Begin  $\mathbf{Y}_{\mathbf{our}}$ Weekends . . . The Thursday Southfield Eccentric

## Pinchoff seeks top ranking

# **Tourneys crucial for area netter**

Mark Pinchoff isn't just apy kid with a tennis racquet in his hand. A sophomore at West Bloomfield high, Pinchoff may be on the verge of distinction and recognition in the

tennis world. These next four weeks will determine that. The 15-year-old netter played in the Western Closed Tournament in In-dianapolis recently, and was one of the 16 players to qualify for the nation-als in early August. Pinchoff's per-

formance in the Western tourney also qualified him for two additional tournaments. the Western Open and the National Clay Courts during the last two weeks of July.

And Plinchoff made an impressive showing in the Southeastern Michael Charles and Charles and Charles Paul VanWalleghem in the finals, 4.6.5.4.4. VanWalleghem is a state Class B high school champion. Doing well in all these tournaments will give Plinchoff a top national ranking in his age group. This is the ladded he needs to climb before he can reach the success of two other young tentin stars. John McEnroe and Tracy Austin. They were two of the youngest players and with the property of the power o

year.
Pinchoff was ranked last year in the
nation somewhere between 44 and 64
in the 16-and-under age group. In the
Western Tennis Association (WTA).
he earned a No. 14 ranking last year.

THE NATIONAL rankings haven't been made public yet for this year, but Pinchoff has beaten some formi-dable foes to help his cause. At the Or-ange Bowl Tournament this past win-ter, he beat Adam Beren, of Wichita. Beren was ranked 12th in the nation left twenge.

last year. In New York over Easter, Mark

In New York over Easter. Mark played in the Easter Bowl and won a couple matches, beating Paul Crozier. of Texas, who was ranked in the top five coming into this year. Pinchoff is only 5-feet-6 and 140 pounds, but says he's been growing a tot talely. He's left handed just like Wimbledon runnerup, Jimmy Conners, Being left handed is an advantage, according to Pinchoff, because not many connents have already lefting.

many oponents have played lefties.
Rod Laver. also a southpaw, is
Pinchoff's favorite player. The West Finchoff's favorite player. The West Bloomfield netter considers Laver one of the greatest who ever lived because he won the Grand Slam of tennis twice. He met Laver once in Canada at a tournament when Laver awarded the trophies in a tournament.

Pinchoff has the aspirations that Laver achieved. "It's a long way off. but it's in the back of my mind." he said. "For me to become a good player, though. I'd have to play the brough. The back of the big serve and volley up front.

"Concentration is also the hardest part of my game, and I have a lot of trouble with it. You have to have that killer instinct, and that comes with experience. I like to stay in the back-court. When I'm playing well, the most effective part of my game is my serve and overhead, and lately my two-handed backhand." he added. "I haven't been volleying a lot. I started trying to come in last year."

PINCHOFF COMES from a family

riving to come in last year."

PINCHOFF COMES from a family of tennis players. His father. Dean. will be the head pro at Franklin Ractuel Club in September. His mother and father went with him on the recent five-week tour.

"It's a lot of fun touring." Pinchoff said. "You get to meet a lot of nice people. I've been going the tournament route for the last five years, and this is the first time my parents have taken time out to coach and watch.
"It makes it a little better with my parents going along. I don't have to worry. Also my dad is my coach, so he can let me know what I'm doing wrong."

wrong."
Pinchoff has been playing tennis since the age of five. His two older brothers, then 10 and 11 years old dragged him down to the courts for

practice. One brother, 20-year-old Jim, teach-One brother, 20-year-old Jim, teach-ea at Square Lake Racquet (Lib. and helps Mark with his game. The other brother, 21-year-old Mike, is in the Air Force. Mark's sister, Sue, just graduated from West Bloomfield High, where she was a member of the girls' swimming team. Mark's mother works in the office at the Square Lake Racquet Club. "It takes a whole family to make a great tennis plaver." Pinchoff said argeat tennis plaver." Pinchoff said

great tennis player." Pinchoff said.
"My mom sacrifices time, and my sister has suffered a little. No kid can make it on his own."





Mark Pinchoff sharpens his game with lots of practice. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

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