

# U-M Ready For Iowa

By W.W. EDGAR

This is the week of anxiety on the University of Michigan campus as the Wolverines await the opening of the football season and defense of a share of the Big Ten title against Iowa in Iowa City on Saturday.

The anxiety runs through many channels, foremost of which turns to whether the new offensive line will be able to do the job.

Next, is the anxiety concerned with the injury jinx—camp followers are wondering whether the injuries to several linemen during the practice sessions will be remedied in time for the first test.

On top of these, Coach "Bo" Schembechler doesn't hesitate to tell any one that he is always a bit fearful of opening the season on the road.

"Naturally," he says "we'd prefer starting at home. This is always considered a plus and this year it would be doubly so because of an offensive line that faces the biggest problem of all."

There is another avenue of anxiety. It concerns the pre-season rating of the team and whether it will live up to advance billing.

The veteran football writers who just completed their tour of the Big Ten campuses have rated the Wolverines as favorites to win the title outright and thus break the present bond with Ohio State.

"And don't forget," Schembechler cautioned, "everybody will be shooting at us. I know if I were a coach of those other teams I would be trying my damndest to break up the Michigan-Ohio State monopoly."

Barring injuries, however, Michigan will present a starting front that Schembechler admitted "could go all the way."

The Wolverines are doubly fortunate in that they have their complete double backfield of last year returning. This means that Dennis Franklin, who did a great job at quarterback as a sophomore, will be back in the spot. Schembechler claims Dennis is good enough to be rated the best in the Big Ten, if not All-America.

With him will be big Ed Shuttlesworth, as the plunging fullback. Right behind him will be Bob Thornbladh, the former Plymouth star, who could be a starter on any other team.

As the team awaits the opener, it looks fit. But there's many a slip from kickoff time to the final whistle. And with Iowa on the way back to the heights, an upset could happen.

No wonder it is "the week of anxiety" on the Wolverine campus.

# Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

John Carlo, executive director of Northville Downs, is a bitter individual these days after discovering the Michigan Legislature had passed a bill taking the choice summer dates away from the 'Downs and it had the signature of the governor.

That portion of the bill providing tracks with an average nightly handle of \$400,000 or more must be allotted back-to-back summer dates by the racing commissioner was in the form of a rider to an appropriation bill.

How and when the rider was attached to the bill remains a mystery to area legislators. None recalls seeing it when the bill was brought to the attention of the House and Senate.

Rep. Robert Geake (Livonia - Northville) says he never saw the rider and Sen. Carl Pursell made the same statement.

Top management from Wolverine and Hazel Park Raceways deny any knowledge of the addenda although each indicated he was happy with the wording that appears to automatically assure the two tracks of all the summer dates in the future.

It is well known that Hazel Park and Wolverine long have felt that back-to-back summer meetings would keep top stables here for most of the year and result in larger crowds, bigger handles and more interest... all of which in turn assures the horsemen of richer purses and the state of additional funds from its share of the mutual handle.

Carlo takes the stand that Shirley didn't need specific instructions to allot back-to-back summer dates. He points out the commissioner has absolute authority and can allot dates in any manner he desires.

"Shirley didn't need any help in dates," said Carlo. "He has had the authority all along but perhaps he thought he must have a bit of assistance in making a decision that would rob the state's pioneer track of its traditional summer racing. He has been paring down our summer nights for the past several years, dropping from a high of 60 a few years back to a mere 36 this year."

Carlo offers several reasons why Northville should have summer programs and is considering legal action on the constitutionality of the new bill. He alleges the rider had nothing to do with original intention of the bill and thus is illegal.

The general Northville boss charges:

1-Northville Downs, because of its location, suffers losses in winter racing. The location factor may be resolved in another year or two when the new freeway is finished.

2-The 'Downs added one per cent to the horsemen's purse contract to 46 per cent of the track's share of the handle, something like \$37,000 more at each meeting.

3-The reduction of summer dates this year caused a hardship in regard to the Michigan colt stakes. Northville with 36 nights paid \$40,000 for the eight stakes. Wolverine paid the same but has an allotment of 82 nights.

4-Northville competes with Windsor Raceway which has a much lower salary structure for employees. Thus it is able to complement its gate and purse program.

5-There is no advantage in Section 17 of the recently passed bill. If Northville loses its summer dates for March and April, it would have an average nightly handle of \$275,000 and not the \$350,000 and \$375,000 it now has in the summer. Moreover, he contends the back-to-back meetings would not increase wagering \$75,000 to \$100,000 as predicted and uses figures from Chicago meetings to prove his point.

During the past year, Fox Valley, in a winter program, averaged \$1,366,580; Suburban Downs followed in the winter with an average of \$1,255,061; Chicago Downs had late winter dates and averaged \$1,233,935; Maywood races in late spring and early summer and averaged \$948,049; Washington Park had late summer and early fall programs and averaged \$775,439; and Aurora had the winter and wound up with a \$273,000 average.

And that to Carlo points out that the most lucrative dates are during the winter when the trotters and pacers have the scene all to themselves and average well over a million.

"The story could be the same in Michigan," he charges. "All the commissioner has to do to prove it is give Wolverine and Hazel Park back - to - back winter and see what happens."

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