

Athletes benched by blizzard

There were no cheers reverberating through high school gymnasiums and swimming pools last weekend as athletes, coaches, officials and boosters played second string to Mother Nature.

However, while most competitors took time off, athletic directors found their responsibilities much more complicated with postponing the cancellations and trying to reschedule the contests.

John Sandmann, athletic director for the Plymouth-Canton Community School District, demonstrated a knack of clairvoyance by postponing all athletic events in his district as early as Wednesday, well before the brunt of the blizzard struck.

Deciding to cancel an event is the

least of the problem for athletic directors.

"The very first thing is we must contact the opposing team. It is very difficult sometimes because you have to contact them at home," said Don Domke, athletic director at Westland John Glenn.

"Next, you have to contact all the officials. The coach has to set up a system to get a hold of every kid on each team."

"Then, it is very difficult to match-up again."

"We have had a lot more cancelled games in the last years. It seems to be getting to be more and more each year," Domke said.

"There have been more problems this year simply because of the

weather conditions," concurred Carl Fetz, athletic director at Livonia Stevenson. "It's not usual to have to cancel three (basketball) games in a year."

Norman Quinn, director of health, physical education and athletics for the Bloomfield Hills Schools, agrees.

"The irony of the whole thing is that in spring, not one was goes by when we don't have to cancel a baseball game. We don't think anything about it—it's something we expect. It's atypical for something like that to happen in winter."

Bob Seltz, athletic director for the Rochester Schools, probably echoed the sentiments of many of his counterparts when he stated, "We're getting together Monday for a meeting. It (snow) makes scheduling difficult, especially because it is so late in the schedule."

The two major problems which developed over the past couple of days involved basketball games and conference wrestling meets.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association limits prep basketball teams to 20 games per season with no more than two permitted during any one week.

Ironically, most of the same game match-ups which were scheduled for Friday were also postponed in the

first-round of league round-robins Dec. 9. The reason back then? Snow.

They included Troy Athens-Rochester Adams, Rochester-Milford, Southfield-Lathrup-Royal Oak Dendora, Southfield-Birmingham Seaholm and Farmington Harrison-Waterford Mont.

Others were West Bloomfield-Canton, Bloomfield Hills Latser-Birmingham Groves, Plymouth Salem-Dearborn, Plymouth Canton-Walled Lake Western, Livonia Bentley-Redford Union and Livonia Stevenson-Milford Lakeside.

Some of the Dec. 9 postponements had already been made up, others not. Most teams have enough, but just barely, open dates now until the start of the state tournament to reschedule. Garden City West, however, has nine games on its schedule and only eight more allowable dates to get them in under the two-games-per-week stipulation.

"What we're going to have to do is work something out with a non-league team," said Bill Pinnell, athletic director at West.

In years past when snowstorms forced the cancellation of basketball games, coaches appealed to the MSHAA to waive the two-game stipulation to allow makeups. The MSHAA has never permitted that.

Many metro-area basketball teams have not played since Jan. 20 and may be adversely affected by a long layoff caused by the weather. Momentum becomes crucial near the end of the season and near tournament time.

Redford St. Agatha, Livonia Stevenson, Garden City West and Redford Union all last competed Jan. 20. RU is

currently riding a four-game winning streak.

Ken Dean, who has coached North Farmington to a 10-1 record so far this winter, pointed out another potential danger of cancellations due to the elements.

"I want our players to be in school. If they're out of school, you always have to be concerned they're out skiing, ice skating and shoveling snow and maybe pulling a muscle," Dean said.

Mike Teachman, coach at Farmington Harrison, sees a silver lining to the snow problem.

"I think this will help us a little bit," he said. "Our guys were really down after losing to Plymouth Canton last week, so not having a practice or a game may help them."

Coaches similarly situated may feel the same way.

Wrestlers and their coaches find themselves in an even bigger quandary than those associated with basketball programs.

Most squads had scheduled season-ending conference meets last weekend, while others have slated duals early this week prior to the state district Saturday.

The Tri-River League attempted to complete its festival as scheduled last

weekend, but most other league meets were postponed.

Is it good or bad for a wrestler to go all out in a highly-emotional setting of a league tournament only a couple of days prior to the districts?

"We'd like to get the league tournament in, but it is important for all boys to do well in the state tournament," said Rick Menoch, coach at Birmingham Seaholm.

"We don't want to jeopardize their chances by scheduling a tournament in the middle of the week when they have no chance to rest."

Jim Urlick, Redford Thurston coach, and Bob Lusk, from Westland John Glenn, both said they would rather have no competition scheduled the week before the districts. The emotional and physical aspects of the sport were cited.

Other sports—swimming, volleyball and even hockey—were also affected by the weather.

The anticipated swimming dual between a pair of strong Livonia teams—Stevenson and Bentley—was postponed for the second time of the season, both by snow.

Pat Duthie, whose North Farmington team was to swim against Livonia Franklin, said he regretted that cancellation.

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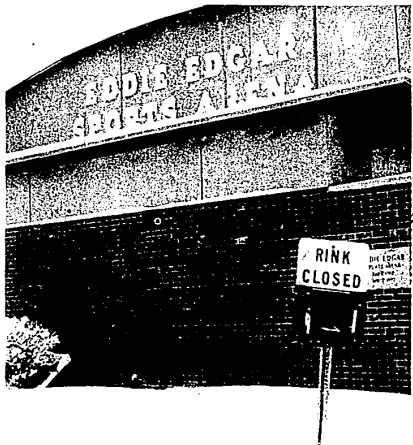
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Old Man Winter last week dealt the metropolitan sports scene no runs, no hits, but one big error. (Staff photo by Bob Woodring)

IN THE POCKET
By W.W. EDGAR

The wintry gusts and heavy snows last week played havoc with the all-star league schedules. They might not be on the track again until the balmy days of spring.

The leagues bow in widely scattered sections of the metropolitan Detroit area. The men share their schedules with Orchard Lanes in Pontiac and the Thunderbolt Lanes in Allen Park. They couldn't be further apart.

The women also are widely separated, with the Bowlerettes bowling at Motor Lanes on the far east side on Mondays and Crown Lanes on the west side on Wednesdays.

It may take a long time to get the schedule back in order with the tournament season on. The all-stars will be busy most of their weekends in tournament play, some of which will be in Dayton Ohio, and Chicago.

THE BARRAGE of 700 series continued at Wonderland Lanes during the past week. Although only one was registered by Joe Sharron, it enabled the string to continue weekly for the past two months.

To join the elite Sharron put

together games of 227, 237 and 194 for a 708. Fred Ringrose missed the 700 barrier by a single pin. He posted games of 204, 222 and 268 for a 699.

The high scoring carried over to the Ladies senior house league where Irene Howe fashioned a 657.

OTIS LACKEY, bowling in the Vinco league, set the pace at Garden Lanes with a 627. Others with double century figures included Pat Kobylinski, of the Bowlerinos, who posted a 601 and Bob Lamont who came through with a 612.

AT MERRI-BOWL, Ted Kulicz rolled a 250 game to lead his team to the pacesetter role in the junior house league with a 3074 count. Other high scorers on the team were Walt Aisenault, who had a 287 in 646 and Bob Sokol, with a 258 in 616.

MONICA DLUGOS showed the way in the ladies classic at Westland with games of 212 and 216 in 617.

In the 725-825 loop, Ron Paslaski was top man with a 243 in 545.

Driveway snow driving hazard

"Mother Nature's wintry whims cause more than enough hazards on the roadways. Motorists don't need danger caused by people pushing driveway snow onto plowed roads and streets," said John L. Grubba, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission.

Grubba said many private contractors and homeowners push snow into the roadway, presenting motorists

with a dangerous, sudden change in surface conditions. He said drivers are apt to brake or speed up upon confronting such situations. Either reaction can lead to a bad skid, he said.

"The safest way for a driver to handle such conditions is to let up on the accelerator and keep the front wheels straight while proceeding," he said.

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