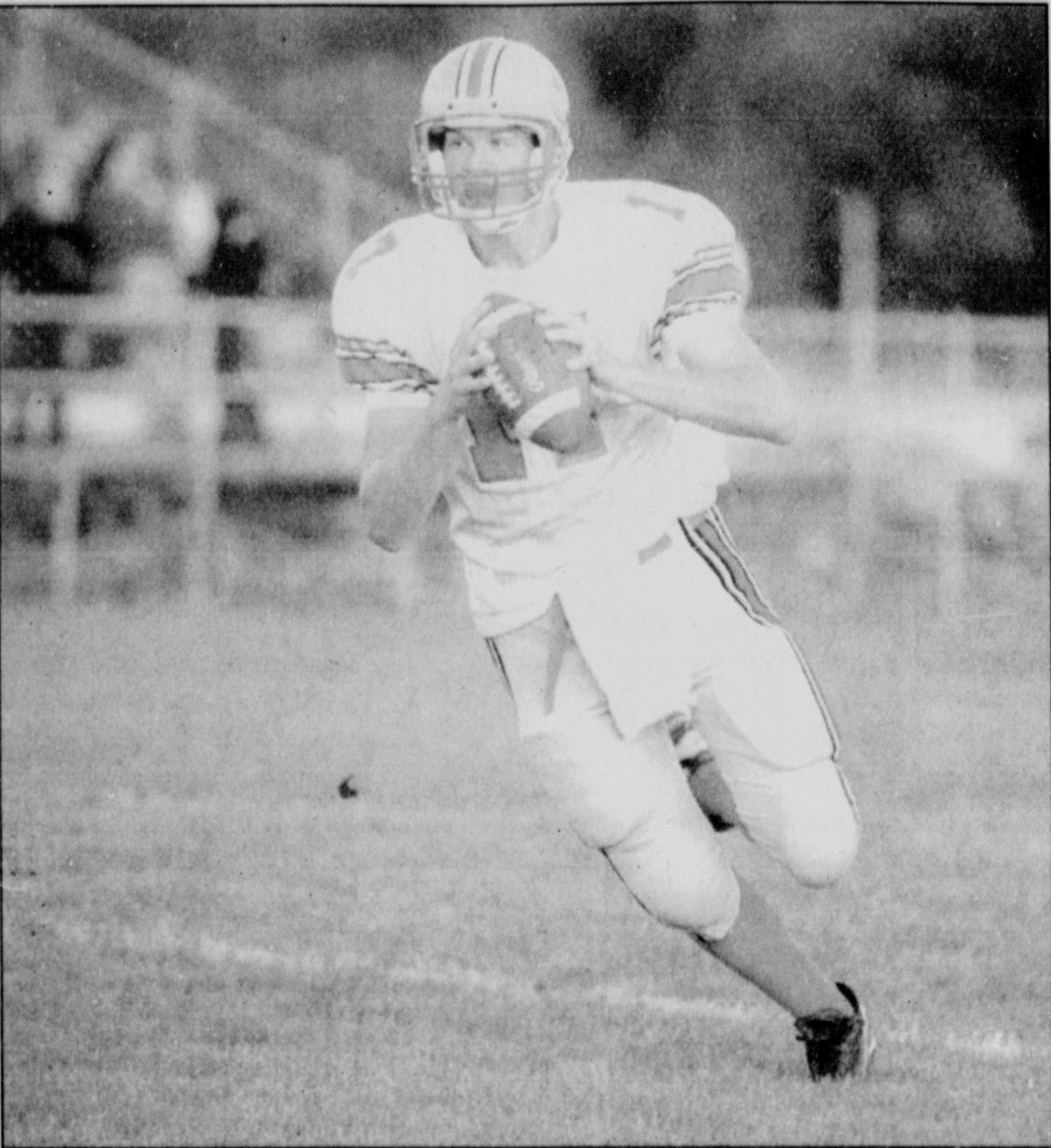




The Telegraph/JOHN BADMAN
In his three seasons as the starting quarterback for the Alton Redbirds, Zach Wooley passed for more than 3,500 yards and earned first team All-SWC honors as a senior.

Wooley

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not worry about sports at all. When he called me, I was so surprised.”

And when Collins met with Wooley and offered financial help in the form of scholarship money, “that made me more surprised,” Wooley said.

The Cougars return starting catcher Todd Haug of Roxana for his senior season next spring and Collins wasn’t in the market for a prep catcher in his incoming recruiting class.

“We’ve got Todd back, but Todd will be a senior,” Collins

said. “We didn’t have a young catcher coming in, but we really weren’t looking for a young catcher. But (Wooley’s) one of the better ones I’ve seen around here, lately.”

And while redshirting as a freshman is a possibility for Wooley, Collins said his new catcher could provide immediate help to a team coming off an appearance in the NCAA Division II National Championships.

“I hope he can,” Collins said. “I’m not counting him

out. But he’ll have to earn it. He’s got some things he needs to learn how to do. But he’s got great tools.”

For Wooley, this summer gone from sour to sweet has provided an athletic rebirth. And he will accept whatever fate waits in the first season of his college baseball career at SIUE.

“I’m just going to try to go in and learn as much as I can,” Wooley said, “work as hard as I can and see how much playing time I can get right away.”

McGriff

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the standpoint this opportunity is not available to us,” MacPhail said. “We’re going to have to proceed along on that basis and we’ll try to find other avenues to help our ball-club.”

“I think we’d be making a mistake if we just sort of hoped and wished and didn’t do anything.”

The Devil Rays, the worst team in baseball, and Cubs reached a deal July 8 that would have sent McGriff to Chicago for two prospects. The Cubs also were expected to pick up a \$6.75 million option for next season.

But McGriff, a Tampa native who has two small children, had to approve the deal because of a no-trade clause in his contract. Though trades usually have to be finalized within 72 hours, the commissioner’s office granted an extension and gave McGriff until noon Monday to make up his mind.

“They made it clear they didn’t want this thing to be in la-la land forever and they wanted it to have a conclusion,” MacPhail said.

When it did, the answer was still no.

“I would characterize our reaction as disappointed, but we’re not angry,” MacPhail said. “We knew when we made the trade that the player had a no-trade clause. He put it in there for good reason. ... We recognized this was a possibility from the start.”

When first announced, the deal seemed like a no-brainer. With one word, McGriff could have gone from a team that was 29-63 before Monday’s game in Atlanta to a pennant race.

But he’s said all along he likes being close to his family.

“For him to come to that decision, it’s got to be a personal decision because everybody likes to go last to first,” Sammy Sosa said. “We all

respect his decision, we haven’t given up and we have to keep moving.”

The Cubs hoped McGriff would give their lineup some extra pop. Though they began Monday with the NL’s best record, their offense has been streaky with Rondell White, Todd Hundley and Bill Mueller hurt. McGriff is hitting .329 with 18 homers and 59 RBIs, and is one of only two players to hit 200 homers in both leagues.

He also would have given Sosa some protection. Already this year, Sosa has drawn a career-high 22 intentional walks, most in the majors.

“Losing Freddie, he would have been a great asset on our team,” Cubs manager Don Baylor said. “I think no less of Freddie. ... That’s his right.”

And MacPhail is still confident he can make a move that will help the Cubs, who’ve been in the playoffs just three times since 1945.

Sharks

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team to hand them a defeat.

“It’s kind of a grudge match,” laughed Dr. Ed Blair of Godfrey, a Summers-Port parent and a longtime booster of area amateur swimming. “I remember we had a lot of swimmers out of town and we kind of coasted into that Montclair meet. But Montclair had a good team and they beat us.”

“Actually, I guess our meet against Paddlers (of Granite City) is more like the big meet of the year, but Montclair IS the last team to beat Summers-Port.”

Blair and the rest of the Summers-Port faithful could be forgiven for looking past this week’s meet at Montclair toward the season finale at home July 26 against Paddlers. Montclair’s Marlins are suffering from the same ailment that has struck most of the other SWISA teams — a lack of swimmers.

Numbers are down for every team in SWISA, except Summers-Port, which has a

record 141 swimmers on its squad.

“Everybody’s down except Summers-Port,” said Doug Zimmer, the assistant coach at Sunset Hills. “I don’t know where all the swimmers went. It seems like (Sunset Hills), Gaslight, Wedgwood and Montclair are all somewhere around 65 swimmers or so. And even Paddlers’ numbers are down, but they’re not as low as the rest of us.”

Paddlers, a perennial SWISA power, is expected to give Summers-Port its toughest challenge. The Pirates are the last team other than the Sharks to win the SWISA swim championship. They did that in 1994 when they won the title at Gaslight.

Summers-Port’s Collman doesn’t take anything for granted as she prepares her team for the stretch run of the season. Even though there doesn’t appear to be any serious challenges between the Sharks and their eighth con-

secutive SWISA championship. That’s because she easily recalls the days when it was her team staring up at the rest of the conference.

“There were a lot of years when we were on the bottom,” Collman said. “I remember those times very clearly.”

At her team’s current pace, however, Collman’s memories may fade a little.

LPGA

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was not about to be caught.

Standouts Annika Sorenstam and Karrie Webb played well but were never able to chase down Klein. Sorenstam, who opened play with a 68, took a shot at the leader but fell short.

“I made a run, just not enough of one,” Sorenstam said.

Webb fired a one-over 73 on Sunday to finish tied for seventh.

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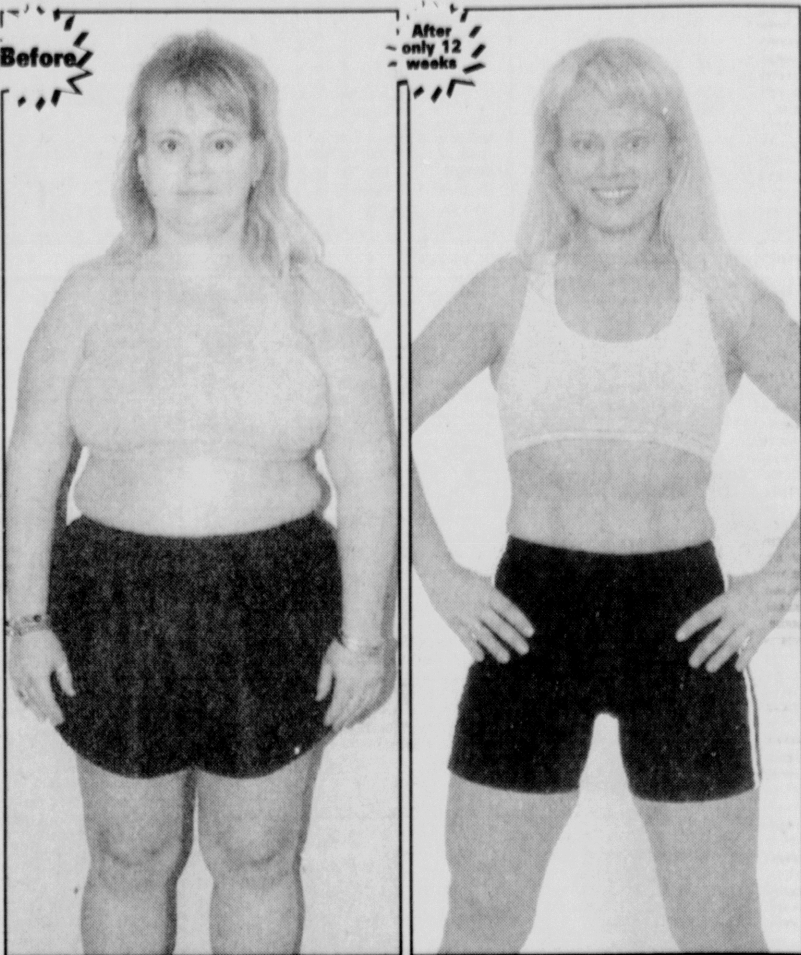
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