

Hurdler Is Inspiring Farmington Athletes

By PAUL PREUSS

Teen-age idolatry, normally reserved for hip-swaying, guitar-twanging adolescents, can come the way of an athlete if his performances are spectacular enough to inspire imitation.

Thus, Farmington's Warren Cawley finds himself a popular figure among the school's student body—a figure to be emulated—as a result of his record-breaking spree in the high and low hurdles this spring.

"Several years ago there was no interest at all in the hurdles," Farmington track

Coach Gene Freed recalled. "Then when our new track was built last year we bought a new set of hurdles.

"Now since Rex (what everyone calls Cawley) has been doing so well in the hurdles everyone is taking up the event. I've got six or seven young hurdlers who can turn in better than average times."

SET 2 RECORDS

The cause of all this interest is an unassuming 17-year-old youth with a thick crop of blond hair, a lean, toughened body and long, muscle-lined legs.

"Rex doesn't quite have the ideal physical equipment for

a hurdler," explained Freed. "Most top hurdlers are taller than Rex. He's split high, however, with longer legs than average."

Cawley, who is only a junior, gave one of his finest performances at the Class A meet at Ann Arbor. He won the high hurdles in :14.5, one-tenth of a second off Hayes Jones' record, and skimmed the low hurdles in :19 flat for a new mark.

The latter time is among the fastest this year by a high school runner. Cawley's best time in the highs (:14.4) also ranks close to the best prep performances.

LEG SPEED ASSET

"Before he's through next year I think Rex can beat the accepted interscholastic records of :13.9 in the highs and :18.5 in the lows," Freed said. "His biggest problem right now is learning to relax.

"He can make improvements yet in his hurdling form. His biggest asset in his leg speed. He makes up most of his ground between hurdles and with his closing burst."

Cawley's emergence as an outstanding hurdler has been rapid.

"The first time Rex ran the hurdles in practice his time was so good I decided to run him in the event," Freed continued. "He got down to :15.4 in the highs last year before injuring his side."

"My side was still hurting during the regional last year and I didn't qualify for the state meet," said Cawley, whose weight has dropped six pounds to 145 since the start of the season.

Cawley operated under a handicap this year in that he lacked competition in all except a few races. If this situation can be corrected next year, Cawley could become the best prep hurdler the state has known.

Port Huron Hires Backfield Product

Jerry Thomas, who won seven varsity letters while attending Port Huron High, will return to his alma mater this fall as backfield coach. Thomas, 24, is a Central Michigan College graduate. While at Port Huron he played halfback on two Eastern Michigan League title teams. He also starred in track. For the last two seasons, he has been head coach at Yale High, of the Thumb B Conference.



MAN IN A HURRY — Farmington's Warren (Rex) Cawley proved himself the state's leading prep hurdler this spring with a double triumph in the state meet at Ann Arbor. Here he exhibits his form.—News Photo by Drayton Holcomb.