

Rodeo performers endure rugged existence

By CURINNE ABART

If you're 25 and thinking about becoming a rodeo star, forget it. You're too old. It's a young man's game and a young man's life.

The Farmington Founders Festival rodeo, which opens at Twelve-Mile and Farmington Roads next Friday at 8 p.m. and continues with 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. performances on Saturday is a big one in rodeo circles.

Farmington's resident cowboy, Tom Decker, likes to talk rodeoing. For 15 years, starting at age 13, he followed the circuit as a very successful barrel race rider.

"If you're 25 and not doing too good, forget it," Decker said. "You're too old. If you don't haul cowboy talk for long distances traveling, good, you probably won't make it either. Cowboys and cowgirls in the Farmington rodeo a good number of them, probably were in rodeo in Montana, Missouri, Arkansas or Oklahoma a day or two earlier. On the Eastern swing here they also make Birmingham, N.Y., Hampton, New York, and Lancaster, Pa., and catch a couple in Oklahoma a week later.

The local event has a good reputation among performers. It is sanctioned by the International Rodeo Association. The prize money is good. The stock, which Jim and Margaret Zinner provide is championship caliber and not tired from overseas.

THERE WILL be three riding events — barrel race, saddle horse and bull — and three timed events — steer wrestling, calf roping and barrel racing, the only event for women.

Decker, often a rodeo judge, but not in his hometown, said the men can't begin to match the women for competitive intensity.

The cowboys do the best they can and accept the judge's decision, but the girls are after blood and they will argue a decision.

Barrel racing requires, above all, a tall, thoroughbred horse "with good sense and a good mouth" to run the cloverleaf barrel course.

The women, often wives of cowboys, bring their horses with them and the welfare of the horse is paramount.

"They may pull in at 3 a.m. after a thousand mile haul, but they don't go to bed until that horse is taken care of," Decker said.

He added, "You've got to have a hell of a horse for barrel racing and you've got to take care of it."

Decker knows and bulls are crossbreeds not thoroughbreds.

A horse is a horse that for reasons with in his own personality likes to buck.

They're born, not made," he said. "You can't train them and they don't like to be ridden."

Cowboys admire a great bucking horse or bull and wouldn't hurt one for anything, Decker says. "But, that doesn't go both ways."

Although the purebred Brahman bull may look fierce, he's absolutely docile, Decker says. That's why they're crossbred with Angus, Hereford and Holstein among others that mix makes for more spirit.

Rodeo stock and old scrubby, crossbred bulls and old, scrubby crossbred horses that would have long since been in a dog food can if they didn't like to buck."

Rodeo performers usually specialize in one, sometimes two events. It costs \$25 to enter each event in the Farmington show. The entry fee goes toward the purse, so the size of the winnings depends on the number of entries.

Decker speculates, "A guy could win \$1,000 if he won two events. An event winner usually gets somewhere around \$500 in theory, a good rider could pick up \$2,500 in prize money on a good weekend, if he made three or more rodeos and had a little luck."

Observer & Eccentric SPORTS Inside / Classified Ads

Thursday, July 29, 1976

(MC)

WORLD CHAMPION saddle bronc rider, Gene Maynard, has won twice in Farmington. Bill Poulos, 1975 national barrel race champion, won his event here last year.

Decker says, "If Poulos hadn't come to Farmington, he wouldn't be the champ. He needed it to win the national."

The most physically demanding is barrel racing and the most dangerous is bull riding, "but," said Decker, "they're beautiful to watch when they're done right."

There are strict rodeo rules on the treatment of animals. You can't jerk a calf over, for instance, its hind legs might be endangered. A hurt under the saddle or a wire in the nose means disqualification.

Good stock is the heartbeat of a rodeo, Decker said. It is a costly investment which owners and cowboys care for and respect.



Tom Decker Farmington's Resident Cowboy

4 local riders to try Rodeo

Three Farmington cowboys and one from neighboring Livonia will be competing against the nation's top rodeo stars for prize money at the Farmington rodeo this Friday and Saturday.

Joe Aho of Farmington, barrel race rider, will ride Friday night as will Ron Wrobel of Farmington who competes in the same event. Eddie Matteson, another local, is a bull rider and will ride Friday evening as will Mike Morgan of Livonia who rides barrel race and bull.

Matteson and Morgan will come up against four of the top 15 bull riders in the country in the Friday competition—Tom Hyde, David Leggett, David Standish and Joe Gaskins.

Saturday afternoon bull competition will feature local Riders—Barber, currently in first place nationally, Tommy Crandall, second, Rob McDonald, fourth and Bobby Delvecchio, 15.

Some of the stars to watch for in bull riding Saturday night are: Jack Wiseman, four time world champion and three times All-American, a member of the 1974 world world champion team who rode the 1974 world world champion horse by 888, Dan Daley and Jerry McCuller.

Aho and Wrobel will face tough competition in Friday night barrel race riding from Ronnie Williams, currently first in the country and 1974 world champion.

Another great name in that event is Jimmy Meyers.

In barrel racing Friday evening, two cowboys to watch are Charlie Kennedy of Okla. City, Mich. and Carl Dearth of Arkansas. Mr. Kennedy is the nation's top 15 rider and Mr. Dearth is currently in eighth place. Jerry of Detroit, a member of the 1974 world world champion team, will be in the Saturday afternoon schedule and Billie Ruth Waters, 1975 Miss U.S.A. rides Saturday night.

Among the change horses are Rev. Mr. Black, 36, and Undertaker, 31. Saddle broncs Deymoney, A. Daydream, 79 and Prince, 109 are sure thrillers along with Hooker, 716, Reddy, 18, Herron, 180 and Wrecker, 21.

will also be seen in barrel race, bull riding and steer wrestling.

Other names to watch for are: Allen Coleman, Saturday evening, first in calf roping; Red Duffin, current steer wrestling champion, Saturday afternoon; and Mike Duffin and Bill Poulos in the Saturday afternoon barrel race riding.

Not to be forgotten are the animals which will include 18 head of international female rodeo stock.

Among the change horses are Rev. Mr. Black, 36, and Undertaker, 31. Saddle broncs Deymoney, A. Daydream, 79 and Prince, 109 are sure thrillers along with Hooker, 716, Reddy, 18, Herron, 180 and Wrecker, 21.

Race ends in Festival parade

Farmington road race attracts top runners

By TOM BAKER

Not everybody can be a winner in the Farmington Founders Festival Mini-Marathon road race, which will be held this Saturday morning.

To be sure, there'll be lots of prizes and medals waiting for the state-breakers at the finish line. And for those who don't win, but still manage to complete the 10-mile trip through the streets of Farmington and Farmington Hills, there'll be an unusual honor — the right to run down the middle of Grand River during the Festival parade.

The Mini-Marathon sponsored by the Farmington YMCA has been an important

part of the Founders Festival for the past six years. More than 100 runners are expected to participate in this year's race according to meet director David Heiser.

"This race has had good response from the runners," Heiser said. "We have some outstanding runners from all over Michigan, plus some from Ohio and Canada. I think people like this race because it's always well organized. They can come here, run their race and still have their day free."

The race is an important part of the Festival. Heiser continued, "It's one of the key events. We get a lot of people who come down just to watch the finish because they know so many people running in it."

The race has four competitive divisions — Open, ages 18-40, Master's, 40 years and over, Women's, 18 years and over, and Youth, boys and girls 17 years and under. The women and the youths will run a special five-mile course.

The runners will assemble at the Farmington Hills City Hall, Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake roads at 8:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The race route winds west on Eleven Mile to Powers Road, north on Powers to Oakland Community College, through the OCC campus to Farmington Road, north on Farmington to Thirteen Mile Road, south on Drake Road, south on Drake to Grand River, and then on to downtown Farmington by way of Shawcross and other side streets.

THE LAST half mile will be run down Grand River as the participants become part of the Founders Festival parade.

The race will probably finish up at the Farmington City Hall. Heiser said, "We might extend it a couple of hundred yards and end it at the corner of Oakland and Grand River. There's more open space there, so it won't be so congested at the end."

Ending the race in the middle of the parade, with the marching bands and pretty girls, has become a popular feature, according to Heiser. "All the spectators are lining the street to see the parade," he said. "Then the runners come trotting

along, and all the people begin to cheer. It kind of makes the runners feel good, and it's good publicity for the race."

Glenn Baldwin, a former track star at the University of Kentucky and now a member of the Flint Track Club, is expected to be on hand to defend his Open Division title. Baldwin won last year's Open competition with a record-setting 47 minutes, 35 seconds.

Baldwin should have some competition from Peter Hallap, a St. Clair Shores resident who runs for the Motor City Striders, and Mike McGuire, a former Farmington High School star and now a member of the University of Michigan's track team.

Of course, high school and college athletes can't win prizes. Instead, they're awarded medals for top performances.

The police departments from Farmington and Farmington Hills will be on hand to watch the runners, according to Heiser.

"The police departments from both cities have been most helpful to us," he said. "In the Hills, we have an officer in a patrol car who starts out with the runners. A Farmington officer picks them up when they cross over into the city. The police try to keep the main intersections open for us, but the runners will have to watch for hazards like cars and dogs."

The race is open to anyone, and there is no residency requirement. There is an entry fee of \$4, which includes the purchase of a race tee shirt.

Runners may enter the race by simply showing up at the Farmington Hills City Hall on Saturday morning before the start. The Farmington YMCA, 3800 Farmington Road, has entry forms for those who wish to pre-register.

Farmington Reds win Mack title

It's been a very good summer for the Farmington Reds baseball team.

Manager Jack Marston's Reds have recorded several impressive accomplishments — a title in the Pontiac Class D Connie Mack League, a 30-41 overall Mack two-loss record, and undefeated status in the Suburban Federation League's post-season play-off — and the rest of the summer looks promising for the team.

Farmington clinched the Connie Mack title by beating Walled Lake Central, 5-2, last Monday night at Pontiac's Aaron Perry Park. The Reds can go undefeated if they beat the second-place Pontiac Clippers this week.

Farmington's victory over Walled Lake Central featured a fine pitching performance by right-hander Bill Lajoie, who left off his Mack record to 6-0. He allowed just five hits, struck out seven and walked three.

"Lajoie isn't overworking," Marston said. "But he's a low-ball pitcher. He drives everybody crazy by keeping the ball

down and still in the strike zone. As a result, a lot of balls are hit on the ground."

Farmington, which had 14 hits, was led by third baseman Vic Ray, who drove in three runs with three singles. Teammate Chris Curtis and John Hurley each knocked in two runs with two hits.

The Reds also play in the Suburban Federation League, which is holding its play-offs on the weekends. So far, Farmington has won two play-off games and is the only undefeated team in the play-off.

Farmington defeated Rochester, 5-1, and then downed Grosse Pointe, 15-1, in the play-off games on Sunday at Oakland University. In the first game, Curtis fired a two-hitter, struck out 11 and walked two. Ray collected three singles and drove in two runs, and Dave Hoenesbach had two hits and knocked in three runs for Farmington, which had eight hits.

Farmington pounded out 14 hits against Grosse Pointe as Ray drove in five runs on two homers, including a 400-foot shot over the left-field fence. Winning pitcher Dave

Dault walked up four hits, fanned six and walked none.

The Federation tournament continues next weekend. Farmington plays Okemos on Saturday (July 31) at Fort Worth High School. The game begins at 10 a.m. If Farmington wins the Federation tournament, it will advance to the Federation National tournament in Joliet, Ill. Aug. 12.

THE FARMINGTON BLUES, another member of the Pontiac Class D Connie Mack League, lifted their season to 5-0-1 with an 8-7 victory over Rochester last Monday at Pontiac Northern High.

The score was tied at several points into the Farmington sixth inning. Will Weber singled and scored the winning run when Dave Cleland doubled. Weber proved Farmington's 14-0 hit attack with two doubles and two singles. Mark Bentley, the winning pitcher, struck out seven and walked three.

On July 30, the Blues defeated Walled Lake Western, 7-3. Winning pitcher Gregg Mashak threw a two-hitter, striking out

seven and walking five. Cleland drove in four runs with a triple and two singles. Farmington had 13 hits.

The Federation tournament continues next weekend. Farmington plays Okemos on Saturday (July 31) at Fort Worth High School. The game begins at 10 a.m. If Farmington wins the Federation tournament, it will advance to the Federation National tournament in Joliet, Ill. Aug. 12.

THE FARMINGTON BLUES, another member of the Pontiac Class D Connie Mack League, lifted their season to 5-0-1 with an 8-7 victory over Rochester last Monday at Pontiac Northern High.

The score was tied at several points into the Farmington sixth inning. Will Weber singled and scored the winning run when Dave Cleland doubled. Weber proved Farmington's 14-0 hit attack with two doubles and two singles. Mark Bentley, the winning pitcher, struck out seven and walked three.

On July 30, the Blues defeated Walled Lake Western, 7-3. Winning pitcher Gregg Mashak threw a two-hitter, striking out

Caesars last in Adray loop

Manager John Stenson and his Farmington Little Caesars baseball team had a last Sunday. Berkley beat Farmington, 7-0 and 13-1 at Drake Park. The team dropped Farmington to 11-4-1 in the Adray loop this summer.

In the first game, Berkley had five hits, including a two-run triple by Mark Berube. The winners scored six unearned runs. Farmington committed four errors. Winning pitcher Brad Saxena allowed three hits — singles by Dick Radatz, Bruce Sher and Kevin Delp — while striking out four and walking two.

"Saxena did a good job," said Farmington manager Wally Christensen. "We were beating everything into the ground. Delp, the losing pitcher, worked the whole game."

Berkley collected nine hits in the nightcap. The Red Sox batters, Lee and Bruce, won the batting start. Lee knocked in three runs with a double and a single, and Bruce had three hits in three trips to the plate and scored three runs. Losing pitcher Jon Haller allowed five Farmington hits.

Farmington scored its run in the second when Tom Harmon tripped and scored on

"They play last baseball in this league, and now they have to go to Stenson said. "But I think we can build for next year and bring along some of our younger players. We had four high school juniors on our team this summer, and they'll have a couple more years in Adray ball. We only had one player, Ron Salterman, with any Adray experience at all."

an infield out by Fred Blackmer, Larry McKee, one of four Farmington pitchers, won the losing start.

"Once I was down by seven runs, I pitched my 16 year olds and my other pitchers who don't get a chance to play very often," Christensen said. "Just about everybody got to play in this game."

On Friday (July 25), Farmington defeated Auburn Hills, 12-0. Rob Perry had a pair of home runs and drove in six runs. Jay Cunningham knocked in three runs with three hits. Delp was the winning pitcher.

Against Wendy's, Caesars stayed close, trailing 3-2 going into the sixth inning. And then "the sky fell in on us in the sixth," according to Stenson. Wendy's took advantage of three walks and three errors and scored four runs in the frame.

Winning pitcher John Kola, a standout at Livonia Stevenson High School last spring, had little trouble with the Caesars batters. He allowed just three hits, struck out five and walked four.

"When Kola is on, he's really tough," Stenson said. "He had a good fastball and a good fast-breaking curve, which just seemed to hang on the corner. He struck out only five batters, but he got the strikeouts when he needed them. When he had to beat down, he could do it."

Wendy's, which had 11 hits, was led by shortstop Tom Lajoie, who had two doubles and a single in four trips to the plate. Teammate Jim Hill went twice in three, including a double and a home run. Mike Tyranski had two hits in three trips.

Caesars scored twice in the first inning. Mike Thomas singled, and Randy Witten hit his third homer of the Adray season. He cleared the bases with a single in right centerfield. The only other Caesars hit was a fourth-inning double by John Jack. Bill Melsheim, Tim Ray, David, Thomas, Brown and Mitch Thomas each drove a walk from Kola.

Melsheim, the losing pitcher, struck out five and walked one before being hit by the 0th inning. Mike Thomas pitched in relief, striking out none and walking three.

Little Caesars also plays in the Detroit Recreation League, and has collected a 2-3 record in that circuit. Caesars plays next on Thursday (July 29) against the Argonauts. The game begins at 7 p.m. at Burtel Field, Livonia near Myers.

Legion drops twin-bill

Berkley can make double trouble for Farmington in American Legion 18th District baseball this Sunday. Berkley beat Farmington, 7-0 and 13-1 at Drake Park. The team dropped Farmington to 11-4-1 in the Adray loop this summer.

In the first game, Berkley had five hits, including a two-run triple by Mark Berube. The winners scored six unearned runs. Farmington committed four errors. Winning pitcher Brad Saxena allowed three hits — singles by Dick Radatz, Bruce Sher and Kevin Delp — while striking out four and walking two.

"Saxena did a good job," said Farmington manager Wally Christensen. "We were beating everything into the ground. Delp, the losing pitcher, worked the whole game."

Berkley collected nine hits in the nightcap. The Red Sox batters, Lee and Bruce, won the batting start. Lee knocked in three runs with a double and a single, and Bruce had three hits in three trips to the plate and scored three runs. Losing pitcher Jon Haller allowed five Farmington hits.

Farmington scored its run in the second when Tom Harmon tripped and scored on

an infield out by Fred Blackmer, Larry McKee, one of four Farmington pitchers, won the losing start.

"Once I was down by seven runs, I pitched my 16 year olds and my other pitchers who don't get a chance to play very often," Christensen said. "Just about everybody got to play in this game."

On Friday (July 25), Farmington defeated Auburn Hills, 12-0. Rob Perry had a pair of home runs and drove in six runs. Jay Cunningham knocked in three runs with three hits. Delp was the winning pitcher.

Legion All-Star Game

The North beat the South, 13-3, in the American Legion's 18th District All-Star game last Saturday night at Jayvee Park in Pontiac. The North had 13 hits and made the most of five South errors. Randy Meier and Rick Mulhiser, both of Farmington, played well for the South. Mulhiser had two hits in three trips to the plate and scored two for three at the plate.

Farmington's Larry McKee was the losing pitcher. Kevin Delp, also of Farmington, also pitched.

DON'T MISS IT!

Bavarian Village

SUMMER IN STORE WAREHOUSE STYLE

SALE

EQUIPMENT

SALE

NOW FOR 2 WEEKS ONLY!

This is the largest ski equipment sale in our history and without a doubt the best ski buys ever. Three times larger than last summer's sale that thousands enjoyed and talked about all winter. We're presenting everything warehouse style in our shops to save you money NOW. It has taken months to gather together this equipment, samples, closeouts, factory overstocks, special purchases, and carryover merchandise. If it's not good ski merchandise, we didn't buy it for this sale. SAVINGS up to 70%.

OPEN TONIGHT til 9 P.M. and all this week daily 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sat. 10-5:30

Lots of good demo skis, and discontinued skis and one of a kind items of unbelievable prices. Remember when these items are gone there will be no more. SO, shop early for best selection. In store warehouse sale lasts two weeks. **SORRY, NO LAY-AWAYS.** Use your BankAmericard, Master Charge, Diners Club or American Express credit cards. Come and visit our New Bloomfield store location.

SURE ITS CRAZY To Buy Ski Equipment NOW!

CRAZY LIKE A FOX!

Come prepared to buy ski equipment and HAVE FUN, SAVE PLUNTY

SKI SHOPS

- BIRMINGHAM: 101 Townsend (Across from Hughes-Hatcher)
- BLOOMFIELD HILLS: 2240 Woodchase (at Square Lake Rd.)
- LATHROP VILLAGE: 28445 Southfield (South of 12 Mile)
- LIVONIA/REDFOOT: 14211 Telegraph (at Schoolcraft)
- EAST DETROIT: 22301 Kelly Rd. (Betw. 8 & 9 Mile)
- MT. CLEMENS: 1216 S. Grotto (1/2 Mile N. of 16 Mile)