

Bugs!

High School Athletic Association works on playoff system

By BOB GROSS

The Michigan State High School Athletic Association (MSHAA) is still trying to get the bugs out of the high school football playoff system.

The system is based on playoff and bonus points. Teams accumulate playoff points by defeating or tying a team. They accumulate bonus points when a team they have previously beaten wins or ties.

A team is awarded 80 points for beating a Class A team, 40 for a tie. Class B teams are worth 64 points beaten, and 32 tied. Teams defeating Class C opponents get 48 points, 24 for a tie. And teams beating Class D squads get 32 points, 16 for a tie.

In the past, both playoff and bonus points were then totalled and divided by the number of games a team played, and reported, in order to come up with an average. This average then determined whether or not a team made the playoffs.

Some teams were able to take advantage of the system, according to MSHAA assistant director Lonnie Lowrey, by agreeing to play games with other teams if the scores were not reported to the MSHAA. The games thus played would not count towards the playoffs.

Teams following this procedure would have the advantage of smaller number of games played to be divided into their point total.

The MSHAA has initiated two changes

to close off this loophole. All games, said Lowrey, "played prior to Oct. 19 will be counted whether they are reported or not."

In addition, playoff points will now be added separately and divided by the number of games played. Bonus points will also be added separately, then divided by nine. The two products will then be added together to come up with a total determining a team's playoff status.

The new mathematical gymnastics will also, according to Lowrey "eliminate any advantage that might be gained by scheduling only seven or eight games."

Such a complicated system might seem a lot of bother to some people, but it becomes very important for the support-

ers of the eight teams from each of the four classes that qualify for the playoffs.

Two teams from four regions qualify in each class which means, in the case of a number of undefeated teams in an area, somebody's bound to lose out.

Lowrey said that in 1977, 10 undefeated teams did not make the playoffs. Last year, six teams had spotless records and did not make it.

Lowrey said the system, as set up, tries to assure "that the best schools in terms of record and competition are the competitors."

"It will hopefully identify," he said, "the best teams not only on their own win-loss records, but also on the win-loss records of their opponents."

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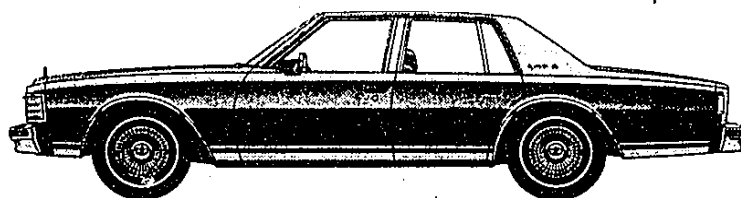
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Cover photo

North Farmington pulled off a major upset when it defeated Birmingham Brother Rice, 26-7, in the state semifinals last season. The Raiders advanced to the state Class 'A' finals with this victory, only to fall to state champion Traverse City at the Pontiac Silverdome.

The cover photo of the Observer & Eccentric special football section captures the tense action of the Raider — Rice game, as North Farmington quarterback Jeff Goldstein attempts a pass over the outstretched arms of Rice defensive end Steve Kalser. (Staff photo)



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