

Central Michigan Relays Attract 3,000 State Preps

BY HAL SCHRAM

Is there a saturation point in conducting a high school track meet?

Al Thomas, the former Cooley High and University of Michigan track star, may find the answer next week.

Thomas, 42, is in his fifth season as director of the Central Michigan University relays and he knows he better do a good job with the nation's top schoolboy track carnival.

His boss, Ron Finch, who originated the event 23 years ago, will be watching.

IT WILL BE the task of Thomas and his 100 campus assistants to send nearly 3,000 Michigan schoolboys through their paces April 27-28.

There will be 16 events in all four classes, A, B, C and D, and the schoolboys will converge on the Mt. Pleasant campus from both peninsulas.

The final entry count won't be in for another week, but nearly 200 schools will be represented.

Pontiac Central and Flint Northern, Michigan's two foremost track powers in recent years, will be back in the Class A field this spring after a lapse of two years.

A conference ruling on the part of other Saginaw Valley League members prevented Pontiac and Northern from making their annual pilgrimage to last weekend's Mansfield (O.) Relays.

"No out-of-state meets," the new rule reads. Therefore the Chiefs and Vikings are preparing to make all opponents eat crow at Mt. Pleasant.

WITH MUSKEGON loaded once more, and with additional challenges coming from such good track schools at Birmingham, Lansing Sexton and Lansing Eastern, the Class A scramble could be one of the finest ever.

Bradell Pritchett, Pontiac's great shotputter, gets his first big chance of the spring to break the 60-foot barrier.

He already holds the state



Thomas



Finch

A 6-4 235-pound senior, Bradell surpassed 57 feet in an indoor meet at Mt. Pleasant three weeks ago.

The oldest record on the books, however, appears safe. In the 1938 meet, the first ever staged by Finch, Al Bates of Flint Central won the high jump with a leap of 6 feet 5 3/4 inches. The record has often been threatened but never surpassed.

record of 59'5 1/2," but neither he nor coach Dean Wilson will be satisfied with anything under 60 feet this spring.

Class C and D schools will take over the Chippewa oval Friday. Class A and B squads strut their stuff on Saturday.

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