

C6 THE MORNING CALL, ALLENTOWN, PA., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1980

## Biathlon Brutality...cross-country running and skiing

"Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends. It's so nice you could attend... come inside, come inside."

Yes, sports fans. You remember those clean-cut young men that brought you Triathlon Torture last August? Well, Heimbach-Novak Enterprises is back again — this time with Biathlon Brutality in February.

These guys make Dr. Frankenstein and Igor look like Boy Scouts. And the sick thing is they no doubt will have to turn fitness and outdoor "reckless recreation" freaks away — just as they did for Triathlon Two. (What was it P.T. Barnum said about a lollipop being born every minute?)

Here's the ticket: Cross-country ski for seven miles, and then ask your body to run 10 MORE miles immediately after you get out of your boots and into your running shoes — all of which will probably take place in temperatures good for nothing but penguins and cool pops. The only thing that surprises me is they didn't tack an underwater wetsuit swim onto the end of it.

"We were just sitting around this bar watching the Pitt-Penn State game on one of those big screens," says Neal Novak. "We were talking about the Triathlon, and someone said 'Why not do something for winter.'"

"Yeah, we were getting bored," says Rick Heimbach.

Novak's co-comprator. "And someone said, 'Let's have a cross-country ski race.'"



Novak says he's already gotten the sky for the race site. It's presently scheduled to be run at Terry Hill Sports Complex, off Route 222 on the way to Kutztown. Durrell Schellhammer of Terry Hill told Novak that he has snow-making machines capable of making snow for three miles of the cross-country ski circuit, if needed. Novak says entry blanks for the Feb. 14 (raindate Feb. 21) event should be out soon.

Sitting around talking was precisely how Heimbach and Novak came up with the Triathlon (for those of you who spend your summers at Cape Cod, the Triathlon included a mile swim, 30-mile bike ride, and a 10-mile run — in one day, with total time making "the winner" 11 years ago. As with the Triathlon,

Heimbach-Novak have "sold" the Biathlon idea to their club — the Ermaus Road Runners.

To give credit where credit is due, sources indicate that Triathlon winner Ray Fritz may have been the third man in on the Biathlon brainstorm — but then, Fritz was a Navy SEAL, and we all know about those guys. (Just kidding, Ray says he never ate any glass beer mugs when he was in the Navy, and I believe him.)

Charlie Norrell, winner of the Merztown "Christmas Classic" 10-K last weekend, defies Leo Durocher's much-quoted phrase about nice guys and where they usually finish. Norrell is — in addition to a very talented athlete and a student in medical school — a nice guy. And he rarely finishes anywhere but near the top.

Norrell outkicked former Bucknell University star Jim Knight to the line Saturday, won by two seconds, and thereby captured the first place prize — a full warmup suit.

Said Norrell to Knight: "Sorry to get nasty about it, but I really needed that warmup suit. How many guys do you know that win races and then say they're sorry about it?"

Norrell, incidentally, may be a Biathlon "recurr." Norrell entered a cross-country ski race once in the Poconos and finished second. And he didn't really know how to ski then.

## MADDEN

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Madden's best information with leading questions and plenty of airtime.

"He accepts all the tiny pressures and naturally covers for me," Madden said. "They might be counting down to commercial, 1:21, when I'll be in. And another thing, I can get away it because Gary's so smooth."

Bender is also discovering what drives and audiences watching Madden's Lite Beer as he knows for some time. Madden loves to talk and his hands like to keep up. He just can't sit still, either.

"I've never sat down at a football game in my life. Our engineers realized this, they gave me those headsets with the long cords. Gary has to stand up, too, if he wants to talk to me. One time I got a little carried away with my body language, though, and... boom! I kicked him in the head."

Madden's need for wide open spaces has made him America's No. 1 long-distance railroad commuter.

"I've flown all my life and never was a good flier. I was the kind of guy who would elbow my neighbor and ask, 'What's that?' at the slightest dip."

I also developed claustrophobia. We flew charters for the Raiders and I could move around a bit. Last year, I flew commercial planes and began getting the feeling that I wanted to get out but there was nothing I could do about it. So I just gave up flying.

This year, Madden shuttled between Sunday assignments on the rails. He spent Thanksgiving in the parlor and dining cars between Chicago and New York. He went from New Orleans to Dallas this week on Amtrak's Sunset Limited. Besides more walking room, Madden enjoys trains for the chance to

## FIESTA BOWL

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Rough, along with senior tight end Brad Scovill. "I haven't seen a better receiving corps all year," said Ohio State coach Earle Bruce.

Schlichter has Doug Donley and Gary Williams as his favorite targets. Donley alone has caught 38 passes for 785 yards, by far more than any receiver in the game.

Runners? There's plenty of them, too, especially in the Penn State camp.

Curt Warner and Booker Moore are the rushing stars for the Nittany Lions, but they are relieved capably by Joel Coles, Jonathan Williams and Mike Meade.

Ohio State tailback Cal Murray is the leading rusher in the game. He's averaged 6.4 yards a carry in collecting 1,192 yards.

Both coaches agree that they have explosiveness in their offenses. "I'd say we (Ohio State and Penn State) grade out very equal on offense," said Bruce.

## KUNDA

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aid along very nicely," Bruce said. "He's very young, but the improvement we've noticed since the early games shows that he has had some fine coaching. Blackledge is a fine athlete."

Bruce and Paterno are both convinced that the Fiesta Bowl has "the best matchup of any of the bowl games."

Perhaps from the standpoint of equality, they might be right. Defensively, especially.

"You're going to see two fine defensive units out there on Friday," Bruce said. "Penn State has always had that reputation. Our team has progressed. Penn State may be more physical — they are hitters — but we've come a long way."

Paterno agreed.

"Ohio State's linebackers are young," he said, "but they play with enthusiasm. I think their strong suit on defense is in the secondary. I was impressed with those guys."

The mutual admiration continued. It finally broke up when Paterno said, "Hey, I've got to be on the practice field in a half-hour — we've still got a lot of work to do."

Bruce was on his way to practice, too. "We've got some catching up to do," he said. "Penn State got here before we did."

hubbub with the plain folk who ride them.

Some know him for his football and announcing careers, others recognize him for his clever commercial, in which he says he has learned to relax, only to whip himself into a frenzy before he pantomimes the final scene by crashing through a beer billboard.

"I've learned a lot about the likes and dislikes of the fans," he said. "One is they like stories and two, they want to learn something. Gary loves to hear stories. So we'll spend Friday and Saturday talking and, on Sunday, he'll get them out of me."

When they did a Philadelphia game, Madden remembered this about Eagles linebacker Bill Bergey. "When Bergey was a rookie with Cincinnati, we had Jim Otto at center. Bergey made a tackle at the Oakland bench, and said: 'He can't stay with me, coach. He's too old and I'm too fast.' Bergey didn't make a tackle the rest of the day."

At one Giants game this year, Madden noticed New York's punter Dave Jennings warming up on first down. "I used to hate it when my punter would get up on first down. I'd tell him, 'Juggin'ee, have a little confidence. Sit down!'"

After years of confrontations, Madden is an expert on referees. "When I started out, I was very vocal and abrasive. They just laughed at me. But I really think we liked each other. Now, before a game, I'll go into their locker room and swipe a sandwich and a Tab."

These are the kinds of things Madden provided last Saturday on the Chicago-Tampa Bay game, which followed NBC's no-nonsense experiment. As another experiment, try turning off the picture and just listening to Madden sometime. His words can be worth a thousand pictures.

## Baseball banquet

Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Greg Gross will be the guest speaker at the Upper Perkiomen Championship Baseball Banquet scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17 at the East Greenville Firehouse.

The event will honor Perkiomen Post 188, champions of the Bus-Mont American Legion League, and the Upper Perkiomen Chiefs, champions of the Tri-County League. Both teams also won titles in 1979.

Tickets are available at local businesses or from team players. For more information, contact George Bunkemper: 697-9072.

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