

Well, Let's Make This One a Year the Boys Will Talk About Forever

SPORT IN OMAHA LOOKS BACK OVER GREATEST YEAR

Rourkes Win Pennant, Many Big Events Are Held and Fans Only Get Stung One Time.

GREAT MOTOR CLASSIC

Stecher-Lewis Match, Great Western Races, Western Handicap All Big Events.

OMAHA HAS MANY CHAMPS

Glancing backward over the old year before we give it a parting kick in the slats and speed it on its way into the dark recesses of the forgotten past, one finds that 1916 was a pretty good old year for Omaha lovers of sport. The Rourkes won a pennant, Omaha was fortunate enough to land a number of big events, and only once did the chaps who plunk down their change at the box office fail to get their money's worth.

The largest piece of good fortune for the largest number of Omaha's sport lovers was, of course, the successful pennant campaign of the Omaha base ball club. For the first time since 1907 the local team captured the Western league pennant. The Rourkes got away to a flying start shortly after the season opened and they maintained their lead against all opposition until the end. The largest crowd in the history of the Western league turned out for a double-header between Omaha and Lincoln at Rourke park the latter part of August. It totaled almost 9,000 paid admissions.

In the way of big sporting events Omaha got more than its share. Not a city of corresponding size and population entertained as many big events as did Omaha during 1916.

Many Rare Treats.

A big automobile classic, the Stecher-Lewis wrestling match, the Western Handicap trap shooting tournament, the state golf tournament, the Great Western circuit harness races, the big indoor athletic and gymnastic meet, all were rare treats for Omaha.

The automobile derby held on the East Omaha oval went down in the annals of automobile racing as one of the greatest speedway classics ever held in this country. No more closely contested, exciting, thrilling gasoline speed contest has ever been held on United States soil. Dario Resta, the famous English-Italian pilot, won the championship event after a grueling contest with Smiling Ralph Mulford, averaging over ninety-nine miles an hour in the face of a blistering sun in order to do it. Ralph De Palma won the short race, marking up a new competitive record for fifty miles.

Three world's records were established on the Omaha track by three of the speed demons entered in the race. Ralph Mulford set up a new mark of over 111 miles an hour for a single lap on a speedway. Dario Resta made a new record for five miles and Eddie Rickenbacher established a new mark for twenty-five miles.

Five days of Great Western circuit racing were staged on the Omaha Driving club's track for lovers of harness stepping. Some of the classiest pacers and trotters in the country took part in the events and no more interesting races to see were held at any other point, not even on the grand circuit. The grand circuit races were a little faster, but the competition wasn't any closer and the rivalry any keener and the races any more thrilling. Three days of state circuit racing was also held on the Benson track in June.

The biggest wrestling event of the year was held in Omaha on July 4 when Joe Stecher and Strangler Lewis clashed. This is the one event which didn't pay dividends from the spectator's standpoint. It was a disappointing bout to watch as a result of the tediously careful defensive tac-

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New Swimmers Put New Life in Water Sports

Swimming proved to be a popular sport of the year, both in college as well as amateur ranks, and it gained a larger following than ever with the women. Record-breaking performances were not quite so much in evidence as during the preceding year, but there were enough of these to bring gratification.

Duke Kahanamoku of Honolulu added several new marks to his already formidable string, as also did Lucy Langer of the Los Angeles Athletic club. Herbert Vollmer of Columbia club was another to loosen some of the former marks, and in addition, he was a decided aid to the Columbia team in the intercollegiate events. Several new women's records were also established, one for 100 yards by Olga Dorfner, and another, a long-distance record, by Eileen Lee, while Claire Galligan established an American mile record for women.

The Yale university team succeeded in capturing the intercollegiate honors, while the water polo champions went to the Princeton combination.

Walnut Hill Methodists Win Over Former Stars

The Walnut Hill Methodist church basket ball five won a victory over a quintet composed of former stars at the church, 19 to 12. Austin, with four field goals in the last half, was the star. Any team wishing games with the Walnut Hill crew call Earl Watson at Benson 588-J after 7 o'clock. The lineup:

W. H. M. OLD STARS
Austin 12 P. Gruver
Austin C. Williams
Austin L.G. Evans
Austin L.G. Thomas

The Walnut Hill Methodist go to Shenandoah, Ia., New Year's night to play the Presbyterian Cubs at that city.

Omaha Champions of the Year 1916

Base Ball—Armours, Class A; Murphy Did It, Class B; Krsjeks, Class C.
Basket Ball—Brandt, Tri-City league; Omaha National Banks, Commercial league; First Methodists, Church league.
Billiards—C. C. S., Class A; Nease, individual champion; Garlow Colts, team champion; Wartchow and McCarthy, doubles champion; Art Pederson, all-events champion; Cheyenne, Omaha.
Cross-Country Running—Hart, Kans.
Foot Ball—Nanparis, Class A; Athletics, Class B; Thirtieth Street Merchants, Class C.
Golf—Ralph Peters, women, Mrs. E. H. Smith; Gymnastics—Frank Riha, individual champion; Omaha Catholic Sokols, team champions.
Hand Ball—F. S. Linn.
Motor Car—Birell, Lutz.
Poker Billiards—Heine, Harsh.
Soccer—Caledonians.
Squash—Spokane Kennedy.
Tennis—Ralph Powell, city champion; Howard Green, junior champion; Katherine Krug, women's champion.
Trap Shooting—Al Keyen.
Tug-of-War—Swedes.

Cue Contests Are Dulled by Lack of Good Competition

Billiards did not enjoy a particularly attractive year from the competitive standpoint. In professional billiards the supremacy of Willie Hoppe was not threatened and he was seldom called upon to play for his title. A handicap professional tournament was arranged in New York, but Hoppe, even allowing handicaps of 100 to 200 in 500 points, was not pressed to win any of his matches. It was in this tournament that he broke the high-run record at 182 balkline by clustering 308.

Hoppe defeated George Sutton in an 182 championship at St. Louis without being pressed closely. The death of Firmin Cassinol robbed the world of Hoppe's strongest opponent. In the amateur ranks Edward W. Gardner secured the national class A title in a tournament which showed rather mediocre billiards. Francis S. Appleby won the amateur class B tournament, with Edgar T. Appleby in second place, and these two were graduated into the class A event. In the class C division the championship went to H. W. Hawley. J. Howard Shoemaker was returned the victor in the pocket billiard championship.

The three-cushion billiard championship has been buffeted about from one player to another, no holder seeming to have the ability to retain the title for a great length of time. It was much the same way in pocket billiards, following the tournament in Chicago, which put a new emblem in competition. Frank Taberski, the present title holder, has been the most successful in keeping a firm hold on the championship.

Trapshooting Has Appeal for Strong Men of the Outdoors

That trapshooting has elements which attract men who breathe and live sport is evident by its naming among its enthusiastic followers such men as Honus Wagner of the Pittsburgh National league team, "Big Chief" Bender, the Indian twirler; "Christy" Mathewson, manager of the Cincinnati Reds; Ty Cobb, the Georgia flash; Lester German, who forsook the New York Nationals to become a professional "player" in the "sport alluring," and many other base ball celebrities.

On the other hand, we see John Philip Sousa finding invigorating recreation in making dust of the turtledove "clay pigeon."

To the man or woman possessed of a tender heart and who has no pleasure in the destruction of living creatures trapshooting affords pleasure without regret.

The "open" season for trapshooting is all of the calendar months and it may be enjoyed regardless of weather conditions.

Any large field is a hunting ground, with the game a-plenty, for the clay "birds" fly every day.

This Busher Umps Obey's Chief's Orders to Letter

Ever have a guy follow you around, do everything you do, eat the same things, wear the same kind of clothes, imitate your little pet oddities, in fact become your animated shadow?

If you did, here's a parallel.

In 1911 Ban Johnson signed up Harry Colliflower, a Southern league umpire, to work in the American league and sent him to Boston with instructions to Billy Evans to break him in.

Evans met him at breakfast the morning he arrived and the show began.

Everything Evans ordered on the bill of fare, Colliflower duplicated, every time Billy appeared with a new shirt, Colliflower bought its mate. If Evans appeared with a new Panama, Colliflower bought one. If Billy ordered chocolate soda, Colliflower couldn't see pineapple or orange.

The climax came near the end of the season when a foul tip broke through Evans' mask, bruising his eye and putting him out of the game for a few days.

The day he returned a foul tip crashed through Colliflower's mask and he was laid up with a black lamp.

Later Evans told Ban Johnson about it and pulled the biggest laugh Ban ever let loose of.

"I told that fellow to do whatever you did, but didn't expect him to follow instructions so closely," Ban chuckled.

Hooks Wiltse Now is Manager and Magnate

George (Hooks) Wiltse will be magnate as well as manager at Readings in the New York State league next season. He has bought a full interest in the club from Dr. F. N. Tate of Albany, who has been sole owner. Wiltse will look after all business affairs from the Reading end, as well as be playing manager.

Cleveland Sends Kid To New Orleans Club

Jack Bradley, the University of Illinois catcher who had a tryout with Cleveland, will be sent to New Orleans for next year.

WESTERN LEAGUE HAS BAD SEASON

Omaha Is Only Club in Circuit That Winds Up Year Without Deficit.

AND 1917 IS UNCERTAIN

While the pennant race was moderately interesting and exciting and the Omaha fan was well pleased with the results, the other seven cities of the Western league and the league itself didn't fare very well during 1916. And one could hardly call the prospects for 1917 glowing.

The Western league has gone through three mighty hard years the last three seasons, but the 1916 term was an exceedingly tough one. With the exception of Omaha every club in the league dropped money and Pa Rourke isn't likely to buy any war brides with the dividends he paid himself.

Attendance all over the circuit was woefully poor. Not a club in the league drew a total paid attendance of 100,000, a mark that should be reached by any Class A club. Omaha drew about 90,000 persons at home, but Lincoln, which ranked second, barely slid over the 60,000 mark.

Wichita Quits.

The Wichita club toward the end of the season was compelled to turn its franchise over to the league because of lack of attendance in the Kansas jobbing town. John Savage at Topeka announced at the conclusion of the season that he was through with the Jayhawk capital. Jack Holland at St. Joseph, Ed Hanlon at Sioux City, Hugh Jones at Denver, Frank Isbell at Des Moines, all lost money. It was a very bad year financially.

The usual internal Western league row arose at the end of the year, Ed Hanlon of Sioux City accusing Frank Isbell of Des Moines of being a trouble-maker. This little fuss, however, has not assumed any serious proportions as yet.

The Western league as it stands today facing the new year is a very uncertain affair. Of what the Western league will consist, when April rolls around is unknown. The magnates don't even know themselves. John Savage has said he will not continue to operate a club in Topeka.

Beel, in point of service, is the oldest wrestler in the game. When Farmer Burns quit Beel took the ranking position. And yet Beel is not yet old in years. He is only 38. But he has been wrestling twenty years and for the most part of that time he has been one of the greatest in the business.

Beel is a little fellow, he only shades five feet by four inches, but he's a wizard for speed and he knows every trick of the game. Excepting probably Gotch and Burns, Beel possesses more science than any other grappler.

Ten years ago Beel appeared a number of times in Omaha. He had one of his famous jousts with Farmer Burns in this city. He has always been a favorite.

Was World's Champ.

For two weeks Beel was the world's champion. He won the honor from Frank Gotch when he threw Gotch the first fall and the Iowan was injured and could not continue. Gotch, however, recaptured the title two weeks later when he triumphed over Beel at Kansas City.

About six months ago Plestina challenged Beel to combat, but Beel didn't care about tackling the Omahan at that time. Plestina repeated his defi, but Beel answered nay, nay. Then Beel ran for sheriff in his home county in Wisconsin and got ticked. So he decided to return to wrestling and for the last two months has been in strict training. Now he feels he can take a chance with Plestina and a week ago challenged the big Austrian to a match. Plestina wasted no time in accepting and he is now in negotiation with Beel as to the date of the match. Beel has agreed to come to Omaha so it is only necessary now to decide upon the time.

The Plestina-Beel match will be the first wrestling match of the winter season in Omaha.

OMAHA, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 31, 1916.

FREDDIE BEELL TO WRESTLE IN OMAHA

Famous Veteran Will Meet Marin Plestina in This City Some Time This Month.

WAS WORLD'S CHAMP ONCE

Freddie Beel, the diminutive Wisconsin grappler, who used to charm the mat fans around Omaha a decade ago, and who is today the ranking veteran of the wrestling game, is going to try to show Omahans that he has lost none of his old-time skill and cunning. Beel is going to wrestle Marin Plestina, the big Omaha Austrian who has been creating such a disturbance in wrestling ranks of late in this city, some time in January.

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