

Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Business continues to boom at Wolverine Raceway and Hazel Park to the point that each is nearing all-time records for wagering. And that's quite a change from conditions a year ago when Hazel Park struggled through one of its poorest seasons ever.

Seems strange that in a period of high inflation with records on purchases of meat to keep down the prices and complaints from every possible source, about skyrocketing prices the per capita betting is at the highest level in Michigan history.

For instance, while both the trotters and the thoroughbreds enjoyed the biggest single days of the season Saturday, it was Hazel Park that's quite a change from conditions a year ago when Hazel Park struggled through one of its poorest seasons ever.

As it was the \$971,129 was a high for the 82-night meeting which went through its 32nd night. That boosted the wagering to six per cent over the all-time highs of 1972 and gave the track a nighty average of \$588,878 contrasted to \$555,000 for the same period a year ago.

For those who like additional figures, and most of us do these days, Wolverine had a nighty average of \$678,669 last week which has to be just about the best week ever for harness racing in this state.

On a Saturday night when the big mile track was at its fastest of the season, what better time for a Michigan owned to register the first sub-2:00 mile of 1973.

It came on a night when the slowest clocking of the evening was 2:04.3 in the 10th and final race, the nine were faster with a 1:59.4, 2:00.3 and 2:01.1 to keep fans on edge.

It remained for Bedford Jet, the six-year-old owned by Ed Weber of West Bloomfield, to break the 2:00 barrier. It was a first of the season and a first for the "cinderella" horse which has won the hearts of Michigan fans with his brilliant feats this winter and spring.

Purchased for \$500 as a two-year old at the Delaware, O. sale, Bedford Jet won Saturday's Michigan invitational over perhaps the best field of pacers put together in the area this year...and it did it in convincing style.

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It took some clever banking by Driver Gordon Norris to get The Jet home this time even though he had a quick 28.2 closing quarter to clinch a length victory and the 1:59.4 time.

Norris left the six-year-old go and he held off the challenges of Skipper Gene Marx and Big Kahuna to win by a length.

Nothing could have been more satisfying to Owner Weber...he saw his horse beat the fastest and best at the track and also record the first mile of the year in 1:59.4. Quite a feat for a \$500 bargain.

Take a look at these times for the evening: Armbrro Mickey, 2:03.3; Rose Creed, 2:02.3; Meadow Hempt, 2:03.3; Rusty McKiyo, 2:03.4; Shado Thru, 2:03.3; Bret Johnston, 2:03.1; Dashing Daner, 2:01.1; Bedford Jet, 1:59.4; Knox Abbe, 2:03.2; and Direct Knox, 2:04.3.

That's why the track is rated as one of the fastest in the Midwest and the times are among the reasons for the tremendous increase in wagering in recent years.

Fans are seeing better finishes than ever and the fastest miles consistently in a harness racing track in this part of the land.

Thurston High extended its unbeaten string on the cinder track to four with a Northwest Suburban dual win over North Farmington.

The Thurston Eagles won two of three relays, two field events, and five running events to topple North, 74-49.

LONG JUMP: 1-Peace (NF); 2-Gibson (NF); 3-Koroy (NF); Distance 20'9".

SHOT PUT: 1-Horton (F); 2-Sain (F); 3-Moon (NF); Distance 53'5".

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