

Statement issued by President John A. Hannah, Wednesday noon, August 11, 1943.

FOOTBALL

Michigan State College during the 86 years of its existence has cooperated continuously with the War Department.

For more than 50 years all men students have been required to take at least two years of military training under the auspices and direction of the War Department.

Since the outbreak of this war all of the facilities of the College have been pledged to full and complete cooperation in the prosecution of the war, through making available training facilities for use by Army personnel, all research and extension facilities in aiding the war effort in many directions and particularly in the field of food production, handling and preservation, and every possible aid to Michigan's agriculture and industry.

Almost 100 percent of our able bodied men are now serving in the armed forces. Last fall there were 135 men participating in varsity or freshman football. Today 134 are in the armed forces; one is still in college.

There are now stationed on the campus approximately 3000 soldier trainees and several hundred more will arrive before October 1.

The War Department has decreed that these men are not to participate in intercollegiate athletics.

By precedent our 2500 young women are banned from intercollegiate athletics.

It is expected that the total enrollment of civilian men this fall will not exceed 400 made up of engineers, pre-medical, and veterinary students deferred by Selective Service and carrying on accelerated programs of studies; boys under 18 years of age; and men unfit for military service and classified in 4-F. These civilians are required to take a minimum of six hours each week of military drill and physical education in addition to their classroom schedules.

Much consideration has been given to the matter of continuing intercollegiate athletics.

Michigan State College is thoroughly convinced that compulsory physical education for all students, a strong program of intramural athletic activities involving the greatest possible number of the total student body and representative competitive athletic teams in all sports are desirable.

Michigan State College is so located geographically that it is the only large state-supported university in the middle-western area not belonging to an athletic conference. Completely surrounded by members of the Western Conference, its schedules should be largely confined to members of the Conference as the only schools in the same size and educational classification in this geographical area. This has not been possible, and Spartan teams have found it necessary to travel widely from coast to coast. Such travel is now incompatible with the war effort.

All members of the Physical Education staff, including all coaches, are teaching full schedules to Army trainees and will continue to do so for the duration of the war. More use is being made of all athletic facilities than ever before in the history of the College.

The decision on intercollegiate athletics is not an easy one to make.

By interest and preference I should prefer to have them continued.

Reason dictates that the decision should be made on the basis of benefits that would accrue to the institution or to the individual students participating.

The Army has determined that intercollegiate athletics are incompatible with the training program.

To carry on with a limited number of 17-year old boys and 4-F men would be such unequal competition with the 1943 football schedule as arranged that it seems unfair to possible participants to expect them to compete with older and more competent men. Such competition would not be advantageous to the physical well being of our men involved and would not be helpful to their morale or the morale of the student body as a whole. The only possible advantage might be financial, and as against the welfare of the student body that must be disregarded.

Arrangements should be made with all scheduled opponents looking toward avoidance of financial loss to the other teams involved.

Army officials assure me they look with favor upon intersquad contests that do not require the hours of preparation and travel involved in the inter-collegiate contests.

During the football season it is hoped that there will be a football game every Saturday afternoon in the stadium involving teams of soldiers and civilians. These games should be open to the students and public without charge. Similarly, competitive teams in all sports should be encouraged to the fullest. The several different types of Army trainees and our civilian students should furnish competition of interest to spectators and bring to the contestants many of the benefits of intercollegiate competition.

It is understood that Michigan State College will proceed with full athletic competition in all sports when the war is over or whenever the War Department determines such activities are not detrimental to the Army's college war training program.