

Variety is sport-of-life for Rocky Gust

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

A new \$64,000 challenge could be: Name all the sports Rocky "Rocky" Gust participates in.

Even his wife, Julie, has a tough time with that one. She ponders it for a moment and then lists basketball, hockey, racquetball, aerobics, swimming, biking, softball and water skiing. "I think that's it," she said. "What else is there?"

Julie forgot to mention cross country skiing, tennis and golf, sports her husband also dabbles in on occasion.

The Bloomfield Hills Lahser graduate calls himself "the jack of all trades and the master of none." And it's no wonder.

"I WOULD GET good at a sport and then quit to start another one," said Gust, who trades in his sweatshirt for a business suit as a real estate broker during working hours.

Needless to say, Gust is the quintessential sports nut, addict and fanatic. Mention a sport, and chances are he's played it at one time or another.

The wide range of encounters with sports began, innocently enough, when Gust used to go to camp during the summer in Wisconsin. There was a multitude of sports offered, and Gust made sure he was involved in just about all of them.

It's progressed to the point now where Gust is training at least 15 hours

a week for a mini triathlon. Only once a month will Gust miss a morning workout, and he doesn't "feel right" when he does.

"Some people say it's addicting, and it is," Gust said.

AND MAYBE even excessive, as some of Gust's co-workers have suggested. But when training for a triathlon, half-hearted efforts don't bring home results.

Gust swims, bikes and runs regularly. Of the three, biking is his strong suit. Swimming is what he works on the most.

In the last year, he's cut at least two minutes off his swimming mile time. In a mini triathlon, you bike 25 to 30 miles, swim a mile, and cap it off with a 6.2-mile run.

"I'm not trying to knock down the world," said Gust. "I'm just trying to get into shape."

A longtime friend of Gust's, who went to high school and college with him, echoes a similar statement. He recalls Gust organizing an intramural hockey team at Michigan State despite not having played the sport much competitively.

"HE KIND OF lumbered around," said Jim Reinhardt of Birmingham. "He just didn't look like a normal hockey player because of his size (6-2, 190 pounds). He improved though. He's in good shape and tries real hard."

Reinhardt remembered Gust as "an average athlete" at Lahser, where he

played football, baseball, hockey and skied. Part of the reason was a debilitating knee injury in football during his sophomore year.

Three operations on Gust's knee since then have been the price of staying an active member of the sporting community.

At Michigan State, Gust was organized and played on many intramural teams. He recalled losing a quarterfinal intramural basketball game to a group of football players called "the whites."

Kirk Gibson was a member of the winning team.

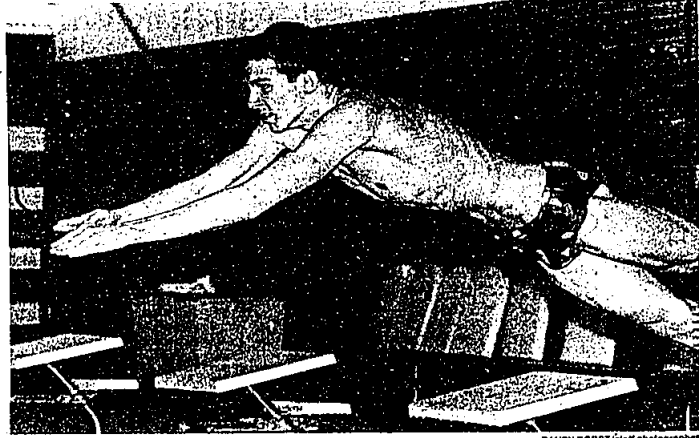
Of team sports, basketball is Gust's favorite. He helps organize and plays regularly in the Bloomfield rec league.

"THAT'S THE ONE (basketball) I enjoy the most," he said. "You get such a good workout."

Basketball, plus racquetball, keep Gust away from home a lot at night. His wife joined an aerobics class at Franklin Racquet Club so they can "hang out together," according to Gust. She also helps him during the transition from one event to the other in the triathlon. Fitness, obviously, is a top priority with Gust. The all-around athlete watches what he eats at the breakfast table. His diet consists of rice, potatoes and fruit. Red meat is a no no.

And don't bother heating up the coffee pot.

"My coffee in the morning is working out," Gust said.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

All-around 'Rock' Rocky Gust smiles no matter what sports season is in vogue.

MSU icers regroup after loss to WMU

By C.J. Rieske
staff writer

For Mike Donnelly, the season was rocketing.

Upward it climbed, streaking to unimaginable heights. Nothing could stop it. Like a gambler giddy with a prolonged streak of success, it seemed the Spartan hockey team could do no wrong.

Unbeatable.

The end had to come, of course. And it did — Saturday, in the last place one might have anticipated, at a time least expected. MSU lost 3-1 to Western Michigan in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association playoffs at Joe Louis Arena, in front of a largely partisan crowd of 18,722.

The Spartans had been beaten just once since Christmas in their ascent to the CCHA regular-season title. And at Joe Louis, they had won four-straight CCHA tournament championships and 17 consecutive games.

"Munn East," proud MSU supporters boasted, using the nickname bestowed upon the riverfront arena. The Spartans rarely lost at their East Lansing home, either — Munn Arena.

BUT STREAKS wouldn't be streaks if they never ended. When MSU's finaly did, it was almost welcomed by the player most responsible for extending it.

Donnelly, the senior right wing from Livonia, sat down with an assistant coach prior to the season to establish reachable goals.

"We both agreed that 25 goals and 25 assists would be good," Donnelly said.

He reached those totals before January. Donnelly has shattered the CCHA goal-scoring record. He is just two shy of Jerry Walker's NCAA-record of 56, which he scored for University of Denver in 1960-61.

Fifty-four goals, 34 assists, 88 points. Donnelly's scoring rampage is a major reason for MSU's success.

On Saturday, his runaway-freight-train of a season crashed. But by Tuesday, he had put his regret behind him.

"It was a big disappointment," he said. "Anytime you get that much fan following and that much hype down there, it will be. People kept saying our luck was going to run out (at Joe Louis), but we earned everything we got there."

FOR DONNELLY, perspective had replaced his initial disappointment. "You can't win every game," he analyzed. "Western Michigan was better prepared and just played a great game. We got a goal in the third period, then got a penalty right after. That took the wind right out of our sails."

Not that the Spartans had much. WMU scored a goal in each of the first two periods. After MSU scored early in the third, Jeff Parker was penalized for roughing. The Broncos' Troy Thrun converted on the power play and that was the game.

Donnelly was shut out in the loss, failing to register a point.

"(The goal record) crosses my mind once in a while," he admitted. "It's a distraction, to myself and my teammates. But I try not to think about it. I'm working my hardest; I'm not out there to score goals."

There are other distractions, like his much-improved chances to play pro hockey. But again, while Donnelly admitted such a goal "has always been an ambition of mine," he refused to dwell on it.

"Right now," he claimed, "my mind is on MSU."

A LOSS LIKE Saturday's helps refocus such aims. And that's why Donnelly was able to shoulder it with relative ease.

"You have to learn from your losses," he said. "Anytime you lose, you want to get something out of it. Maybe this was an opportunistic time for us to lose. It didn't end our season."

MSU will begin the NCAA playoffs next weekend, with both team and location to be announced Sunday. Last year, the Spartans were ranked No. 1 and had just claimed the CCHA title when they were sidelined — at Munn Arena — by Providence in the NCAA tourney.

"We talked about that in our meeting yesterday," said Donnelly. "Anybody who reaches the final eight has a great hockey program. But we've done that the last four years. This year, we want to go further."

CCHA titles as tuneups the four previous years didn't help the Spartans achieve an NCAA championship. Maybe losing in the CCHA will.

Mackenzie overpowers CC in regional

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CC led 7-4 in the early going, but Mackenzie got rolling in the second and

third quarters behind the agile Smith, the middle two periods plus. That took the Mackenzie held a 31-26 halftime ad-

vantage and led 53-43 after three quarters. "We played good defense," Holowski said. "We squandered some opportuni-

ties, but that's because they caused them. There were some key plays that turned out to be big plays that's always been part of the state tournament."

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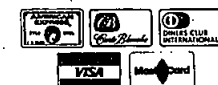
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