

## C-J Sports

## Sports Shorts



Players advance down field by catching the ball and hurling it.



Injuries often occur when players use the wooden hurlys as clubs.

Linda Dow

## Irishmen give sister city a hurling lesson

By Richard A. Kiley

In Rochester and other parts of upstate New York where lacrosse and hockey dominate, jokes about children being born with lacrosse or hockey sticks in hand are common.

The adage is used in Ireland, too, only it's joked that babies there are born holding hurlys.

But let there be no doubt, Irish hurling is most definitely a man's game. It should be neither watched nor played by the faint-hearted.

Hurling is a cross between lacrosse and American field hockey. It resembles field hockey in that players try to advance a ball toward the opposition's goal. The game is similar to lacrosse because of its physical style of play. And because players wear little protective gear, injuries tend to be nasty and common.

That tendency was easy to see when 36 hurling players from the Waterford Regional Technical College in Rochester's sister city of Waterford, Ireland, visited St. John Fisher College Tuesday, July 21, for an exhibition game.

If you revel in action-packed and fast-paced sports like hockey and lacrosse, hurling is definitely for you. The Gaelic game is played

at a lightning-quick pace with a curved stick (approximately four inches wide and made of ash wood) called a "caman" or hurley, and a "sliotar," a small leather ball, nine to 10 inches in circumference.

Hurling, the national game of Ireland, is first mentioned in history books around 1272 B.C. It developed during the Battle of Moytura, in which the team of Tuatha De and Danann defeated the opposing Fomorians, first in a hurling match and then the subsequent battle for the lordship of Ireland. Devotion to the sport is particularly strong in Ireland's south and southeastern regions.

Waterford, which has a population of approximately 35,000, is located in southeastern Ireland. Not surprisingly the Waterford College team has been the All-Ireland College champion for the past two years. For about half of the players, who recently graduated from college, the match at Fisher was probably their last.

Irish children generally begin playing the game by the age of four or five, and have time to refine their skills before joining organized school teams. According to some members of the Waterford squad, it's common to see chil-

dren walking around carrying hurlys as tall as they are.

Much like American football and soccer, amateur hurling is played at several grade-school, college and club levels throughout the 32 counties that make up Ireland. A Sunday game between county teams — the highest level of competition — can bring out as many as 60,000 spectators, Waterford team members noted.

Teams field 13 players for games that last approximately 60 minutes. The games, which are played on a 140-by-80-yard field, are extended to 90 minutes during the playoffs. Three points are scored when the ball is hurled into the net under the crossbar of the goal posts, and one point is tallied if the ball goes over the crossbar.

Before arriving in Rochester, the Waterford College athletes traveled to Boston, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Some team members actually are Irish football players traveling with Ireland's best hurlers. In three stops during their U.S. tour, the team competed in both Irish football and hurling against U.S. teams made up of recent Irish immigrants.

## Annual benefit grid classic has tough act to follow

By Richard A. Kiley

All-star games are hard to predict — just ask anybody who figured the "rabbit ball" would make a wild slug fest out of this year's showdown between the American and National leagues. The game was score-

less until the 13th inning.

Whenever the sports' best get together for a one-time-only game, anything can happen.

That's why it's hard to predict how this year's fifth-annual Eddie Meath All-Star Football

Game will turn out. One thing is for certain, though: it will be difficult to top last year's battle between the East and the West at the University of Rochester's Fauver Stadium. In that game, the East squad made up for being shut out the previous two all-star games by lighting up the scoreboard with seven touchdowns en route to a 49-24 triumph.

The charity football game, which gives Section 5 athletes one last chance to demonstrate their talents to college scouts, was dominated by Rush-Henrietta Roth's Stan Johnson. The burly running back reached the end zone four times, shattering all previous records for points scored. In all, Johnson caught two passes for 157 yards, and ran 13 times for 78 yards.

Former Canandaigua quarterback Billy Scharr, who will no doubt wow them at Syracuse University in years to come, also threw for 270 yards in the win for the East.

Meanwhile, the running games of the West forgot to show up, compiling a measly 25 yards on 32 carries. Thanks to tough running by Johnson and Jacques Monte (Fairport), however, the East ran up 198 yards on 49 carries.

Five of the game's 11 touchdowns covered 49 yards or more. The East finished with a lopsided 467-283 advantage in total yards, and a 15-6 bulge in first downs.

What will this year bring? Well to fathom

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**FURTHER COMMENTS** on the possibility of the 1990 state boys' basketball tournament coming to Rochester, and the new three-point shot in high school basketball: Cardinal Mooney basketball coach Ed Nietopski is glad to see the tournament being moved around, enabling all basketball lovers in the Empire State to watch the great teams play.

"The tournament should be moved around; all major cities should get to see (the states)," said Nietopski, who was a finalist as a baseball coach in the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Awards this year. "Every section should have the chance to see the kind of basketball played around this state."

Nietopski said he is becoming more and more impressed by the increase in interest and talent in Section 5, calling the caliber of play "as good as any in the state."

"It's a real compliment to the programs in the high schools (in the Rochester area)," Nietopski said. "Our coaching here is excellent, and the talent is getting much better."

**NIETOPSKI SAID** the new three-point shot will probably have over-zealous shooters "just throwing it up at first," and that teams relying solely on the shot from 19'9" and beyond will be in trouble.

"When a team consistently thinks its going to get that three-point play, you're going to have some problems," the Mooney coach said. "(The shot) will open up the inside game; the teams that consistently try to go inside will see some benefits."

Nietopski is interested in seeing how the officials will handle the extra responsibility of seeing whether a player is shooting from two or three-point range, as well as keeping a grasp on fouls and other infractions.

"The shot is going to put a lot of pressure on the referees. They will have a difficult time . . . watching the three-point line. They might miss some fouling."

**BISHOP KEARNEY** hoop coach Mike Ruff is happy to see the tournament back, and, like Nietopski, believes the tourney should be shopped around.

"I don't feel Rochester is the only basketball haven; it should move around," Ruff said. "But it's a well-documented fact that Section 5 is one of the most organized and well-attended tournaments in the state," Ruff said. "People see the (New York State High School Basketball) ratings all the time, and now they will be able to see why teams are rated where they are."

**RUFF IS OVERWHELMINGLY** in favor of implementing the three-point on the high school level. He plans to pattern his team after Rick Pitino's Providence College team, which advanced to the Final Four of this year's NCAA basketball tournament.

"(The three-point shot) helps the little guy, and it gives the smaller teams a chance."

Ruff plans to make the shot a regular feature in the Fighting Kings arsenal next season.

"We're going to stay outside . . . and we'll rely on the same hawking defense Providence did in the tournament this year."

### Coach steps down

I recently learned of Bob Bayer's stepping down as St. John Fisher College football coach. Bayer, who was never under contract at Fisher, was grid coach for 12 seasons.

He resigned due to greater demands from his job as a manager of DuPont's Seneca Avenue chemical plant. His increasing work load left less time for his part-time coaching position at Fisher.

Bayer compiled an 81-30-2 record during his coaching career, which included three National Collegiate Football Association championships.

The former coach guided the Cardinals to back-to-back national club titles and was instrumental in Fisher's decision to move up to Division III for the 1987 season.

Fisher has enjoyed 11 consecutive winning seasons since Bayer's first year, a 1-6 finish. The first club championship came in 1981.

Bayer played offensive guard at Aquinas Institute in the late 1950s, and after coaching Pop Warner teams in the Rochester area, was an assistant at Bishop Kearney before arriving at Fisher.



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