

## Snow's On The Way And Skiers Begin To Smile

Signs of snow have begun to appear and for the ski enthusiasts this is only the beginning of what they hope will be a long and snowy season. For those enthusiasts and for the beginner there is fine skiing only 30 minutes away from Hillsdale at Irish Hills. This spot promises to be better than ever this year.

New is the word this year at Irish Hills Sports Park.

For the thousands of skiers from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana who flock to this well-known ski area this winter, the first look at the 1968-69 season will take in more new than old.

Major surgery has been done on the slopes in front of the A-frame lodge.

Most noticeable to skiers will be a brand new, 2400-foot slope, a real test for skiers up to intermediate level. And with a vertical drop of more than 200 feet, even a snow bunny knows a chairlift is necessary for a slope that long.

So an equally brand new high-capacity chairlift . . . with 78 double chairs . . . has been installed and stands poised now to take skiers back up the 2,400 feet. The equipment is new, the only all-new chairlift in southeastern Michigan this year.

For advanced skiers, those who like maximum excitement and challenge in their hills, Irish Hills has a new advanced slope. This slope has a vertical drop of 250 feet in its 700-foot length.

In addition, six other slopes have been rebuilt during the off season for the 1968-69 year.

In back of the innovations is an equally new management group this year at Irish Hills.

President of the team is William H. Cook, Toledo real estate developer, and, so far, a non skier.

"We welcome the beginning skier, Mr. Cook says. "But now Irish Hills Sports Park, with the longest single slope in southeastern Michigan, also is ideal for skiers with several years experience. No longer do intermediate-level skiers have to go several hundred miles from the Toledo area to find slopes challenging enough to match their skills."

In addition to Mr. Cook, technical talents have been supplied by another prime mover, and a vice president of the new corporation, Henry B. Lancel, also of Toledo. Mr. Lancel is a rarity among professional skiers in this area . . . he is not only a certified ski instructor in the United

States, he also has been certified in his native Germany and in Canada.

Mr. Lancel, besides providing the expertise in the designing of new slopes at Irish Hills, will help with general management of the facility and will supervise the team of 20 expert instructors who hail from this country and from Canada, Austria, Germany and Italy.

Among the new corps of instructors is Miss Diana Carter of Canada, one of the few women instructors in this area.

Miss Carter is better known among auto racing buffs as an equally skilled race car driver on Canadian tracks, and she's also public relations director for the nearby Michigan International Speedway.

All in all, a quarter of a million dollars have been used this year for improvements at the Sports Park.

Beginners will appreciate a new slope as well as a new access-way from the lodge to the top of the slope.

## Life Begins At Forty

NEW YORK (AP) — If life begins at 40, Gordie Howe is off to a pretty good start.

Howe, who turned 40 in March, is off to the fastest start in his 23-season National Hockey League career with 14 goals and 24 assists for 38 points and second place in the scoring race.

The Detroit star, hockey's all-time scoring king, passed the 700-goal plateau and picked up three goals and four assists last week. Howe's 38 points in 24 games are eight more than he has ever managed this early in the season.

Howe trails Chicago's Bobby Hull in the scoring race. Hull, who scored his 23rd career hat trick Sunday night—three short of the record held by former Montreal great Maurice Richard—leads all scorers with 19 goals and 25 assists for 44 points. His assists total is only six short of the number he had all last year.

St. Louis has the best goal-tending mark with Jacques Plante and Glenn Hall combining for a 2.04 goals against average.

Olympic skier Larry Damon, formerly of Burlington, Vt., resides in Norway with his wife, the former Babben Enger, also a skier.

Also new is a snowmobile trail, expected to be ready for this season. Irish Hills, reports Mr. Lancel, will be the site of an international snowmobile competition during the 1968-70 season. A course of 2.7 miles has been laid out, winding among the tree-covered hills and beginning and ending at the lodge.

Snowmobiles will be available or rent at the lodge.

The A-frame lodge itself has been expanded and refurbished or this season. The ski equipment rental area has been rippled in size to facilitate getting skiers onto the slopes quicker than ever before.

Snow-making equipment has been doubled, and Irish Hills now has Michigan's largest compressor for making snow. Every one of the 10 slopes can be covered.

Ten towing devices are available to skiers to make sure they spend the maximum time going down and the minimum time going back up. Besides the 78-chair chairlift, there are three high-capacity T-bar tows . . . one at each of the beginner's, intermediate and advanced areas . . . and six electric rope tows with magnetic brakes.

Sharp light is provided by Mercury vapor lighting for best nighttime visibility on all slopes, which, incidentally, are watched carefully at all times by members of the National Ski Patrol.

Even those who love to go to ski lodges but who never hit the slopes haven't been overlooked. The upper-level bar and dining area have been gone over to make relaxing while looking out at the snowy slopes as pleasurable as it can be. Dining room and bar are open seven days a week, and banquet facilities for up to 400 are available.

And for groups . . . primarily the college set . . . who want overnight accommodations, a 100-bed dormitory, clean and cozy, can be arranged for.

Even the lower-level snack bar has been redone to handle the hot-dog and french-fries crowd who don't want to waste too much time eating before going back out on the slopes.

A year older now are the old Twin Towers, across the highway from the entrance to Irish Hills Sports Park, the landmark by which skiers from hundreds of miles around have navigated their way to Irish Hills. They're still on U.S. Highway 12, just two miles east of the intersection of Highway 12 and Michigan Highway 50.