

It Was A Thriller--But West Lost

Minute by minute in the greatest game of basketball Garden City West or any other Observerland high school team ever has played:

8:17 p.m.: Rick Drewitz, West's All-Stater leads his mates on to the floor before more than 12,200 fans in Michigan State's Jenison Field House.

8:17 1/2: Drewitz sinks a layup on the first practice shot attempted by a West player.

8:17 1/2: Here comes Pontiac Central led by its All-Stater Campy Russell.

8:18: Campy misses the first practice shot the Chiefs try.

8:21: The gent in the pressbox notes that four members of the West squad including Drewitz, wear eye-glasses.

8:21 1/2: Similar observation about Pontiac Central. One wears glasses.

8:24: Coach John Orr of the University of Michigan says hello: "Sure wish Drewitz decides to come to our place." Drewitz reportedly will pick between Michigan and the University of Kentucky.

8:26: The practice drills continue.

8:28: West fans move into their seats in the bleachers along the west side of the court.

8:29 WEST'S JOHN Rutter stands off to the side, about 20 feet from the basket, practicing jumper after jumper. Coach Chris Babler walks around behind the basket to say something to him.

8:29 1/2: The referees appear for the first time. Their identities are kept a big secret.

8:30: The captains of the two teams meet the officials at midcourt. West sends out two, Pontiac three.

8:31: The meeting ends.

8:31 1/4: Pontiac leaves the floor for last-minute instructions.

8:32: Coach Babler of West walks around behind the basket again, this time to tell Drewitz to stop shooting jumpers and to try some free throws. The All-Stater complies.

8:33: The West cheerleaders to go work.

8:35: Pontiac Central returns to the floors.

Will Bows Out With State Title

They say it can't happen: Better state high school basketball tournaments every year?

How can the thrills be matched and surpassed? Sounds impossible, but it happens every time in the finals... and in the 1970 championships decided Saturday in East Lansing, the preps outdid themselves again.

IT STARTED IN the morning... when River Rouge met Saginaw Carrollton for the Class B title.

Remember that Carrollton was No. 1 in many ratings, but how could you dissent Rouge in the state tourney? The Panthers had won nine times in the previous 16 years.

And here they were bidding for an unprecedented 10th state crown and for a couple of periods, it appeared Rouge had the game in the bag.

But then from 14 points down, Carrollton struck back. The Saginaw entry even went into the lead.

In the end, there was Rouge on top, 76-66, after a bustout in the closing few moments.

The Panthers had won their 10th state crown and one Coach Lofton Greene said was the most precious of all.

Rouge has been experiencing racial problems in the high school. Some of its games had to be played behind closed doors.



WEST'S KIRK LEWIS is hemmed in by the arms of two Pontiac Central defenders as he tries to get the ball to center Rick Drewitz (40). This was typical of the action in the semifinals. (Observer photo)

Trotters At Olympia On April 5

Bouncing a basketball off "anything that didn't move" led Freddie "Curly" Neal to a contract with the Harlem Globetrotters.

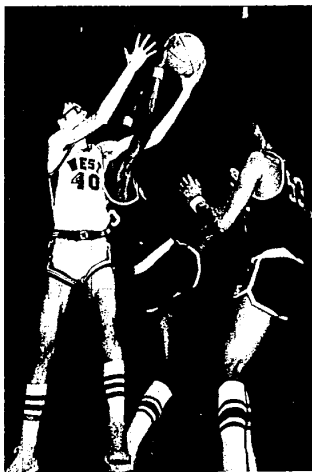
"All it took was practice," Neal recalls. "About 20 years of it at four hours a day."

Prior to his Trotter career Neal starred at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, N.C., averaging 23.1 points a game and led his team to a league championship as a senior.

"At college I worked up to the behind-the-back passes," said Neal, who has become one of the team's top ballhandlers. "Then working with the Trotters polished me up."

His career with the "magicians of basketball" began in 1963. "His forte is dribbling and he's the best in this specialized art," says the team General Manager, George Gillett.

Neal and the Trotters return to Olympia Stadium on Sunday, April 5, for a matinee contest with the New Jersey Reds. It will be the team's second appearance at Olympia this season. On Dec. 27, 1969, they played to 14,060, which was the largest crowd to ever watch a Globetrotter exhibition in Detroit.



RICK DREWITZ battles Pontiac's Campy Russell for possession of the ball. Rick and Campy were the big guns of the semifinals with the former falling one short of a tournament scoring record with his 42 points. (Observer photo)

right in Detroit were much more highly regarded.

And then the tournament began. Robinson quietly reminded his boys what he wanted as a goody gift before he takes over as the coach at Illinois State University next fall.

"Win this state title for me," he said.

And, the sports world knows the rest. Pershing did what nobody expected.

It all went to prove how important desire and attitude can be... how boys can rise to a feverish pitch, if the cause is there and the willingness is there.

Why it can't exist, sometimes, away from the sports front, is difficult to understand. Perhaps, then, there'd be less problems in the world today.

THE "A" FINAL was a corker all the way, just as the semifinals the night before in which Pontiac Central squeezed past Garden City West.

When it was over, the fans talked about the various thrills... they talked, too, about Rouge's comeback... and about, Rick Drewitz, the kid from Garden City West, who with his 42 points was easily the most brilliant individual to perform in East Lansing over the weekend.

The tournament marked the end of the Michigan classic as the state has known them for many years.

Beginning next year, the meet will be extended over a fourth week. Teams reaching the finals must wait from one Saturday to another to decide their titles.

The "big weekend" in the Lansing area will be a thing of the past. Henceforth, they'll alternate the finals between Michigan and Michigan State.



A HAPPY FAREWELL. Will Robinson, who coached Pershing to the state class 'A' basketball championship and then left Monday to assume his new duties as cage mentor at Illinois State Normal, had his happiest moment when he received the coveted trophy. Two of his players show their joy and they indicate "we're No. 1" and they were. (Observer photo by Craig Goffield)

Betting Records Fall In Hazel Park Opener

Michigan's racing season opened Monday with the greatest first night program in harness racing history before a crowd of 9,761 who wagered an all-time high of \$820,851.

4 Champs Crowned In LHA Play

With over 1,000 fans in attendance, the Livonia Hockey Association brought its House League program to a successful conclusion.

It saw championships settled in the Squirt, Pee Wee, Bantam and Midget divisions and a pleasing ice show featuring Bev Griffin, head figure skating instructor and Bill Martin, formerly of the Holiday on Ice show along with many figure skating students from the Parks and Recreation figure skating program.

IN THE SQUIRT division two goals by Bruin Bret Green and one by Mullin helped Leonard Klecka's team register a 3-0 victory over Dan Waldeck's Rangers. Randall Savio registered a shutout.

In the Pee Wee division, it was the Bruins, 3-2 over the Blues with Major getting the winning goal with 1:15 remaining in the third period.

It was an uphill fight all the way for Tony Rozzin's Bruins who finished fourth in regular season play. It was a heart breaker for Bill Barlow and his Blues after leading through two periods.

In the Bantams, it was Walt Petoskey's Blues by a 6-3 score over Claude Lamy's Bruins.

Blues Jeff Monson proved to much for the Bruins by scoring three goals after the Bruins had taken a 2-1 lead in the first period.

Ken Harma's Midget North Stars had too much power for Art Perkin's Rangers registering a 5-1 victory in the final game, with Bill Harma scoring 2 goals.

pleased with the condition of the racing strip, a limestone surface which had been subjected to a week of rain and snow.

THE FOOTING was fast enough for driver Gerry Bookmyer to bring the 6-5 favorite Howie Johnston in first in 2:09 4/5 for the mile in the \$3,500 Inaugural Pace.

IT INDICATED racing in the state is headed for another year for the trotters and the runners. It was the first spring opening at Hazel Park in several years and continued the sensational success of last fall's campaign.

Hazel Park rewrote the record book in 1969 showing an increase of 19 per cent in wagering with a record average handle of \$807,000.

The previous high for an opening night at the track was \$535,000 in 1966.

Only the longshot players were disappointed in the opener. All but two of the 10 winners were well-played chasers.

Baron Cal, 13.20 winner of the second race, and Kelly Haven, \$18.40 upstetter in the sixth, were the only horses who paid more than \$10.

It was strictly because of Kelly Haven that the new Big Perfecta paid a lucrative \$2,361.60 to 19 lucky ticketholders.

Under the Big P, a better must pick the 1-2 finishers in both the sixth and seventh races and this proved quite a challenge despite the flood of favorites.

BUT NOTHING could deter the fans in their march to the mutual windows.

The way the betting started out it appeared as if there was a chance Hazel Park might beat its all-time record of \$681,609.

Then the action eased off, but it was still enough to top the track's old, opening mark of \$335,049 set in 1966 as well as Walverine Raceway's state record of \$506,000.

"We're very pleased to be so well received," said Hazel Park president Don MacFarlane. "You know, Walverine set that opening-night record on a Saturday, which is always a much bigger night than a Monday."

MacFarlane was equally

8:58: THE SECOND QUARTER begins and Pontiac's Ratliffe again gets the tap.

9:01: Rutter connects on a jumper and West leads, 28-26.

9:05: Game is tied at 30-30... the 14th deadlock.

9:06: West's Gary Nustad and Rutter force Pontiac to lose the ball.

9:06 1/2: Nustad out jumps three Chiefs for the ball.

9:07: All West rooters groan. Drewitz missed his second straight layup.

9:10: The half ends. West leads, 39-37. Who would have believed that?

9:12: "This game should be for the championship," says Free Press sports editor Joe Falls.

9:15: "Maybe the Pistons should sign Drewitz right away," chips in Will Perry, the sports publicist at the University of Michigan.

9:18: West returns for the second half.

9:19: Back comes Pontiac Central.

9:20: Drewitz wins the second half tipoff.

9:25: It's Drewitz scoring and West leads, 43-39.

Continued on Page 28

FISHER SALE The famed Fisher. Best buy, by far.

You've heard about the irresistible sound of Fisher stereos. Now even Fisher prices are music to your ears. Take the spectacular systems built around the Fisher 210-T and the all-new XP-65 wide-range speaker system. You get a superbly matched stereo system complete with ■ Powerful Fisher 110-watt AM/FM stereo receiver ■ Fine Fisher 3-way speaker system, featuring ■ 10-inch woofer ■ 5-inch mid-range driver ■ 3-inch tweeter

And all for the never-before price of \$399.95



For just a little more you can add a B.S.R. changer with Shure Cartridge and diamond stylus and you now have a complete and superb stereo system for only \$439.95

STEREOLAND

17131 W. Michigan 38-8021
2111 Plymouth Road 281-8170
20748 West Ave. TU 4-3800
DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER 139 S. MAIN 651-3550