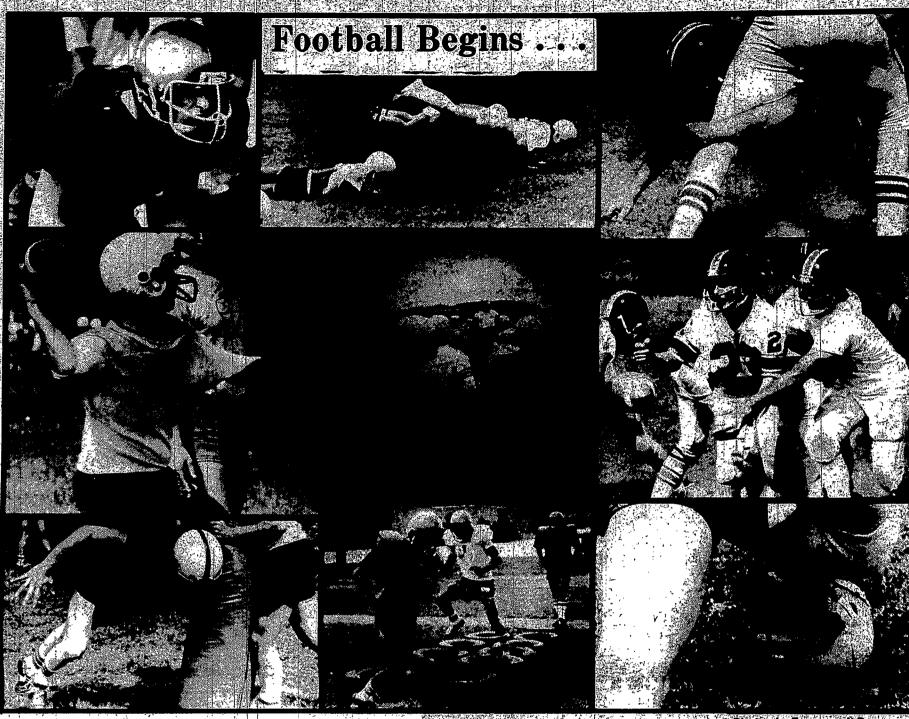
ROPARTICE ROPARTICE ROPARTICE



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan

.. With Rigor

By TERRANCE J. BRENNAN

They come in all shapes and sizes — tall and short; black and white, overweight and thinner than beanstalks. A few are greatly skilled but all push themselves to their physical limits to make the team.

It's been a long time so the fundamentals are stressed again: the three point stance, opening holes for the dive, the trap, and the draw, and protecting for the pass. For the defense, it's plugging those gaps, sacking the quarterback, or blocking, the crucial kick.

Through it all they run many miles, hit many a tackling dummy, push the blocking sled a few hundred yards, kick hundreds of footballs, and pass and catch even more.

The calisthenics are gruelling: push-ups, sit-ups, toe-touches jumping jacks, stretching one way and then the other, and when the coach says "Hit it!", the stomach smacks the ground.

They sweat, ache, scream at the top of their lungs, clap hands rythymically, and cheer each other on.

They run some more, sweat a lot more, and finally practice is over and they get to shower up. — only to return a few hours later for the afternoon session.

The photos above were taken last week at Bishop Kearney High School, Aquinas Institute, McQuaid Jesuit High School, and Cardinal Mooney High School.

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