

Faulkner serves pro tennis package to city

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Area sports promoter Roger Faulkner is gambling Detroit will respond favorably to men's international tennis like it did for the Grand Prix and Super Bowl.

Faulkner, now a stockbroker at Merrill-Lynch but best remembered as

general manager of the now defunct Detroit Express in the North American Soccer League, was instrumental in bringing World Championship Tennis (WCT) to Cobo Arena for Super Bowl weekend (Jan. 27-30).

The event is called the WCT Winter Finals, pitting the top eight players from five previous WCT stops. Detroit got the \$250,000 tournament

because of a scheduling conflict with an arena in Zurich, Switzerland.

Faulkner, who's been trying to bring a men's tennis tournament here for the past five years, was contacted by WCT's Commercial Director Bob Balnick about bringing the tournament to Detroit.

It just so happened that the two were

old friends, having played tennis against one another in 1964 at St. Moritz, Switzerland.

The world's top draws, Jimmy Connors, Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe, are not eligible to compete here because they haven't entered any of the WCT's winter stops at Amsterdam, Netherlands; Maryland; Dortmund,

West Germany, Chicago or Hartford. But three of the eight spots have been filled. Wojtek Fibak of Poland, ranked No. 7 on the Nizdorf Computer Rankings, has qualified by winning the Amsterdam and Chicago events.

BRIAN TEACHER, ranked 13th, won at Dortmund and will be here along with Australian Paul McNamee (No. 24), who beat Guillermo Vilas (No. 4) last month in the Maryland final. The Hartford tournament, which began last night, will go a long way in determining the other five spots.

Ivan Lendl, No. 2 in the world, is entered in the 16-player Hartford field along with Kevin Curren (No. 10), Roscoe Tanner, Bill Scanlon (No. 19), Fikak, Peter McNamara (No. 14) and Jose-Luis Clerc (No. 6).

Vilas, although not entered at Hartford, could also qualify for the \$125,000 first prize in Detroit because he is currently the second leading point-getter behind Fibak on the WCT winter tour.

The winner of the Hartford event will earn 500 points and will be assured of a spot in Detroit.

"Although we won't have a McEnroe or Connors, we will have some players

ranked in the top 10," said Balnick. "We're coming to Detroit because of its Renaissance spirit and reputation as a sports-minded town."

Faulkner, with the help of some forthcoming local sponsors to promote and sponsor the tournament, hopes to average 8,000 fans per session.

THERE WILL be no doubles play, only singles, which are all five-set matches. Quarterfinal matches will be played Thursday and Friday evenings, Jan. 27-28. The semifinals begin at 1 p.m. Saturday (Jan. 29) with the finals at 1 p.m. Sunday (Jan. 29).

"If you come and see the final you'll have plenty of time to get home and see the Super Bowl because that doesn't start until 6 p.m.," said Faulkner at a recent press conference at the Ponchartraine Hotel.

Daily ticket prices range from \$6 to \$12.50. Series tickets (for all four days) are \$40 for Tier A (inner circle), \$30 for Tier B (circle logs) and \$20 for Tier C (upper reserved).

For ticket information, contact the Joe Louis Arena box office at 567-6000. To charge tickets on either MasterCard or Visa, call 567-9800.

Rice to host cage 'Classic'

Harrison gridders gain new honor

Farmington Harrison's state championship football team was recently honored as one of the nation's top 25 teams by USA Today, a new national newspaper based in Washington, D.C.

The Hawks, who won the Class-A title with an exciting double-overtime victory over Dearborn Fordson at the Pontiac Silverdome, were ranked 23rd in the poll.

The top team, according to the poll, was perennial national power Cincinnati Moeller High School which won the Ohio state championship and finished with a perfect 13-0 record. The next five schools listed in the poll were Valdosta (Ga.) High School, Woodham (Pennacola, Fla.) High School, South Elgin (Port Orchard, Wa.) High School and Servite (Anaheim, Ca.) High School.

Harrison, coached by John Herrington, finished with a perfect 12-0 overall record, including semifinal playoff victories over Bloomfield Hills Lahser and Milford Lakeland.

● RICE SETS CAGE CLASSIC

Birmingham Brother Rice High School has organized a basketball doubleheader Dec. 21 at the Pontiac Silverdome known as the "Warrior Invitational Classic."

Brother Rice, the 1982 Catholic League champion, will meet defending state class-A champion Flint Central in the 9 p.m. feature game. A pair of Pontiac schools — Central and Northern — will tip off in the 7 p.m. opener.

Rice officials are hoping to attract a crowd of 8,000.

Tickets are \$3 and are available at participating schools. Proceeds from the tournament will be split between the home teams — Pontiac Central and Brother Rice.

"If this year's Warrior Invitational Classic is successful, in future years we're planning to invite the best teams in the state," said Rice athletic director Mike Popson. "It will be a showcase event."

● IT'S TIME FOR SNO-BALL

The Sno-Ball II winter softball tournament will be held the weekend of Jan. 8 at the Southfield Civic Center. The entry deadline is Dec. 31 and there is only room for the first 50 paid teams.

Entry fee is \$75 per team, with the championship teams in all three divi-

sport shorts

sions (men's, women's and co-ed) receiving T-shirts and trophies. Winners will also qualify for the March of Dimes National Sno-Ball tournament in Omaha, Neb. in February.

Any team is eligible to enter.

All proceeds will benefit the Oakland County March of Dimes. The March of Dimes sponsors research, medical services and public and professional health-education programs to prevent birth defects and improve maternal/newborn health.

For further information, call 851-8000.

● RACQUETBALL TOURNEY The Franklin Racquetball Club, in cooperation with Carlos Murphy's Restaurant, will sponsor a New Year's Racquetball Tournament.

The tourney is set for the Jan. 1 weekend. Entry deadline is Dec. 27. Nautilus memberships will be the grand prize for winners of the adult divisions. Junior-division winners will receive trophies.

There will be T-shirts and two-for-one drinks at Carlos Murphy's the entire weekend.

Adult entry fee is \$20. The junior entry fee is \$10.

For further information, call 352-8000.

● A 'DEVOTE'-TED CARDINAL Freshman running back Devote Cornell was one of 52 lettermen recently honored at the annual Saginaw Valley State College Football Awards Banquet.

Cornell, a graduate of Southfield High School, was the second-leading Cardinal rusher with 197 yards in 49 carries for a 3.9 average. His exciting 30-yard touchdown run against Ferris State in the final home game was one of the few bright spots for the Cardinal offense this year.

Cornell, a 5-foot 8-inch offensive back, was a member of the Observer & Eccentric's 1981 All-Area Football Team.

Saginaw Valley finished with only one victory in 10 games this season.

● NEW YEAR'S EVE RUN The 13th annual New Year's Eve Run will start at 8:30 p.m. Dec. 31.

The run, organized by the Belle Isle Runners, starts near the Belle Isle Casino and follows a four-mile course around the island. It is open to runners of all age groups.

The first 500 finishers receive a pla-

que. Trophies are awarded to the first male and female finishers. All four-mile participants receive T-shirts.

For further information, call the Detroit Recreation Department at 224-1184.



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