

North Ski Industry Growing

Michigan is making a strong bid this year for a favored spot among the nation's winter playgrounds.

A pre-season check by the State Tourist Council of Michigan's winter sports facilities reveals that forty-four ski centers will go into operation with the opening of this winter's ski season.

"GIVEN FAVORABLE weather, the approaching winter sports season should be our most successful to date," said Robert J. Furlong, Executive Secretary of the Council. He added that all indications point to an increase in participation and revenue comparable to the upsurge in Michigan's 1955 summer and fall tourist business.

Furlong cites the enthusiasm and initiative of Michigan's resort operators in developing new and better winter sports facilities as proof that winter sports have become a permanent and substantial part of the state's multi-million dollar tourist industry.

The tourist official estimates that 400,000 will take advantage of Michigan's improved facilities this winter.

TO MEET THIS growing demand, Michigan will introduce three new ski centers to visitors this season. Located in the northern lower peninsula, they include the Au Sable Ranch & Ski Club near Gaylord, Mio Mountain in northeast Michigan, and Glacier Hills Ski Club near Bellaire in the Grand Traverse region.

Three other ski areas made their first appearance last winter: Mt. Onaway Ski Run in the northeastern corner of the lower peninsula, Lake Valley Ski Resort near Kalkaska in northwest Michigan, and Mt. Kimberly Ski Area on Lake Gogebic in the upper peninsula.

These six newcomers to Michigan's ski scene bring the total number of ski centers to 44.

All well-equipped, they are located in almost every section of the state, from Kalamazoo in the south to the Copper Country on the shore of Lake Superior. Representing Michigan's four tourist regions, there are 17 in the northeastern half of the lower peninsula, 19 in the western half, one in southeast Michigan, and nine in the upper peninsula.

Since the close of last season, general improvements and additions have been made at most of the centers.

Michigan's winter recreation areas offer a wide variety of facilities for beginners and experts alike. Ski slopes vary in length from 500 to 3,500 feet.

MICHIGAN ALSO OFFERS more than a dozen well-developed winter recreation areas that feature sports other than skiing. They are located chiefly near the larger cities in the lower peninsula where the winter snowfall is insufficient for sustained skiing. Added to these are the thousands of inland lakes throughout the state where winter sportsmen may enjoy ice-fishing, ice-boating and skating fun.

ALTHOUGH DEFINITE dates have not yet been set, the Tourist Council reports that ski events are already planned for Caberfae near Cadillac, Boyne City, Ishpeming, Mesick and Houghton. Ice-fishing festivals too, will again be held at Houghton Lake, the Tawas, Escanaba, and Boyne City.