

# Cal-Mum star facing the challenge of his life

By **BOB MATTHEWS**  
D&C Sportswriter

Ed VanGorder may be excused for displaying more than typical fatherly pride in his son, Chuck.

"When we found out Chuck needed open-heart surgery, he didn't start sobbing and complaining about his bad fortune," said Ed VanGorder. "He took the news very well, better than I did. All he said was, 'Dad, I don't want anybody chopping on my chest unless it's absolutely necessary, and now it is'."

Chuck VanGorder has faced his share of challenges in his 17 years and conquered most of them.

He's a three-sport athletic star at Caledonia-Mumford High School. He's Livingston County's defending wrestling champion at 145 pounds, runs the 440 in 55 seconds for the track team, and started at blocking back for coach Bill McAlee's undefeated football team last

fall.

Chuck had a goal for his final wrestling season this winter. He wanted to avenge his loss in last year's Section 5 wrestling semifinals, when he led 7-3 with 90 seconds left in the third period before running out of gas and losing 13-8 in overtime.

But a physical examination on Dec. 3 wiped out the dream of a Section 5 title and presented Chuck with the biggest challenge of his life.

"I've always had a hole between the left and right ventricles of my heart, just above the aorta, but until now it wasn't serious enough to require surgery," said VanGorder. "My physical exam on Dec. 3 revealed that the hole has become a high-pressure leak, and my aortic valve is beginning to weaken. The operation will plug the hole."

Characteristically, Ed VanGorder is more worried than his son.

"It's about as delicate an operation as

there is," said Ed VanGorder. "Sure, I'm worried. I wish it didn't have to be done, but we have no choice. I'm not worried about his athletic career. I'm just praying the kid lives."

"The doctors have told me I'll be able to play sports again, with no restrictions," Chuck said. "I have things all planned. I enter Strong Memorial Hospital Monday, the operation is Wednesday, I'll leave the hospital 11 days later, be home in bed for a week, return to school, and be playing sports again in 3 months."

Chuck thinks the operation will make him a better athlete than before.

"In the past, I've had a tendency to get extremely tired very suddenly in certain sports," said Chuck. "I always had the thought in the back of my mind that something was physically wrong with me. In a way, I was relieved to learn about the operation. I want to get it over with so I won't have to worry anymore."

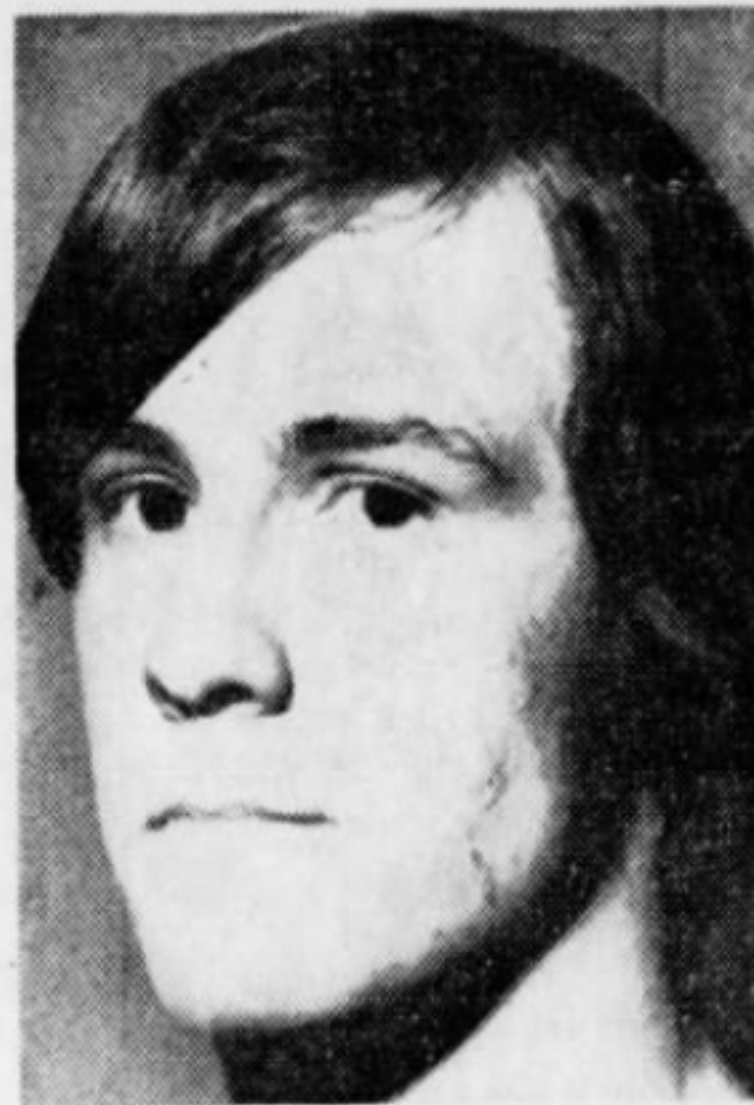
"Chuck won't make excuses, but I'm sure his loss in last year's Section 5 wrestling semifinals was because of the heart defect," said Ed VanGorder. "He was in control of the match but ran out of energy in the final minute of the third period. The other boy tied the match in regulation, and Chuck had no chance in overtime. He was too exhausted to move."

The open-heart surgery perhaps will cost Chuck an athletic scholarship to college.

"We thought Chuck could earn a scholarship, probably for wrestling, but what school is going to take a chance now," said Ed VanGorder. "We're not worried about that, though. Our only concern is having him come out of this thing. His health is all we care about."

"I probably won't go to college next year," said Chuck. "I'd like to find a job

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Chuck VanGorder

# CAL-MUM STAR

From 1D

and spend a year working myself back into shape. Maybe I'll earn enough to pay for one year of school, and do well enough in athletics to get a scholarship the rest of the way."

Chuck draws some of his courage from his family and friends. His mother, Charlotte, was ill for a long period when he was very young, and his father was successfully operated upon to arrest cancer 12 years ago. One of Chuck's best friends in school, Tim Lauffer, had open-heart surgery when he was eight years old.

Ed and his son agree that Chuck's athletic background has helped in the ordeal.

"He's been competing all his life. He's been playing sports since the day he could walk," said Ed VanGorder. "This is just another thing for him to beat."

"I'm not scared, but I'm nervous," said Chuck. "I have the same feeling I had before the Le Roy football game this season. I'm excited. The big difference is that I can't do anything about the operation. In football, I had some control over the outcome of the game."

## Stars capture 14th straight

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—The Utah Stars picked up their 14th straight American Basketball Association victory last night, a 121-110 conquest of the Carolina Cougars.

Ron Boone, Willie Wise and James Jones led Utah with a combined 67 points. The Stars lead the ABA West by 12½ games.

Boone hit 11 of 11 from the field and led Utah with 24 points.

Carolina was down by 10 points late in the game when Mack Calvin, who led all scorers with 31 points, sparked a rally which nearly pulled the game out for the Cougars.

The lead changed hands 14 times before Utah went to a 52-49 at the end of the first half. Each team put 34 points on the scoreboard in the third quarter and the Stars maintained their slim three-point edge, 86-83.



Ed VanGorder