



Owner's box won't be ready

# Lions' Pontiac Stadium almost set for opener

By JIM KINSELLA

Rick Forzano may have a heap of company along the sidelines Saturday when the Detroit Lions christen the new Pontiac Metropolitan Stadium in the team's exhibition home opener with the Kansas City Chiefs.

The stadium itself is being rushed toward completion on schedule. The installation of the revolutionary, inflatable dome has actually been moved forward from its June 30, 1978, contracted date. Architect Carl Luckenbach of Bloomfield Hills feels an Oct. 2 "blow up" is feasible.

But Lions' owner William Clay Ford, and for that matter, members of the Pontiac Stadium Authority, will not take immediate possession of their private stadium suites. Those are the only two of the 100 leased luxury boxes that will not be completed by the 1 p.m. kick-off.

LUCKENBACH SAID those boxes would be ready for occupancy by mid-September.

All things considered though, Luckenbach said, "I think you've got to marvel at how smoothly and swiftly the work on the stadium has progressed. We're opening to permit play on Saturday and that's a full 100 days ahead of our schedule."

The architect credited the early opening to a construction schedule free of strikes.

"That's extremely important because it prevented cost over-runs and allowed us to be in on our \$55 million budget," Luckenbach said.

ASKED IF the stadium authority was still taking flak from critics, Board Chairman Harold Cousins of

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Bloomfield Hills laughed and said "some people just aren't good in the work they should be doing... minding their own business."

At a press conference Monday, Cousins and several others intimately involved with the stadium went on the offensive against those who say stadium will be a tax burden for Michigan residents.

"We brought the stadium in at \$42.5 million or \$529 per seat," Cousins said. "That's a great deal lower than the per seat cost of the New Orleans Superdome, King County Stadium in Seattle, and even the Astrodome in Houston."

Cousins believes the \$1 per ticket service charge, along with the rent received for stadium use, will be adequate to defray bond expenses.

Compared to the \$529 per seat expense involved in construction of the Pontiac Stadium, King County Stadium cost an estimated \$800 per seat. The New Orleans Superdome came in at \$168 million or \$2,470 per seat for its 72,000 capacity. The Lions' new home seats 60,000.

FANS MAKING the northward trek for the opening have been warned the road system still is not ready to

handle the expected volume of traffic. That warning, issued by the Automobile Club of Michigan, was rebuffed by a spokesman for Barton-Malow, the construction management firm in charge of the stadium.

"We'll have adequate parking to handle a crowd of 60,000 and with the opening of Featherstone Road, we'll have 11 lanes of traffic serving the stadium by Saturday. That's more than any other facility of its type in the country," said Roland Wilkerson, the spokesman.

Nevertheless, the stadium authority has leased 100 buses from SEMTA and has shuttle service available from 12 sites in Bloomfield Hills and Pontiac beginning at 9:45 a.m. the day of the game.

Shuttle buses will run from Cedar Mill Village, the Miracle Mile Shopping Center, the Pontiac-Bloomfield Sheraton Inn and the Holiday Inn on Telegraph north of Square Lake Road.

Lions tickets for the opener will also be handled through the Cedar Mill Village outlet and at the Sheraton. An additional ticket office has been set up at the west end of the stadium site. All sales run through Saturday morning.

## Farmington family helps in ALSAC Swim-A-Thon

By TAMI McCLARAN

Metropolitan area teens volunteered their swimming abilities Monday in the ALSAC Swim-A-Thon in West Bloomfield. The energetic teens raised nearly \$3,900 for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in the 12-hour marathon.

A total of 112 swimmers from 14 cities took to the cool waters of the Potomac Club.

Each team swam a three-hour shift to raise money for their city's donations. The swimmers alternate laps, each team except Farmington (doing eight volunteers).

"EVERYBODY HAS been really great about helping out in this event. We had so much support from the community that everything's just falling into place and running smoothly," commented Ginny Seyferth, morning coordinator for the fund-raiser.

Five cities—West Bloomfield, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Walled Lake and Detroit opened the swim-

thon at 9 a.m. Complaints followed very closely on the heels of the first diver with the universal discovery that the pool water had been chilled by dropping temperatures the evening before.

"Everybody jumped in the pool and started yelling and laughing," explained Ms. Seyferth, "but they continued swimming and really moved in the first half-hour the West Bloomfield swimmers completed 76 lengths of the pool."

"It was hard to swim at first because it was so cold," commented Craig Remberg of West Bloomfield.

BUT THE SPIRIT seemed to blossom among each team as the swimmers wanted to beat the clock of their high school sports rivals.

Between laps, swimmers stood on pool sidelines throughout the swim-athon cheering for their team members. Others assisted in wrapping cold and exhausted teammates and in swinging wet towels.

The spirit is here, right here," Ms. Seyferth said at mid-morning.

"We didn't have much before, but now everyone is hyped up to complete 500 laps." West Bloomfield swimmer Dane Hickey said.

IN INTENSE competition to complete the most laps of the morning session, Dearborn Heights swimmers finished in front with 616. That team was followed by one from Pleasant Ridge which swam 580 laps. West Bloomfield swimmers finished 519. Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills fielded teams that finished farther back. Birmingham completed 472 laps. Bloomfield Hills completed 442.

One hitch developed in staging the morning session when all but one swimmer from Walled Lake failed to arrive. West Bloomfield spectators quickly filled the void though, obtaining the necessary signatures on permission slips, changing clothes, and diving into action.

Carl Rose, one of those pressed into service, admitted that he was cold and very hungry as it neared noon. "I

really like to swim," Rose admitted, "but I've never before swam for three hours straight."

West Bloomfield's team was Bob Shack, Cheryl Hall, Rick Murray, Seph and Misty Larkin, Celeste Carroll, Terri Samuels, Karen Galbraith, Pam and Matt Jackson, Lisa and Liz Porter, Debbie Galbraith and Patti Samuels.

Val Wetzel, Janet Herrberg, Christine Michel, Gina Parrott, Barb Blaney and Lesley Yulbowski teamed the entry from Bloomfield Hills.

The Birmingham team finished the swim with two Franklin residents and another member from Walled Lake. Joining Jill McArthur and Carol Sattermoe from Birmingham were

Ralph Beckler and Ali Kartoglu from Franklin and Al Bouckaert from Walled Lake.

Livonia was represented by Scott Leggett, Lon Jackson, Cheryl Jackson, Gary Rogers, Steven Christo and Art Werrott.

Farmington limited itself to just three swimmers: Brian, Barb and Steve Manderfield.

### Site of O&E Tournament

## Golfers face 'tight' test at Whispering Willows

Livonia's Whispering Willows Golf Course, site of next month's seventh annual Observer & Eccentric Open Golf Tournament, is a showcase in deception.

"The course isn't that long, but it's tight," assistant Whispering Willows pro Tom Shelton said Monday.

The 6,400-yard course at Newburgh and Eight Mile is presently in its best condition ever and that means plenty of trouble for golfers who don't slam the little white ball arrow straight.

Bedecked with trees seemingly

everywhere, the par-71 course can prove a nightmare for those with a propensity to hook or slice even the slightest bit.

"That's what gets golfers in trouble the most. There's a lot of wood out there," Shelton said.

Water also can be a problem. The course has five holes with water.

Construction recently was completed on the 14th and 18th holes making them tougher than ever but the entire course will get a facelift for Sept. 13 and 14 men's tournament and

Sept. 18 women's competition.

"We'll let the rough grow a lot thicker and shape the fairways more. Also we'll cut the greens very short to make them fast," Shelton said.

The Livonia municipal course is one of the busiest in the entire state. Last month, for example, it averaged 304 players daily and hit a one-day high of 521. In spite of this, the trees, fairways and greens remain in very good shape and the expected 300 golfers for the O&E tourney should face a formidable task hitting par.

"Considering the amount of people who use the course, it's in excellent shape. A lot of credit is due to our groundskeeper Jim Tremner who has been the head man in that department for all eight years that the course has operated," said Shelton.

As an assistant pro, Shelton gets on the course regularly and has hit a personal best of one-under 70 there.

That mark is far off the course record of 68 set by touring Canadian pro Bill Waltem four years ago. But according to Shelton, not many golfers play scratch golf on the course.

Last year, for example, a two-over 144 was good enough for top prize in the championship flight of the four-flight men's tourney. That score was hit by Farmington's Bill Curtis.

"There are several tough holes on the course. Probably the two toughest are the back-to-back par 4's 11th and 12th holes. It takes a real good golfer to get through those two in eight," said Shelton.

If past years are any indication, it just may be several golfers in this year's largest field who'll be shooting not only those two holes, but the whole course at or near par.

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#### Men's, Women's Open Golf Tournaments Sponsored by the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and Whispering Willows Municipal Golf Course

**MEN'S**  
36 holes medal play, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 13 and 14. Entry fee: \$20 (greens fee, trophies and prizes).

**WOMEN'S**  
18 holes medal play, Thursday, Sept. 18. Entry fee: \$7.50 (greens fee and trophies).

Make check payable to Gary Whitener, tournament director and enclose with entry blank.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ HANDICAP \_\_\_\_\_

Men's entries close Wednesday, Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. Call for starting times on Friday, Sept. 12 at 10 a.m.

Women's entries close Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 5 p.m. Call for starting times Thursday, Sept. 18 at 10 a.m.

Open to all residents of Livonia, Plymouth, Garden City, Westland, Redford Township, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Birmingham, West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Rochester and Ayrton Twp. Entries may be mailed to Tournament Director Gary Whitener, Whispering Willows Golf Course, 20900 Newburgh, Livonia.