

Fracture Hasn't Hurt Play-the-Game Plan

By Joe Krupinski

Huntington—He is in bed with traction on a broken left leg, but that doesn't stop Mickey Norton from serving his friends and neighbors of Huntington in a new recreation venture. The Huntington Athletic Club.

Norton left his five-year-old position as program director for the Huntington Town YMCA a few months ago, about the same time he accidentally fell off his back porch ("Isn't that something?" he asks with a smile) and cracked the thigh bone in his leg. It was a friendly separation—the parting, not the accident—brought on by the local YMCA's growing philosophy toward non-competitive sports programs.

"I think that there's no such thing as playing a game and feeling it doesn't matter who wins" Norton says. "The competition is an inherent part of the game. We want to teach people how to be a good loser and, harder yet, how to be a gracious winner."

The Huntington A.C., a non-profit organization, will be serving youngsters, boys and girls, between the ages of 6 and 15 and adults, too. Programs are already set in baseball, softball and soccer. Plans for football, basketball, wrestling, boxing, bowling, lacrosse and volleyball are being made.

"For the youngsters we're trying to build a mutual respect for teammates, opponents and officials, which has a carryover value in life," Norton said. "For the adults we want to give them something to participate in and include their family."

He gave some examples of family participation. Amos and Evelyn Bozeman and their three children were all involved in the YMCA program with Norton. "She's the star center-fielder of our women's softball team. I think she might be a better player than he is. Their two sons and daughter are also playing baseball or softball."

The Russ Johnsons are involved, too. A New York City detective, he plays third base in softball. His wife, Joan, was Norton's secretary at the YMCA and is now "doing more than ever" as a volunteer for the Huntington A.C. They have twin daughters, 9-year-olds Joan and Jean, playing softball and twin sons, Jack and Jim, who have graduated from the YMCA ranks to varsity wrestling and lacrosse competition at Huntington High where they are seniors. "They may be too old for us now, but they come back to help us administer," Norton says. "These are outstanding young people, prime example of what we're trying to accomplish."

Norton's own wife, Arline, was a first baseman for the women's softball team which won the Long Island Metropolitan title and went to the national tournament in Florida. She had the eighth best batting average, .522, among 1,100 women at the tourney. Now she's coaching one of the boy's basketball teams and plans to manage a girl's softball team during the summer.

Norton inherited an interest in sports pro-

grams from his father, Ed, who served as Huntington's recreation director in the 1940s and 1950s. Polio struck Mickey when he was 13 years old so that he now walks with a cane, but that did not daunt his love and interest in sports. "After the illness," he says, "it didn't stop me from enjoying and being part of it."

After being graduated from Hofstra University, Mickey left the YMCA program in 1957 to form the Norton A.C. Day Camp, operating in Greenlawn, Elwood and Fort Salonga. He sold this business 10 years later to return to the YMCA. "As a private venture it worked well," he said. "But then I thought I could do more through the YMCA."

Now he has plenty of support from community leaders for the Huntington A.C. They include John Ryder, the Northport High athletic director; Sam Albicocco, who erected the controversial Columbus statue in Huntington and who finances the YMCA teams' trips to national tournaments; Mrs. Anita Messinger, president of the board of education for the Huntington schools who served as chairman of the Moms and Dads Club when it raised \$20,000 to sod and install lights at the YMCA's softball field; and Larry Gabor, owner of the Beachview Lumber Company which sponsors its own men's slow-pitch softball team.

Meanwhile, Mickey Norton keeps organizing and arranging these activities with a bedside telephone and paper-stacked table. "I hope to be up and around by opening day of the boys' baseball league over Memorial Day weekend," he says. "There's so much more to be done."

Over the Line

Brentwood crossed the Suffolk County line for a successful foray into Nassau yesterday, coming home with a smashing 10-6 victory over Plainview in an inter-sectional lacrosse match.

Frank Urso scored two goals as Brentwood pulled ahead to a 6-1 lead at the half and coasted.

In a major Nassau match, Long Island champion East Meadow was extended into overtime before downing Hicksville, 8-7, at Hicksville. Hicksville rallied from a 5-3 deficit in the fourth quarter but found East Meadow attackman Bob Miller a bit much to handle. Miller, who scored five goals, made all of East Meadow's last four scores.