

North Fans Can Yell: 'We're No. 1'

The state champs! What greater feeling...what greater honor...what greater distinction can come to a high school team? And it has to North Farmington's unbeaten-united football team.

When the Detroit News posted its final Class A ratings, the Raiders of North Farmington held down the No. 1 spot.

IN THE other polls -- the Free Press, the Associated

Press and the United Press International -- North Farmington stands No. 2. But before this week is over, the Raiders may be No. 1 everywhere. It all depends on how Flint Central comes out against Flint

Northern Thursday in their annual Thanksgiving Day collision. Flint Central leads in the Free Press, AP and UPI ratings.

"I think a bunch of us from here will go up to Flint

Thursday," said Ron Holland, who for the past 10 years has coached at North Farmington.

Who will they root for? Holland laughed. The answer was pretty obvious. Whatever happens Thurs-

day and whatever the final ratings still to be announced show, it's been a season of seasons for Holland, his players and that matter all of North Farmington.

Nine games...nine victories. There's no topping that.

some powerhouses, including one previous perfect team at North Farmington.

But this had to be his best season. And what does a coach say, now that it's all over?

News' state champs naturally overshadowed another honor that came to the Raiders: the No. 1 team among the 20 high school squares in

Southfield Lathrup wound up in second spot with, perhaps, the greatest success story of any team in the

state. Only three years ago, Lathrup was still starting out. A brand new school.

So in short order, the team arose to win its league (Inter-Lakes) crown and wind up with a 7-1 record to finish not only No. 2 in Observerland...and nine victories! Being crowned as the state's best.

Fight Game Dead In Detroit

By W.W. EDGAR

Once recognized as the greatest fight town in the country, Detroit has fallen to the bottom rung on the pugilistic ladder.

The steep drop was climaxed Wednesday night in Cobo Arena when only about 6,000 persons turned out to watch Joe Frazier retain the heavyweight championship

with a second-round knockout of Bob Foster, the light heavyweight champion, and it marked the first time in ring history that there were more empty seats than customers for a heavyweight title fight.

From the days when the Olympia was opened in 1927 with a fight between Tom Heeney and Johnny Risko for the right to meet Gene Tunney for the title—a fight that Heeney won—Detroit has been looked upon as one of the main centers of pugilism.

Through the years standing-room-only crowds have been the rule rather than the exception for such memorable battles as the one waged between Risko and Mickey Walker, long rated one of the bloodiest struggles of all time, the never to be forgotten series between Ray Miller and Jimmy McLarnin and later the epic fights be-

tween Jake LaMotta and Sugar Ray Robinson.

THEN CAME the Joe Louis era when the Brown Bomber jammed the house to capacity every time he fought. And all through these years The Detroit Olympia waged a struggle with Madison Square Garden in New York for the right to be recognized as the nation's fight capital. And most years Detroit and the Olympia was one of the winners.

But there was a sad contrast last Wednesday night in Cobo Arena when most of the meager crowd was huddled in the gallery, high above the ring, leaving the usually crowded ringside sections a wasteland.

Some of the die-hards blamed the small turnout on the GM strike, but their arguments were refuted by the

interest being shown in the Detroit Pistons in the same arena, the Detroit Lions, and the fact that Peggy Fleming is skating to capacity crowds at Olympia.

Added to this is the fact that both Frazier and Foster are just a pair of good journeyman fighters without a sparkle of color or greatness, no magnetic power over the fans and no fanfare wherever they go. There's no sparkle of a Louis, a Dempsey, a La Motta or Robinson and it showed at the gate.

In the days gone by just the mention of a title fight—in any division—would have filled Olympia.

No more. This was emphasized in Frazier's dressing room after the fight when the champion's manager was asked, "Where do you think the Frazier-Cassius Clay fight will be held?"

"I'll tell you one thing," he shot back quickly. "It won't be in Detroit."

Fight Town, U.S.A. It is now only a memory.

Tigers Meet Tribe In Earliest Opener

The earliest Opening Day in Tiger Stadium history will see the Tigers launch their 1971 American League season against the Cleveland Indians on Tuesday, April 6.

Earliest previous home opener for the Tigers was April 8, 1968, but they had an April 6 season opener at Washington in 1970.

The 1971 home schedule, announced by Jim Campbell, executive vice-president and general manager, showed the Tigers playing their 81 home games on 78 dates, one more than last year, with the final game on Sunday, Sept. 26, against the New York Yankees.

THERE WILL BE 49 night dates, including one two-nighter, to match last season's club record for after-dark play.

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Out will go the rule which says no team, like Michigan, can go two years running.

It's ridiculous and Michigan athletic director Don Canham is one who says so. Only he can't get enough people...yet...to agree with him.

Canham said as much last year and was saying the same thing this week as Michigan prepared for its showdown with Ohio State—the first time in the history of the Big Ten two teams have come down to the final game matching perfect records.

If Michigan won, it would mean a spotless season, the Big Ten title and a spot among the three best teams in the final ratings.

But no Rose Bowl. Ohio State or Northwestern would go.

"The Rose Bowl people one of these days will arise to say they don't like such a policy," says Canham. "Maybe that will get the Big Ten to change its rules. After all, there's no way the Big Ten can afford to lose the \$1 million the game is worth."

Rather than accept the No. 2 or No. 3 Big Ten team, Canham fears the Rose Bowl may turn to the likes of Notre Dame or Texas, especially when they're unbeaten.

The big question now around the Big Ten is: "How long will the faculty representatives wait to change things around and put a little sense into what they're doing?"

IT'S SOMETHING like 2,000 miles the way the crow flies between what we refer to as Observerland and the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Los Angeles.

The jets take some 4 1/2 hours to cover the vast space which rests in between the two points.

Yet, it was like old home week the other morning. Both the Pistons and Wings were in Los Angeles together and at breakfast the gent who sat next to you is somebody the whole sports world raves about.

His name: Gordie Howe, who makes home in the shadow of Southfield Lathrup High.

But that morning Howe chose to rave about other people...like Mrs. Howe, for instance.

"What a job she is doing for teen-age hockey around the Detroit area," Gordie said of his better half. "She works day and night to promote the game, to obtain necessary funds, etc."

"And, what makes her the happiest is the fact that every year more and more boys from the program are going on to win college scholarships. That's what gives you a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. Maybe all of us should do a lot more for the youngster and complain less about what they're doing."

Gordie paused...

"Hey, what about the Lathrup football team? Champs, huh? Wonderful. And, in just a few years. That's something."

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"He had to pick between Lathrup and playing on the Junior Wings," his dad said. "In no way could he play both sports at the same time."

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