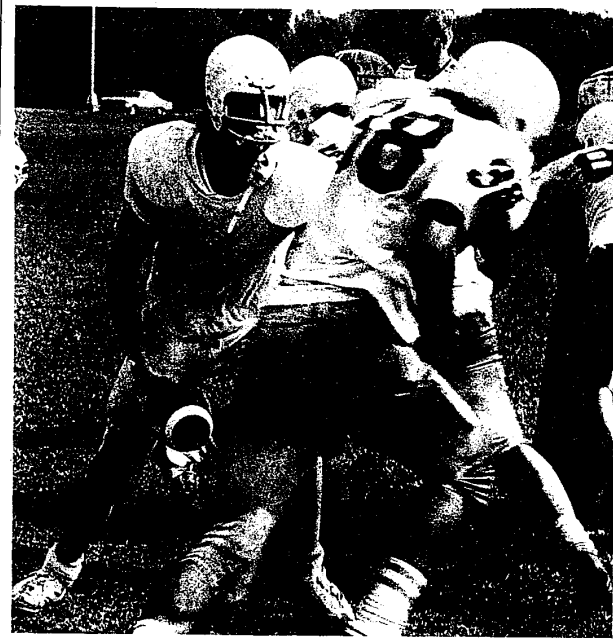


Monday, August 28, 1979

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The changing of seasons

Traditionally, fall brings the changing colors of the leaves and the chill winds that warn us of the coming winter.

But fall brings something else that engulfs our entire nation through the fall and into the winter—the football season.

Already, prep squads throughout the area have begun preparing for the season. All have high hopes and optimistic outlooks for their team's

chances. Early season workouts concentrate on instruction (pictured below) and development of technique (at left), with hopes that it will pay off in the coming months.

So that you may be kept abreast of what your team's chances are in the upcoming season, the Observer & Eccentric will begin its football preview of local teams in Thursday's edition.



U. S. Olympic hopes dimmed

AAU sports threatened by lack of financial support

By C.J. RISAK

Amateur athletics in the United States are so poorly funded that "it's incredible our athletes can compete on an international scale."

According to Dr. Dennis Spandrel, head of the Michigan AAU, the U.S. rates "in the top five in almost any Olympic sport, but probably around 50th in support of their athletes."

"We have 15,000 members of the Michigan AAU in 22 different sports," Spandrel said. "All of our funding came from one source: the dues the athletes paid. We ran our entire program on \$50,000 last year."

"And we have one of the best programs in the country. The national cost for the AAU last year was \$1 million. That was all the money we had for the entire nation."

The funding of amateur athletes has been a topic for discussion since the last Olympics. A bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year which gave the U.S. Olympic Committee \$30 million for amateur athletic programs. But questions on how the money was to be used and how it would affect the athletes' amateur status led to the appropriation being stripped from the bill and its subsequent burying in the Senate agenda.

Neither the AAU nor the NCAA were vigorous in their support of the bill.

"None of the money would have come to our organization," Spandrel explained. "The U.S. Olympic Committee would have given it to the world class athletes only, instead of to programs that help develop young athletes."

The AAU is the only national program aimed at developing athletes from the children's level to the senior citizen. American athletes participating in almost any international sporting event on the amateur level are members of the AAU.

"The Olympic Committee will raise around \$25 million for the Olympic team and spend it on them two months before the Olympics. But what about the other three years and ten months? Who supports the athlete while he prepares for the Olympics?"

Eastern European countries and the USSR have state-supported programs for their athletes. They are put on the government's sports funding program and attend classes and train at special sports institutes. It's vaguely similar to Americans who receive sports scholarships to attend college.

"Actually, we have something like the Eastern countries program," Spandrel said. "It's the military. Many of our athletes can join the services and compete on an amateur basis while being government supported. Not too many have taken advantage of it, but some have—Phil Boggs and Micki King are prime examples."

But, despite the success of government-funded programs, such as East Germany's in the last Olympics, Spandrel is not in favor of them.

"I'd rather see corporate sponsorship of our sports. The government

could help by passing legislation giving corporations a tax break if they supported amateur athletics.

"We've been trying to get some corporate sponsorship in this state, but so far we've had no luck. In other states there is some sponsorship, but until there's some tax advantage to it, I don't think it will ever go over."

One of the best examples of a successfully-funded corporate sport is in California. The Mission Viejo real estate company supports a swimming program that attracts many of the

nation's top athletes.

Dave Burgering is one of those athletes. Formerly a Michigan resident, Burgering, one of the top five divers in the nation, took his talents to the Mission Viejo team. Now, wherever he dives, his expenses are paid for.

"You need money to have a sound sports program," Spandrel said. "The kids who qualified for the National AAU championships got \$50 in expense money. That isn't nearly enough."

And yet, Michigan has one of the better AAU programs in the country.

It has the only full-time staff; other states' AAU work on a part time basis.

"If I had a \$3 million budget, we could have a team from Michigan that could compete with many national teams from other countries," Spandrel claimed. "That's how much potential we have in this state."

But there have been no takers so far. Despite Spandrel's efforts, no one has offered financial support for any of the AAU's sports.

"We were almost unable to have the state AAU long course championships

this year because we couldn't afford it," he recalled. "This is one of the few times all year that swimmers can compete against other top swimmers in the state in a 50-meter pool (the same length as used in the Olympics)."

But without financial backing, Michigan's swimming program lags behind many other states.

"People think California raises the best swimmers," Spandrel stated. "California doesn't have the best swimmers, they GET the best swimmers."

Spandrel cited the better climate, which allowed swimmers to train all year long at outdoor pools, and corporate funding, which attracted the best coaches as well as helping the athletes, as the reasons for the successful California swimming program.

"Without money, we can't afford the coaching or the facilities we need if we're going to develop any world class athletes."

"Still, we have accomplished a lot in the past few years. All we can do is keep trying and hoping."

Champ's sport?

An oft-quoted saying goes something like this: "The road to success is never an easy one." Some people fight their way up it, while others never find it.

And there are others who stumble right into it. "I started wrestling in seventh grade, to get in shape for football," said Scott Hazen, a senior at Farmington High School.

It's fortunate Hazen likes football so much, or he may never have taken up wrestling. So, one might say that, thanks to football, Hazen won a gold medal in the National AAU Junior Olympics, held in Lincoln, Neb. earlier this month.

Hazen's victory came one week after finishing third in the National AAU Olympics. He qualified for both events by winning three matches enroute to the state AAU championship. At the Junior Olympics, he wrestled five times in two days to capture the championship.

A weekend like that might tire out some people, but not Scott. He no sooner returned home from Lincoln when he was off again, this time to the Farmington High School football camp.

"I enjoy both sports," Hazen said. "I'd like to go on to college in one or the other, but I'm not sure which. I'd have to rate them pretty even right now."

Several schools have expressed an interest in Hazen, including the University of Michigan. He received a letter from U-M after the wrestling season. But, so far, Scott has made no decision on either sport or school.

Hazen's size (6-3, 245 lbs.) makes him a formidable opponent in either sport. He's been a starter on the Farmington football team since he moved into the area last fall.

"We moved into Farmington just before the fourth game last season," Hazen recalled. "I only had about two days of practice that week and couldn't play. But I started the rest of the year."

Hazen will be a two-way starter this year for Farmington coach Hal Beardsley at both offensive and defensive tackle. Beardsley rates him as one of the best players on the team and one of the keys to a successful season for Farmington.

But Hazen has not always been so successful. He qualified for the high school state wrestling tournament last spring by winning district and regional titles. But he lost in the first round at the state meet and was eliminated.

He avenged the earlier loss in the state competition by winning the AAU state championship. The victory earned him a special bonus: a berth on the state team that toured Europe in June.

(Continued on page 2C)

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