

Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Michigan's thoroughbred racing season gets underway Friday at Hazel Park with new owners, a brand new track, and generally a new appearance from that of a year ago when the east side plant had its poorest meeting in several seasons.

Attendance was down to the lowest level in a long time, the wagering was far below the norm, the weather was the worst...everything that could possibly go wrong went wrong.

Then the management bowed out and sold the plant, lock, stock and barrel to Herb Tyner and Bernie Hartman, a pair of energetic Southfield businessmen with a lot of the necessary green stuff and a desire to make the track a winning business.

Tyner and Hartman put up something like \$14.5 million for the rundown plant and have been busy most of the winter making improvements they believe will bring back the betting public.

They'll know how well they've succeeded when the gates open Friday at noon for the start of their first venture into racing. They are expected to draw a crowd of more than 15,000, if the sun shines.

They would like to have the opening day handle in the neighborhood of a million even though the inaugural program will consist of eight races with a posttime of 3:20 p.m.

If that happens, then you'll know they are on their way to a bigger and better season than that of 1972. They'll be watching the figures daily for a comparison of business this year contrasted to that of last.

All of this in spite of the fact that Tyner and Hartman realize the quality of horseflesh won't be the best for another month.

The general thought among those close to racing is that the first meet always gets the fresh money which has been burning holes in bettors' pockets since the close of action last December.

There isn't any question that people have money to spend and want to spend it. This has been demonstrated by the attendance and handle at both the Windsor and Northville Downs harness racing meets.

Whether Hazel Park's opening will have a downward effect on the harness tracks probably won't be known for several days. The mere fact the east side plant will have a daily double, three perfectas and two trifectas as gimmicks along with the eight race programs on weekdays and 10 on Saturdays is bound to take betters away from the trotters and pacers.

Since most of the horses on the grounds are from Michigan and Ohio, Director of Racing Bud Sears plans eight races daily and the 10-race card on Saturdays until mid-April. That's when the big influx of horses from Oaklawn, Kentucky, Florida and New Orleans is expected and that's when the racing will reach a peak.

Many of the weaker stables will leave for the openings in Ohio and smaller tracks in the east and the big, powerful strings will be on hand to resume their year long rivalry.

All wish Tyner and Hartman luck in their new venture and hope they get off to a flying start.

With a break in the weather, business and attendance has climbed at Northville Downs with a high for the week on Saturday when 5,759 fans poured into the half-mile plant and wagered \$431,735.

That was the second largest crowd of the winter season and the handle was the second best and well over the high of \$423,426 last winter.

With one weekend remaining, Executive Director John Carlo is looking forward next Saturday to the first \$500,000 night in history for a winter program.

Johnny G, the veteran pacer owned by Angus McTigue of Port Huron, showed he is ready for the start of the Wolverine Raceway season and a chance to go against the best when he won Saturday's \$3,000 Saline Pace in a tight finish with Tricky Dale.

It was only the second start of the year for the oldtimer who was taken to the front after a half-mile and stayed there to the wire.

Tricky Dale, the speedster from the Bob Kalish stable of Southfield, gave Johnny G a real battle in the stretch but couldn't quite get up. It was Tricky Dale's first race after resting for almost two months.

THIS IS THAT...Harness racing mourned the death of Owner Ray Forsyth, of Birmingham, in December and those close to the racing scene wondered what would happen to the powerful string he had developed in a short span of three years.

It will be recalled that Forsyth decided to go into the business as a hobby, hired Ted Taylor as his driver-trainer and then went to the auction sales to build a stable from scratch.

For three years he was one of the busiest buyers at the Tattersalls sale, generally selecting horses bred by Good Time or Bret Hanover. This year he was the buyer when he would see all of his young horses race but unfortunately death took Ray before he could realize his big dream.

The answer to the question "What will happen to the Forsyth stable?" comes in this week's edition of The Horseman and Fair World, a trade magazine.

The next Tattersalls sale, in Lexington, is scheduled for April 23. It will feature the sale of the racing and breeding stock from the estate of Ray Forsyth and includes such standouts as: H.T. Nick, Bret's Image, two Bret Hanover yearlings among others.

Bedford Jet, the camellia star of the winter circuit who had to move from Northville Downs to Windsor when he ran out of competition, recorded his second feature victory at the Canadian oval Saturday.



NOT THIS TIME!! Livonia Bentley's Tim Bollin (52) reaches out to block a shot by RU's Scott Bjerkie (12). But it wasn't enough to halt the Panthers who toppled Bentley, 82-70, in a Suburban Eight contest. (Observer photo by Harry Mauthe)

Plymouth Gymnasts Take Titles

Three members of the Plymouth Gymnastic Club turned in first place performances at the U.S. Gymnastic Federation Michigan championship meet last week, while the "A" team defeated Southfield 115.91 to 113.18.

Late ND Rally Beats Borgess

Greg Dripen's game-leading output of 21 points was in vain for Bishop Borgess as Notre Dame turned on the heat for a 27-8 surge in the fourth quarter that gave ND a 77-56 cage triumph.

Borgess fought Notre Dame to a 36-36 standoff in the first half and trailed only by two, 50-48, after three periods. Then came the Notre Dame scoring avalanche that left Borgess at 10-10 for the regular season and Notre Dame 13-6 overall.

Greg LeFevre and Don Buzynski shared the scoring lead for Notre Dame with 15 points each.

Floor Exercise: 1 - Anwe (P); 2 - Worsnop (P); 3 - Brown (S); Plymouth 22.28, Southfield 20.15.

Team Score: Plymouth 93.27, Southfield 83.49.

Plymouth First B Vault: 1 - Christensen (P); 2 - McMillan (P); 3 - Karlstrom (P); Flint 26.48, Plymouth 28.50.

Ureven Bars: 1 - Glowney (P); 2 - Gray (P); 3 - McMillan (P); Flint 24.83, Plymouth 27.23.

Balance Beam: 1 - Glowney (P); 2 - Muracke (P); 3 - M. Lukens (P); Plymouth 28.90, Flint 24.25.

Floor Exercise: 1 - Glowney (P); 2 - Karlstrom (P); 3 - Cate (P); Anwe (P) tied; Flint 28.17, Plymouth 27.25.

Team Score: Flint 100.81, Plymouth 93.27.

Plymouth-Southfield A Vault: 1 - K. Skilman (S); 2 - S. Skilman (S); 3 - Patten (P); Southfield 24.82, Plymouth 24.23.

Ureven Bars: 1 - Garbus (P); 2 - K. Skilman (S); 3 - Moorehead (P); Plymouth 26.40, Southfield 25.08.

Balance Beam: 1 - Mullane (P); 2 - K. Skilman (S); 3 - Moorehead (P); Garbus (P) tied; Southfield 29.48, Plymouth 28.64.

Floor Exercise: 1 - K. Skilman (S); 2 - Moorehead (P); 3 - Thomas (P); Southfield 22.80, Plymouth 22.30.

Plymouth-Southfield B Vault: 1 - M. Good (S); 2 - J. Thibodeau (S); 3 - N. Thibodeau (S); Southfield 22.15, Plymouth 22.15.

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