Scholastic Sports Scene

Mervo eyes track goals

He could be seen rounding the far turn in the quarter-mile track at Morgan State University, gliding along with smooth, seemingly effortless strides, his yellow windbreaker streaming in the wind.

A pair of eyes, squinting in the low, winter's afternoon sunlight, followed the running figure around the turn and into the straightaway.

"I expect him to go low 47 before the season's end," Fred Hendricks, whose squinting eyes followed the running figure, said.

Hendricks, the track coach at Mergenthaller High School was putting the Mustangs' track team through a pre - season exercise. The day's session was called only to allow the runners a chance to get their legs flexible and ready for serious training, Hendricks said.

But already the coach, who is in his 11th year at Mervo, is beginning to set goals for the team and the individuals who pound the cinders for him.

"I try to help them set goals," the coach said of Paul Brown, the running figure that caught his eye, and of the rest of the team.

"Then it is a matter of helping them reach those goals," he said.

Mervo has been near the top of track competition in the city in recent years, and Hendricks wishes to continue the successes.

"Since 1976 we have finished out of the top three only once," Hendricks said, adding he would like to unseat Mt. St. Joe for the MSA crown this year.

Mervo's last championship was in 1977.

By establishing goals for the team and helping individuals set goals for themselves, Hendricks assists the members of the Mervo team to understand what they are trying to do, a vital first step which makes the ultimate success seem more attainable to the runners.

"He really motivates me," Paul Brown, the long-striding Mervo quarter-miler said after Tuesday's practice. "He takes things step-by-step."

Hendricks patient approach stresses the achievability of a series of small goals strung together. The approach avoids frustrating or overwhelming his runners.

"As I go along with my training I know what my goal is," Brown said. "If I run a 48 one time, I know I am shooting for a 47. I don't have to do it all immediately. He is not expecting me to run a 47 in the first meet."

Although Paul Brown is not the fastest man in the city, he makes good use of his physical and mental capabilities, and draws from experience gained by running with the Baltimore Suns track team.

"He has picked up a lot of track sense in the years he has been running," Hendricks said. "He's an excellent strategist. He knows where he is in a race, knows where to make his move. He gets into good position."

Hendricks in hoping to get his team into good position for another good season this year, and perhaps to take the MSA crown.

Mervo gained only two points from field events in the MSA tournament last spring, a factor Hendricks thinks prevented his team from challenging for the title. He hopes to do better this year.

"Cal Brown is expected to handle the high jump pretty well," Hendricks said, adding Cal broke the Mervo triple-jump record over the summer.

The Mervo team is bolstered by a number of the city's outstanding schoolboy trackmen.

Ricky Meekins, a senior, is the 1500 meter champ. And Kenny Daughtry, a sizzling soph, went to Nebraska during the summer to take the Junior Nationals in the 1500 meters.

Although Hendricks thinks this will be another good year for his runners, if they realize their goals, he would not make an MSA title prediction.

"We'll have to see," he said.

GOALMOUTH SCRAMBLE — Members of Poly's lacrosse team charge a loose ball, the result of an errant shot which skipped past the cage during a recent practice. The Engineers, 9 - 3 last year and reigning MSA 'B' Conference champs, are hard at work. "We would like to do well again this year," understated Poly's coach Augie Waibel.

'Cats' pursue official title

Although Mt. St. Joseph's holds the official MSA 'A' Conference crown, Northwestern High may be considered the unofficial champs.

"We got the most points in the MSA final last year, but we were said to be ineligible by the committee (the MSA)," Jim Ward, Northwestern's coach said in a recent interview.

The MSA put Northwestern's entire athletic program on probation last year because an over-aged football player had been fielded, Ward said. The decision left the school's sports program ineligible for championship recognition. recognition the school is eager to win back.

Asked if this year will be a winning one for the Northwestern harriers, Ward would only respond with cryptic evasiveness.

"Let me just say we will be there," he said with a chuckle. "I don't want to say any more than that."

When pressed, however, he said the team has managed to do consistently well in the recent past, and a number of last year's juniors have returned.

James Lands, last year's MSA long-jump champ; Hank McKinney, a pole vaulter and Alfonso Henson, a quarter - miler are three individuals Ward mentioned.

He said the junior varsity has been the reigning MSA champion for five years running, and has not lost a dual meet in that time span.

But he mentioned the graduation of several seniors from last year's fleet footed squad, and expressed concern their absence could affect this year's chances.

Gone is Bucky Taylor, the three year MSA one-half mile champ, and Adrian Ward, the three-year MSA 300 meter high hurdles, triple-jump and mile relay champ. Gone also is Antonio Carter, and others.

"We have lost some key kids," he said.

Humility is a characteristic which seems to strike all coaches when asked to assess their prospects before a season, and it did not fail to strike Ward.

"You had better call Mervo," the Northwestern coach said. "Mervo is the team to beat this year, Mervo and Poly. Also, keep an eye on Walbrook. We are going to take our lumps this year," he continued earnestly.

One might have imagined that Northwestern had graduated everyone except the guys who get timed for the quarter mile with a sundial.

Wrestling tourney set

The MSA season may be officially over, but wrestling fans will get more than just a taste of their favorite sport in the next few weekends.

A Collegiate-Style Wrestling Tournament, sponsored by the Westside at Walbrook Wrestling Club, will be presented at Walbrook High this weekend.

A class field, including a number of MSA title-holders, is expected to show up from the corners of the greater Baltimore area and from as far away as Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Also upcoming on the wrestling calendar are events at St. Paul's, March 20, and at Morgan on the 27th.

Larry McCoy, Walbrook's wrestling coach and a principal organizer of the Walbrook tournament sees the tourney as a chance for participating atheletes to broaden their experience.

"Thats our whole thing, to give our kids some exposure," an exuberant McCoy said Tuesday.

Awards will be given to the top four wrestlers in each weight class, and a free clinic will be available between 9 and 10 a.m. for those interested in polishing techniques.

Registration is available at the door, and is $5.00 with a U.S.W.F. card. Persons without the card may purchase one, also $5.00, at the registration. The card is good at all other U.S.W.F. meets.

Spectator admission is $1.00 for adults and 50 cents for children 15 and under.

For more information, call Larry McCoy at 396-0720.

Students in good health

About 700 high school kids turned up at the Union Memorial Hospital last Saturday to be probed and thumped, eyed and interrogated.

No, this is not the latest punk fad. Rather, it was spring physical time again for aspiring high school atheletes.

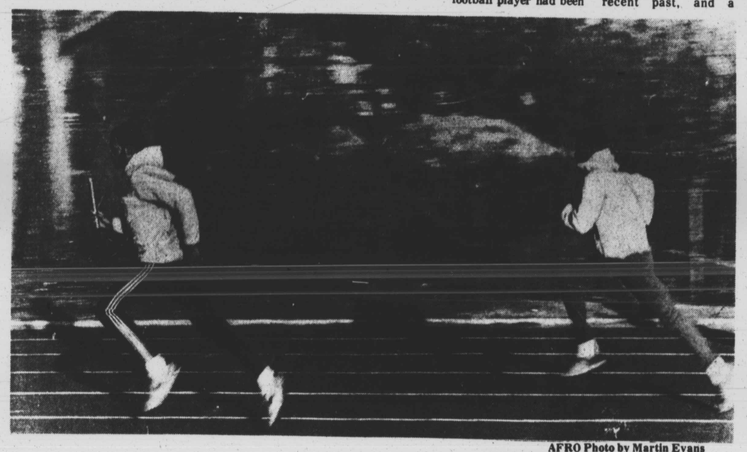
As required by school board regulation, all high school students wishing to participate in interscholastic events must pass a physical examination, and six area schools, including Poly, Northern Eastern, City, Western and Lake Clifton were chosen to get the exams at Union Memorial.

The results of the physicals indicate students are relatively free of major health problems.

Kevin Cross, a freshman at Northern High said he had come because he intends to play varsity baseball, following in the footsteps of his older brother, Joseph.

"He hit a couple of home runs for them last year," Kevin said proudly.

"I would like to play, too."



AFRO Photo by Martin Evans

A TUNE-UP SPRINT — Paul Brown and Jeff Williams, two of Mervo's top runners, were a blur of speed as they rounded this turn during a practice run Tuesday afternoon on the MSU track. Mervo practices at Morgan because it lacks its own track facilities. Jeff, an honor roll student, competes in hurdling events. Paul, the recipient of at least one scholarship offer, likes to stay closer to the ground, and competes at 400 meters.

Poly stickmen gear up

The Poly lacrossemen, reigning MSA 'B' conference champions, began spring practices last week, bent on capturing the title again this year.

Coach Augie Waibel assembled his stickmen in the chill, late winter's air Friday, March 5, to drill the team in basic formations and to have a look at new and returning talent.

"Hold it, hold it," the big coach boomed at a prospective player guilty of sloppy stickwork.

"What are you doing with the stick way out here," Waibel asked in his good-natured, gravely-voiced growl. "You hold it out here and the defensemen will love you for it. They will throw themselves at you. Their tongues will be hanging out!"

Waibel then panted like a dog and foamed at the mouth, his eyes bulging like a madman for effect. A number of the Engineers suppressed snickers, but the offending stickman, as well as the others, seemed to have gained a graphic appreciation of what the coach was driving at.

"A lot of new kids are afraid of getting hit with the stick," Waibel said after practice, explaining their propensity for holding the ball away from their bodies.

He said getting over that fear is essential to being able to concentrate on the game itself.

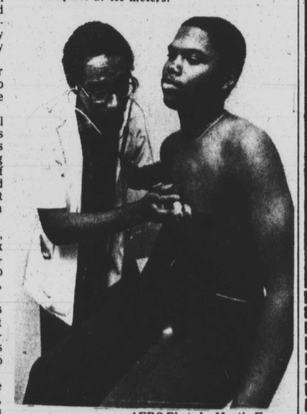
The Engineers will have a number of players return to action this year, players who long ago overcame the fear of the slashings and clubbings which, at least to the uninitiated, seem part of the game.

Two such players, Gary Adams and Mark Johnson, will lend experience and maturity to the offense and defense, respectively.

Adams uses his quickness around the net to create scoring opportunities, and hampers opponent's efforts to clear the ball.

"Gary is all over the field," Waibel said, adding Mark Johnson, a three year starter, is "one of those guys who doesn't like to be last. He wants to be first."

The two seem to exemplify the team's spirit.



AFRO Photo by Martin Evans

A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH was given to most of the city's high school students who visited Union Memorial Hospital last Saturday for physical check-ups required of participants in varsity and junior varsity athletics. Here, Dr. Walter Burkes listens to the heartbeat of Kevin Cross, a freshman at Northern High.

$500 REWARD

For information leading to the arrest and indictment of the person or persons responsible for the death of

HOWARD SMITH, Jr.

on March 6, 1982 at approximately 10:30 P.M. in the vicinity of the Harlem Park Elementary School at Calhoun and Lanvale Sts.

All information received in the strictest confidence. Please contact

BALTO. POLICE

222-3333 or

METRO CRIME ALERT

276-8888

Clip This Coupon Today!

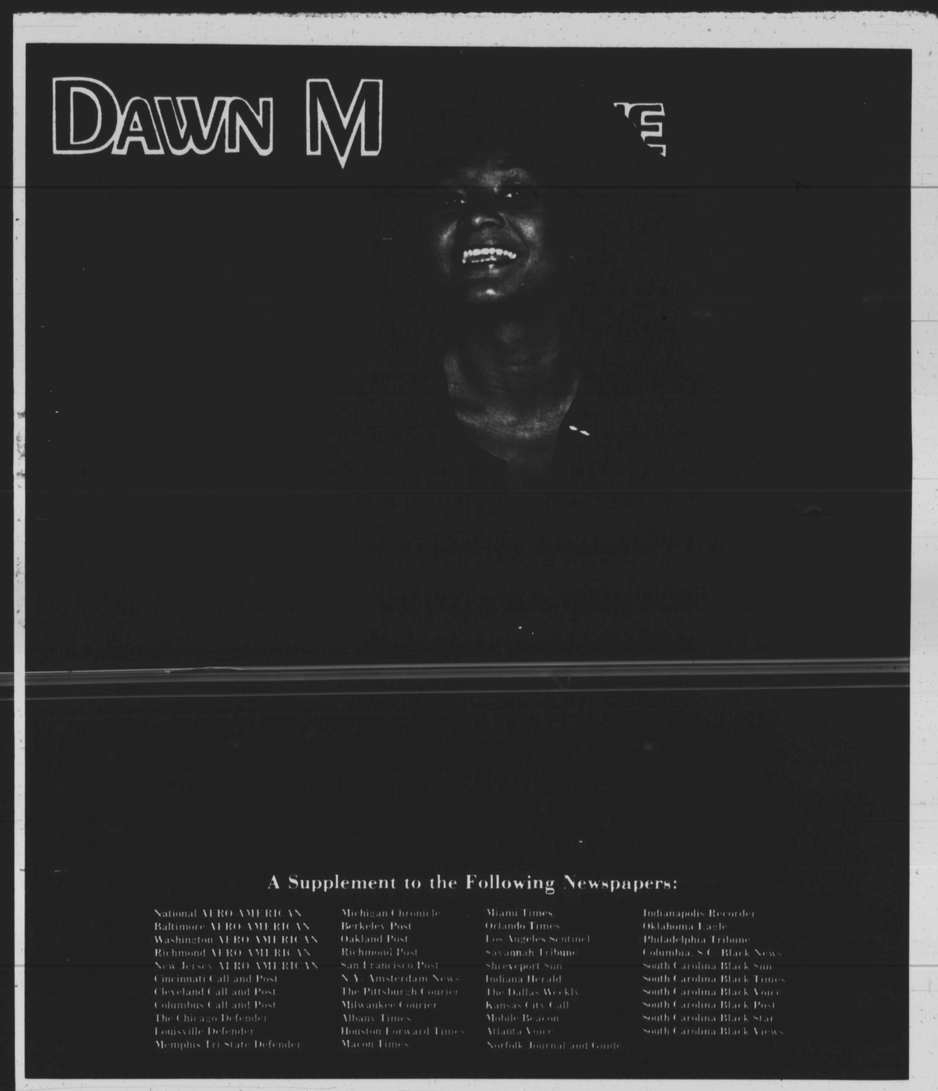
If you are not a Home Delivery by mail Subscriber Clip this coupon today and join the many Baltimoreans enjoying the Tuesday & Friday Baltimore Afro-American

For Home Delivery
Mail coupon and check to:
THE AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS
Circulation Dept.
P.O. Box 1857
Baltimore, Md. 21203

Please start my Home Delivery Order Immediately. Send To:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

If charged to Master Charge of Visa
Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Thirteen Weeks For $9.00

THIS OFFER GOOD ONLY TO NON-SUBSCRIBERS