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Clarenceville's Baseball Hopes Take a 'Wait And See' Turn

Clarenceville baseball Coach Bob McKillop had high hopes for a comeback season with the return of eight lettermen, but now there are six and a question mark has popped up.

"I was looking for a big season with eight players returning," said Coach McKillop. "Two of my senior starters have decided to work full time after school and give up baseball and our hopes in

the Wayne-Oakland league now appear questionable." The Trojans placed seventh last season with a 3-11 conference mark and open with Brighton in a non-league battle on April 13.

Pitching doesn't appear to be a Trojan problem with Clarenceville having three returnees in Chip Meyrelles, Terry Laird and Paul Simmons.

ALL THREE swing a strong

bat and will see double duty white not on the mound. Meyrelles has the ability to pace the hurlers in conference action.

Laird lashed out a .293 mark last season while being named to the Wayne-Oakland second team in the third base slot. Junior Simmons hit at a .315 pace in eight varsity contests and will perform the shortstop duties along with mound assignments.

Greg Saarela nailed down the backstop chores last year

as a sophomore and McKillop has high hopes of Saarela developing into a .300 plus hitter. Sophomore Jim McCannon shows promise at the second base position and Senior Daryl Evans will be looked to fill the first base gap.

The outfield is up for grabs with the loss of two returning ball handlers to the "world of labor" and McKillop labels the upcoming season as a "wait and see year."



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LEAPING HAWK - Farmington Harrison's Dan McConeghy leaps over a hurdle en route to third place in the 70-yard low hurdles. That's Andy Dine of Warren Woods and Mike Luxton of St. Clair Shores in competition with McConeghy. (Observer photo by Tom Donoghue)

Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Three betting marks in as many nights including a receding handle for a Saturday night . . . that's the impressive mark established by Wolverine Raceway during the past weekend and Monday.

The union had agreed that any increases in 1971 would be hinged on the additional one per cent . . . Inasmuch as the additional funds were not forthcoming, neither was the raise.

Wagering for Thursday, the day before Good Friday, was an all-time high for a Thursday of \$64,400. That bettered the previous high of \$55,655 set on April 11, 1968.

And that's one of the reasons why the union negotiators are being so hard to get along with this year.

Most everyone connected with harness racing knew Saturday was going to be one of the biggest nights of the entire season. Racing Secretary Bill Connors had arranged a card that included all of the best races from what normally would have been Friday and Saturday programs.

That was a high for the year and is an indication that racing may be on the way to its best year after the thoroughbreds suffered through a bad time a year ago.

Michigan tracks by state law are dark on Good Friday. . . thus Connors was able to come up with a 10-race program that was second to none offered in the area this year.

What we're trying to say is don't discount the possibility of a walkout. The weather is getting warmer, business is getting better and what would be a more opportune time to put pressure on the track managements than a strike when things are at the peak?

And the fans bought it in large numbers. Saturday's crowd of 10,899 was the largest of the year and it follows that wagering had to be a high and it was . . . \$54,895 . . . most ever for a Saturday and the third largest handle in Wolverine history.

Only time will provide the answer. We hope an agreement is reached without picketing, it's much better for all.

Then to top it all . . . the track started Monday with 5,896 braving a snowstorm and a tricky racing strip to pour \$521,415 through the machines for one of the better Mondays.

Wolverine will be one of the 11 tracks in the United States and Canada to stage the colorful international competition, sponsored by Harness Tracks of America and held this year between April 24 and May 6.

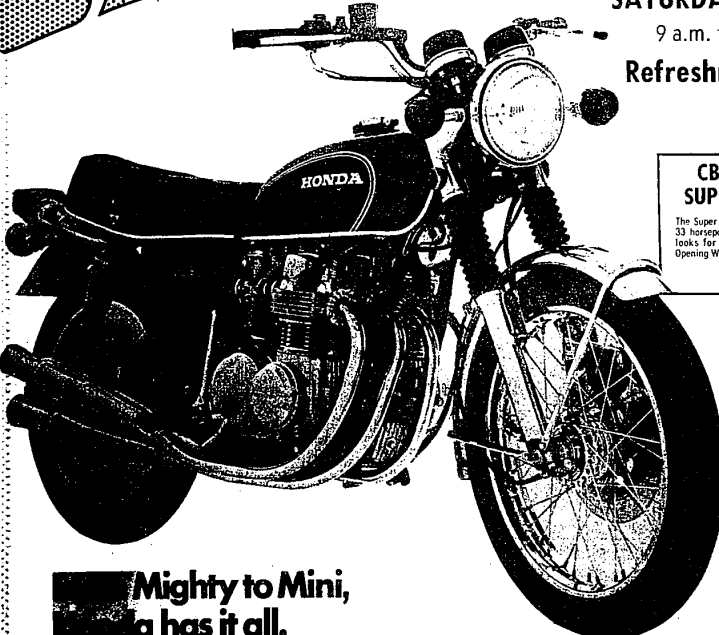
One would have to say that Wolverine is off to the best spring start in several years and if business continues . . . the track should break all of the records established.

General Manager Dick Wilson said that Herve Filion of Canada, the world record holder with 543 victories in 1971, and Joe O'Brien, leading U.S. driver last year in HTA's all around championship standings, have been selected as the first drivers to compete and will race against six other international driving stars.

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