best teams assembled at Central in recent years. The Chiefs have some outstanding hurdlers in Tim Parker, Antoine Rose and Donzell Broadnax, and have one of the top sophomores in the county, Donte Robertson. Robertson has already long jumped 22 feet this year, and won the ninth-grade county meet in the 100. Sophomore Darrell Dixon anchors the discus and shot put, while newcomers Ryan Beane and Jaleo Mayo will contribute in the high jump. Phil Curry, Andre Neely and Oscar Louris are the top sprinters. "We've got a strong team this year," assistant coach Bobby Kaiser said. "We just need to improve in our distance events. It's going to be hard to keep Donte Robertson a secret."

3. PONTIAC NORTHERN — The Huskies have one of the county's top sprinters in senior Edwin Watson, who will compete in the 100 and 200 and sprint relays. Sophomore high-hurdler Jerome

Rodgers and Delshawn White, another sophomore who will compete in both the high jump and long jump, have shown a lot of promise. Tremain McNair and Bobby Travis provide strength in the distance events, with Eugene Stroman and Jarvis Freeman helping out in the shot put and discus. Seniors Andreias Vickers and Pinklon Thomas will also be strong in the open sprints and relays. "We have a fairly decent team with some key people returning," coach Jim Nelson said. "Our question mark is our field events."

4. SOUTHFIELD — The SMA conference race should be quite interesting between Troy and Southfield. Sophomore Andre Burton won the indoor Oakland County meet in the high hurdles while junior Otis Floyd has shown potential in the 100, 200 and 400. Homer Isaac, Justin Sherrrod and Lincoln Garrett will solidify the sprint relays along with Floyd, especially the 400 relay. "We'll be competitive, but whether we can outscore people at will is another question," said Tom Eschmann, now in his 16th year as coach. "Our depth limits us in dual meets, but our strength is in championship-style meets."

5. MILFORD — The mood is one of optimism in Milford as the Redskins have a stable of talent. Seniors Jason Johnson and Chris Witney have already gone 12-6 in the pole vault, while junior Chuck Purvis is strong in the long jump, 200 and sprint relays. Keith Bagnell has done well in both hurdle races, finishing second in the KVC last season. A trio of juniors, Jeff Rutkowski, Corey Kramer and Dan Caldwell will head the distance races and provide considerable depth. "We feel really good about our team," Milford coach Chris Ceresa said. "We had a group of kids that trained hard on their own over the winter, and it has paid dividends."

6. WATERFORD MOTT — The time is now for the Corsairs. Junior Jeff Farrell, who finished fourth in the state last year in the 1,600 and won the state cross country championship last fall, will lead the way. Farrell will also run on the 3,200-meter relay team with Joe Condon, Bill Fisher and Jonathon Renner, which set a school record last year. Field events are Mott's strong suit, led by Oakland County indoor champion shot putter Michael Primeau. Aaron Amshay, Jason Kimball and Alan Goodrich will also be strong in the shot put and discus, as will two-time state



Oakland Press file photo/JOSE JUAREZ

Southfield will once again be a factor in the SMA conference race

qualifier in the long jump Ryan Taylor. "We think this is our year," coach Jerry Pachla said. "We're going to be real competitive. It's up to the kids how good they want to be."

7. BROTHER RICE — The program has been on the upswing, and 1994 looks promising for Brother Rice. Both senior Jack Manning and junior Unwana Ubom will be tough to beat in the high jump, long jump and sprint relays, while Kirk Mayes has done well in the high hurdles. Justin Guereux and sophomore Nick Cooley are the top sprinters, while senior Brad Harrison looks strong in the 800 and intermediate hurdles. "We've got some good jumpers, and a little bit of speed. If we had one more good distance runner, we'd be a solid invitational team. We're only weak in two or three events," said coach Bob Stark.

8. BLOOMFIELD HILLS LAHSE — Despite graduating 12 members of last year's team, Lahser still returns some league champions for 1994. Senior Larrin Robertson, who won the league title in the 400 and finished fifth in the Oakland County meet in 1993, will also compete in the 800 and 1600 relays. Rick Smith set the school record in the 100 last year with a time of 10.7 seconds, and will be tough in the 200 as well. Jack Kittides and Doug Spearot will anchor the distance events, with Chris Luo and DeShawn Rogers having long jumped over 20 feet this year. Luo is also a strong hurdler. "We've got some good kids, but not a lot of depth," coach Don Rolston said. "We've also got some decent sprint relays."

9. ROCHESTER — The Falcons have some talented individuals and should compete for the MSAA title. Senior Matt Johnson was a state qualifier in the long jump last season, and will also be a top performer in the 100, 200 and sprint relays, as will Ron Lamerand. Junior Chris Dorsch will race anywhere from the 800 to the 3,200. Sophomore Mike Kilbourne will add some depth in the distance events, while newcomer Luis Bobrica will help in the 400 and 1600 relay. If he can stay healthy, Mike Huegli will be a top performer in the hurdles. "We should be good, but we had some kids who decided not to come out. I think pay-to-play is finally catching up to us. But I think we have a chance to win the league."

10. LAKE ORION — It will be hard to top last year's season for the Dragons, who won both the GOAL championship and the Oakland County Championship. Senior Kurt Dubowski, the defending county champ in the 100 and 200 and a state qualifier in the 100, will also run the 400 and the 1,600 relay. Scott Grace, who won the Oakland County meet in the 3,200 last season, will be tough to beat in the 800 and 1,600. Matt Jeshurun will show his versatility by competing in the pole vault, long jump, high hurdles and intermediate hurdles. Tony Luebbert is strong in the discus, while Brian Weger will help in the long jump and high jump. "I expect great things from this team," coach Rich Burrell said. "The experienced members will provide excellent leadership, and the younger members need to follow that example."