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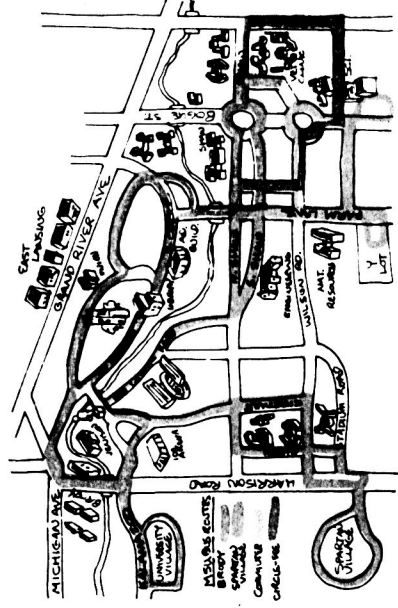
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"SPORTS: It's Made of People"

Rogers: 'Passing coach'

By TOM SHANAHAN
State News Sports Writer

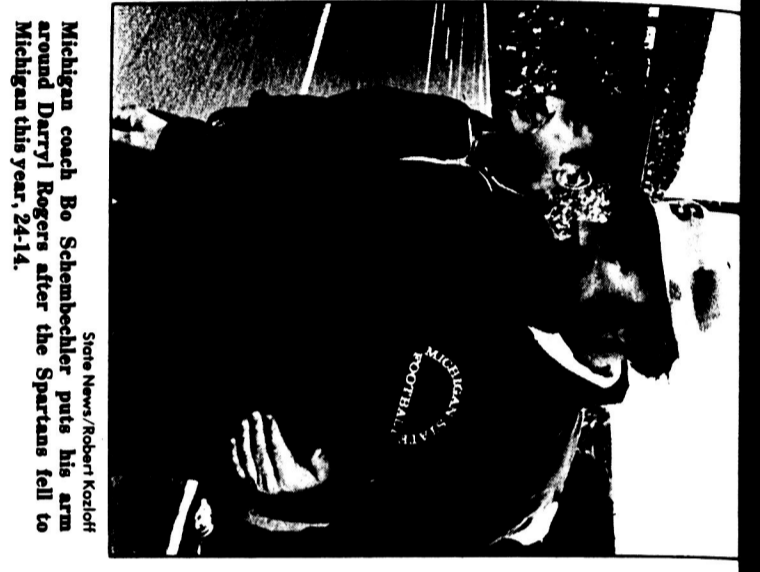
Darryl Rogers — the radical coach who passes the football in the Big Ten.

Last year, his first at MSU, Rogers created a stir when he named a former assistant coach as his first assistant. The move was an unorthodox coach that passed down the way I look at it, if you complete the pass on the



MSU quarterback Ed Smith has helped coach Darryl Rogers install a passing attack at MSU. Here they discuss strategy during a sideline conference in the rain at Indiana.

kind of a guy this is. He was quoted on arrival in East Lansing in April 1976 as saying: "From what I gather, Big Ten coaches don't like to pass on first down because if it's incomplete, that means they have to pass on the next two downs. The way I look at it, if you complete the pass on the



Michigan coach Bo Schembechler puts his arm around Darryl Rogers after the Spartans fell to Michigan this year, 24-14.

Heathcote has MSU basketball contending

(continued from page 17)

points of your own university is something Heathcote obviously abhors. Instead, he tries to stress the academic factor when recruiting.

"My approach to recruiting is more than just being a vacuum cleaner salesman who goes out and peddles things that aren't really there," he said. "A kid's education is still the primary purpose of being at a university. I believe you have to be sincere and honest or you'll never interest anyone in your university."

While Heathcote calls his approach to recruiting low-key, the same cannot be said of his coaching style.

Heathcote was the head coach at Montana and an assistant at Washington State before coming to MSU.

Throughout his coaching career Heathcote said he has been emotionally and actively involved with the game, the players and the officials.

"As a coach, I think the more vocal you are, the more open you are to criticism," Heathcote said. "There are a number of people who think the coach should sit and let the players should play. I don't believe that."

"This year I'll be less visibly emotional. I'll still be as emotional, it just won't be that obvious."

"But I have to be involved and if I get to the point where I'm not, then I'll give up coaching."

Viewing Heathcote from the stands, it would appear he often gets quite irate with his players. More than a few times fans have commented, "Boy, I'd sure hate to play for him."

But that's Heathcote's style. "You have to kind of educate your fans to your style. If every time you try to get information in to your players the fans interpret it as negativism, then you can't operate."

But Heathcote does admit he is often more negative toward his players than most coaches. He said he often gets coaching points across by pointing out mistakes.

For instance, one day in practice a player took a long jump shot way out of his range. Heathcote blew his whistle and shouted, "Do you ever wonder why you're always so wide open? It's because you take such damn long shots no one bothers to guard you."

But again, that's his style. "For the two hours a day of practice, players' personal problems are not important. They are out there to make themselves better basketball players and we're trying to help them. We have to worry about

the task at hand — and that's basketball."

"But at the same time, I recognize there are pressures and problems facing the kids, and I always work hard to help them out. I've always had a close rapport with all my players but I develop that more while off the court."

With basketball, Heathcote is all business. He has to be because it's his job. But there is also a light and humorous side to the 50-year old coach that many fans don't realize.

While sitting in his office, a reporter called to ask Heathcote how he thought the Big Ten would shape up this year.

"Purdue first. Minnesota second. Michigan ought to be third and Indiana fourth. Iowa fifth. Illinois and Wisconsin will battle it out for sixth and seventh. And Ohio State and Northwestern will bring up the rear."

A bewildered caller must have wondered why Heathcote failed to mention MSU. A couple seconds later Heathcote blurted out, "Oh, I knew I forgot somebody."

Taking the humor away from the episode, it doesn't appear that Heathcote doesn't just want to come out and say his team could win it all.

But he did say his players have a great attitude going into the season. He sums up his outlook as optimistic and enthusiastic.

"We'll talk about being realistic, but if we were to be totally realistic we would be satisfied with a fifth- or sixth-place finish. We're not prepared to do that," Heathcote said.

"We're a lot like the Lansing people who expect a lot out of us because we're looking for a hell of a season."

"Maybe we won't get it. But if we aren't looking for a great season we'll never have it."

(continued from page 2)
Last Saturday's 29-10 win over Minnesota has Rogers' two-year rebuilding program

college to add to the stature he already has in the Lansing area?

amount to all this for someone whose 18 years old. It's been a real trip but you don't really care. Einar Johnson says

By TOM SHANAHAN
State News Sports Writer
Einar Johnson says

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'Magic' waits for college

(continued from page 18)

Spartans are preparing for their first game with Central Michigan Nov. 28 at Jenson Fieldhouse that may open a new era in MSU basketball.

"We've got a super team and super guys and we're going to win. Hopefully we'll play the style of basketball that coach wants us to." As far as Johnson's style, MSU basketball coach Jud Heathcote has Johnson running the fastbreak and handling the ball.

"I like to create situations," Johnson said. "And I love it when I hit the open man and he lays it up for the easy two."

Johnson said he may have butterflies at the start of the game but... "As soon as the jump ball is tossed they'll be gone."

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Rogers

(continued from page 2)
Last Saturday's 28-10 win over Minnesota has Rogers over two-year rebuilding program at its peak. The Spartans have won three in a row and are in third place with a chance to finish second in the Big Ten. Rogers returned to his passing attack at Minnesota last week after being forced to run the ball because teams have been overplaying the pass. MSU quarterback Ed Smith and flanker Kirk Gibson hooked up with each other as they did last year. First Gibson caught a 51-yard touchdown pass and then an 85-yard scoring reception.


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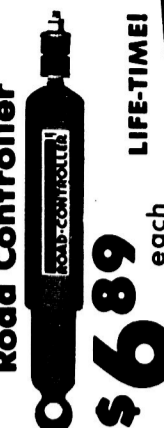
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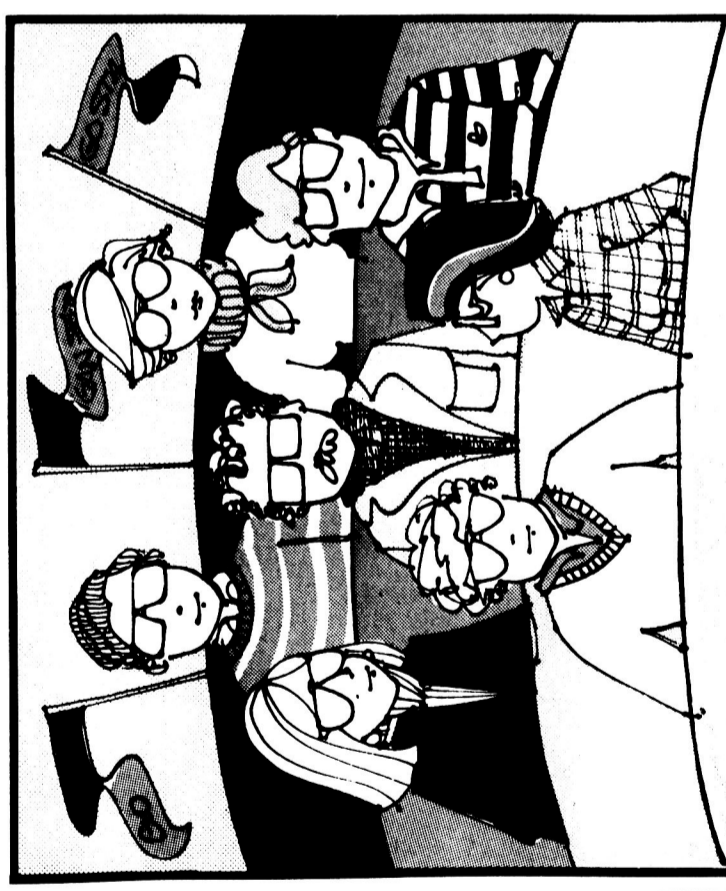
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Johnson captures fans

amount to all this for someone who's 18 years old. It's been a real trip but you don't really pay attention to it or you'll start ego tripping."
Although fan interest in MSU basketball grew after he said he would attend MSU, Johnson adds he knows veterans Greg Keiser and Bob Chapman are the stars.
"Greg and Bob have been here and I'm still learning. I'm something to add to the team and I'm not going to do anything silly."
"I know Bob and Greg can score and I'll just be another person to pick up the slack and score that 16 or 17 points they were missing last year. I'll play my role because you have to to end up losing."
"I feel that they (the fans) know who the big players are. When they see the games they'll know that Greg and Bob lead us and if people don't know at least I do."
After being called the best high school player in America and winning the state high school championship his senior year, what can Johnson do in college to add to the stature he already has in the Lansing area?
"High school was a super thing. Right now it's the greatest feeling I could ever have. It could be just as nice in college if we just pick up the track and win... I'm not used to losing. If we win the 'big boy' (the NCAA championship) it'd be just as nice. But first we have to work for the Big Ten championship."
Johnson said he tries not to let the admiration go to his head, but he adds he did enjoy the attention when he was recruited by any college he wanted to go to.
"It was nice and I could stand it again," Johnson smiled. "It was a big decision for me and that's why it took a long time. I wanted to be sure, but I was also glad when it was over because now I get a lot more time."
The recruiting battle for Johnson last spring narrowed down to MSU and Michigan. And when the day finally came for him to announce the decision, he had still kept it a year, what can Johnson do in



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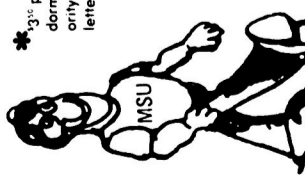
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State News/Robert Kozloff
MSU freshman Earvin 'Magic' Johnson pulls down a rebound in last spring's state championship game. Johnson and his Lansing Everett teammates won the class A state title over Birmingham Brother Rice.


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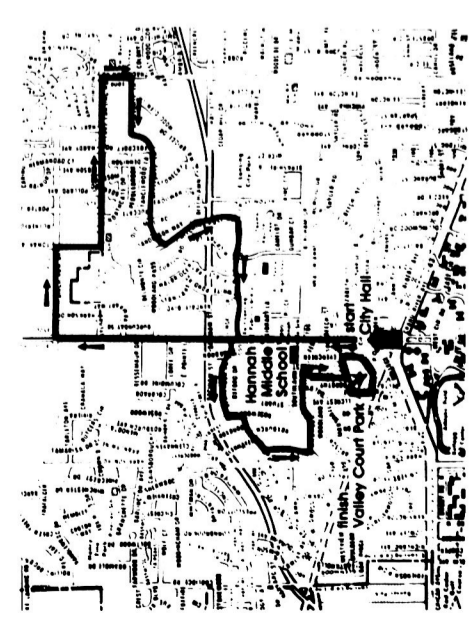


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 (continued from page 15)
 us picked to finish fifth or sixth in the Big Ten. But that's not the NCAA.
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made a 51-yarder in the second half, Rogers said. "Hans usually jumps up and down after he makes a field goal but after that one, he just picked up the ball and ran."

Rogers events
 In 15 years, our first year we were 4-5-2 and we had kids crying because they'd never been on a winning team before. Michigan State is not a school with 15 years of losing. They've been at the top of the Big Ten and they've had a national championship — Michigan State may have had the best college football team ever assembled in 1965 and '66. Because of that there is a chance to do it again.
 "I don't set goals as a straight,

could just go and have a tailgate party or sit in the stands with a girl and friends. I've never been able to enjoy watching a game and just mess around. I'm sure I've missed a real pleasure because I seldom see the bands and the pagentry and I think that is as important as the game itself.
 Rebuilding MSU to the national power it once was in the 1950s and '60s is the job ahead of Rogers.

"It's completely different (at MSU) than at San Jose because we hadn't had a winning season



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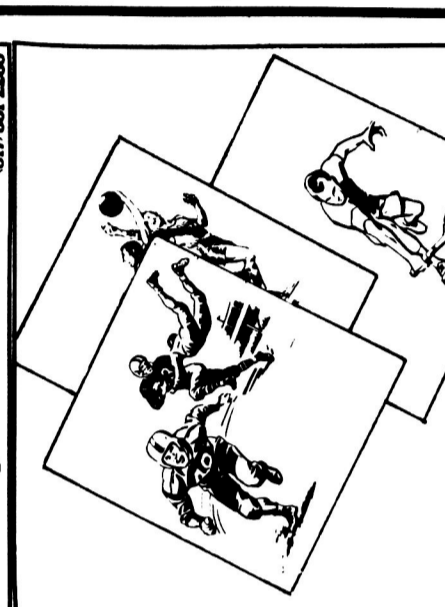
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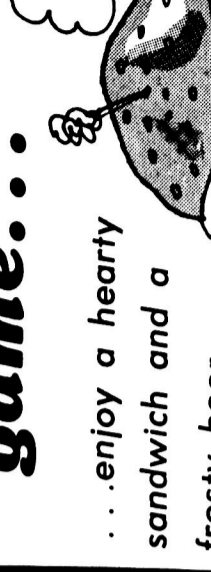
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MSU football because of probability when they've obtained some thing bigger than what they've done in the past two seasons. Rogers has been able to keep his unique sense of humor

Rogers rebuilds football
 Rogers says he has been playing "Throughout my playing days I was a receiver and a quarterback," Rogers said. "I

Even though his offense isn't playing exactly as he wants it to, because that might take a championship year, the Big Ten already knows what the name Rogers means. "That's the guy who passes."

With two games left in the 1977 season Rogers may be progressing faster than he hoped, if not faster than the media thought MSU could. The win over Minnesota evened Rogers' two year record

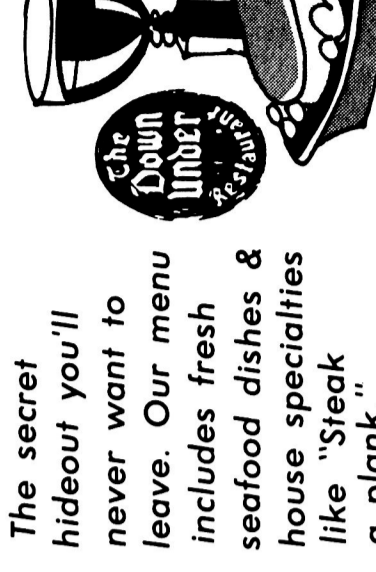


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found this passing disease. "Through the road aren't going to find it."

MSU record
 "Okay, this year is when we can beat Michigan." The first thing we (coaching staff) try to do is beat Michigan and try to beat Notre Dame. After we've tried to beat someone we can measure ourselves against we ask,

With two games left in the 1977 season Rogers may be progressing faster than he hoped, if not faster than the media thought MSU could. The win over Minnesota evened Rogers' two year record

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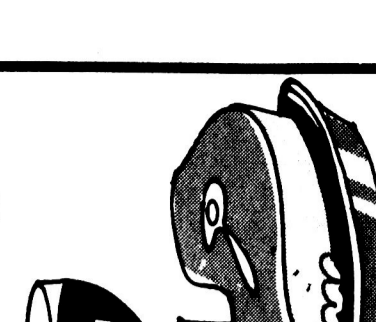


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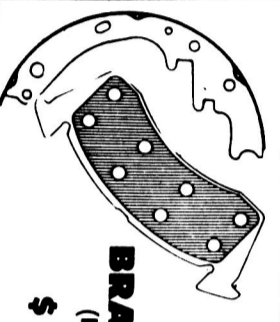


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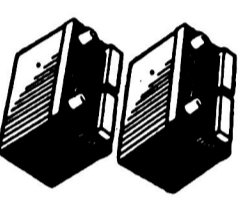


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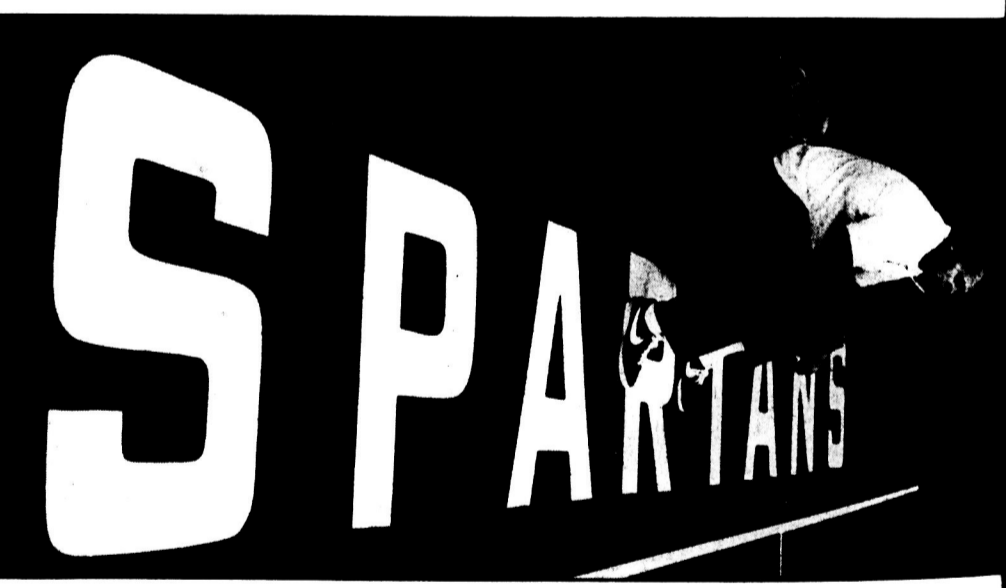
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Heathcote mellow yet?

By MICHAEL KLOCKE
 State News Sports Writer
 Jud Heathcote sat in his team office leaning back in a chair with his feet propped up on his desk. He looked calm and complacent as he answered questions and reflected on his career, his coaching style and the MSU basketball program.
 "Calm and complacent? Now how can this be the same Jud Heathcote whose vociferous antics and referee baiting were so noticeable during his first season at MSU?"
 "I'm in my twenty-eighth year of coaching. You'd think that age, baldness and obesity would mellow a coach," Heathcote said. "But I get involved. I'm an emotional person and I become totally obsessed with the game."
 Heathcote is about to begin his second year as the Spartan head coach after replacing Gus Ganakas. In his first year MSU suffered through a dismal 10-17 season and sixth place finish.
 But now things couldn't look much brighter for Heathcote and his team. Basketball interest at MSU is at an all time high, mainly because the Spartans have Earvin "Magic" Johnson and many people expect him to lead the Spartans to



State News/Robert Kozloff
 Due mainly to Jud Heathcote's outstanding recruiting success, basketball interest at MSU appears to be at an all time high.

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State News/Robert Kozloff
 Jud Heathcote, who is known for his emotional and boisterous coaching style, looks rather subdued during a recent practice. Heathcote said he would be less visibly emotional this season.

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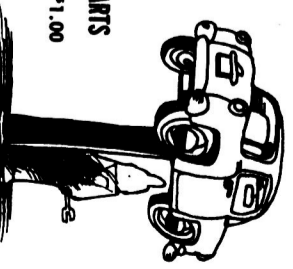
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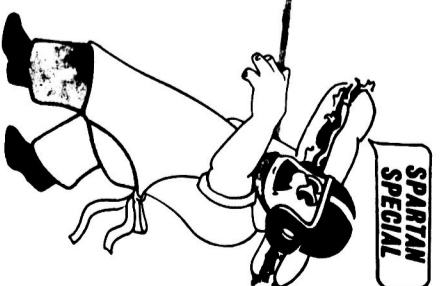
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See

Amo a long MSU saga

By EDWARD L. RONDERS
Special to the State News
Take one cigar-smoking Italian from Springfield, Mass.



State News/Maggie Walker
Amo Bessone still breaks out the skates to coach the MSU hockey team on the ice. Bessone's career at MSU has been anything but dull.

Then place the entire affair on ice.
The result is: Amo Bessone. The tales involving the cigar-chomping Bessone reach from Chicago to the vast expanses of New Mexico and Arizona.
And each incident concerning the Spartan coach has its own individual value.

The Bessone saga began soon after graduation from high school and a stint in Paris, France playing professional hockey.
Following his return to the States, Bessone went to the University of Illinois.

While on the Champaign campus, Bessone met an individual who was to later become one of his closest friends; John Mariucci.

Their paths crossed several times in later years as Mariucci went on to coach hockey at Minnesota following a professional career with the Chicago Black Hawks. Bessone met his rival while behind the bench in East Lansing.

Mariucci now a scout for the Minnesota North Stars believes in chiding Amo at every opportunity.

"Yeah, Amo's a low-class Italian and a bad hockey coach, too," Mariucci said from his Minneapolis office.
"Why, one year we were (continued on page 8)



State News/Maggie Walker
With his baseball cap, but lacking his cigar, Amo Bessone eyes another practice session in his 27 years as the Spartan's coach.

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...and we were losing 5-3 in the third period," he continued.

"Then I taught Amo a lesson and pulled my goaltender with about eight minutes to go. We ended up winning that game 6-5 and Amo's face was just salient after that defeat," Manucci recollected.

"In fact, he couldn't even talk for a week. I think it was Amo, that's damned hard for Amo to do," he added.

Bessone returned to his friend's account of the embarrassing defeat at the hands of the Gophers.

"John's a hell of a guy," Bessone blurted while cigar smoke curled past his glasses. He's pulling your leg. I'll tell you what really happened. Hell, we saved John's job with that game. In fact, Minnesota won it on a fluke play. Their player tried to clear the puck from behind our net and it hit our goalie in the back of the head and went in.

"I told John after the game that even a blind pig can find an

scoren every now and then. Following his stint in World War II, Bessone played professional hockey with Providence of the old American Hockey League. His teams opponent one night was Cleveland, who counted on its roster Amo's brother Pete.

The game started fiercely with Pete taking a five-inch gash from the business end of one of Amo's teammates.

"Yeah, that's how it started," Amo grunted. "I warned our guy that Pete was mad and would get him. Sure enough in the second period, while I'm in the penalty box Pete gets this guy a good one and gets a penalty.

"The Providence bench was right next to the penalty box and when Pete came over to get in, one of my teammates said he was gonna get that big son of a bitch.

"I told him not to mess around because Pete was mad."

Amo continued. "Finally this guy keeps threatening and here he comes over the boards from the bench. So I cold-cocked on him in mid-air. I guess blood's thicker than different uniform colors. When we went into the locker room between periods, I figured there'd be another fight. That poor guy had one of the biggest shiners I've ever seen," Bessone recalled.

"But the guys sort of laughed it off. It wasn't funny when we got fined, though," he added stumbling for yet another light.

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for his clear.

While Bessone was eager to challenge his own teammate in Providence, the Spartan coach was less than eager to put a team on the ice in Albuquerque, N.M.

During his first year at MSU Denver where we had phase reservations with the University to get back to East Lansing.

"When this guy wouldn't pay," Bessone continued, "I refused to send the team on the (continued on page 13)

"I was a rookie coach that year and learned my lesson," Bessone declared, the cigar finally finding life again.

"The promoter in Albuquerque didn't want to pay the guaranteed gate money to us. We needed it to get back to Denver where we had phase reservations with the University to get back to East Lansing."

"When this guy wouldn't pay," Bessone continued, "I refused to send the team on the (continued on page 13)

(continued from page 8)

ice. He finally convinced me to accept a check, but before we went out for the game I sent the student manager across the street to get plane reservations back to Denver.

"There were 5,000 people, including the governor, waiting for the game to start. Well, they waited about an hour until we got the guaranteed money," Bessone reminisced.

While the check in Albuquerque was good, Amo didn't run into any such luck on the Phoenix leg of the 1950 venture.

"I met this guy at the hotel who said he was Mickey Potter from Saginaw. And that he graduated from MSU. When he found out who we were, he was happy to wine and dine with us. Hell, this guy had money. He'd think nothing of tipping a waitress \$5 for a sandwich."

"He gave me a check for \$500 and told me to make sure the boys had a nice Christmas," Bessone chuckled.

"Then he turned around and gave the barmaid a check for \$1,000. When I got home from that trip, here's a stranger sitting in my parlor. He's an FBI agent."

(continued from page 12)

checks to me and the barmaid since Mr. Potter's bank was called and said that wasn't the real Mr. Potter," Bessone mused.

"The agent told me that the guy was a coal miner from Illinois and had somehow come across Mr. Potter's credit cards and check book. I guess the guy had a grand time for awhile going to (Las) Vegas and then on to Phoenix. But, he got tripped up when he wrote those

AND COACHES MSU HOCKEY 21 YEARS

Kearney heads Spartans

(continued from page 12)

responses toward MSU has been "overwhelmingly good."

"Everywhere I go people seem to be very optimistic about MSU's athletic program," Kearney said. "People are really starting to believe in MSU."

The reason they are believing may be that in Joe Kearney, MSU has exactly what they need in the athletic director's office — a touch of class.

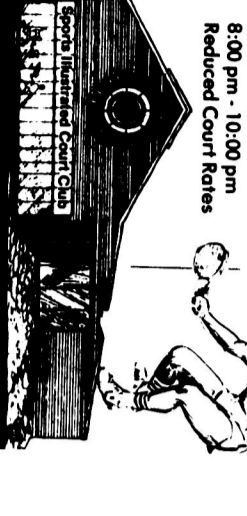
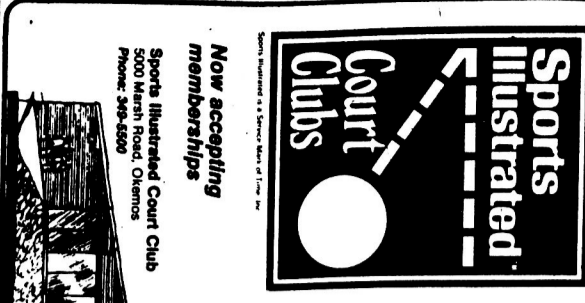
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an an athletic expected to be never lot of coaching, he said he never (11) aged many participants)

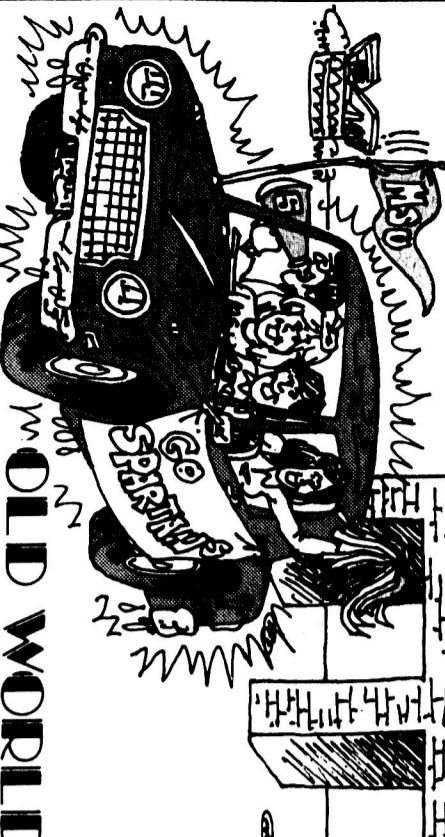
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Kearney heads Spartans

(continued from page 12)

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Kearney

(continued from page 11)
 Although Kearney had done a lot of coaching, he said he never expected to be an athletic administrator. He was a high school principal for seven years, and he had his eyes set on the presidency of one of the small California junior colleges.

"It became apparent to me that I needed a Ph.D. if I was going to go anywhere," Kearney said. "While I was at the University of Washington working on my doctorate, I was made head of a counseling office for student athletes. Every year they gave me more and more to do until eventually I became athletic director in 1989."

Kearney said he enjoys his work at MSU and all the people he has met. But he added that sometime in the future, a university vice-presidency or perhaps the presidency of a junior college would not be out of the question.

But that is for the future. Currently, Kearney is looking at an athletic program at MSU that is beginning to improve under his leadership.

Kearney is realistic about how long it will take to rebuild MSU following the probation. He hopes it will take five years and he added that things are looking better everyday.

"You just don't build a football program overnight," Kearney said.

(continued on page 13)

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MSU athletic director Joe Kearney invites Spartan coaches into his office to discuss rebuilding MSU. Football coach Darryl Rogers and hockey coach Amo Bessone carry a depleted Spartan while basketball coach Jud Heathcote feeds the patient "Magic pills."

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Kearney heads rebuilding task

By MICHAEL KLOCKE
 State News Staff Writer

The MSU athletic scene was in a state of turmoil in April of 1976 when Joe Kearney was appointed athletic director.

The NCAA had just placed MSU's football program on three-year probation for various rule violations. Kearney's job was to rebuild the program.

But before he could even begin to rebuild Spartan athletics, Kearney had to help MSU establish a degree of credibility. Public sentiment toward MSU athletes was understandably negative.

"We felt if in our first three years we could establish some credibility, some meaningful relationships and set a foundation for our program, then we might be a little bit stronger coming out of probation than we were going in," Kearney said.

But in addition to the probation, Kearney had the more immediate task of choosing coaches. Denny Stolz and Gus Ganakas were both gone and Kearney's chore was to choose new coaches for two major revenue sports.

"I've got a private philosophy of what my role is as an athletic administrator. I think the most important area is how well I hire," Kearney said. "Secondly, I then have to provide them with the resources and the environment so they can do their job."

Many people close to MSU already had their picks made for the two head coaching jobs. So what does this new athletic director do but choose Darryl Rogers and Jud Heathcote from two obscure schools out west? But Kearney had no second thoughts.

"I knew these coaches wouldn't be exactly household names. But a good coach is a coach."



State News/Robert Koriof

Athletic Director Joe Kearney has had the task of rebuilding a beleaguered athletic program. His efforts appear to be paying off as MSU sports are on the upswing. (continued on page 11)

Kearney entered athletic program in troubled times

(continued from page 10)

coaches were.

In retrospect, there are two obvious ways to look at MSU's decision to come to Kearney. One is to wonder why he would want to step into a program in such obvious turmoil. Two, you could say it represented a personal challenge.

But Kearney said he looked on it simply as a great opportunity.

"A lot of people ask me why I would want to step into all of these difficulties. But you have to realize that we probably have one of the 20 finest universities in the country," Kearney said.

"MSU enjoys a reputation that maybe you don't realize when you're right in its own backyard. I realized that MSU had the necessary resources to climb back after the trauma of the probation, so I viewed it more as a great opportunity than a challenge."

The busy and complex schedule of an athletic director can make the job rather hectic — but Kearney obviously enjoys it.

"It's one of the more complex jobs and in many ways I deal with the same type of constituency as a top-level university administrator," Kearney said. "You deal with a very visible entity. Everything you do is going to be commented on — either good had or indifferent."

One of the main jobs of an athletic director is funding since MSU has 24 different sports to support.

Most of the money has to be generated by the department itself. MSU's athletic department is working on a budget of \$3.7 million dollars this year — the University allocates \$400,000 and the athletic department must come up with \$3.3 million.

"As an athletic director, you are responsible for a depart-



Kearney

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