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'Ancient' Bobby Still Tops In Riding Winners

Robert Lee Baird, who was booting in winners before most of his present rivals were born, is still going great guns at the Hazel Park race track. Baird, who will be 51 years old this fall, brought in 11 winners in the first three weeks of the current meeting to earn second place in the jockey standings. Only the sensational Larry Snyder has done better.

He went ashore on the second day in the invasion of Normandy. He was wounded four times in combat but never seriously.

Baird is a genius at keeping a quiet horse running. He has no superior in the subtle arts of handridding. His instinct for pace is superb. He can get the last measure of speed from his mounts. He rarely goes for his whip.

Early in the 1970 meeting at Hazel Park, Baird broke his heel in a freak accident. Instructors feared that such an injury, at his age, could convince him to hang up his tack but Baird never seriously entertained the idea.

The meeting is off to an encouraging start to an average first attendance for the first three weeks is 12,094 and the average daily mutual handle is \$1,038,720.

THE AGELESS TEXAN picks his spots these days. He rides three or four times in an afternoon, about half as often as Snyder. And he no longer exercises horses in the morning. But when the bell rings, he is tough as ever to beat.

One of the winningest riders in North America, he has made it to the winner's circle more than 3,200 times. He is one of the top dozen all-time victors in the history of the North American turf.

His record would be considerably more impressive if he had not spent four years in the infantry in World War II.

The Court Jester

by BILL CAMERON

Only one more tennis tournament left and that's the Dearborn "Tennis & Crumpets" mixed doubles, proceeds to benefit the Children's Hospital of Michigan.

They'll have beginner, intermediate and advanced divisions, so everyone can play. It is coming up the weekend of Sept. 11 and 12.

How about an Overland team tournament? We'll shoot for the last weekend in September.

I can envision five singles and five doubles in the men's division and three singles and three doubles teams in the women's division. Players would be limited to only one event, singles or doubles, round robin, one pro-set (ones against ones, twos, etc.).

Of course in order to make the whole thing work there would have to be a team

Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Unbelievable in Michigan. Something that will never happen on a harness track in Metropolitan Detroit. That has been the talk for years about a race in which every horse finishes in less than 2:00.

Those who have watched the developments since Wolverine Raceway changed from the traditional half-mile racing strip to the mile have wondered how long it would be before such a race took place.

They didn't have to wait long. Wolverine is using the mile track for the second year and the dream became a reality Saturday when the slowest pacer in the \$6,600 invitational was clocked in 1:59.1 and the winner in 1:58.3.

This was the event that matched all of the fastest pacers on the grounds and included record holder Knox Patch. It will be recalled that Knox Patch set the track

standard a year ago with a 1:58 mile.

Strange enough, in this race which could have bettered that time, Knox Patch was sixth.

The winner was Keystone Pat, a brilliant four-year-old shipped to Wolverine for the upcoming Matron stake which has an estimated value of more than \$40,000. Pat won recently at Vernon Downs in 1:56.4 and Racing Secretary Bill Connors had visions of a duel between Knox Patch and eastern invader.

By George Maske observing sports

My gosh, where has the summer gone? Seems like just yesterday we wrapped up the high school sports year for 1970-71 on these pages.

We talked about all-area heroes, the best in baseball, how the greats from Overland were landing scholarships all over the country, from Wayne State and the University in Detroit to Michigan to Notre Dame to Illinois to out west and back east.

That was early June.

We talked about how the Tigers still had a chance, how the Greater Livonia Connie Mack and Adray Leagues were blossoming into two of the best in these parts.

It turned out that way . . . for the Adray and Mack Leagues, but, unfortunately, not the Tigers.

REDFORD TOWNSHIP repeated as the State Adray champs . . . then swept through the regionals of the All-American tournament at Altoona, Pa., and won three more games in the nationals at Johnstown.

Overland teams did well in the Mack regionals. Three won trips to the state tournament at Marshall.

SO, WHILE baseball runs its final course we now turn full attention ahead to the Lions, the colleges, the preps . . . we can swing our thoughts, too, to the Red Wings and the Pistons who begin training next week.

The Lions? Just about every expert feels that this will be their year. They have a great deal going for them . . . one of the best defenses, an offense which is much stronger than in recent years . . . and the schedule!

It would appear that what happens on Sept. 20 could make or break the Lions. That's when they open against the defending divisional champion Minnesota Vikings, who figure to give the Lions a run for their money.

THE RED WINGS? Well, where else can they go but up after last season. And, they will . . . but from where I sit they'll do it without Gordie Howe.

Gordie is about to announce he's retiring from the active wars. He admits at age 43 the "old desire" isn't there. The Wings, minus Howe, or the National Hockey League, minus Howe, never will seem quite the same. But, people said that when Maurice Richard quit and many others.

There's no sense in believing that you can go on forever, nor should one ever entertain the thought that one player — even a Howe — is bigger than the game or the league.

The honest and true sports fan would prefer to remember Howe as the greatest player in the game's history instead of a facsimile thereof . . . and the latter is inevitable if he keeps trying to play on and on and on.

THE PISTONS? Once you achieve a winning fever, it helps in the years to come.

The Pistons finally did it last season. True they missed the playoffs, but the National Basketball Association system actually worked against them. They had a better record than three teams which made the playoffs.

They're certain to be a better club this season because of one player, Bob Lanier. He was hardly 100 per cent physically when he played on a knee that still was mending from surgery the previous spring.

A 50 per cent Lanier did considerably for the Pistons in 1970-71. What should a 100 per cent Lanier do in 1971-72?

THE PREPS? It's a safe wager — even if one shouldn't bring up that word in the schoolboy area — that Overland teams again will be powers throughout the coming school year.

All you have to do is look at the past and you'll see for yourself how our teams have walked away with honors — from league to regional to state.

Those who know will tell you that this particular area is blessed with great athletes in all phases, thanks to strong sports programs in every school system.

Such an approach is bound to pay off . . . and it has . . . from Garden City West's state basketball semifinals two years ago, to North Farmington's state football kings last year . . . to powers in tracks, swimming, golf, etc.

As the new school year dawns, there's one lump . . . Our Lady of Sorrows is out of the prep picture. And, here was a perennial winner in so many sports over so many years.

UNFORTUNATELY it never came off. Keystone Pat took the lead from the start and stayed in front all the way with youthful John Hayes Jr. in the sulky. Ordinarily John Sr. would have had the reins but he was ailing and turned the duties over to his son.

The four-year-old had a time of 2:02 for the first quarter, 1:00.2 at the half and then came the final half in a quick 1:58.1, one of the fastest clockings at Wolverine.

Even then Pat had to go all out to win. El Patron, the speedy three-year-old from the Doug Ackerman stable, pressed him all the way and was just a tick behind at the wire in 1:58.4.

Then came Right Honor, Record Time and Hazel Ideal in a bunch, all timed at 1:59, followed by Knox Patch at 1:59.1.

It has to be one of the best races ever presented in Michigan. It came on the heels of two other sub-2:00 miles. The Big Bear, owned by Detroit Jack Stahl and driven by Wally McIlmurray, roared out of the pack in the stretch to win in 1:59.

Mighty Fire, a four-year-old from Lexington, O., sped from far back in the final quarter for a 1:59.2 victory, his fastest mile.

As far as we can recall, it marks the first time a Michigan track has three better than 2:00 miles on the same program. More and more the Wolverine decision to go to the mile track is proving the point of faster and better races.

IT ISN'T official but there is a rumor floating around Wolverine that the track management will add another trifecta to its betting pool before another week goes by.

The success of the gimmick, in which the better tries to pick the one — two — three finish, has been nothing short of phenomenal at Hazel Park runners and Wolverine trotters.

As matters now stand, Wolverine has a daily double, Perfecta on the six race and a trifecta on the 10th. As we hear it, the additional trifecta may come on the fourth race.

NEWEST darling of harness racing fans is No Time Flat, a three-year-old Knight Time colt owned by Denis and Frances Fauxaux of Windsor.

No Time Flat did most of his racing as a two in Ontario where he was only out of the money once in eight starts but earned only \$338.

It has been a different story in the parimutuel circuits. The colt, driven by Jim Merriman Jr., has won seven of nine starts and shows two seconds. He proved himself last week when he went against older company, including many of the better class pacers, and pulled away in the stretch to win 2:01.3. A week earlier he had lowered his mark to 2:00.

His earnings to date are \$8,900 . . . quite a difference from the Ontario fair circuit.

Southfield Plans Touch Football Loop

There will be an organizational meeting for the adult touch football league on Saturday, Sept. 11, in Room 112 at 10 a.m. in the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building. This league is for Southfield residents and men working in the Southfield area. The age limit is 35-35 years.

The league will be operated with seven men teams playing on a four zone 80 yard field. Games will be played on Saturday afternoons beginning the last week of September.

This meeting will determine whether enough interest has been generated to organize.

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Polish Groups Set Tiger Night

It will be "Polish Night with the Tigers" at Tiger Stadium Thursday, Sept. 9, when the Tigers meet the Boston Red Sox at 8 p.m.

Fans of Polish descent are arranging a pre-game salute which will feature music by three polka bands. There will be special honors for four figures of the two teams — Outfielder Carl Yastrzemski and Coach Eddie Popowski, of the Red Sox; Pitcher Joe Niekro and Pitcher Ron Ferrafranski, of the Tigers.

Ed Browalski, sports editor of The Polish Daily News, will be master of ceremonies.

The Impalas, the Roystons and the V-Tones are the polka bands which will supply pre-game music, masking for the National Anthem which will be sung by the Our Lady of Assisi choir, under the direction of Robert Birdwell.

This will be the first of two ethnic nights at Tiger Stadium in September. Previously announced was Latin American Night, sponsored by the League of Latin American Citizens. It will be held Friday, Sept. 17, when the Tigers will be playing the Baltimore Orioles in a twilight doubleheader.

Canadian Golfer Gets Hole-In-One

Holes in one have become a weekly event at Brooklane Golf Course in Northville Township with the latest coming last week.

Ralph Howard, a visitor from St. Jean, Quebec, recorded his ace on the No. 6, 140-yard hole with a seven iron. The ball landed on the green, took one bounce and dropped into the cup.

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