

Spills can make a jockey's trade dangerous

Jockey Grady Overton rode Win Bill, winner of last Saturday's \$61,700 Dowling Memorial Handicap at Detroit Race Course, with a broken hand. Still recuperating from broken bones in his foot, jockey R.D. Strauss booted home two winners, two seconds and a third on Monday at DRC.

Both of the veteran riders would confirm that, like saddles and manes, there's no such thing as a nice spill off the back of a horse, particularly off a thoroughbred racing in close quarters.

But the nature of the fall, or the way it might hit at first to the naked eye, doesn't always determine the extent of the injury a jockey might suffer. Jockeys learn early in the business how to bail off a falling horse, loose and rolling, if there's time.

Frequently, there isn't time or room for bailing out of the saddle, and that was the case with young apprentice jockey Tommy Knapp one recent afternoon at DRC. When his horse, Coco Tower, was jammed against the rail by another swerving thoroughbred,

there was no place to go but down.

Knapp, the 19-year-old son of the late Earl Knapp, one of the best riders in Detroit history, lay motionless on the track for several seconds. His helmet was still on. That was good. But the fall had been a violent one and the crowd was hushed.

Fortunately, almost miraculously, Knapp was only stunned. His back hurt and his face was scratched, but hospital X-rays and observation showed no serious injuries.

Probably no one was even worried meanwhile about another apprentice jockey, Dallen Thomas, who had been dumped from the saddle of Mr. Gyro in a starting gate mishap just 46 seconds earlier in the same race.

The horses had just left the gate when a slight collision of horses occurred, and it seemed like more of a slide than a fall with young Thomas left sitting upright on the track.

He seemed to be suffering only pique and embarrassment as he limped off after a thoroughbred race track. When Coco Tower and Knapp went down a few seconds later, Thomas was almost forgotten.

What a difference an X-ray can make. Next day, with Knapp merely taking a short time away from the track with bumps and bruises, the hospital pictures showed that Thomas suffered a broken elbow in the slide and would likely be sidelined from a month to six weeks.

It was even more ironic because the same young jockey had broken an arm early in the year at Finger Lakes Race Track, then again at Hazel Park late this spring. His third spill was anything but a charm, innocent as it might have looked.

In the DRC jockey quarters this week up that trouble-logged race wherein the second accident also resulted in the death of the fine 3-year-old gelding Coco Tower.

"We all know that such things are an occupational hazard," said Perez who has had his share of spills during an illustrious riding career. "Sure you think about it, and it's a nasty thought, but when you're racing you put it completely out of your mind."

Perez pointed out that most sports fans have seen a batter hurt with an inside pitch, seen a football player carried off after a strong block and watched hockey players helped to the sidelines after a block or scuffle.

"Some people forget that a jockey is one of the best conditioned athletes in sports," Perez said. "We play a hard game and we've got to expect some hard knocks."

Sports shorts

School sets dates for physicals

Physical examinations for all Southfield High School athletes have been scheduled for two dates in the near future.

A medical doctor will be at Southfield High's gymnasium at 3 p.m. on Aug. 9 and 12 to give specialists to the athletes who intend to participate in the 1977-78 sports program. Cost of the physicals is \$3 per student. Southfield High is located at Ten Mile and Lahser roads.

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GOLF TOURNEY PLANNED

The Michigan Junior Invitational Golf Tournament will be held Aug. 17-19 at the Holly Greens Golf Club near Holly.

Entries will be accepted until Aug. 16 and the entry fee is \$20 per golfer. The cost includes a practice round on the first round of the tournament, and 36 holes of competitive play on the

second round.

Several Catholic League high school football coaches will speak when the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) holds its first annual Summer Clinic for CYO grade-school football coaches on Saturday (Aug. 6) at Divine Child High School in Dearborn. The clinic will open at 8 a.m., and the last session will begin at 2:15 p.m.

Attendance will not be limited to CYO coaches, and the public is invited to attend. Tom Abdenour, assistant trainer at Wayne State University, will speak on the basics of conditioning to reduce injuries, and how to deal promptly and effectively with injuries.

Guests may pre-register with the CYO central office at 305 Michigan Ave., Detroit at a cost of \$3. Registration at the door will cost \$4.

GRID CLINIC SET

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STATE SCHOOL SIGNS CAGER

Dave Watwona is the third Birmingham Groves basketball player who will be tying his laces on another court next winter.

Watwona, a 6-foot-6 forward who paced Groves' exceptional season last winter, will be playing for Grand Rapids Junior College. He was the key to Groves' fast break last season, and was the fourth highest scorer on the team with 199 points in 22 games. He was the second leading rebounder with 188, and second in blocked shots with 26.

"He was a super player for us, and I hope things work out for him said Groves coach Jay Schwalm."

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