

Race Boss, Track Probe DRC Drugging

By DOC MINARD

After cancelling the final race on Monday's program when four of the starters allegedly were found drugged, the Detroit Race Course management, Racing Commissioner Leo Shirley, representatives of the Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau, plus officers from the Livonia police and the Michigan State Police have joined in an investigation of the entire barn area.

It was the first major tam-

pering case at the track and may involve as many as three horsemen judging from the meager information available. The racing boss and the



track stewards will probably hold a hearing on the case before the end of the week or as soon as the teams of investigators complete their probe.

The matter first came to light early Monday morning when the track and state veterinarian, along with the track identifier, started their check of all horses entered in that day's races.

This is a normal procedure, one that shows the progress of the management

and racing commission in making all possible checks to avoid such incidents as tampering, drugging and trying to start horses not in the best physical condition.

The group had just begun the morning check when the stewards were notified by a trainer that his horse, entered in the final race, was not acting right and he wanted to scratch it.

The stewards, in turn, immediately notified the veterinarians who went to the barn and discovered the horse had been tampered with. It had the appearance, it was reported, of having been injected with a tranquilizer.

They continued their check of the horses and discovered at least four of those entered in the ninth race showed symptoms of having been "needled," according to reports.

All of the quartet were regarded as top contenders in the six-furlong event.

Information filtering from the stewards and the racing commissioner's office in-

dicated another horse was stricken with an attack of colic and another trainer tried to scratch still another horse from the same race.

This led to management cancelling the race following a conference with Racing Commissioner Shirley and security men.

The public was made aware of the cancellation because the start of the day's racing and employees were told of it when they checked in.

Monday's incident followed closely a case of possible tampering last week which resulted in the death of a three-year-old filly, Not For Love.

The filly had been scheduled to run in the fourth race last Wednesday but was found in her stall beating her head against the wall. It was in such pain that it was destroyed and DRC management sent the remains to Michigan State University for tests.

The newest incident was discovered shortly after 8 a.m. That's shortly before the deadline for scratches

when horsemen are required to make requests to the stewards if they do not want to run their horses.

Trainer Jim Jackson made the first call to the stewards to report his horse Wichita Charles was behaving in a strange manner.

The two vets discovered the five-year-old was sweating profusely and acted lethargic. Shortly after checking Wichita Charles, they found Mr. Sumner, who defeated Wichita Charles a week ago, also appeared to have been tranquilized.

Then they found Frank 'N Jesse and Ellemar, also entered in the last race, showed signs of tampering.

It was reported knots were found in the necks of several of the horses as if they had been hit by a needle. This was not confirmed by the stewards, however.

The racing commissioner is awaiting results of the hearing before a final decision.

"We had to stop traffic at Hazel Park last year," he said, "when we

found several horses had been tampered with. Wolverine Raceway scratched several horses four years ago but this is the first time to my knowledge we have lost a race because of alleged tranquilizing."

Earlier in the year there were reports of alleged tampering with races at the Jansbury harness racing meeting conducted by Jackson Raceway at Northville Downs.

It was reported then that several drivers, trainers and owners were involved in attempts to "fix" races in which wagering gimmicks were involved.

It is known the racing commissioner and the stewards held several hearings, calling in drivers, but thus far no final report has been made.

It has been reported some of the findings have been turned over to Attorney General Frank Kelley for final disposition. Earlier in the report Kelley's office had issued warrants but to date there hasn't been any additional action.

Redford Bats Stymied

By TOM DONOGHUE

Sports Editor

Twenty-four hits in two victories and going strong. That was the story of Redford Adray in the Triple A Baseball Nationals in Johnston, Pa. a tale that was quickly altered.

What followed was a complete breakdown in Bob Atkins' hitting department which went 15 innings with only one hit, losing a one-hitter to Detroit Applance, 8-0, and a three-hitter to New York in 11 innings, 5-1.

Only four hits in 20 innings spilled two defeats and a ride home from Johnston.

"The bats just went dead," said Atkins whose team finished at 28-72 for the summer. "An injury to our shortstop Jeff Hodgkins didn't help us any in the final contest either."

Just when it appeared that the momentum might shift back Redford's way in the second contest, New York pulled off three double plays in the eighth, 10th and 11th innings to choke off any semblance.

It was Redford against Pat Sheridan's Detroit team with both clubs sporting two wins. Sheridan took over the Redford reins last season when Atkins bowed out. But Atkins returned this year and Sheridan jumped to the Det-

roit League and took a winner to Johnston.

A leadoff bunt single by Jeff Hodgkins in the eighth inning was all Redford could muster against the pitching control of Detroit's Bob Owchinko.

Meanwhile, Redford's hurlers were having trouble getting the ball over the plate.

Scott Evans started and lasted only one inning, pitching to nine batters and allowing six to get on base via three walks and three hit batsmen.

Evans got out of a jam in the first inning, walking one and hitting one but wasn't as fortunate in the second.

Dan Damiani opened the inning with a base on balls, Joe Meyer was hit by a pitch and Tom Broder struck out. Evans then lost Owchinko on four balls and Damiani tumbled in with run No. 1.

"Atkins had seen enough of Evans and brought in Jeff Moon.

Moon got Dan Schmidt to ground out, with Meyer scoring. Randy Reynolds then popped out to Vourchok at first for the second out.

Ken Hamann followed with a slow roller down the third base line that he beat out for a single with another Detroit crossing home plate.

Owchinko grounded out but Redford found itself down by three and that's the way it remained until the ninth.

Atkins had pulled Moon for a ninth inning in the eighth and replaced him with Tom Nippa, his ace lefthander.

Nippa walked the first batter he faced, Owchinko hit Tom Broder, who was with Drumkenmiller out at second.

With Owchinko at first, Schmidt singled and Nippa wild pitched them to second and third. Reynolds walked to fill the bases and Hamann singled to score one.

Schmidt scampered in on a wild pitch and Tom Broder walked. Atkins made another out to the mound and came in with Tom Miller.

Miller gave up a single to Steve Anson before getting Meyer to pop out to retire the side. Detroit had scored five times on only three hits.

Redford was now in the losers bracket with a 2-1 mark with only eight of the original field of 16 remaining in contention.

Atkins called on Del Malloch in the clash with New York. The hard throwing right-hander from Westland came through 10 1/3 innings with 11 hits, gave up three runs, walked three and struck out seven.

Evans went the last 2/3 inning, allowing two runs on one hit and struck out one. Starter Malloch suffered the loss.

Redford, which had gone 15 innings without a hit, got its

first against Beizer in the sixth. Mark Durance singled but was quickly erased on a pickoff play.

A two out rally for Redford in the seventh ended things up at one-all. John Broder doubled, Malloch walked and Glenn Richmond singled in Broder.

The eighth saw Redford get its leadoff batter Durance on by way of a two-base error. But couldn't get a bunt down to move him to third and Durance wound up getting doubled off second on a line drive to left off the bat of Friedman.

Walks to Richmond in the 10th and Durance in the 11th went to the waystate with New York pulling off double plays in both instances.

The New York 11th saw Redford fall out of the tourney.

New York didn't stop at the one run margin. Tony Briegouel followed with a single and Atkins came in with Evans. Tony LaFerrara greeted Evans with a bounce back to the pitcher that was tossed high to second with everyone safe.

After a strikeout for No. 2, Beizer singled in one run and Christy was safe on an error by LeFaux at short with two more runs scoring. The die had been cast and Atkins' seventh trip to Johnston proved to be an unlucky No. 7.

Plymouth Umpire Still Calling Them At 77

An umpire, according to Webster, is defined as an official who administers the rules in certain team sports - a person chosen to render a decision in a dispute.

Earl Gray, of Plymouth, has to be the "demon" of doing just that. In fact the 77-year-old Gray has been administering rules and umpiring for the past 44 seasons.

With more than 4,500 games under his belt, Gray admits one mistake he made and that was quitting Plymouth High School his junior year in 1915.

The first contest Gray umpired was on May 30, 1929, between C.S. Smith and Plymouth Class A.

Since then he has worked the Michigan-Ontario League, which started in 1932, and organized the Inter-County Baseball League in 1936. He was president and an umpire of that circuit for

22 years before just sticking to officiating after '58.

Gray organized the Suburban Umpires Association in 1947 and was secretary and treasurer for 25 years. At one time he had 68 men working under him in the area.

High school baseball and softball games have found their way to fill Gray's weekly schedules.

Just why does a man umpire for 44 years and why at the age of 77 does he still take the curses of many managers, players and fans?

"I really enjoy working a game," said Gray. "I can relax on the field knowing that I know and understand the game as well as anyone around."

"You know, I got scartlet fever at the age of three and have been close to blind in my right eye. At the age of 65 I started to wear glasses."

"All along I knew I probably couldn't advance too far in officiating because of my eye. My arms gave out on me when I was young so my playing days were over and I decided to stick it out in another aspect.

"Arguments don't bother me in the least, if they are called, I'll take them. I'm calling balls and strikes and yelling safe or out, I have been hit only once and that by a spectator in Garden City.

"It was an Inter-County game in '42 and Garden City lost to Belleville. This fan didn't like a call I made at the plate. He jumped out and knocked me down and the police promptly escorted him away."

Gray, who umpired 119 baseball and softball games last year and has worked over 30 this season, admits baseball is his game.

"Baseball is my science, softball is too slow," added Gray. "And I can't really say that I have ever blown a call."

Gray has even umpired through three generations of one family.

"I was working a little league game last year and there were this kid's father and grandfather - I had umpired for all three of them and they were all still complaining about present and past calls.

"You know, I have taught myself almost everything there is to know about the game through boys and experience. I used to idolize Bill Summers when he was working the circuit at Briggs Stadium.

"But you know, the hardest call to make is when to call a game because of weather conditions or darkness. Strikes and balls and whether or not a player is safe or out is there to be called."

The retired Wayne County heavy construction worker

married in 1925 and his wife, Edna, used to watch her husband work behind the plate in the early days but things have changed now.

"She won't go to the games now," said Gray. "She takes everything too serious and is afraid that somebody is going to kill me - the way they talk and all."

An interesting aspect of working games was pointed out by the dean of area umpires.

"I would say that only about one per cent of all coaches come up to me or for that matter any umpire after the game and give any sort of congratulations for a good job. It's just not in their blood, I guess.

"But there are some outstanding coaches in the area like Roger Fryker, Bob Atkins and Wayne Sparkman to name a few."

Just how much longer does Earl figure he can call games, well...

"About 19 years ago I said that I would just be filling in and here I am still going strong. I guess when I realize my reflexes are slowing down is when I will hang it up for good.

"I have made a lot of friends and enemies and have received self satisfaction from keeping clean the national sport.

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