

Snowmobilers buy more; merchants cautious

By RON HINGST

Snowmobile retailers are trying to retool their products into customer's need after a year of bad vibes from the last crisis.

Mike Konners, said sales were up over last year, but all the snow in the market place is not white.

The December blizzard and above average snow fall did give sales a shot in the arm.

"WE ARE selling quite a bit better than last year," said Mike Konners.

owner of Dynamic Cycle, Troy, which handles the Arctic Cat line of snowmobiles. "The snow has helped."

Snowmobilers gained in popularity by leaps and bounds during the last decade, but when the public suddenly became fuel conscious last winter, gasoline-powered products lost some of their appeal.

This year, the problems are still there with an added dimension.

"We've sold as many machines as last year, but unemployment and the energy crisis has nipped some sales in

the bud," said Art Crouch, owner of Northwestern Boat Co. Southfield, which handles the Johnson brand.

"The worm has turned."

FROM CONVERSATIONS with area snowmobile dealers, prices for the 1975 models are generally up about \$100 over the previous year and the profit for the individual businessman is nothing to brag about.

"Last year's ecology thing made it so you couldn't make a buck on snowmobiles," said a spokesman for

Arley's Snow Village, Southfield, which quit selling snowmobiles this year.

Crouch, whose store has sold the machines since 1964, said customers tend to compare snowmobiles to the furniture business.

If you are selling a machine for \$1,000, they figure you are making \$500 on the deal.

"WHY, I don't make over \$100 on one sale," he said.

Konners in Troy explained he was trying to offset the list price increases on snowmobiles by "holding the line" on the retail price tag.

According to the Arctic Cat dealer, many customers have shown interest in remaining 74 models, but he pointed out that the supply of those models at his store has been exhausted.

Crouch and Konners classified their customers into the family buyers and racing-minded categories.

"Basically, young people are going for speed," Crouch said.

KONNERS FELT the racing set was less interested in fuel economy, while the family buyer might cast a more critical eye on the price and gasoline usage.

"In this area, our greatest numbers of customers are in families," he said.

Most changes for the 75 models of snowmobiles come in the form of refinements. Like the car, improved designs, easier handling and safety features receive top billing.

A spokesman for LeBarons, Troy, which sells Rupp snowmobiles, noted that many manufacturers have learned from other's mistakes.

"THERE ARE no surplus of machines," he said. "Many manufacturers are selling on allocation. The idea of selling machines at a loss is not a business approach."

The logical answer to the snowmobile market problems lies with the economy and the public's buying attitude.

A quick solution to boosting snowmobile interest lies up in the sky—more snow.

Mich. squads lead girls puck league

First place Dearborn Cougars handed second place Spartan Sport Shop Mini Wings its first loss in the Michigan Ontario Ladies Hockey League with a 3-0 shutout last weekend.

Dearborn's Jan Miller, the league leading scorer, tallied one

goal followed by goals from Shelly Hossack and Cheryl Armour.

The Mini Wings maintained its hold on second place goals from Shelly Hossack and Cheryl Armour.

The Mini Wings maintained its

hold on second place by blanking Leamington 1-0 on a first period goal by Pam Cable.

Goalie Debbie Nett recorded the shutout.

The win left Spartan Sport Shop with a 7-1-1 record.

Jackets split ski opener

Detroit Country Day's ski team divided its first meet of the season with Southfield Lathrup last week at Brighton.

The Yellow Jacket boys defeated Lathrup 180.5 to 266.7. Freshman

Dave Ayer paced CD with a time of 32.7 over two runs followed by team captain Mike Smith, 40.2.

Lathrup's girls combined for a 178.6 score to best the Jacket ladies who were disqualified.

Lahser takes fifth at RI

Bloomfield Hills Lahser wrestling team took 41 points in the Rochester Invitational last week for a fifth place finish.

Junior and sophomore matmen picked up 34 points for the Knights while Terry Moffat (121 pounds), a senior, Karl Kumas (147 pounds), a junior, and Ron Nichols (134 pounds), a sophomore, all turned in second place finishes at the event.

At the Schwaefel Invitational, West Bloomfield grapplers scored 46 points for a 12th place finish in a 34 school field and Birmingham Groves took 25 points for a 17th place finish.

THE LAKERS' Casey Sawronski had the best finish for area schools with a third place performance in the heavyweight division. Pete Skaythomas notched fourth place in the 157 pounds class for West Bloomfield and Dan Lorimer took fifth place in the 134 pound division for Groves.

In dual meet action, a seasoned Groves team blanked Lahser through the first six weight classes and went on to defeat the Knights 30-12.

Lahser did not pick up its first point until the 140 pound competition when John Lee defeated Jim Bertelson 5-40. The Falcons won eight of 12 events and boosted their record to 2-3 Lahser is 3-2.

104 pounds: Dan Brown, Groves (G) won by forfeit.

107 pounds: Brian Coyle (G) dec. Tim Carroll, Lahser (L), 3-2.

114 pounds: John Mitchell (G) dec. Kip Urviller (L), 11-2.

121 pounds: Doug Fierberg (G) dec. Terry Moffat (L), 3-0.

128 pounds: Dan Fisher (G) pinned Tom Harte (L), 1-18.

134 pounds: Dan Lorimer (G) dec. Ron Nichols (L), 11-0.

140 pounds: John Lee (L) dec. Jim Bertelson (G), 5-40.

147 pounds: Karl Kumas (L) dec. Mark Schaefer (G), 4-3.

157 pounds: John Samara (G) dec. Doug Vandugens (L), 7-1.

160 pounds: Grant Hasty (L) dec. Glen Kampen (G), 8-5.

187 pounds: Brian Priebe (G) dec. Dave Harte (L), 7-3.

Heavyweight: Hans VanKeken (L) dec. Hank Berry (G), 2-0.



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MSU offers course on sports books

Michigan State University Graduate and Continuing Education Center at Kingswood School, Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, is offering a course entitled "Sport-faction and Sports writing."

Instructed by Mike Steinberg, assistant professor at MSU, the course will focus on studying why sports are so popular in bad as well as good economic times, what that popularity reveals about the quality of life in our time, and the impact of the sports hero or anti-hero on society today.

There have been a lot of good sports books today, that seem to be talking about more than just teams and games," Steinberg said. "I've been in sports all my life and I am a teacher. I wanted to combine the two."

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