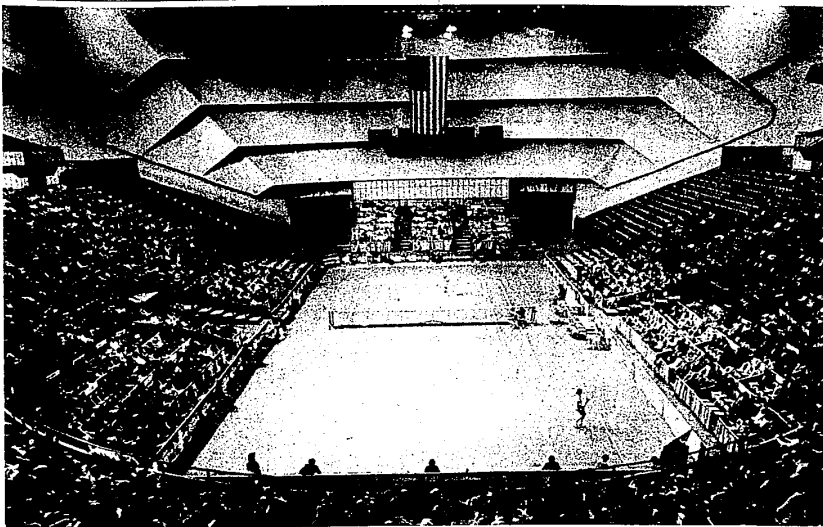




GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

The Avon Championship of Detroit was plagued by bad weather and no shows by top-name players. The result was predictable: a drop in attendance from previous years.

Decision due by April

Avon may drop net sponsorship

Continued from Page 1

"I think there are a lot of reasons," said this year's Detroit Avon champion, Andrea Jaeger, explaining why so many top pros were missing. "Number one, a lot of players are injured. And players play the first three or four weeks (of the tour) and take the next week off. "I feel really bad for Detroit because every year they get the shaft." Jaeger obviously knows her town, because she said all the things Detroiters believe and want to hear. The fact is, Detroit isn't the only city on the Avon circuit that got shafted this year. "Chicago was missing more top seeds than Detroit," said Sue Kessler, the Detroit tournament director for the Junior League of Birmingham. "And Cincinnati was without any of the top five players."

THE RESULT is what has caused the problem: too many tournaments for too few name players. "WTA members literally admitted to us that they had created a monster," Kessler said of the jammed women's tour. "What has happened to other professional sports (hockey, for example) is now

plaguing women's tennis — dilution of talent.

Faulkner disagrees. "The public and media aren't willing or ready to accept a Pam Shriver in the same light as a Chris (Ever) or Martina (Navratilova). Unless the public recognizes the other tennis players we'll either have to lower the player commitment or cutback on the tournament schedule."

Player commitment deals with the amount of prize money offered. The bigger the purse, the more top players are promised by the WTA. It is obvious the Detroit public won't accept lesser talent in tennis any more than it would in soccer, evident when the Detroit Express folded after the loss of Trevor Francis.

IF THE WTA and Avon both decide to cut back on the number of tournaments, will Detroit be one of the stops eliminated?

Kessler doesn't think so. "We're a charity tournament that raises a lot of money. And sponsors love to be associated with charity tournaments."

What Kessler would like, of course, is a warmer date. This year's attendance was down 6,000, largely because of the snowstorms last week. Since the

tour only lasts from January to March, there aren't many. She is pushing for a date in March.

But first things first. What if Avon drops its sponsorship? The Junior League of Birmingham couldn't possibly raise enough money for a \$150,000 prize (currently, Avon supplies 70 percent of the prize money).

It's been rumored that Toyota may provide the sponsorship, but Faulkner discounts that since Toyota already is a major WTA sponsor.

Chatham squad returns to 'Spiel'

Mark Parry and his team from Chatham, Ontario, will try to defend its championship in the Detroit Curling Club's annual "Championship Spiel" Feb. 20-21.

Parry will contend for honors with sharp-shooting Lyle Switzer of the Windsor Curling Club, who has won two major trophies this season.

The 1982 "Championship Spiel" features 18 teams from Ontario and six from the United States.

Canadian teams are entered from Toronto, London, Woodstock, Chatham, Sarnia and Windsor. U.S. teams are expected from Detroit, Birmingham and Midland.

Action begins at 9 a.m. Saturday and runs until 8 p.m. Sunday's rounds start at 9 a.m., with the finals scheduled for 4 p.m.

The public is invited, and there is no admission charge.

The Detroit Skating Club is located at 5600 Drake Road in West Bloomfield. For further information, call 661-2890.

COACHES WANTED

Birmingham Marian High School needs girls' track coaches for the upcoming spring season.

Marian is also in need of a girls' basketball coach for next fall. Last year the Mustang team won a district title.

Interested applicants should call Athletic Director Joan Scheerer at 644-1751.

RAIDER BASKETBALL

The Oakland Community College men's basketball team split a pair of one-point games last week.

The Raiders lost to Highland Park, 76-75, and defeated Schoolcraft, 72-71.

James Ross scored the winning basket in the Highlander Park game. Oakland, which had a 47-41 halftime lead, was led offensively by Tom D'Agostino with 20 points.

OCC is 5-8 and seventh in the Michigan Community College Athletic Association (MCCAA) Eastern Conference standings. Oakland is 6-11 overall.

sport shorts

FOOTBALL COACHING CLINIC

Some of the nation's top football coaches will speak at the Ann Arbor Sheraton Medallist Clinic March 19-20.

The clinic, sponsored by the Medallist Sports Education, will be conducted by Walt Bazylewicz, the director of the Catholic League.

Sid Gillman, the Philadelphia Eagles offensive advisory coach, Warren Powers, head coach at the University of Missouri, Tom Osborne, head coach at Nebraska, and Jerry Claiborne, head coach at Maryland, are some of the featured speakers.

Others include Bill Dooley (Virginia Tech), Jerry Sandusky (Penn State), Floyd Peters (defensive line specialist) and Don Nehlen (West Virginia).

Dr. Jim Peterson of Stanford will talk on strength training.

The two-day session is expected to attract some 500 college, high-school and junior-high-school coaches. This is the 32nd-year Bazylewicz has directed the Michigan clinic.

The fee is \$33. For further information, call Bazylewicz at 237-5990, or write Athletics, 305 Michigan Ave., Detroit 48225.

SOFTBALL WORKSHOP

The second-annual Softball Workshop will be Feb. 17 at the Dearborn Civic Center.

The workshop, presented by the Metro Detroit Amateur Softball Association, is open to the public. It will offer educational talks, a luncheon and exhibit area, plus other feature sessions.

Some of the topics include upcoming umpire clinics and camps; 1982 rule changes and interpretations; classification of teams; summer tournaments and innovative new trends in various leagues, among other items.

For further information, contact Mike Egan at the Michigan Recreation and Park Association office (532-2554) or Jet Farland, Metro Detroit ASA president, at 474-6115.

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