

# Kettering, Rouge Top Cage Choices

By GEORGE MASKIN  
Observer Sports Editor

Once there were 720 teams. Now there are just eight left in Michigan's 1971 state high school basketball tournament.

For the first time in history, those eight teams are going through a long week's wait before they go forth Saturday in the University of Michigan's Crisler Arena to decide the state's four prep titles.

Heretofore, the pause between the semifinals and the

finals was just a matter of a few hours. But under the new setup, a full week has been added to the tournament schedule.

But this won't take away from the heated excitement of finals day in Michigan.

**EVEN THOUGH** Crisler Arena can accommodate approximately 2,000 more than Jenison Field House in East Lansing, longtime permanent home of the state tournament, all seats are gone for Saturday's three sessions, which line up as follows.

11:30 a.m.: Class B - River Rouge and Muskegon Heights.  
3 p.m.: Class D - Covert and Free Soil.  
6:30 p.m.: Class C - Stockbridge and Shelby.

8:30 p.m.: Class A - Detroit Kettering and Flint Northern. The major spotlight will fall on Detroit Kettering, the tourney's big giant killer, and River Rouge.

**MEANTIME**, River Rouge went roaring into the finals and will be the only 1970 champ with a chance to repeat as kingpins when the Panthers go after a record breaking 11th state Class B crown.

The odds favor Kettering and Rouge, but the way things have gone in this as well as previous state tournaments - the form sheet means very little.

For many, the Kettering-Flint Northern game may be anti-climactic because of the semifinal collision between Kettering and Pontiac Central.

in Michigan since the days when Dave DeBusschere played for Detroit Austin in the finals against Chet Walker of Benton Harbor. Both DeBusschere and Walker now are greats in pro basketball.

Kettering took a 38-27 lead at halftime against Pontiac Central, which had won 27 straight and 42 out of 43 previous games in the past two seasons.

But, ironically, for the Chiefs, they haven't been able to win the BIGGEST one of all - the state title. A year ago that honor went to Detroit Pershing and so for the second year in a row a Detroit team likely will wind up as the state champ - if form holds.

Hairston and Russell went head-on against each other before more than 11,500 fans. Russell wound up with 27 points and Hairston came up with 21 in leading Kettering to its 20th win against one defeat.



THE WINNER? It's easy to tell which jockey was astride the winning mount at the Detroit Race Course in the gummy, goosy going. Jockey Derry Snyder (5) was the victor in a race where Windy Games took the lead and stayed in front all the way. Mud covered Glenn Brogan was aboard the second place horse.

## Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Michigan's harness racing activities shift from Northville Downs, which closes Thursday night, to Hazel Park on Friday. Friday appears to be the biggest test of what is ahead for racing during the remainder of the year.

A year ago Hazel Park got off to the fastest start of any harness racing operation in Michigan and the impetus continued for the entire meet.

As a result the track remade all existing state records for attendance and wagering. It became the first to go past \$700,000 for a SINGLE NIGHT; it shattered all records for weekend wagering; the turnstile count soared to the highest figures ever... all in all it goes without saying that the 1970 meeting definitely stamped harness racing as well on its way to becoming a major competitor for the day races.

**NOW WE ARE** coming to another season, one that has seen Northville Downs fairly well in attendance and betting but still well below the anticipations of track officials and the horsemen.

Most of the blame for the relatively poor showing was placed on Racing Commissioner Leo Shirley for not granting dates early in January that would have kept Michigan ovals in direct competition with Windsor Raceway throughout the winter.

As it turned out, Michigan tracks were dark for a two-month period while Windsor operated and Northville never had a chance of building up business.

Thus Northville is ringing down the curtains on a meeting that is anything but sensational... one that found the state's pioneer harness racing plant plagued by bad weather from opening night to the closing program.

All of which leads one to conjecture about the Hazel Park campaign. There isn't any question that it will have better horses and stronger stables because it is offering more money in purses.

**THIS YEAR'S** oval is based on last year's averages, at least for the early part of the meeting. That could be rather costly since the economic picture is much different than a year ago and the predictions of the state's best meeting ever may fall far short.

Be that as it may, Hazel Park did set new standards for a harness racing campaign and it might well do it again.

is a much larger facility, it has additional betting gimmicks and it has the best location of all standardbred tracks in Michigan.

**LAST FALL**, Dick Wilson, vice president in charge of public relations and publicity at the Detroit Race Course, indicated improvements would be made to the room facilities that would make it the finest in the area.

Thus there were more than a few eyebrows lifted when the two writers reported a day or two in advance of the current meeting and were greeted with a sparkling, paneled, carpeted press room complete with new tables, a lounge off to one side and some time this week.

At least she won't have some of the troubles that faced Mary when the jockeys all but threatened a walkout if she was allowed to ride. The threat was eased but Mary never did come close to winning during her brief DRC stay. Perhaps Miss Schroeder will do better.

wasn't so long ago the DRC made great play of the first woman jockey, Mary Bacon from Toledo who, Mary lasted about a week, complained about the mounts she received and then took off for Montreal where she had better than average luck.

Mary didn't move to the DRC this year although her husband, Johnny Bacon, is on hand after a successful season at the recent Toledo meeting.

But it was a Birmingham gal, Helen Schroeder, who didn't even have the necessary papers or the necessary backing who finally won the approval of the stewards and was scheduled to make her first Detroit appearance.

At least she won't have some of the troubles that faced Mary when the jockeys all but threatened a walkout if she was allowed to ride. The threat was eased but Mary never did come close to winning during her brief DRC stay. Perhaps Miss Schroeder will do better.

Flint Northern, meantime, had won early in the evening over Kalamazoo Central with a great defensive effort, 52-40. Northern trailed, 29-24, at

the half, but turned things around once the final period began.

**IN CLASS B**, River Rouge stormed past Ludington, 77-47, by unleashing in the second half, while Muskegon Heights rallied from a six-point deficit to down Flint Ainsworth, 72-62.

The Heights-Rouge game will be a rematch as far as the state finals are concerned. They met last year with Rouge winning without much trouble.

Rouge outscored Ludington, 11-1 in the third period and 19-2 in the fourth period to bring coach Lofton Greene his 49th career victory. What a way he can win No. 500 - if Rouge can conquer the Heights.

In Class C, Stockbridge zoomed past Battle Creek Springfield, 95-61, and Shelby crushed Norway, 59-44.

Covert disposed of Saginaw St. Joseph, 85-77, and Free Soil downed Channing, 67-63, in the Class D semis.

## Maskin's Picks In Prep Finals

Observer sports editor George Maskin is a brave man. At least, that's what he claims.

But, here he goes out on the limb to pick who'll win in next Saturday's state high school basketball finals.

**CLASS A**  
Detroit Kettering vs. Flint Northern: Any team that can knock off the No. 1 Pontiac Central team as Kettering did last Saturday should win. So, it's Kettering.

**CLASS B**  
River Rouge vs. Muskegon Heights: Never get off a champ. Rouge all the way.

**CLASS C**  
Stockbridge vs. Shelby: A battle of two "S" teams. Or will it be a battle. Stockbridge is too powerful. Much too powerful.

**CLASS D**  
Covert vs. Free Soil: Many of us probably don't know where these two communities rest on the Michigan map. But, ah, it has to be Covert by six points.

## Livonians Lose State Rec Final

Livonia's Class-A men's recreation basketball team came home a loser from the state tournament at Grand Rapids.

In a tightly-fought game, Livonia bowed to Grand Rapids Wyoming Park, 68-65, after the teams were tied, 30-30 at the half.

Bill Bollin had 23 points for the losers while Bruce Follan had 17 and Don MacDonald 13. Red Hillery scored 14 along with Al Wooten for the winners.

**THE LIVONIANS** had come through the district tournament in flying colors by beating Jackson, 74-71, and then swamping Dearborn Heights, 104-70.

Follan had 26 points, Frank Empley 18 and MacDonald 16 in the games with Jackson.

Bollin rifled in 37 points, Empley and MacDonald 16 apiece and Jim Fitzgerald in the one-sided romp over Dearborn Heights.

The Class B playoff will be decided Wednesday at Emerson Junior High, 7:30 p.m. with the winner advancing to the district tournament at Romulus which starts next Monday.

## Stevenson Six Whip Champions

Livonia Stevenson High's hockey team finished its 1970-71 season on a high note. Stevenson downed Livonia Bentley a week ago for the city title of Livonia and then Friday won over Benedictine's powerful state champs, 5-3.



### Ski-Heil

By  
**BILL CAMERON**

Who needs four feet of new powder-snow? That's how much snow fell in a three day period in St. Christoph. When we left for Munich on Saturday, the sun was shining, the thermometer read 25 degrees and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Oh well, spring is here, and in the spring...

We had two individuals (both women) who sustained fractures, out of 195 passengers. That's not a bad average. Both were the result of slow, twisting falls in which their bindings failed to release. If you do nothing else next season, have your bindings checked at a ski shop before the season begins.

Those casts get rather uncomfortable.

I WAS RATHER surprised at the number of people who evidenced an interest in a summer charter flight to Europe. This recommendation will be made to the European Flight Committee of the U.S.S.A. - Central Division at their convention in Cleveland, April 30.

If accepted, the flight will probably be in conjunction with the Olympic Games in Munich in '72. You must be a member of the U.S.S.A. - C.D. six months prior to departure, so if you're entertaining any ideas for such a trip, get your membership soon.

This will undoubtedly be my last article for this season. It has been an interesting and at times, frustrating year. On a few occasions my articles have been cut and seem very confused.

Phillip Hart and I grew beards.

I made two European trips, but managed to get to Boyne Mountain twice. A few more of my friends got hooked on skiing. I acquired a wig for skiing

(compliments of Squire Strang's, Hairpieces for Men). Everyone tells me I should wear it at parties.

Everyone in my pre-ski conditioning program made it through the season unscathed! I met quite a few beautiful people, too numerous to mention here. (The Mt. Elliot Ski Club now owns half of Austria!)

Two people I have to mention are my two secretaries, Chris and Bonnie. They handled all my typing, bookkeeping and many phone calls and never lost their sense of humor. I love the both of you. What about next year?

I'm going to spend the summer on the tennis courts. I'll be teaching a couple of tennis classes for adults at "Y" if anyone is interested. If you'd like to talk about skiing, drop in and see me. Auf wiedersehen!

## Big Wally Returns To Favorite Oval

Wily Waldo McMurray, who will celebrate his 45th birthday April 6, is a stand-out in the glittering list of drivers who will compete in the 78-night trotting meeting at the Hazel Park Harness Raceway beginning Friday, March 26.

**FEW DRIVERS** in Michigan harness annals have ever been so consistently successful as Wally, one of five brothers who have distinguished themselves in the sport. Their father, too, was an excellent horseman.

Waldo has been bringing in winners for a quarter of a century or more, but he has hit a peak at Hazel Park in the past two seasons. He was the winningest driver at the

track in 1969 with 35 victories. He was the 1970 dash winner again in the top dash.

He promises to be tough again this year. He will have a stable of 35 head, probably the biggest assembly on the grounds. He has some good ones, too, including the Big Bear. Among Wally's other horses are: Czar Hanover, Castle Hanover, Golden Cash, Deb Adios and Elbarod.

Hard work, as much as anything else, accounts for Wally's consistency.

He will come to Hazel Park from Northville Downs where, as usual, he has been one of the top half-dozen drivers in the winter meeting, that is now coming to a close.

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