

Attitude—it means a great deal when you're a coach

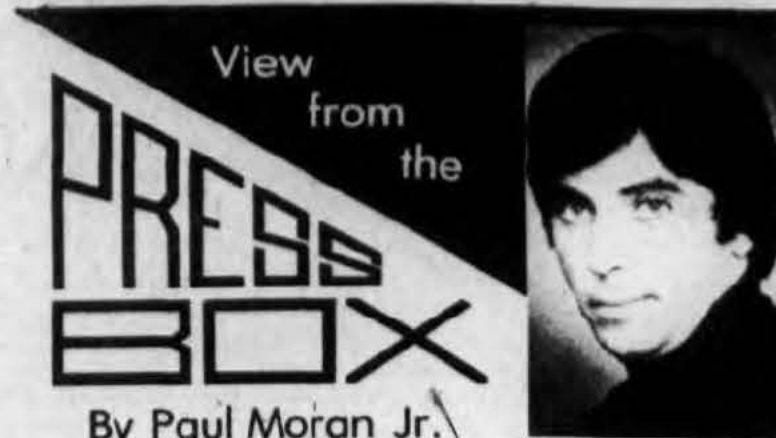
AS A GROUP, high school athletes who turn their backs on the glory sports for other activities which are no less demanding, but lead to far less notoriety, are mostly selfless and dedicated individuals.

Sports which often are classified as "minor" at times require more dedication and make greater physical demands on athletes than do the more familiar "major" sports. The glory is most often found on the football field, the basketball court and the baseball diamond. It requires a certain type of athlete to channel his talents toward wrestling, swimming, soccer, track and field or cross country.

THE DAY WHEN YOU HAD to be a football hero to get along with the beautiful girls may be behind us. But the football heroes and their basketball counterparts continue to receive the bulk of the attention.

Last Friday night all but seven members of the Tonawanda High School wrestling team refused to participate in the annual Niagara Frontier League meet. The incident was said to have been ignited by the suspension of Steve Marone.

Marone has been one of Tonawanda's top wrestlers throughout the season. He has lost only one match. But



By Paul Moran Jr.

Coach Jim Guido said late Friday night, Marone was being disciplined because of his continued insubordination. Guido had no compulsion to elaborate on the matter. "That's all I wish to say," he repeated several times. "Anything else will have to come from Ed Leibinger."

LEIBINGER IS THE ATHLETIC director for the Tonawanda Public Schools. We also managed to contact him

at his home and had spoken with him even before speaking to Jim Guido. Leibinger had told us that anything said would be said by the coaches.

But, one major question remained unanswered. If Marone was the instigator of the incident and was actually insubordinate over a long period of time, why then, was he supported by all but seven members of a team which includes almost 50 young men?

WHERE AN ATHLETIC TEAM is concerned, there is no place for insubordination. A coach, if he is to be successful, must command the respect of his team members. Teams have a way of forcing insubordinates and troublemakers out. So, if Marone was truly causing enough trouble to be suspended for the league meet, his teammates would be happy to see him depart.

Instead, the players decided to protest the coach's decision by not wrestling in the meet.

Something just didn't add up. But the school officials still had nothing to say.

HOWEVER, IT IS FORTUNATE that there were those who did have something to say. In Tuesday's edition of The NEWS, Marone gave a description of the incident which led

to his suspension. He feared injury if he followed a coach's order so he refused to follow it. The coach ordered him to run steps, which Marone did.

The players even went to the coaches to explain why they were threatening to boycott the meet. They really would rather have wrestled. But their request to be heard fell upon deaf ears. A bit of respect for the players on the part of the coaches may well have averted the incident.

TO THIS POINT, NO OFFICIAL of Tonawanda High School has taken the trouble to refute anything that has appeared in print.

On the other hand, we have received thanks from parents of the wrestlers for bringing the behind-the-scenes activities leading up to the incident to the attention of the public.

Hopefully the people who are responsible for taking care of such things have learned something from this incident, even though they have expended a good deal of energy in covering it up.

THEY WOULD DO WELL to take a long look at their situation. It takes only a bit of effort to avoid problems such as the one which has just confronted them.