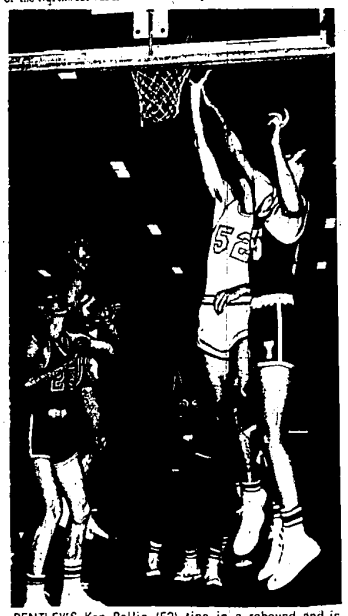
Missed Free Throws Ruin Livonians

Ypsilanti Nips Bentley, 52-50

Bentley missed chances at eight points in the final quarter of the Northwest Suburban holiday tournament on four one-and-one free throws, and bowed to Ypsilanti 52-50 Saturday at Bentley.



BENTLEY'S Ken Bollin (52) tips in a rebound and is fouled by Ypsilanti's Mike Ryan during the early moments of the championship game.

The missed free throws and a stout zone defense in the second half gave Bentley a second place in the tourney final, with Ypsilanti taking home a well earned first place trophy.

* * *

YPSILANTI JEALOUSLY guarded the Bentley baseline in the second half shutting off point-producing moves from the Bulldogs big center Ken Bollin.

Craig Larsen, Ypsilanti's 6-foot-9 center had nothing but trouble, under his own backboard as the Ypsilanti offense never seemed to get organized.

Bollin and Walt Blancha, Bentley's two big men dominated the Ypsilanti backboards, but could not do the same at their own end. Larsen and crew closed up the middle with the big man stuffing several Bentley shots from around the key.

Ypsilanti took an early lead and was never headed in the low scoring contest. The Braves led 17-13 at the end of the first quarter, but Bentley closed the gap to 33-30 at half time.

The Bulldogs, with Bollin and the middle bottled up were forced to shoot from outside and could dump in only seven points in the third quarter, missing key free throws.

* * *

IN THE FINAL stanza Ypsilanti had troubles with their sputtering offense and scored only 7 to Bentley's 13.

Four one-and-one options at the charity line were the difference as Bentley couldn't drop one.

Bollin was held to 11 points, with game honors for the Livonians going to Jim Powers who sank 15 points, mostly in the first half on long shots.

Larsen netted 16 for Ypsilanti and guard Al Richison added 11.

Both teams tried unsuccessfully to man a full court press.

* * *

BENTLEY, down 47-52 in the closing seconds got a boost from Blancha who drove for a two pointer, was fouled and sank one, bringing the score to 50-52. But Ypsilanti controlled the ball and held on for the win, after missing a free throw at its end.

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THAT'S CRAIG LARSON, of Ypsilanti, leaping high in the air to bat down a shot by Mark Chrisman, of Livonia. Larson was a thorn to Bentley throughout the championship contest.

By George Maskin
observing sports

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — You sit and talk with Dick Wilson, the man who runs the Pompano Park harness raceway a few miles to the north.

Getaway day at Pompano is Friday, and Wilson is a pretty busy man.

But he's already thinking about going north—back home as he says—to the Detroit Race Course at Schoolcraft and Middlebelt in Livonia where he will be one of the key officials in the annual harness meet staged by the Wolverine Raceway.

The trotters will gallop at Wolverine in late March and it might be a trifle chilly, compared to the weather one enjoys in these parts.

"We had a great meeting at Wolverine last year," Wilson says. "We think it should be even greater in 1968.

"While we are busy with problems down here, we aren't neglecting Wolverine. We're working to land some topflight stables to race up there . . . and we already have some in the bag.

"We're planning some big races and our fans will see some of the country's best trotters and pacers in action."

Wilson naturally is elated over the way trotting action, attendance and wagering has boomed at Wolverine in recent years.

"We think that at Wolverine we have one of the finest plants in the country for harness racing," Wilson added.

Anybody who has been to Wolverine in the spring must agree.

* * *

THE TROTTERS aren't the only sports action which has visitors to Southeast Florida hopping these days.

This has to be the hub of the sports world this winter.

They had the North-South football game down here—a game won by the North, coached by Michigan's Bump Elliott.

There was the Orange Bowl clash Monday between Tennessee and Oklahoma . . .

This week the pros take over with the runner-up bowl between Cleveland and Los Angeles . . . and a week from Sunday, there's the classic of all—the Super Bowl.

In between, the St. Louis Hawks are hosting several National Basketball Association games, like the one with the Pistons the other night.

The horses are running at Hialeah Park, the most beautiful oval around.

And then one really can go to the dogs . . . the dog tracks, that is . . . and then they have a sport down here called Jaia Lai.

* * *

IF THAT'S NOT enough for the sports-minded person, the golf courses are all green . . . tennis courts pop up all over the plate . . . and if you care to swim . . . there's the ocean or any one of a thousand outdoor pools.

Each hotel tries to outdo its neighbor in the way of a pool, and when you're here, you must try and get a suntan, even when it's cold.

After all, considering the prices, you can't go home without a touch of burned skin.

And, you wouldn't believe it: several of the hotels even have artificial skating rinks, something we'd like to see more of in Livonia, Plymouth, Redford Township, etc.

And, as you ride about, you can't help but notice that the various baseball parks are being readied for the invasion of the various major and minor league teams for whom trading isn't far away.

Snow and Ice?

Now, what's that, friend?

Redford Showing In ABC Rated Area's Top Sports Story

Auld Lang Syne.....

The familiar tune will ring out Sunday night and with it 1967 will follow its predecessors into history.

Americans will start figuring and worrying about their income tax and the experts will start to make their predictions about 1968.

As is customary, as a year ends, The Observer reflects upon the past 12 months and lists the top sports stories that have prevailed on the area's sports scene.

* * *

IN ORDER, the Top Ten of Observerland:

1--Redford Township's Class A baseball team winning league honors, then area, then reaching the finals in the state, national regionals and the world championships in the American Baseball Congress tournament.

2--Redford's Free-Press League team repeating as state champs and qualifying for the second straight year to play in the National Boys tournament at Alloona, Pa.

3--Plymouth High's free style relay team making history by winning the title in the State Class A meet.

4--Redford Township's Rick Clark becoming a standout pitcher for the California Angels of the American League after the Tigers yielded rights to him the previous winter.

5--The "comeback" of Livonia's Joe Sparma as a Tiger pitcher. After a dismal season in 1966, Sparma found himself and helped the Tigers roar down to the final day of the season before being edged by Boston for the American League title.

6--John Glenn High's emergence in the prep football world. Four straight wins enabled Glenn to wind up as co-champs with Franklin for the Northwest Suburban League crown.

7--Another district crown for Bentley High in basketball.

8--Wolverine Raceway at the Detroit Race Course posting the largest single-night handle in the history of trotting in Michigan. More than $679,000 was wagered on one night.

9--Redford Union winning the annual Greater Livonia Invitational Baseball tournament, sponsored by Livonia Recreation's Department, the Jaycees and the Observer papers.

10--Plymouth's Dale Livingston kicking his way to honors at Western Michigan University and into a place on the North-South All Stars, played this past week at Miami, Fla., in the Orange Bowl where he sparked a North victory with a first period field goal.

* * *

NOMINATING THE Top Five Stories on the Greater Michigan Sports Scene in 1967:

1--The great rush of the Tigers and how they went down to the last day of the season before losing out on their chance to bring Detroit its first American League pennant in over two decades.

2--The dismal showings of the University of Michigan and Michigan State in football and the resulting talk to replace Bump Elliott as coach of the Wolverines.

3--Estreno II, paying almost $250,000 winning the Michigan Mile at the Detroit Race Course. It had to be one of the biggest upsets ever for a major horse race in the country.

4--Joe Schmidt taking over as coach of the Detroit Lions and upping the team's record from a year ago and casting hope that the Lions "are on the way back" after some dismal campaigns.

5--The fast start this season of the Detroit Pistons, marking the first time in their history that they had been in games over .500 at one stage in the season.

Prep Schedule This Week

BASKETBALL

FRIDAY

Farmington at Plymouth
Crestwood at Garden City West
Clarenceville at W. Bloomfield
Mt. Carmel at St. Agatha
Sorrows at Waterford OLLH
Franklin at Romulus
Garden City East at Robichaud
John Glenn at Carleton

TUESDAY

Lowrey at Garden City West
Clarenceville at South Lyon

SWIMMING

THURSDAY

Lowrey at Garden City West
Dearborn at Plymouth
John Glenn at Huron

TUESDAY

Ecorse at Stevenson
Highland Park at Clarenceville
Ypsilanti at Thurston

WRESTLING

THURSDAY

John Glenn at Garden City West
Stevenson at Bellville

FRIDAY

Northville at Franklin

TUESDAY

Garden City W. at Catholic Cent.
Franklin at Garden City East

Preps To Test Pro Time Rule

It's back to work for Observerland area high school basketball teams Friday and the schedule will be topped by a "something different" game pitting Farmington and Plymouth at Plymouth.

The two teams will copy a rule from the professionals by making the team with the ball get off a shot within 24 seconds.

* * *

PLYMOUTH HIGH Athletic Director John Sandmann has arranged with the Detroit Pistons to loan the school a special set of the 24-time clocks.

"It's an experiment for high school basketball," said Sandmann, "but we feel that this soon may become a part of our prep game.

"We feel that we should do something to end the stalling and the needless fouling and also give a team which is trailing a better chance to pull up in the closing part of the game."

To use the 24-second clocks, Sandmann gained the approval of Farmington High officials, including athletic director Jack Cotton, and also an okay from state prep director Charles Forsythe.

* * *

ACCORDING TO Sandmann, many schools are eager to learn the results of the Plymouth-Farmington game.

"We're to file a report which is to be published in high school manuals," said Sandmann, who is very enthusiastic about the use of the 24-second clocks.

Sandmann himself attended a Pistons game last week to school himself in the use of the clocks.

Under the 24-second rule, a team loses the ball on a violation if it fails to take a shot within the prescribed limit.

IF A TEAM SHOOTS and the ball hits the rim or backboard and the same team makes a successful rebound, the 24-second clock starts anew in its favor.

The National Basketball Association credits the 24-second clock with revolutionizing the pro game when it was installed over a decade ago.

Garden City East, unbeaten before the holidays in regular-season action, goes backs to work at Robichaud with an eight game streak on the line.

Another feature sends Clarenceville to West Bloomfield, the unbeaten leader of the Wayne-Oakland League, Clarenceville, after a slow start, began to make a move when the holiday break brought a pause to operations.

Packers Win In Closing 14 Seconds

Incomparable Bart Starr, the Green Bay play caller who seems to get better with age if such can happen to the league's premier, guided the Packers to an unprecedented third straight National Football League championship with a 21-17 victory over the Dallas Oilers.

The same two teams tangled in the playoff a year ago when the Packers squeaked out a 34-27 victory after a hard fought struggle.

Sunday's game, played in 13 below zero weather in Green Bay, was another heartbreaker for the Oilers who had a 17-14 lead with 14 seconds showing on the clock--that's when Starr found an opening at right guard for the one foot needed for the winning touchdown.

Hewritt Dixon climaxed his career Sunday be beating the Houston Oiler defense to death as the Oakland Raiders waltzed away with the American Football League title, 40-7.

Dixon rambled for 144 yards, including a 69-yard touchdown run that broke the game open early in the second quarter.

Twice Green Bay hit the stout Dallas forward wall from a yard out and twice it was turned back. Then with the alternative of trying for a game-tying field goal that would have thrown the game into overtime, or a game-winning touchdown, Starr, with the consent of Coach Vince Lombardi, cooly ordered a quarterback sneak and went in for the six points.

Small matter that Don Chandler converted to make the score 21-17--Green Bay had the victory and everyone in the stands knew it including the Oilers.

The aroused Packers watched the kickoff roll into the end zone. Then snuffed off two Oiler passes before the final gun.

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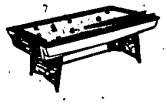

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