

Opening Surge of Skiers Expected This Weekend—

Winter Play Centers Ready Hearty Welcome for Fans

Northern Michigan resorts are preparing a hearty welcome this weekend for the opening surge of winter sports enthusiasts.

The general deer hunting season closes at 6 o'clock this afternoon, and by this weekend most remnants of the deer hunting army will have drifted out of the north woods making way for official opening of the winter sports season, according to Robert J. Furlong, executive secretary of the Michigan Tourist council.

Furlong and other tourist spokesmen anticipate a booming winter resort season with cooperation from the weather.

Winter sports have climbed steadily in popularity since end of World War II and now contribute a substantial portion of the state's annual \$500,000,000 tourist business, according to Furlong.

"More than 50 percent of our tourist accommodations remain open year-around because of winter sports and hunting," Furlong said. "A few years ago the majority closed after Labor Day.

"Winter sports areas in Michigan are ideally situated in the snowbelt and yet close enough to Detroit and Metropolitan centers in Ohio and Illinois," he added.

Greatest increase in popularity of winter sports in Michigan has been marked by skiing resorts with slopes for novices to experts,

Furlong noted.

The 30 skiing areas operating last year attracted an estimated 250,000 enthusiasts, Furlong declared.

Four new skiing developments will open this year, Hickory Hill, at Traverse City; Avalanche, at Boyne City; Mt. Mesnard, at Marquette, and Lake Gogebic Hill near Marenisco.

Ski jumping, on the other hand, has been popular to some degree in Michigan for at least the past 75 years. Oldest and still one of the leading attractions is Suicide Hill at Ishpeming.

Last year, trials for the American Olympic Ski team attracted some 60,000 spectators and enthusiasts to Iron Mountain which boasts the highest artificial ski slide in the world.

The olympic team, with three Michigan members, is tentatively scheduled to leave from the Iron Mountain airport for the Olympic tourney in Finland and return by air in time to participate in the annual Iron Mountain meet.

In addition to winter sports, Michigan with its 11,037 inland lakes and the Great Lakes attracts thousands weekly from the ranks of ice fishermen.

Tawas City is readying opening of "Perch Village" on Tawas Bay, a settlement of fishing shanties complete with angling gear operated as a public service by the chamber of commerce.

In addition, some 34 winter carnivals are scheduled throughout Michigan with attractions ranging from a bobcat hunt to jamborees of ice skating, tobogganning, skiing, and beauty queens.

Caberfae, near Cadillac, already is operating with benefit of normally low temperatures and heavy snowfall in that area.

Good Citizen

