

Sports

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C.J. Risak

Eastern betrayed by 'noble' MAC leaders

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I give you the presidents of our esteemed institutions of higher education, collectively known as the Mid-American Conference — MAC for short.

Let's give them a hand, shall we? The intellectuals who rule over our colleges, brightening and enlightening the youth of today and leaders of tomorrow.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we have reason to be proud of the men who preside over Miami of Ohio, Northern Illinois, Toledo, Ohio University, Bowling Green, Kent State, Ball State, Central Michigan and Western Michigan. They have shown their true colors, the noble stuff they are made of.

Wait a moment, you ask? Something's amiss? A university is absent from the above list of MAC schools?

What has happened to Eastern Michigan University?

LIMBO. THAT'S what has happened to EMU. Thanks to their valiant MAC cohorts, the Hurons have been put in limbo. And they have about two weeks — until Aug. 1 — to determine their own fate.

Yes, dear friends, these MAC leaders displayed wisdom and generosity rare in this day and age by granting EMU a choice:

Either drop football or get out. Sweet fellows, aren't they? They needed a sacrificial lamb to maintain their football ranking as an NCAA Division 1A conference, so with an inspiring display of Christianity that would make a Judas proud, seven noble MAC members ganged up on Eastern and demanded its ouster Monday.

One option remained: EMU must drop football. What prompted this was fear and greed: Fear that the conference would lose its Division 1A ranking, and greed for the money, glamour and importance the MAC presidents attached to it.

THE FEAR was kindled at the May 19 MAC meeting. According to NCAA standards, to qualify for Division 1A football — with the big boys like Michigan and Notre Dame — a majority of the conference's 10 schools must average 17,000 fans per game.

Six MAC teams did last year, but one of those — Western — could not guarantee it would repeat this season. Frankly, the MAC presidents figured the only way to assure they wouldn't lose their precious standing was to drop one team.

On Monday's MAC meeting, they chose Eastern. Why Eastern instead of the other three schools with poor attendance (Ohio, Kent State and Ball State)? Good question. And MAC commissioner Jim Lexing had an eloquent answer: "There is no comment and there will be no comment."

Three conceivable reasons are EMU's poor attendance, poor record (1-10 last season) and its short tie with the MAC (a member since 1971). None of the other three combine those factors like EMU.

WHY DIVISION 1A? Dreams of grandeur, it seems. MAC schools have always dreamed of battling the Oklahomas and Penn States on the gridiron. Big-time football greatly enhances any institution of higher education — right?

And let's not forget greed. The Supreme Court threw out the NCAA's television package, meaning schools could negotiate TV contracts for themselves. The MAC has done so, signing a two-year, \$4-million pact with Sports Illustrated of St. Louis for nearly \$800,000. It's a deal MAC officials say would never have happened without a 1A race.

So they dumped Eastern — for about \$30,000 a year per school. Prices sure have risen since Judas collected his 12 pieces of silver in betrayal money. The Hurons don't have to leave the conference entirely. The MAC presidents, so doubtful to pity the poor Hurons, decided to allow EMU's other 21 varsity sports (more than any other conference school) to remain. They insured this by changing the conference bylaws, dropping a clause that said all schools must play football.

Of course, there's no way to be sure that these men of honor might not renege that rule in a year or so, should Eastern officials choose to drop football and stay in the conference.

ONE QUESTION remains. What about the kids? Guys like Dan Cohen (a North Farmington grad), Scott Niemiec (Redford Catholic Central) and Pat Burke (Redford Union), now in the senior season; Frank Helmstetter (Rochester Adams), Scott Jurk (Plymouth Salem), Bill Kupp (Bloomfield Hills Lahar) and Rick Paier (CC), all freshmen just starting at Eastern; and John Wisner (CC), Mike Salver (Redford St. Agatha), Tom Redilla (RR), Brett Petersmark (West Bloomfield) and Dale Boone (Westland John Glenn), all in mid-career.

What happens to them? Coach Jack Harkness doesn't know: "I'm concerned about our football players at this point," the second-year man admits. What he wants is clear: "We're going to fight like hell to convince the administration to keep football and drop out of the conference."

Then what happens to the athletes in other sports who came to Eastern to do battle in the MAC? It makes for a difficult decision, without much time to consider. As Harkness pointed out, "I'm just upset they left us just two weeks to decide the fate of a 91-year-old program."

That's the way of such gentlemen. They force the issue, but leave the final, ugly verdict to the drop football or drop out of the MAC — to be rendered by people already pushed into a corner.

I know what my decision would be. Leave gentlemen with such lofty ideals to themselves — they deserve each other.

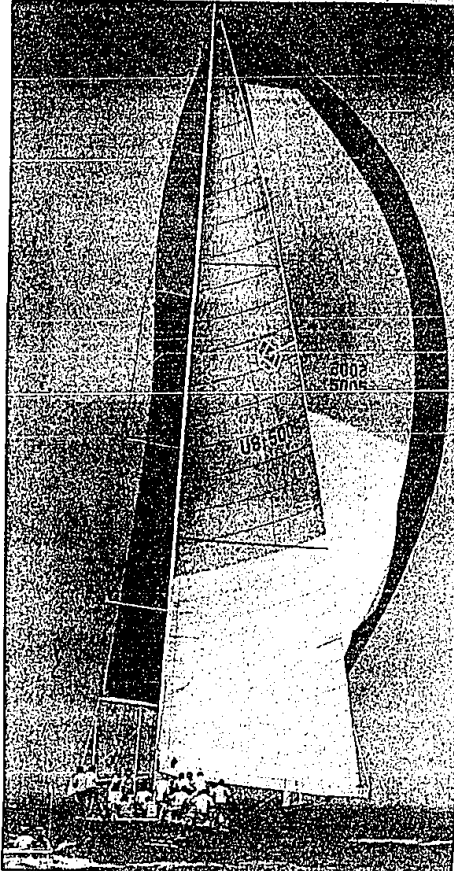


photo by GARY CARNEY/staff photographer

Sassy, winner of the Port Huron-to-Mackinac race in the Class A division, gets off to a strong spinnaker start en route to a record-breaking finish.

Executone dials correct number

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Paul Boudreau and John Cogrovo, dressed in their three-tone blue and white Executone uniforms, stood happily on the winner's platform in the pit area shortly after completion of the 1984 Squire's Thunderfest.

They held their "Spirit of Detroit" trophy aloft and basked in delight as Miss Executone's two-day survival test around the moody 2 1/2-mile Detroit River course culminated in a third-place finish.

It was the exact same placing as last year. But, this year's performance by Executone driver George Johnson was especially satisfying for both of them.

"Last year, we felt we backed into third place," said Boudreau, a Bloomfield Hills resident and chief executive officer of the Troy-based Executone Group which has sponsored the 5,600-pound unlimited hydroplane for the past three years.

"This year, we raced. I can't be unhappy with that performance at all — especially considering you're running against those turbines."

"Our intent was to be competitive and I think we've accomplished that," he said.

MISS BUDWEISER, averaging 130.113 miles per hour, won the annual Detroit race for its third victory of the season. Squire Shop finished second with an average speed of 118.886 and Miss Executone was third at 104.932.

Miss Renault and the turbine-powered Miss Diesel, sponsored by Ty Field Importers Inc. of Troy, did not finish the championship heat.

The race was originally scheduled for Sunday but was postponed after a rainstorm on that date.

The race was held on a course that was laid out on the beach that caused stress on the up to four feet.

Race officials decided to resume the race Monday morning. Despite another rainstorm, which slowed the race.

west and didn't affect the course as dramatically — the Thunderfest was concluded by 3 p.m.

However, because of the unfavorable conditions, the race turned into more of a survival test than the competitive showcase envisioned between the conventional combustion engines and the whirling turbines.

Budweiser, like the Squire Shop and Executone, are heavier boats run by the traditional World War II aircraft piston engines. They had the advantage on the rugged Detroit river waters over the sleek turbine-powered boats like Tostl Asti and defending national champion Atlas Van Lines.

BUDWEISER WON both of its qualifying heats to accompany its championship-heat victory. Executone was second behind "Bud" in both of its preliminary heats and easily qualified for the "winner-take-all" championship heat.

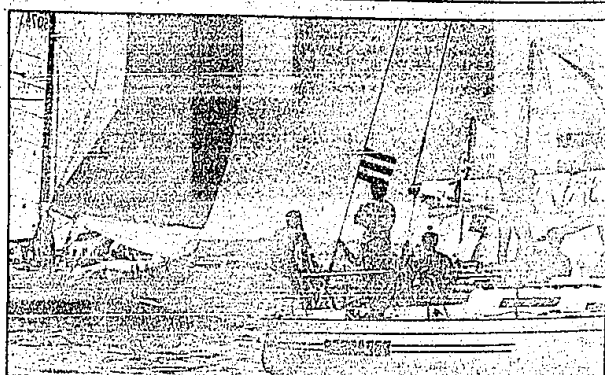
Miss Executone, powered by a supercharged Rolls Royce Merlin engine, started third in the championship race and didn't have enough speed to catch either Miss Budweiser or the Squire Shop. Johnson's boat of five laps in the championship heat was the first time around when he was clocked at 110.811.

"This year the field was substantially stronger and I'm absolutely thrilled about finishing third," said Cogrovo, president of the Executone Group. "I think someone said this is the second-fastest unlimited field ever. Third out of this kind of lot is no embarrassment."

Tostl Asti, which entered the race as the fastest qualifier after last week's trials with an average speed lap of 133.993, had a rough weekend of racing.

The Squire Shop, which finished second in the championship heat, was not as fast as in his other heat and did not finish the race.

Race officials decided to resume the race Monday morning. Despite another rainstorm, which slowed the race.



Crew members of Gundance, the second-place Class C North American 40 finisher,

watch one of the divisions begin the race.

Silver sailing
Wake wins in 25th raceBy Rich Swenson
staff writer

Staff writer Rich Swenson crewed on Maztrot III, a North American 40 sail boat, which competed in last weekend's Port Huron-to-Mackinac yacht race.

THE GRAND OL' lady of Great Lakes sailing celebrated her 25th Port Huron-to-Mackinac race with a bang Monday, winning the prestigious North American (NA) 40TOR Class C race aboard Veleto IV.

Troy's Maggie Wake, owner of Veleto with her husband, Dr. Douglas Wake, was crewing on her 25th Mackinac, sponsored by Bayview Yacht Club, and the triumph couldn't have been more timely.

She recently became the first woman ever to be inducted into Bayview's Society of the Old Gales, an honor bestowed to sailors who have completed 25 or more Mackinac races. Her name will join the 80 men who have been inscribed on the Old Goat roster above the bar at Bayview.

"It was really great — just fantastic," she said with a beaming smile. "We even had our son and nephew from California sailing with us. They came in for sentimental reasons."

'It was the right time to win it. It was my most satisfying Mackinac victory because it was Maggie's 25th (race).'

— Doug Wake
Veleto IV

"IT WAS THE RIGHT time to win it," her husband added. "It was my most satisfying Mackinac victory because it was Maggie's 25th (race)."

Wake and his wife have been sailing together side-by-side for some 35 years, and they have a lot to show for their efforts. They won back-to-back Mackinacs in 1961 and 1962 on their Tripp 30.

They also captured class honors in 1972 aboard the 39-foot Osecketa (Indian for Lake St. Clair), but this was their first win in the highly competitive one-design NA 40 class.

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