On Dec. 3 the authors had voted Emile Griffith, 24, of the Virgin Islands, the fight game's most coveted trophy—the Edward J Neal Award for "Fighter of the Year." Griffith had won the welterweight championship for the third time in 1963, some kind of a record.

But on Dec. 20 Emile had the superlative bad taste to get knocked out by Rubin (Hurricane) Carter. Not only was he knocked out, but he was stopped in the first round. He was decked twice before he got the coup de grace from Rubin.

You would think this would have posed a difficult situation. Entertaining a guy who had been judged by his hosts the greatest in the biz, even by-passing Cassius Clay, when on the basis of his most recent effort he was a patent bum.

But everybody was gallant about the whole thing, and Emile showed up and acted with becoming demur-eness, and the writers ate and drank themselves torpid which was, after all, the real purpose of the meeting.

But the little incident invites certain thoughts to the careful student of champship, of which I am one.

The great thing about being a champ is to stay that way, at all costs. Treasure your champship, and fondle it as you would your first-born. Champ carefully, the champship you save may be your own.

If the boxing writers say you're the glorious tops, don't let anything get in the way of that distinction. In other words, don't de anything until you hear from me. For hell hath no fury like an expert scorned. And this goes for sports experts, with knobs on.

As I've had occasion to remark, sports writing is one racket where you're never wrong. You predict that Rocky will knock out Goldie in the first round. But Goldie doesn't play it your way, and knocks out Rocky in the first.

Your bad guess is then immortalized as "the upset of the year" and hundreds of column inches are spent on the wonder of it all. Your horse doesn't end up paying \$37.50, and somebody got to the trainer, the little soandso.

Sports writing is one of the few occupations in the world where you can make your mistakes pay. But handsomely.

A baseball team loses, and it loses. A miler loses, and he loses. A sports writer loses, and he suddenly becomes fair-minded, compassionate, the very dickens of a fellow. *

The only guys who come anywhere near us are the political analysts. They lap it up at some press bar somewhere and decide that Truman hasn't got a chance. And, for the next 10 years, the political journalists are gaping about the upset of the century. Authoring fine pieces about it, too, on dull days.

But even sports writers sometimes get their comeuppance. This is what seems to have happened to the boys in New York. They got hung up so badly on their Griffith prognosis that it's doubtful they'll ever

But ring authors are resourceful fellows. I think I can wager that the Griffith gaffe will not happen again. In the coming year, and years after that, I can confidently predict that the Champ of the year will be just that when he enters the Americana Hotel, or wherever, even if the authors have to bind him up and keep him in a deep-freeze until the great day arrives.

Youthful Cagers To Continue Play

Thirteen out of 71 Torrance | Jefferson, Walteria, Newton,

Thirteen out of 71 Torrance Recreation Department teams remain undefeated this week at the halfway point in basketball action for boys from 10 to 18 years old.

Several of the 13 quintets appear headed for the March 7 playoffs that will determine the city championships in Rocky Mountain and Big Ten league play.

League winners and city champions will be crowned on March 7 at an "Awards Night" for the more than 700 boys who are participating in the program.

GAMES ARE currently being leaved at the North South and the Cookies trailing.

GAMES ARE currently being leaved at the North South and the Cookies trailing.

Torrance High Skyline action is the Walteria Newton. St. Lawrence and Hilliside. In the Rocky Mountain League at South the Flavian Rams are currently on top, followed by the Riviera Celtics, the Newton Jaguars, Meadow Park, the Seaside Fal-seade Hawks, the Sepulveda Indians, the Walteria Spartans, the Walteria Playars and the Listle 5, with the Lakers, the Ringers and the Cookies trailing.

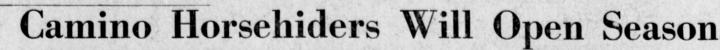
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Torrance High Swyline action of the Act

GAMES ARE currently being played at the North, South and Torrance high school gymnasiums.

At North, St. Catherines leads the Skyline League with a 5-0 mark, followed by Hawthorne, Magruder and Yukon The Rocky Mountain loop is paced by Edison and the Vikings with Casimir, Perry, the Celtics, Bryants, Lincoln, Carr, the Kings, St. Catherine, Yukon and the Rebels trailing.

North High's Big Ten circuit is led by the Butchers and the Greenwood Indians lead the Madrona Whiz Kids, the Torrance Hohawks, the Hockory Hawks and the Adams Rockets. The Celtics pace major league Big Ten action at South High. topping the Dunkers, the South, followed by Sepulveda,



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El Camino College will unveil its "new look" baseball team tomorrow afternoon at 2:30, when it hosts the Bruins of UCLA on a non-conference poening day encounter.

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