

Former hog farmer wins title

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Miss Fiebig couldn't be called muscle-bound, but she is strong and quick.

"A lot of girls shy away from the sport," she said. "They say it takes away their femininity. I don't see how it can unless they let it."

"Sure, there's the risk of breaking your arm. But if you know how to do it, that's not going to happen. We, I love the sport. It's my sport. I love the crowds, and I love to entertain people."

"Very few men do I lose against," said the blonde arm wrestler. "In fact, in high school I went against the state champion in wrestling. He cried when I beat him. I offered to buy him lunch, but he refused."

With that, she demonstrated her winning technique of "hooking" her opponent's thumb in a grip and "coming over the top" to pin the wrist down.

LIKE THE MAJORITY of competitors, Miss Fiebig is from Michigan. But the tournament also drew spectators from New York, Minnesota, Wyoming and a large contingent from Georgia who were attracted by the first place prize of a free trip to Petaluma, Calif. to compete for the world title.

Saturday's attendance was 305 persons, and nearly a third of the crowd

was involved in the competition. About half were there mainly for a celebrity bout pitting radio station WHIP rock 'n' roll disc jockey Jim Johnson against WDRQ disco defender Don Oke. Disco lost twice, to the delight of the rock fans in the audience.

Some persons criticized the \$5 admission fee as unusually high for a wrist wrestling event. A \$500 donation is going to the Lions Club to benefit the Leader Dog School for the Blind, according to tournament promoter Gentry.

Many out-of-state competitors lodged objections about referees competing in the matches.

Gentry called the complaints "legitimate," but said it is difficult to find people who know how to officiate in the sport and don't compete in it. He added that referees didn't judge matches in their own weight classes.

Gentry said he was disappointed in the turnout, but blamed the setting, not the price of admission.

"It'll be a lot bigger next year," Gentry said. "The ones in the auditoriums just don't bring 'em in like the bars. I sponsored a tournament in Almost Heaven, a bar in Drayton Place, where we had 600 spectators and 150 competitors. The bars are definitely better for it."

More than a few spectators were disappointed that no Strohs, the tournament sponsor, was sold at the school auditorium.

Even without the beer, there were high points in the competition Saturday.

day. The most excitement was generated in a match pitting Michigan champion Fred Wenk against Steve Lusby, of Davenport, Iowa, world champion in 1976 and 1977. Wenk upset Lusby by beating him in the semifinals, and the finals in a couple of draw-out matches that saw arms see-sawing back and forth.

"Whoa, California here I come," yelled a jubilant Wenk after his victory.

He was genuinely congratulated by Lusby, a sentiment that seemed to be common in the sport. Winners would discuss technique with opponents in a friendly fashion. And often after being bested, a wrist wrestler would grime, embrace his opponent and head for the sidelines to discuss fine points of the game, such as grip and position.

Lusby and many of the out-of-state competitors wore Frankenstein-like boots with soles and heels as high as 10 inches to gain leverage. The auditorium smelled like a eucalyptus forest as

numerous competitors smeared Ben-Gay ointment on their arms to loosen up their muscles. Others sprayed a toughening spray on their hands and patted their hands with rosin for gripping strategy.

WRESTLERS travel around the country at their own expense in a sport that is just starting to offer cash prizes. National champ Dean says the most he ever made wrist wrestling was \$22,000, and he made that in a bet against Virgil Arciero of Los Angeles.

But the relatively new sport has its stars, like Dean and Lusby, and people with colorful nicknames.

Competing Saturday was "Jumpin' Joe" Friedman of West Bloomfield, who explained he got his nickname and his muscles at a factory where he installs pistons on an assembly line.

And when Howard "Arm-bender" Steves of Cowlesville, N.Y., isn't bending someone's arm, he works as a toymaker at Fisher Price.

Hills youth nets win

Brad Goodman of Farmington Hills claimed the singles championship of the Grand Slam Tennis Club Junior boys' 15 and Under tennis tournament last weekend with a 5-3, 6-1 victory over Hans Akan of West Bloomfield.

Akan rallied in the doubles play, however, as he teamed with John

McCarthy of Livonia to best Scott Davis of Farmington Hills and Tim Ninomiya of Livonia, 6-4, 5-1.

Goodman, 15, was the No. 1 seed in the tournament, held at the Livonia Family Y and sanctioned by the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

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