nn Arbor News (published as The Ann Arbor News) - October 14, 1973 - page 36

36 The Ann Arbor News, Sunday, October 14, 1973

By Bill Anderson

contentment, a man who has ture ahead fought the good fight for girl's athletics and is now just be- real shot at winning the state ginning to see the light at the cross country championship end of the tunnel.

For the first time in years. his girl's track & field club appears to be on sound financial footing with a secure fu-

His Michigammes have a next weekend on the Central

Were '7 to '11

P99

each

Michigan campus in Mount

He is even casting a cautious glance ahead to the state track & field championships next spring, the national cross big issue out of it. country meet next year, and, yes, even the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal.

vineyards of girl's athletics long before women libbers and their advocates made a

The Michigammes date from the time Simmons retired from youth work in the

Detroit area and moved to who has toiled quietly in the Ann Arbor where he earned a Master's degree from Michigan and soon became a member of the staff.

Ken Simmons: The Man Behind The Michigammes

"I was always interested in sports," Simmons said, "but I was just too old for most coaching jobs. So, I decided to start my own team."

It is hardly surprising that Simmons chose track & field because he was a finalist in the 1932 Olympic Trials, but he never made the team that competed in Los Angeles.

But then Ken and his wife, Betty, found a special mission in girl's track & field as an area where they could really do something for young peo-

"We took a look at the results from the 1960 Olympic could do something about it." he said. "So we started this girl's track club here in Ann Arbor."

Founding a girl's track club is one thing, but paying for it is another. Through years, the a more stabile future. club treasury was quite often Simmons' wallet.

He received a charter from they can't afford the road the AAU for \$50, paid for most trips. No girl need not pass up of the expenses on the trips an event because she doesn't and occasionally had a buck have the entry fee. or two left over to help any girl who couldn't afford the entry fees at meets. Just recently, the Mi-good chance at winning the

chigammes received a big Michigan AAU title. boost when the Ann Arbor Ex-Earlier this month, the Michange Club decided to as- chigammes won the Golden nation as well. The club deve-

KEN SIMMONS

sume some of the expenses

left because of monetary rea-

sons, the Michigammes have

leave anyone home because

His immediate concern is

the state cross country meet.

er from Simmons.

terested in them."

Eastern Michigan campus defeating the Kettering Striders one of the strongest teams in the Midwest.

Triangle Invitational on the

Frances Goodridge paced the team with a second place finish while Pam Beyst was fourth, Karen McKeachie was fifth and Anne Forshee was sixth. But a 17th place from Sue Koebnick, who was running in her first meet, insured the victory.

"We have got some good prospects," the coach said. "We have a real shot at the state championship. We beat the Kettering Striders and they always have been one of the best clubs in the Midwand purchased the club chart- est.

"It has been a great shot in chigammes are profiting from the arm," he said. "The girls the demise of other clubs in know now that someone is in- the Detroit area. Many of the girls are turning to the Ann While clubs around the state Arbor club as their only outhave been folding right and let.

"We will be picking up a couple of real good girls from other clubs. We have got a Simmons won't have to shot at the state track & field title next spring.

"The national cross country championships are going to be run in the southwest this year. If they hold them anywhere within reasonable driving distance, we will take a run at it He figures his team has a next year.

> The Michigammes are known around the state and

loped the only Michigan resident ever to become a member of the U.S. Olympic team, Francie Kraker. 🥆

Mrs. Simmons picked the future Olympian right out of her physical education class at Slauson Junior High, and with Simmons doing the coaching, she developed into a world class athlete.

Francie ran in all of the big meets, the Milrose Games, the New York AC and Maple Leaf Games. She once held a world indoor record. She was a member of the 1968 and 1972 Olympic Games.

Perhaps her most important contribution was giving prominence and visibility to girl's athletics in the city. She Ironically, the Mi-really helped put the city on the map as far as women's track & field went.

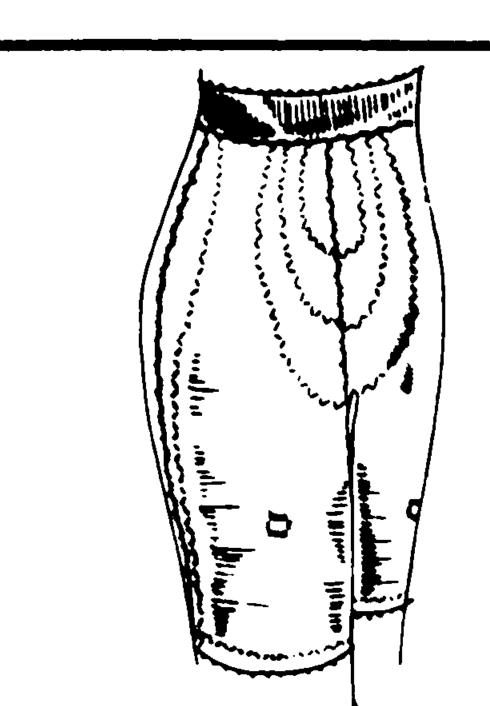
Her accomplishments also helped Simmons morale when the going was tough and the financial problems started to mount up for the club.

"It's a long ways to build a club," he said. "But I never really got discouraged. Every now and then, I would see a little spark and determination in the girls. That's all I really

Local Riders Gain Honors

(Special to The News)

GRASS LAKE — The names of three Ann Arbor riders and their horses will be inscribed on four trophies presented



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