

### HOPKINS KEEPS PACE AT MANSFIELD RELAYS

## Tigers' Rhodes Area's Fastest Human

MANSFIELD, Ohio — Rodney Rhodes of Benton Harbor is the fastest human in southwestern Michigan history, but he's not gaining an inch on teammate Don Hopkins.

Rhodes established an all-time southwest Michigan sprint record here Saturday as he rocketed to a 9.8 second clocking in the 100-yard dash during the prestigious Mansfield Relays, the Midwest's top school-boy track event.

Hopkins kept pace with his younger teammate by joining an elite group of 9.8 second runners in the same event, however, and

actually finished ahead of Rhodes in the championship finals.

Rhodes was timed in 9.8 seconds while winning a preliminary heat, breaking the Benton Harbor and area record of 9.9 seconds set by Bert Copeland back in 1941 and since equalled by three other runners including Rhodes himself last spring.

The strapping 6-foot-2 junior got a bad start coming out of the blocks in the final, however, and finished in fourth place with a 10.3 clocking.

Hopkins, who competes in track as a sideline to baseball,

picked up the slack by racing to second place in 9.9 seconds and came within inches of surging ahead at the tape.

"Five more yards and he would have won," said Benton Harbor coach George McGinnis of Hopkins, who was clocked in exactly the same time as winner Greg Martin of Grapewin Attucks high school in Indianapolis.

Despite the disappointing ending, Rhodes still stands in a points still finished 11th in the grand track carnival, which drew 2,884 entrants from 291 schools, 86 from Michigan, Cleveland Glenville won the

exclusive 9.8 club.

Hopkins failed to qualify for the finals in the long jump despite a leap of 21 feet, seven inches, but teamed up with Rhodes, Frank Atkinson and Al Williams to take fifth place in the 880-yard relay in a snip with 1:31.9, establishing themselves as the fourth fastest half-mile quartet in area history.

Benton Harbor failed to place in any other events, but with 14 points still finished 11th in the grand track carnival, which drew 2,884 entrants from 291 schools, 86 from Michigan, Cleveland Glenville won the

team championship with 49 points.

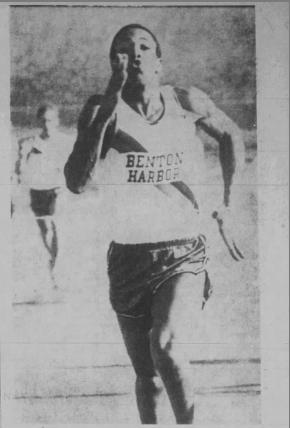
"We still have room for improvement," McGinnis said. "We had two very poor exchanges on the relay or we might have been down around 1:29."

Three meet records were set during Saturday's competition despite blustery winds and chilling temperatures that fell to 23 degrees before the final event was completed.

Two of the records were the work of Michigan athletes, with Kevin Roache of Waterford leading striding over the half-

mile in 1:23.6 while Garrande Pettus of Belleville cleared 6-foot-9 1/2 in the high jump. The third record was a blistering 4:12.8 mile by Lee Nagy of Niles (Ohio) McKinley.

Other Michigan winners included Mel Reeves of Pontiac Northern who swept the hurdles with clockings of 14.4 in the 120-yard high and 19.6 in the 180-yard low, Marshall Dill of Detroit Northern who won the 220-yard dash in 23 seconds flat running into the wind. And Steve Nelson of Battle Creek Central, who got off a toss of 58.6 in the shot put.



FASTEST EVER: Rodney Rhodes of Benton Harbor laid claim to the title of the fastest sprinter in southwestern Michigan history Saturday when he was clocked at 9.8 seconds in the 100-yard dash during annual Mansfield Relays at Mansfield, Ohio. (Staff photo)

## NIEKRO TIGER PITCHING SAVIOR

BALTIMORE (AP) — The Baltimore Orioles came closer to obtaining Joe Niekro in a trade last winter than they were to beating the pitching savior of the Detroit Tigers Sunday.

The 25-year-old right-hander allowed only a bunt single through the first seven innings, and registered a 7-2 victory with last-out relief help from Tom Timmerman after yielding five more hits including a Brooks Robinson homer. It was the second straight

American League victory for Niekro, who was hot trading bait despite an 8-18 record with Chicago and San Diego in the National League last season.

"I knew there was a good chance I'd go somewhere," Niekro said. "I heard about the possibility of going to Atlanta, Cincinnati and Cleveland, but I was surprised when I came to Detroit."

The Tigers, idle today, open their home season Tuesday at Tiger Stadium, with Maskey Leitch, 1-1, scheduled to take on

the Cleveland Indians.

After contributing a two-run triple to a 13-hit attack which dealt the Orioles their first loss in six games, Niekro learned that Baltimore also had sought him in a deal with the Padres.

"We were close, and had a chance," said Harry Dalton, the director of player personnel for the Orioles.

But Dalton thought San Diego's request for outfielder Dave May and minor league shortstop Enzo Hernandez "was a

little too much to give when we didn't know where Niekro would fit into our staff."

"I know one thing," said Baltimore Manager Earl Weaver. "If we had him, Niekro wouldn't have started a game yet — not ahead of Dave McNally, Mike Cuellar, Jim Palmer and Tom Phoebus."

With Detroit ace Denny McLain under a half-season suspension, however, Niekro fits right into the Tigers' rotation and has won two of the team's three victories.

He was given Detroit's third starting assignment of the season, and shut out the Washington Senators on six hits in his AL debut.

"I guess the first time around the league might be to my advantage," Niekro said. "In Baltimore, for instance, I sat on the bench two days watching the hitters but they didn't see me until I pitched."

"Niekro looked good," Weaver said, "but he didn't last. He threw harder than we thought he would. Let's see how he does

against us next time."

Cuellar, who won 23 for the Orioles last season and his first start of 1970, gave up eight hits before being replaced with nose out in the fourth inning. Detroit scored five in the inning, three off reliever Dave Leonhard, for a 7-0 lead.

Willie Horton had three hits and two runs batted in before leaving with an apparent minor muscle pull in his back. Dick McAuliffe, Bill Freehan and Cesar Gutierrez had two hits apiece.

# Rodney Rhodes feature 4-13-1970

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