

Starting gates will open for last time at Ladbroke



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HAWLEY

They're off: Post time is 2 p.m. at Ladbroke Detroit Race Course. Today is the last day of live racing at the track at Middlebelt and Schoolcraft. Ladbroke is Michigan's only all-thoroughbred track.

By MATT JACHMAN
STAFF WRITER
mjachman@oe.homedom.net

A chapter of history will end today when the starting gates at Middlebelt and Schoolcraft Road open for the last time.

It's the final day of live racing at Ladbroke Detroit Race Course, whose management says it cannot compete with other forms of gambling, particularly the Windsor casino and the coming Detroit casinos.

Post time is 2 p.m. The closing of Michigan's only all-thoroughbred track leaves sentimental regulars reminiscing, and employees, horse owners, trainers and jockeys looking for other jobs and thoroughbred venues.

"It's provided a lot of fun, a lot of entertainment for me," said Murray Duffy of Garden City after betting on a race Thursday afternoon. Duffy, at DRC with a neighbor, Tony Bentz, said he has been a regular at the track for about 30 years.

"Some days you walk out with a hunk and some days you walk out scratching your behind," he said.

"We're going to miss it," said Gloria Piechowski. "We were and to hear this," said her husband, Ernie. "We knew it was coming" and wanted to get in a final visit, he added.

The Piechowskis, of Kalamazoo,

The 194-acre site was sold in March, for \$30 million, to a group of developers who plan a commercial and industrial complex, Millennium Park.

said they have been coming to the track for about 25 years.

The track's founding propelled what was then Livonia Township toward cityhood in 1950, the same year it opened. Incorporating as a city let Livonia benefit from track revenues through the state. Ladbroke, based in Great Britain, bought the track in 1985.

The 194-acre site was sold in March, for \$30 million, to a group of developers who plan a commercial and industrial complex, Millennium Park. Ladbroke will be open through the end of the year for simulcasting of races from tracks around the country, but demolition of some buildings is expected to begin later this month.

The shutdown has Mike Corbett of Livonia shaking his head.

"Even the small metro markets have a thoroughbred race-track," said Corbett, who along

with his wife, Phyllis, owns The Tout, a track concession and an information center for regular horse players.

The Tout, based at Ladbroke for five years, will move to Northville Downs, a harness-racing track.

Corbett wonders why Ladbroke couldn't make a go of it in Livonia. "It's probably the most vibrant corner in the whole metro area," he said.

Other tracks in the state offer mostly harness racing, which involves standard-bred horses. In thoroughbred racing, jockeys ride the horses.

Plans are under way for a thoroughbred track in Muskegon next year, and some horse owners, trainers and jockeys are betting on that, said Ladbroke track announcer Sam McKee.

But Shirley Johnson Singh of Detroit, who owns seven racing thoroughbreds, said she and her husband, Sher Singh, are moving to Kentucky to be near a track there.

"It's heartbreaking," Singh said of Ladbroke's closing.

McKee, finishing his 10th season at Ladbroke, said it has been a place where people of all types rub elbows and share their interest in racing.

"You'll see stockbrokers down there and CPAs and guys from the line," McKee said.

Offering Assisted Living in a warm and intimate home like setting!

We offer Assisted Living through a carefully structured and comprehensive program. Personalized care and social activities designed to stimulate each resident to maximize their social, intellectual and physical capabilities. By focusing our efforts in small groups in our residential setting we are able to accommodate Active/Alert, Memory Impaired, Frail/Recovering, and Alzheimer's residents.

- State Licensed • Medication Management • Nurse On Site • Spacious Apartment Style Suites
- Single Story Buildings • Incontinence Management • Planned Activities
- On Site Physician Visits • Wander Secured/Barrier Free Available

Please call today to set up a time for an informative tour and visit with our friendly staff.

AUBURN HILLS 3033 N. Squirrel Rd. 1-800-756-9199	FARMINGTON HILLS 29750 Farmington 1-800-998-0787
LIVONIA 32406 W. 7 Mile Road 1-800-736-2325	STERLING HEIGHTS 13400 Nimitz Road 1-800-926-2920
WIXOM 46578 Pontiac Trail 1-800-753-1046	

Thanksgiving

PICK-UP A COMPLETE DINNER FOR 6 TO 8 PEOPLE FOR \$125.00^{tax}

Turkey, Traditional Stuffing, Butter Whipped Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Gravy, Cranberry Relish, Fresh Buttered Green Beans, Mixed Organic Greens, Rolls and Flat Bread, Pumpkin Pie & Apple Pie (complete with reheating instructions) Pick-up between 8 am & 2 pm

Restaurant Open Thanksgiving Day 2 pm to 10 pm
Serving our Dinner Menu and Thanksgiving Specials

28875 Franklin Rd.
on the corner of 12 Mile & Northwestern Highway

Order Now 248-358-3355

SNEAK PREVIEW

WEDNESDAY 11/11/98

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS

WE LOVE SPORTS AS MUCH AS YOU DO

NEW Northville Area Location
Near 8 Mile Rd.
21061 Haggerty Rd.
Novi, MI 48375
248-738-8180

STORE HOURS
Mon.-Fri. 10am to 9:30pm
Sat. 10am to 7:30pm

get involved

WORK. PLAY. SHARE.

Buy athletic shoes at Dick's and you'll be helping kids with every step, because portions of shoe sales go to SADD. It's another part of our "Get Involved" program that urges kids to do positive activities. So get your shoes at Dick's, and it won't be just your feet that get great support.

You can e-mail us with any comments regarding service at custserv@dicks@mcimail.com or call our toll free number at 1.888.737.8344.

Check Out Our Huge Footwear Department!

It's Bigger than a football field.
Try them out on our huge indoor running track. Over 400 of the hottest styles in athletic footwear, cleats, inline skates, boots and casual footwear!

DICK'S SNEAK PREVIEW COUPON

Take \$10 OFF

Any Single Pair Of Footwear \$54.99 & Over

WORK. PLAY. SHARE.

Buy athletic shoes at Dick's and you'll be helping kids with every step, because portions of shoe sales go to SADD. It's another part of our "Get Involved" program that urges kids to do positive activities. So get your shoes at Dick's, and it won't be just your feet that get great support.

We also, with community spirit, by urging kids to participate in positive activities. As a thank you, we donate a portion of our proceeds from athletic shoe sales back to local SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) chapters in the communities where we do business.