

# Preps Welcome Start Of Winter Sports

Welcome, winter sports! This is the week the curtain goes up on the basketball, swimming, wrestling and gymnastics schedules for most Observerland high school teams.

A few already have tasted action — in particular, the three Catholic League basketball teams in the air — but in

the main, this is the week the action really starts.

For the next three months, there'll be regular season action, which then is capped by state tournament competition in all four sports.

The league structure remains unchanged for the 1969-70 campaigning, but there'll be some changes a year hence

when Livonia's new Churchill High is expected to start in a new league with the about-to-be third high school in Farmington and the new school sprouting in Plymouth.

**CHURCHILL FACING** its first all-winter schedule will contest on an independent basis in basketball, swimming

and wrestling.

With no home court in basketball, Churchill will play all its games on the road, although Stevenson will be "home" four times and Franklin three times for the youngest of Livonia's four public high schools.

The opening basketball action on Tuesday matches a

pair of 1968-69 champs — Plymouth and Stevenson — at Plymouth Tuesday night.

Stevenson, which shared the Inter-Lakes League title with Pontiac Northern, would appear to have another strong team in the making, led by three veterans in Ted Exarhos, Rusty Gregg and Paul Van Wagener, the latter the

son of Coach George Van Wagener.

Plymouth Coach Dick Bearup must rebuild. He has lost 11 of his 15 players from a year ago and now has a squad of four seniors and 11 juniors, paced by Pat Cunningham, the only returning regular.

The lack of height could hurt the Rocks. They have nobody

over 6-3.

ONE MARKED change on the area prep basketball scene will be the absence of George Felles as coach at Bentley High.

Felles, who turned out a series of league and district titles at Bentley, has departed from the coaching scene to become the school's athletic director.

Ken Timmons, who was promoted to succeed Felles, was left with no returning regulars.

But he does have good height with four starters ranging from 6-3 1/2 to 6-8 and should have another contender in the Suburban Six League where Bentley tied for second place a year ago.

Except for the Catholic League teams and Clarenceville, which are jumping directly into league basketball action, other teams will engage in one of two warmups.

some as many as three, before taking off for tries a week from Friday night.

The same holds true in wrestling and swimming.

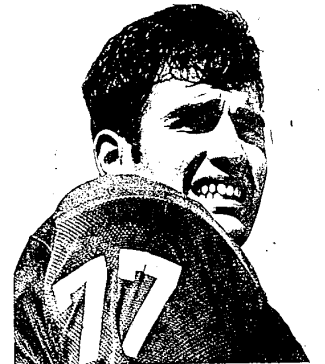
Here's a rundown on how the public school basketball races sizes up:

**SUBURBAN SIX:** Belleville, Allen Park and Bentley shape up as the big three, but Plymouth and Redford Union rate a lot of attention.

**INTER-LAKES:** A three-fold race with Farmington, Stevenson and Pontiac Northern all in the picture.

**NORTHWEST:** They're saying this could be North Farmington's year to haul in the honor — but never discount Thurston or Franklin. Oak Park is another hot contender.

**WAYNE-OAKLAND:** Clarenceville to be stronger than last year, but doesn't figure to cut in on the title pie against such teams as West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Andover and Clarkston, all perennial power-



MICHIGAN STATE's big No. 77 from Farmington, Craig Wycinsky, has been selected best Spartan football player from the metropolitan Detroit area. Wycinsky, an offensive tackle, was awarded the Fred Denton award, named for a Spartan great of the mid-1920s and donated in his name by his family. The award consists of a plaque and a gift. Wycinsky, 24311 Buchanan Court, played for the North Farmington Raiders in his prep days.

## Sorrows Wins, St. Agatha Bows

It was a happy basketball start for Our Lady of Sorrows.

Not so happy for St. Agatha.

Sorrows turned on the power, especially in the second period, and whipped Royal Oak St. Mary's 75-56, in its Catholic League opener.

St. Agatha, rallying from a 39-21 halftime deficit, forced an overtime against Ypsilanti St. John before finally bowing, 57-51.

Dan McGrath and Mike Hart, fresh from fine football seasons, were the major cogs in Sorrows' winning basketball debut.

McGRATH PILED up 24 points while Hart had 16 and also stole the ball from St. Mary's rivals seven times.

Bill Robertson came through with 15 points, Dan Blumstein, Chris Strand seven, Chris Centers four and Dan

Woods two for the winners.

Sorrows took a 19-18 lead after the first quarter, then outscored St. Mary's 39-11, in the second period and held on the rest of the way.

DAVE URBAN and Tim Flamboie with 14 and 12 points, respectively, stood for St. Agatha which showed the effects of only two weeks of practice.

Cage workouts at St. Agatha

had to be delayed when the school's football team took sectional honors, then won in the semifinals and moved to the finals in the Catholic League Second Division playoffs.

St. John had a 37-31 halftime edge before Urban and Flamboie led the St. Agatha rally that sent the game into overtime.

But, once in the extra session, it was all St. John's.

## Five Lettermen Boost Trojans Hopes On Court

There is no wasted motion or warmups as far as Clarenceville High's basketball team is concerned.

When the Trojans start their season on Dec. 1 against Northville in the Clarenceville

gym, the teams will be jumping promptly into Wayne-Oakland League action.

Coach Ralph Wettle, fresh from guiding Clarenceville to one of its best football seasons in recent years, is confident that the 1969-70 Trojan cage squad will improve upon its 8-12 record and sixth-place league finish of last season.

Wettle has five lettermen returning and sees the Clarenceville defense, along with rebounding and good overall speed as the strong points of the team which will square off against Northville in the opener.

THE VETERANS are Bob Hidding, 5-11, and Mike Duman, 5-10, guards; Ron Lamontagne, 6-4, and Steve Schiles, 6-3, both who operate at forward and center, and Pat Hough, 6-2, a forward.

Also on the squad are Randy McClary, 5-9; Fred Watson, 5-10; Randy Wettle, 6-2; Rob Weller, 5-8; Chip Nevrellis, 6-2, and Jim Hoover, 5-9.

Clarenceville again is in one of the toughest leagues in the area and faces tough going against Clarkston, West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Andover.

## Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Racing Commissioner Leo Shirley appears to have a big problem ahead when he sits down and tries to decide the future of winter racing in Michigan.

There isn't a bit of doubt in the minds of anyone close to the situation that the current Jackson-at-Northville Downs meeting won't furnish the answer Shirley had expected.

After almost one full week, the Jackson-at-Northville season has turned out to be almost a duplicate of the recent Jackson session at the Jackson Fairgrounds.

The attendance may be up slightly and the handle may show an increase of 1 or 2% but actually the turnstile count and the mutual play is just about the same as that at Jackson.

During the campaign which closed a week ago, Jackson ended with an all-time high nightly average handle of slightly more than \$150,000. Action for the first four nights at Northville is on the same level.

LEON SLAVIN, longtime president and general manager of Jackson, deserves a medal for bravery in accepting the winter dates, Leon, who built Jackson from a losing proposition to a money maker even though it took almost 10 years, has been wanting to move his operation into the Detroit area for a long time.

Thus he welcomed the opportunity to stage the winter meeting even though he probably realized all the time that it could be a losing venture. What was going against Windsor Raceway, which has been operating for seven weeks and is in the midst of its greatest year, Slavin knew he had a rough row to go.

Even with that knowledge he accepted the challenge and still feels he has a chance to reach

the anticipated nightly average of \$250,000 before the season ends on Dec. 30.

Whether Jackson-at-Northville will reach that expectation is something else. There is the matter of location — Northville is at the outer edge of the northwest boundaries of Wayne County and it lacks major highways and freeways.

It can be taken for granted that there will be many nights in December when traveling will be hazardous over ice, slippery roads. Then, too, there is the matter of the holiday season — the meeting started three days before Thanksgiving and continues for a month during the most festive period of the entire year.

But Executive Manager John Carlo, of Northville Downs, promised to have the first level of the new clubhouse available for the meeting and also had the grandstands completely glass enclosed and heated. He made good on his promises and those attending the night programs are assured of seats in a well heated area with a clear view of the track from start to finish.

ONE WOULD EXPECT that the attendance and wagering would pick up as the meeting progresses — but there's always the competition in Windsor where patrons become accustomed to attending races for a full seven weeks before the start of the Jackson-at-Northville season. They have had seven weeks to get adjusted to the horses and it will be rather difficult to convince them that racing is better in the United States where they'll be starting from scratch.

We doff our hats to Slavin for having the courage to accept the winter dates — on the other side of the picture we are a bit skeptical about the decision of the Racing Commissioner. It doesn't appear from here that he studied the situation from all angles before deciding on winter racing.

How can he hope to make a decision pro or con when he gave the opposition a seven-week start and then expects Michigan to compete on an equal basis

## What's Doing On Prep Sports Beat

### BASKETBALL

TUESDAY

Franklin at Romulus Stevenson at Plymouth St. Agatha at Ann Arbor St. Thomas Our Lady of Lakes at Our Lady of Sorrows Holy Redeemer at Bishop Borgess

FRIDAY

Bentley at Farmington Northville at Clarenceville Churchill at Shafer Waterford Mott at North Farmington Thurston at Cherry Hill Plymouth at Walled Lake Central Southfield at Redford Union Mt. Carmel at St. Agatha Our Lady of Sorrows at Orchard Lake St. Mary's Bishop Borgess at Cabrini

SATURDAY

Stevenson at Thurston

### WRESTLING

TUESDAY

Redford Union at Farmington Dearborn at Franklin Plymouth at North Farmington Thurston at Southfield

WEDNESDAY

Fordson at Bentley Churchill at Northville Churchhill at North Farmington Stevenson at Franklin

THURSDAY

Thurston at Berkley

### SWIMMING

TUESDAY

Plymouth at North Farmington Redford Union at Farmington

THURSDAY

Farmington at Plymouth Churchhill at North Farmington Garden City West at Redford Union

### GYMNASTICS

WEDNESDAY

Clarenceville at Farmington Allen Park at North Farmington

## 5 Veterans Wrestle At Thurston

The wrestling outlook appears much brighter at Thurston High for 1969-70 after last season's 2-10 record.

Coach James Copp has five veterans back, along with seven stand-out newcomers for the season which begins at Southfield Tuesday.

The returnees are Marc Miller, Pat Johnson, Brian McCreedy, Dave Kroll and Mike Young.

Standouts among the newcomers are Jim Row, John Wheeler, Greg Scott, Kirk Urey, Ken Gendle, Larry Harris and Jim Wachter.

So what was more natural then for Kofender to induce the Good Doctor and his wife, who is a very competent receptionist and nurse, to take charge of the first aid room at the DRC.

THE DRAVES were reluctant at first but Kofender finally sold them on the idea of how much fun it would be to enjoy retirement at the races with a few patients now and then in the first aid.

But Dr. Ed and Mrs. Draves aren't so sure now. Although they admit they had a lot of fun working in such a relaxed manner, they also informed Kofender that they had kept a record of the number of calls during the 90-day meeting.

"Three or four calls per day," grumbled Dr. Ed, "Kofender is the greatest dreamer of all time. Our records show we handled more than 3,000 cases during the meeting. That's a far cry from the total of 270 we were promised."

Then he had a big smile again, "We'll be back for the 1970 season. We did have a lot of fun mixed with a lot of work but where else can you get an opportunity to work with such a mixed group?"

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