

Sports

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New director, new direction for MHSAA?

THE CHANGE IN COMMAND is at hand. And if first impressions are worth anything at all, it seems the change will be considerable.

First, an introduction is in order. Meet Jack Roberts, who will officially take charge of the Michigan High School Athletic Association Sept. 1. Roberts will begin Aug. 4 and will spend the first month learning just what the job entails from retiring executive director Vern Norris.

I had the opportunity to speak with the new boss of the MHSAA last week in a telephone interview from his present place of employment, the national headquarters of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Kansas City, where he serves as executive vice president.

With the formality of introductions properly dispensed with, let's get on with some meaningful interrogations. Like, what can we expect from this guy?

HOW ABOUT something different?

That alone would be more than most people even remotely aware of the MHSAA and its workings would expect. But my feeling — premature as it might be — is that the new guy represents a change in thinking in the MHSAA.

Such a bold prediction is based on more than just a brief conversation with Roberts. Consider, first of all, his selection.

If the MHSAA Representative Council was totally satisfied with the direction the association was taking in recent years under Norris, they probably would have selected Sible as the next executive director.

Sible, one of the three finalists for the post, was an assistant director under Norris.

INSTEAD THEY chose Roberts, a surprise pick for several reasons. First, he's never had any previous connection with our state. He was born and raised in Stevens Point, Wis., where his father was employed as head of the state's interscholastic athletic association for 29 years.

And, despite a formidable list of impressive credentials that includes seven years as assistant director of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations, Roberts is just 37 years old.

My opinion is nobody should be



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disqualified from a job because of age, but considering the scope of the MHSAA's executive directorship, it seems Roberts' lack of years — which is often mistakenly translated as a lack of experience — would have stifled his chances for the job.

Yet here he is, the executive director-to-be. Roberts seemed to be the longshot when the field was narrowed to three; the others, Sible and William Pappas, a principal at Grand Rapids Northview high school, both have closer ties to athletics within the state.

Roberts' selection alone should clearly signal that a change in how the MHSAA operates is not only probable, it's needed. Or so the Representative Council believes.

BUT IF THAT isn't convincing enough, listening to Roberts as he outlines his basic philosophy clinches it.

For example: "When there is litigation, when there are enforcement problems, people are misunderstanding (the MHSAA's) purpose. Communication is a major responsibility."

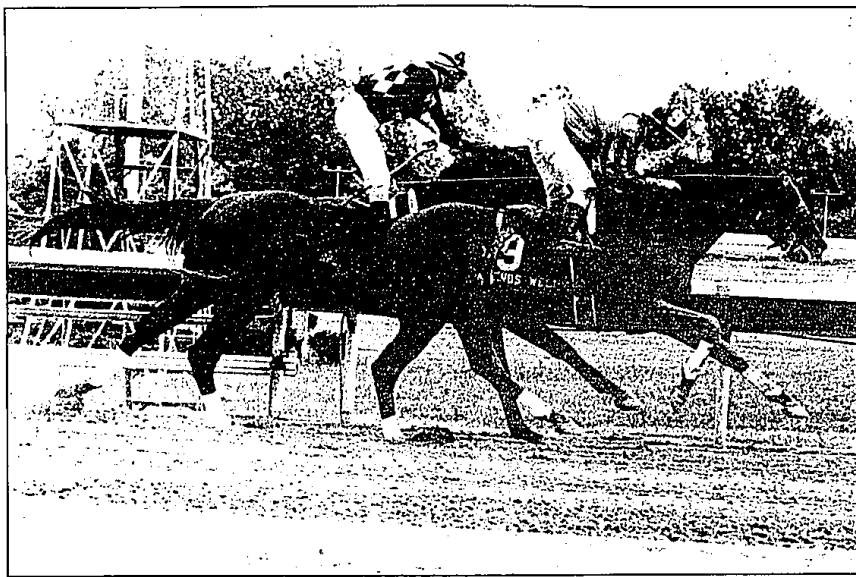
That probably doesn't sound so insightful, but do you think Norris would admit a communication problem even existed? Roberts made his intentions clear: to make people aware of the MHSAA's operations and avenues of appeal.

"An early and persistent goal of mine," he said, "will be to point out to the public that the purpose of high school sports is unique and special compared to collegiate or other sports. When we forget that purpose, we lose our distinction."

ROBERTS PLANS to battle the litigation problems that have plagued the MHSAA in recent years partially through better communication.

"Not just from the MHSAA office, either," he emphasized, "but from the school districts themselves. They have to take some of the responsibility."

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ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Ends Well (No.9), jockeyed by Randy Romero, edges out Purple Mountain Saturday to win the 38th running of the Michigan Mile at Ladbroke DRC. Ends Well took a first-place purse of \$164,700.

Gate Danceless But all 'Ends Well' at Michigan Mile

By Larry O'Connor staff writer

All Ends Well needed was a leader to catch Saturday in the Michigan Mile at Ladbroke DRC.

And it was Purple Mountain, not Gate Dancer, who provided Ends Well someone to beat. Ends Well took Purple Mountain at the finish line to win the 38th running of Michigan Mile.

Ends Well, jockeyed by Randy Romero, picked up \$164,700 winners' share of the \$250,000-added purse. The horse, a 1-to-4½ favorite at the start of the race, paid \$11.20 to win.

Purple Mountain, favored 2-to-1 at race time, was followed by Valiant Luck. Gate Dancer, who won the 1984 Preakness, was scratched from the Michigan Mile because of a heel injury. Gate Dancer was favored 8-to-5 in the morning odds.

DEJEAN, THE 1985 Michigan Derby winner, was also scratched due to injuries.

Gate Dancer suffered burned heels after working out Wednesday at Ladbroke DRC. It was thought, though, that he would be ready for Saturday's race.

But Saturday morning, Gate Dancer was withdrawn from the race after the injuries were considered too severe.

Gate Dancer's absence didn't alter any plans Ends Well's trainer Robert Reinacher Jr. had for the race. "From a tactical standpoint, it didn't change anything," Reinacher said. "The controlling horse in my opinion was the one that finished second (Purple Mountain)."

Purple Mountain set an excellent pace for Ends Well to follow, posting a 47.1 time at the half mile. Purple Mountain held the first position until the eighth post before Ends All made

a break for the finish line.

At the half-mile mark, Purple Mountain was followed by Quibble and Land Of The Believe. Purple Mountain, ridden by Nick Santagata, still had the lead at the mile mark with a time of 1:36.2.

"I knew he was the horse to beat (Purple Mountain)," said Romero, who has recovered from an accident which left burns over 65 percent of his body. "I came in with the determination to win."

ROMERO, A CAJUN from Louisiana, finished second in the nation in wins in 1985 with 466 and earnings over \$5 million. He added another \$164,700.

Reinacher said, after some recent hard luck, he'd hoped to get win to get Ends Well's confidence back. Gate Dancer's absence made that more possible.

The fast track was a help also.

"All the races were running really quick," said Romero. "I thought I would be leading by three or four horses, but I could see I was going to be a lot more faster than I expected."

Ten Gold Pots, a 2-to-1 favorite, finished fourth. Last year's Michigan Mile winner, Bandwagon Harry, finished fifth.

Quibble, which ran in second for the first half mile, faded to ninth. Land Of The Believe, after a strong start, finished seventh.

The win for Romero came in his first race in Michigan. Recently he's moved eastward from Louisiana, Arkansas and Illinois to Florida and New York.

In the east Romero's raced well, winning 41 races this year and the riding title at Gulfstream Park.

He was also one of the leaders at Belmont Park before a back injury sidelined him again.

Sizzling Sabre Buffalo draftee ignites MSHL team

By Chris McCosky staff writer

The first week of the Midwest Summer Hockey League concluded Wednesday and already Mike Hartman has emerged as one of the league's premier players.

"He's a strong candidate for this year's scoring leader," said A.J. Baker, MSHL commissioner. No doubt.

A West Bloomfield High School grad and seventh-round draft choice of the Buffalo Sabres, Hartman exploded for five goals and an assist Monday as his team, the Huskies, earned a 7-7 tie against the Falcons at the Plymouth Cultural Center Ice Arena.

Four of Hartman's goals came in the final period. The Falcons carried a 5-2 lead into the final period. Hartman's fourth goal of the period, with one minute left in the game, drew the Huskies and Falcons even at 7-7.

Ken Chaput (U-M Dearborn) had three goals and an assist for the Falcons. Tomas Carlsson, who plays Junior A hockey in Sweden, added two goals.

THE MSHL began its fourth season with a trio of games Sunday. Scott Jagod (Cranbrook) scored two goals to lead the Wolverines past the Broncos 9-5. Livonia Churchill product Rick Robitaille had two assists, and Detroit Country Day's Jeff Keller added a goal and an assist.

hockey	
MIDWEST SUMMER HOCKEY LEAGUE STANDINGS (as of July 16)	
BATES CONFERENCE	
Spartans	2-0-0
Lakers	1-1-0
Bulldogs	1-1-0
Wildcats	0-2-0
TEX CONFERENCE	
Falcons	1-0-1
Wolverines	1-1-0
Huskies	0-0-1
Broncos	0-1-0
MSHL SCHEDULE	
Monday July 14	
Wolverines vs. Bulldogs, 6 p.m.	
Tuesday, July 15	
Wildcats vs. Broncos, 7 a.m.	
Spartans vs. Falcons, 8:30 p.m.	
Wednesday, July 16	
Bulldogs vs. Huskies, 7 p.m.	
Wolverines vs. Falcons, 8:30 p.m.	
Thursday, July 17	
Broncos vs. Falcons, 8:30 p.m.	
All games at the Plymouth Cultural Center	

Dave Ward (Northwood) scored twice for the Broncos.

The Spartans, coached by Baker, scored five times in the third period to overtake the Bulldogs 7-3. Livonia's Tommaso Midgetti scored three of the five third-period goals.

of goals. Catholic Central line-mates Walt Bartels (a goal and two assists) and Eric Kapelanski (two assists) figured in three of the Spartans' goals.

Rick Osborn (U-M Dearborn) scored twice for the Bulldogs.

In the finale Sunday, the Lakers blunted the Wildcats 11-5. The Lakers scored six times in the final period. John Smith (Kent State) scored twice and added four assists for the winners. Bobby Molse (Eric Blades, ACHL) scored a goal and two assists.

Livonia Franklin product Tim Olschanski had a pair of goals and an assist for the Wildcats.

ON TUESDAY, the Spartans won their second straight game, tipping the Lakers 6-3. Jolie Toft (Sweden A) scored twice and Nester added a goal and two assists.

Bobby Molse scored a goal and an assist for the Lakers.

On Wednesday, a pair of goals by Todd Kryger (Connecticut) led the Bulldogs to a 7-5 win against the Wildcats. Rick Osborn scored a goal and notched three assists.

Olschanski and Jeff Dobek had a goal and assist each for the Cats. Hennessey Engineer standout, Ed Sauver led the Falcons to a 4-4 win over the Wolverines with a goal and two assists.

Keller and Jagod scored twice each for the Wolves.

Zero hour? Smith's pro career at crossroads

By Brad Emons staff writer

Dennis Smith is at the crossroads of his hockey career.

He calls the upcoming season "N.Y. make or break year."

All the 22-year-old Westland native really wants is a break from some National Hockey League team. With the help of Toronto agent Harry Francis, the 5-foot-11, 192-pound defenseman is hoping to get a tryout with somebody.

"Dennis has incredible skills, but the situation can be political sometimes," said A.J. Baker, director of the Midwest Summer Hockey League. "It depends on who knows him and who he knows."

Smith, who now resides in Livonia, played last season with the St. Louis Blues farm club, the Peoria (Ill.) Rivermen of the rough-and-tumble International Hockey League.

Scoring a plus-13 rating, second highest among defenseman on the team, Smith was named the Rivermen's Rookie of the Year.

"The IHL is a good league with a lot of young guys, Smith said. "We had several guys pulled up and down between the NHL. But it was frustrating to see that because I know I can play with some of those guys."

SMITH HOPES to follow the path of Leo Norwood, the Warren native who went last season from Peoria to the Blues. Smith's prob-



Dennis Smith St. Louis bound?

lem, however, is that he is a free agent.

"I'm not sure what NHL team I might go to, but St. Louis is the best possibility," Smith said. "Bob Flager, their head scout, saw us play six or seven times. I'm just looking forward to going to camp and getting a contract. I have a lot of options right now."

One option is getting a tryout with the U.S. Olympic team, but Smith doesn't want to spend another season taking six-hour bus rides around the IHL.

"The bus rides are terrible," he said. "That's the worst part of it." Growing up in Westland, Smith played midget hockey in Taylor for his father and also was a member of Little Caesars Bantam championship team.

AS A 17-YEAR-OLD, Smith was drafted in the seventh round by Kingston of the Ontario Hockey League. He was also drafted second by the Redford Royals of the local North American Junior Hockey League.

Smith decided to go the OHL junior route where he suffered one bad break after another in three seasons with the Kingston Canadians.

"I broke my jaw the first year and it killed my chances of being drafted," he said. "I went through three different coaches in three years and we were a last place team. I sent letters out (to NHL teams), but I had no agent."

After earning a plus-11 rating with Kingston in 1983-84, Smith went to Erie, Pa., to play in the Atlantic Coast Hockey League.

With the help of Baker, the defenseman then played the 1984-85 season in a Division II League in Osh, Sweden.

"As a junior I always was an aggressive defenseman, but I had a lot of giveaways," Smith said. "In Sweden I worked a lot on my skating and puckhandling. I also worked on my body. I added weight (going from 174 to 190) and strength."

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