

P. J. Tells it
like it is

by Paul Johnson
Blueprint Sports Editor

TRUE CONFESSIONS :

When people think of athletes they usually think of a team. Once or twice a week the team will go out onto the field, court, or whatever and play a game. The team wins or loses (sometimes ties) and goes back into the locker room after the game. Right?

Lot of "fun"

Well, that is partially right. But all too often the long, hard hours (4th and 5th hours every day) of practice are forgotten.

How many people know what it's like to hit a practice dummy twenty times in a row (hit, spring back, hit, spring back, etc.) Being a one time football player of small acclaim, I can tell you what I called it - HELL.

This, among many other "Gut" drills, like "no-holds-barred" scrambling for a ball thrown out by the coach to a group of two or so gridgers. This supposedly resembles fumble and it is drills like these that comprise most of a football practice. The other part, scrimmaging, is often the easiest.

While you walk out to practice, after it's over you may be crawling back to the locker room.

"WE want YOU in shape"

Other sports have their fun things too. In hockey and basketball are the strenuous three-on-two drills, that is three offensive players go against two defensive players and try to score. The two defense men try to stop them.

Wrestlers are almost always trying to learn new moves. The more moves he has, the more versatility he has over his opponent. He may do the same thing forty times in a row before he perfects it. Gymnasts are the same way. Doing things over and over again until they get the routine to their liking. Perhaps the worst practice time for athletes is the conditioning period before regular fall sports practice begins.

During these mid-morning work outs in about the second week in August, the athletes who weren't smart enough to keep in shape over the summer know who they are. Many an athlete loses many a good breakfast.

The Strategy

The strategy behind these hard practices is simple and fairly obvious. By exaggerating game conditions in a strenuous practice, the real games seem like a piece of cake.

How many times do you come in contact with opponents during one football play? Certainly not twenty.

A gymnast gets only one chance to show his routine in a meet. That's why it's necessary that he practice his routine to perfection before the meet. He gets no chance to redeem himself if he messes it up.

Every athlete has a good reason to practice and practice hard. Besides the obvious results of greater physical skills, mental discipline is learned. Players learn to press on when their bodies tell them to quit. This is the character building side to athletics.

Third String Benchwarmer

The person on the team whom I admire the most is not always the star ace. Often he is the third string fellow who practices his guts out, day after day, and plays every bit as hard as the next guy. The members on the starting team get rewards for their efforts; they get to play. The third stringer rarely sees any action or glory. All he has is his name on the bottom of the roster.

It takes a lot of guts to take all that torture without any glory. Sort of like the bitter with no sweet.

The Moral

The true picture of athletics is not reflected in the games and star players alone. Practice plays perhaps the biggest part. It's where you get no glory for putting out the same amount of effort that you would in a game.



Wing Pat Phippen pushes the puck past the Kellogg netminder in one of last years games.

Ramsey - Mounds View Who will win out this year?

by Paul Johnson

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With the hockey season just starting, writers all over have been making predictions as to how the races for Conference and Region titles will come out.

Both newspapers dealing with the Suburban Conference, the St. Paul Dispatch - Pioneer Press and the Roseville Suburban Sun, look to Mounds View as the favorites for both the Conference and Region II titles. However, Ramsey's own should not be counted out of the fray.

Tom Wegleightner, Mounds View's hockey coach, views his team with bold optimism. "We're shooting for the State Championship. We've got experience, speed and depth. We'll be an offensive team, always moving that puck, featuring aggressive play," he said recently.

He picked Ramsey as his team's toughest opponent and main rival for the conference and Region II crowns. "We know our league will be tough and that Ramsey looks especially rugged but we have set our goal's high," he commented.

Ramsey's Gordy Genz, while optimistic, was more conservative in his approach toward Ramsey's chances. He said, "Every team is out for the State Championship. I know we're out to win 100%. We think we've got as good a chance as any good team in the state."

The Mustangs, last year's Region II Champions, have eleven men coming back and the Rams have nine lettermen returning. Depth is no problem for either team.

Good Goalies

One all important factor, besides a moving offense, in determining a hockey team's success is the goaltending. The Mustangs have three returnees in this department, including Terry Moores, considered outstanding by some. Moores last season, as a sophomore, stopped enough to get his team to the state Tournament.

Ramsey has senior Ward Morgan from last year's squad and Doug Madole and Doug Nelson, juniors who served at goalie on the "B"-squad last season.

Genz plans to start Morgan, at least at the beginning of the season, and use Nelson and Madole.

Strong goalie performances during pre-season scrimmages with other schools indicate good shape in this department, according to Genz.

The offensive attack centers around Mike and Pat Phippen and Dave Kath - first line; Jon Kelsey, Dale Ahrens and a rotation of Carl Brandt and Mark Fitzimmons - second line; and Craig Arvidson, Mike Eagles, Bob Graziger - third line.

The line numbers are not definite. Defense pairs are Tim Anderson and Steve Curley, Mark Czaia and Dale Wessel, and Joel Holger and Dan Short.

Revenge

The Rams face Mounds View only once during regular season play, on Jan. 24. The Rams will be out for revenge against the Mustangs, who defeated the

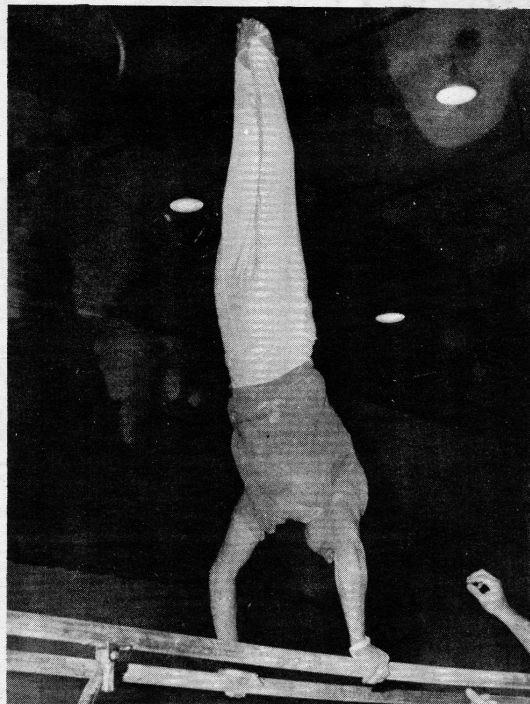
Rams in last year's Region II title game, and in turn, won the Region II berth in the State Tournament.

This season's Conference and Region II competition, barring any injuries or similar misfortune, will almost inevitably be a neck-in-neck race between the two teams, which may once again go down to the final wire, the Region Championship game.

It could be that Ramsey will emerge the victor this time.

Meanwhile...

The Rams face White Bear at the Aldrich Arena Thursday, Dec. 4. This, along with the next two games with Kellogg and North St. Paul respectively are exhibition and will not count in Conference standings but Genz stresses, "When you only play twenty games, every game is important."



John Goedeke's gymnasts ready themselves for their opening meet with Bloomington Kennedy, Thursday, Dec. 4.