

Observerland Fives Clash In Holiday Cage Tourney

Time was when most area high school basketball teams passed from competition during the Christmas vacation. Not any more.

Most Observerland schools will be in action next week, shooting for honors in three holiday meets.

The annual Northwest prep meet opens Wednesday at Redford Union and Bentley and moves to Bentley Thursday for the final three days of competition.

Teams from Bentley, Redford Union, North Farmington, Southfield, Ypsilanti, Berkley, Farmington and Stevenson make up the field.

IN WEDNESDAY'S opener, it'll be Bentley vs. Berkley

By George Maskin

observing sports

Utilizing a sports column to send out our annual holiday greetings: Merry Christmas —

To the Redford Township baseball team which for the second straight year won its way into the national tournament held in Pennsylvania.

To the mothers who haul their athletic-minded sons back and forth to practices and games . . . to fathers, who beef, because their sons don't play on a Little League team; yet dad doesn't seem ever to find the time to assist with the coaching or running of the team.

To athletic directors, who are loaded down with more paper work than ever . . . to referees who walk away smiling from the toughest and most unpraised job in the world.

To all the coaches who cut in their reports, win or lose, and those who bellyache because they won't take a couple seconds time on the telephone.

To supporters of Little League and non-supporters . . . to each bowler who has shot a 300 game, and those lucky enough to register a 75 . . .

To athletes, who manage fine grades despite the rigors of sports competition . . . to substitutes who don't get much chance to play, yet never miss a practice . . . to coaches who scream and those who take things more calmly.

To boys who run the 100-yard dash in 9.8 . . . and those who need twice that time to go 50 yards . . . to the students who walk to school and those who must ride, even if they live just around the corner.

To those young men you meet on airplanes

Continued on page 8C

gates North Farmington at 7, with Ypsilanti and Southfield taking over at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday's losers play

Thursday at Bentley while the first-night winners contest in the semifinals on Friday. The championship game will climax a four-game program on Saturday.

Ypsilanti and Southfield shape up as the teams to beat with Bentley rated a strong contender, too, along with Redford Union.

Southfield downed Bentley in last December's title game.

JOHN GLENN HIGH will sponsor a four-team tourney in which Wayne plays Plymouth in the first game Thursday with Belleville and Glenn looking up at 9 in the nightcap.

The two losers play in Friday's first game, the two winners for the title Friday at 9. Belleville is rated as the best bet.

Glenn officials are hopeful of making the tourney an annual event. They'd look forward to swelling the field to eight teams next season.

GARDEN CITY EAST'S unbeaten powerhouse and strong Thurston are among eight teams which will vie in the annual River Rouge Invitational at River Rouge High.

This will be East's first shot at honors in the Rouge classic. The Garden City team, winners of five straight, take on Northville in the first game at 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Inkster Robichaud then tackles Thurston at 6:30 with Ecorse-Lincoln and Highland Park-River Rouge following on the first night's card.

NORTH OF THE BORDER The Tigers have two Canadians on their 1968 roster—both pitchers.

A-PLUS The Toledo Mud Hens, Detroit's Class AAA farm club, won the International League playoffs in 1967 after finishing third during the regular season.

MISSED OUT Tony Cucinello, Tiger third-base coach, played in the major leagues for 15 years without ever appearing in a World Series.

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Sad Start Is Fatal To Agatha

A bad start proved fatal to St. Agatha High's basketball team Tuesday.

The Townshipers were snowed under, 27-10, by St. Rita in the first period.

The rest of the way saw St. Agatha more than hold its own. But the damage had been done; St. Rita wound up a 77-72 winner.

St. Agatha closed the cap to 42-36 by halftime and twice in the third period pulled within three points of a tie.

Dave Urban led the losers with 20 points. Dan Sweeney had 16, along with Chuck Costello.

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