

Wings Need Only A Tie To Gain Playoff Berth

By GEORGE MASKIN
Observer Sports Editor

before in any sport at such a late date.

WITH TWO GAMES left for each team, Chicago and Boston are tied for first with 95 points. Detroit is third with 93 points, followed by Montreal with 92 and New York with 90. The "city" are so intriguing one might spend a week trying to figure them all out.

But, as Detroit plays New York back-to-back at Olympia Saturday night and in New York Sunday afternoon as

Chicago faces Montreal in two games and Boston goes against Toronto in a pair, there's little else for the rabid hockey fan to do but bite his nails.

The Wings need just a tie in either game with New York to end a three-year span of not making the playoffs. But if the Wings win twice, they could close with 97 points and wind up on top by themselves or in a tie.

Should there be a tie for any position, well, that'll be decided by favoring the team

which has won the most games.

Right now Chicago has 43 victories to 39 for Detroit, 38 each for Boston and Montreal and 37 for New York.

IF THERE'S a tie in the victory column, the goals-for will be the deciding factor. If there still is a tie, they'll pick the team which has had the fewest goals against it.

About all that's sure is that Chicago and Boston can't miss

the playoffs which begin Wednesday, with the first place team meeting the third and the second going against the fourth.

The first two games will be played in the cities of the winners, which finish first and second. The next two games will be played in the other two cities. So, there could be hockey at Olympia Wednesday and Thursday or Saturday and Sunday—and maybe there could be nothing.

The Wings virtually sewed up a playoff spot when they scalped Chicago, 5-2, Wednesday and then beat Toronto, 4-2, the next night.

Detroit in a brilliant late start has won 10, lost two and tied five in its last 17 games.

COMING DOWN to the wire, the race for the Wings' invaluable scoring lead is as hectic as the battle among the five teams.

Gordie Howe, still blazing at

the age of 42, has 67 points to 66 for Frank Mahovlich, 63 for Gary Unger and 64 for Alex Delvecchio, who says he may retire after this season ends...but most likely won't.

Unger will be honored at Saturday night's trophy night as the top goal-getter with 11 and it's pretty much certain that goalie Roy Edwards will likely be named the team's most valuable player.

It took the Wings only 16 seconds to take the lead against Toronto. Delvecchio

poking one in. Then Gary Hargman made it 2-0.

Toronto got back to within a point of a tie when ex-Livonian North 11man scored early in the second period. But a half-minute later, Howe swarmed in and then Mahovich converted and it was all over.

Hopefully, it won't be all over for the Wings Sunday.

Both the Ranger games will be televised Saturday night on Channel 30, Sunday afternoon on Channel 2.



SNO' USE... That's what these two Plymouth High trackmen decided as they tried to workout on the snow covered strip. The Rocks are scheduled to open their season this week but all workouts were scheduled indoors during the past few days. The pair includes Mike Bodak (left), one of the state's top broad jumpers, and Bob Colglino. The same conditions existed throughout the Observersland area. (Observer photo by Craig Gaffield).

Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

From Lansing comes word that lawmakers are considering legislation that will lengthen the Michigan racing season from April 1 through Dec. 1 with a proposal to allow winter racing at a yet to be constructed track 20 miles from metropolitan Detroit. In other words leave the racing act to allow a license for another plant in the Detroit area for the express purpose of a winter meeting.

Seems strange that the legislator making the proposal isn't aware of the fact that some of the Detroit area plants are busy with improvements geared for the same winter racing dates.

Perhaps it might not be a bad idea to have some of the skeptical lawmakers visit the new facilities at Northville Downs which should be completed in a short time.

EXECUTIVE MANAGER John Carlo and his associates have enclosed the grandstand, installed heating and air conditioning units for the express purpose of sponsoring winter racing. That portion of the modernization was completed well in advance of the Jackson-Northville winter meeting last December.

Rapidly nearing completion is an ultra modern, multi-million dollar clubhouse that will be one of the finest in the Midwest. It is the final step in Northville Downs' bid for winter racing.

It is Carlo's answer to Racing Commissioner Len Shirley who reportedly told top officials of the various area racing plants that winter dates would be allotted when the facilities are available.

The facilities will be available come May when the Northville Clubhouse is ready for use, but the winter dates were not allotted.

Instead of a winter meeting, Northville Downs and other area racing plants are faced with the proposal from the legislature—an extension of dates, but winter time racing to be permitted at a track which

isn't even under construction at this time.

More than that, if the reference is in regard to the proposed facility in the Ponton area, then there is still a matter of a stock sale and raising the dollars needed to build a grandstand, clubhouse, barns, installation of an all-weather racing strip and all of the other things needed to start a new race plant.

Just to make the Motor City track officials a bit more grim, the same legislators are looking favorably on proposals for dog racing. If approved, and there's a chance the dog racing bill will get out of committee this year for the first time, then there will be another interest bidding for a share of the betting dollars.

AFTER WINDSOR RACEWAY'S most successful campaign in history—one that saw all records for attendance and wagering shattered—the unanswered question is "why didn't the racing Commission allow dates for an extension of the Jackson-Northville winter season?"

With the legislature looking in all directions for additional money in the state treasury, it would appear that it would ask for answers and take positive steps to correct the situation.

UNLESS THE BUSINESS recession slows down action at the mutual machines, Hazel Park Harness Raceway appears headed for the greatest campaign ever for a track in the Detroit sector.

With the 16-night meeting almost through the second full week, wagering and crowd figures have gone down the drain with an all-time high a week ago.

That came last Saturday when a throng of 12,907, largest Saturday night gathering in Michigan annals had the mutual machines sizzling with a total of \$781,825. The betting annihilated the previous high of \$714,000 at Wolverine Raceway. And those attendance have a firm belief that the handle would have been higher

if all wanting to bet had been able to get in the windows.

The ticket sellers had hardly recovered from the Saturday blitz until they ran into another all-time high mark on Monday.

An amazing crowd of 9,549 bet \$669,358 and you had better believe that was the track's third highest wagering for a single night and the most for a Monday. Track officials haven't recovered from that remarkable turnstile count for Monday.

The two-night handle soared to \$1,451,383 and another record. The crowd total of 22,000 will be an all-time high for a Michigan harness track.

To cap a remarkable three nights, Hazel Park cracked more records on Tuesday when 7,088 wagered \$578,317.

And would you believe it—attendance and betting of this type when the Detroit area is in the throes of a recession that has boosted unemployment to the highest level in years.

To add another note to the success story of horse racing this spring-Toledo Raceway, also in the midst of its best spring meeting, bettered existing standards for wagering last Saturday and again on Tuesday.

The automobile business may be suffering the blues, but the horse business—remember that Old Dobbin and the sulky that preceded the automobile—is booming. To rub a bit of salt on a festering wound—booming in the nation's automobile capital. Ironie, isn't it?

WMU Picks Eldon Miller

KALAMAZOO Eldon Miller, who compiled a record of 142 wins against 56 losses at Wittenberg College in earning acclaim as one of the nation's top young coaches, has been named as the new head basketball mentor at Western Michigan University.

The 30-year-old Miller is the seventh coach called in WMU history and succeeds Sonny

HERE ARE the spring schedules:

BASEBALL

April, 9— at Dearborn, 13- at Thurston, 15- at Bentley, 21- Waterford, 24- at Pontiac Northern, 28- Walled Lake, 30- at Edsel Ford.

May, 1— at Lathrup, 5- Farmington, 8- at Waterford, 12- Pontiac Northern, 15- at Walled Lake, 19- Lathrup, 22- at Farmington.

TRACK

April, 7- Plymouth, 9- Franklin, 14- Edsel Ford, 16- Farmington, 20- Wayne and Garden City East at East, 22- Waterford, 27- RU and Groves at Groves, 29- at Pontiac Northern.

May, 4- at Churchill, 7- at Walled Lake, 9- Schaefer Re-lays, 13- at Lathrup, 15- regionals, 20- League meet at Walled Lake, 23- State meet, 26- Lathrup-League meet at Farmington.

Trotters Play On Sunday

The Harlem Globetrotters bring their patented basketball program back to Olympia Stadium Sunday, when they meet the New Jersey Rags at 3 p.m.

Leading the team is Meadowlark Lemon, who earned the title of "Glow Prince of Basketball" shortly after he signed with the team in 1954.

He'll be joined by veterans Leon Hillard, Fred "Curly" Neal, Mel Davis, Bobby Joe Mason, Jackie Jackson and Frank Stephens.

Also on the Trotter roster is Harrison Stephens, a former starter on the Michigan State University quintet.

WMU Picks Eldon Miller

Means, who resigned three weeks ago.

In his first year at Wittenberg, Miller directed the Tigers to a 36-2 mark, a No. 1 ranking in both small college wire service polls and a runner-up finish at the NCAA College Division tournament. At the time, he was just 23 and the youngest college coach in the country.

Why the light sentence when Denny admitted his dealings with known gamblers and his confession to the Commissioner that he thought he was buying a partnership in a gambling venture in Flint?

Does this decision mean the old tradition that baseball and gambling don't mix is cast aside?

Does shuffling off Denny's betting on basketball games mean that ballplayers on any place wagers on any sports—other than baseball?

Was the decision a political move with the knowledge that Tiger owner John E. Fetters wielded a great deal of power in the selection of Kuhn as the Commissioner?

The lightness of the sentence on McLean was both a surprise and a shock to the sports world and baseball in particular.

Recalling that Leo Durocher, then manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was sus-

pended for a year in 1947, just for coveting with gamblers, even Denny's fondest adherents expected that he would be lost to the Tigers for one season at least.

Others, remembering the stubbornness of the late Judge Keesaw Mountain Landis, first high commissioner of baseball, who suspended eight members of the Chicago White Sox for life—even after a grand jury cleared them, figured the Tiger right hander would meet a similar fate.

In the entire history of the game, all players found guilty of gambling or even being seen in their company, were dealt with severely.

Even the immortal Ty Cobb and Tris Speaker were quietly eased out of the game in the fading years for allegedly dealing with gamblers.

So, there was precedent for Denny being dealt with severely.

Time For Anglers To Start Hooking

By LEM MESEE

I can feel the chill press and gush of the Manistee River at my waders, threatening legs unsteady after a winter's lethargy. Promise of big, deep-water Rainbow Trout, the Steelhead, has brought me to Michigan's western coast this weekend.

But, alas, it is only in my daydreams. Would that I could, I'd be there for the Saturday, April 4 opening day of this first open water gamefish season. Here's hoping you can go.

If you can't make the trip across the state, the Au Sable or any number of rivers leading to Lake Huron can be fished for the same species. Somewhat the lure of the Lake Michigan Steelhead runs is just more enticing.

TALK OF THE MANISTEE, the Pere Marquette or the Boardman Rivers and their lusty Steelhead ring only slightly less challenging than those of that most famous Steelhead river of all, the Kiskipinow over on the western coast of the North American continent.

In British Columbia, this river has produced 32 of the 45 world's record flyrod Steelhead. How does a 32-pound trout to you? A winter's largest taken on fly tackle, and it was taken on the Kiskipinow.

Michigan waters don't produce Steelhead nearly that big, of course. Great as the Great Lakes are they don't provide the luxury the Pacific Ocean does for Steelhead between spring and fall-winter stream runs.

But Michigan Rainbows offer a strain for normal trout tackle, flies, spinners or bait casting lures.

The major trick seems to be to get natural action from near the bottom. Good prospecting dictates getting down into deep, medium fast riffles, in pools above rapids—or, let's gamify, into Steelhead favored lakes with trolling gear.

If you're lucky at this, the next thing necessary is patience. Steelhead are praised as the strongest of the stream trout. With amazing stamina.

McLain Ruling A Real Shocker

By W.W. EDGAR

Bowie Kuhn, high commissioner of baseball, opened a Pandora's box with the three month suspension he imposed on Denny McLain for his admitted dealing with gamblers during his off-field activities in 1967.

Instead of closing the case, as he expected, by handing down his decision, the lightness of the verdict and the fact that he has turned his back on baseball tradition, has opened the way to all sorts of questions—many of which may never be answered.

While none of the higher echelon in baseball cares to be quoted at this time, it is a fact that the Commissioner's decision marked the first time that anything less than a one year suspension was meted out for coveting with gamblers.

NOW THESE QUESTIONS are being asked:

Why the light sentence when Denny admitted his dealings with known gamblers and his confession to the Commissioner that he thought he was buying a partnership in a gambling venture in Flint?

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Beyond that, in selecting Kuhn for the commissionership, the baseball owners expressed the desire for a "strong administrator" following the reign of Gen. William D. Eckert, who did little on the job and was known in baseball circles only as "The Unknown Soldier."

KNOWING THE OWNERS wanted a dynamic leader to wield the power in the commissioner's office, many felt that Kuhn would take the opportunity to make a name for himself by handing out a stiff penalty.

But the Commissioner chose to take another route. He shrugged off Denny's admission that he thought he was buying a partnership in a betting parlor, by asserting that the Tiger right hander was "duped" and being used only as a tool by the gamblers.

He cast aside the fact that

Denny was known to have dated bets on basketball games, and what's more, making the calls to the Flint parlor from the Tiger dressing room.

So, he settled on a three-month suspension that will permit Denny to return in time to pitch on the evening of July 1 against the Yankees.

The sentence is the lightest ever handed down for such charges and it may cause fellows like Alex Karras, of the Detroit Lions, and Paul Hornung, formerly of the Green Bay Packers, to wonder at the justice of the sentence when Pete Rozelle, commissioner of the National Football League, set them down for a complete season for betting on their own teams.

So instead of settling the McLain case as he expected Commissioner Kuhn has left the entire sports world in a state of shock.



NOT FOR ME seem to be the words straight from the horse's mouth. This thoroughbred, quartered at the Detroit Race Course, appears to have an eye out for the weather before deciding it would be much better to struggle back into his warm bed of hay. He's one of the hundreds on the grounds awaiting opening day on April 20. (Observer photo by Vince Witke)

HOMEOWNERS CORNER

by Marvin Kamp, President
American Hardware & Supply Co.

It is very important to keep the gutters around the house in good repair to prevent water damage. So when they are cleared and free of debris, they are leader-checked for any obstructions. Hangers for the gutters should be placed every three feet so as to keep the gutters from sagging. If they are in need of repair, the following is a good guideline: 1. Gutters should be checked for leaks. 2. Gutter hangers should be pointed on the inside to keep them from pulling out. 3. Gutter ends should be fitted with a weatherproof cap. 4. Gutter downspouts should be checked for leaks. 5. Gutter downspouts should be checked for leaks. 6. Gutter downspouts should be checked for leaks.

After you have made your gutter repair, keep a box of the materials used clearly labeled for future emergencies should they arise.

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