

August 5, 1946

The Mining Journal
Marquette, MI

Negaunee's All-Star Grid Game Brings Forth Plenty Of Doubletalk In Lansing

By W.H. Treloar

Negaunee-One of the interesting angles to the all-star football game to be played here Saturday, August 17, is the persistent sniping at the attraction by the Michigan High School Athletic Association through its director, Charles Forsythe.

There are facts in the case which tend to support the idea Forsythe is not making so much a personal campaign as he is endeavoring to make a positive stand out of a lot of official doubletalk on the part of the executive committee of the association.

Buck Erickson, sports writer in the Iron Mountain News, predicts Forsythe will toss a lot of rank around when the next session of the committee comes up and that he will insist on an immediate end to all-star games.

Forsythe's past record and his own personal amiability do not support such prediction.

Wassberg's Proposition

The facts are that Oscar Wassberg, coach of the Negaunee high school athletic teams, but acting as an individual with the right to employ his summer time as he sees fit, went to the Upper Peninsula athletic council and, in effect, said: "Gentlemen, this is my proposition. What's your answer?"

His proposition was an all-star football game, contestants to be graduates of high school, participating in an event closely hedged with all the amateur restrictions of high school play.

The Peninsular group, being a subsidiary of the state athletic council, very properly referred the matter to the ranking policy-making body of the association.

Doubletalk Starts

Here is where the doubletalk started. The association had something new on its hands. There were no answers in the back of the book.

So they came up with the doubletalk decision that they recognized the event did not involve boys under the jurisdiction of the Michigan State High School Athletic Association and that properly the association had nothing to say in the matter, but that they would not be able to endorse the game.

In effect, they asked Forsythe to try to stop the game without putting themselves on the spot by taking a positive stand. This mealy-mouthed evasion has forced Forsythe into statements that put him in an untenable position.

School “Atmosphere”

Forsythe, in letters to school men attacking the game, has said that while the association has no jurisdiction over the players, there is a high school atmosphere to the game because high school men will do the coaching, high school equipment will be used. True, but Gold Medal basketball tournaments, where high school players compete against graduates, are played annually in high school gymnasiums, prizes are awarded, and whole squad equipment has been turned over to players, and not once has the voice of the mighty MHSAA been raised in objection. The same can be said for skiing and boxing.

One serious issue has developed: In letters to the sponsors, Forsythe has hinted it might not be well for coaches to show too much interest in the game. If Forsythe hints that reprisals might be made, or that indirect recommendation of some action might come from him or the executive committee of the Michigan State High School Athletic Association, then the schools have traveled further along the road of regimentation than most persons realize. It would be well, the coaches declare, for Forsythe to issue an immediate statement clarifying this attitude and well for him personally to disown promptly any intention of campaigning against those who had any part in the presentation of the game.

It would be well, too, for the executive committee of the athletic association to accept its own responsibilities and make a definite declaration of policy and relieve Forsythe, who is well-liked by school men, of the onerous task of being whipping boy for the committee.