

Winter Is Training Time At Northville

It's unusually cold on winter mornings at Northville Downs race track, and the horses' bodies steam after a few miles in the grey dawn.

The harness racing season is six weeks away, and trainers are busy every day getting the animals in shape.

Mostly, it's the two- and three-year-old colts and a few fillies who are being conditioned for their first campaigns.

The trainers say it's especially important to condition the young horses properly.

kind of usable condition, they'll be out. A week ago, when rains flooded and softened the ground, the trainers had only two working days in the full week. There was considerable grumbling.

The tight caps of ice skaters, the red padded clothing of the hunter, yellow sunglasses—these are the commonest uniforms on the wind-swept track.

"Three out of four horses in Michigan don't pay their own way," says one trainer.

He owns a farm but considers himself a horseman, not a farmer.

Yet the conversation is much like that of farmers because it's about profits and costs. Rent, \$15 a month for a stall. Shoeing, \$27 ("It used to be \$10"). Purse.

NORTHVILLE IS the winter training track for the area with more than 300 pacers and trotters quartered on the ground. Wolverine Raceway, Hazel Park and the 'Downs' managements contribute to the funds that partially pay for the winter operation.

However, the funds do not cover all of the expenses which

are charged back to the horse-men in monthly rent for stall space.

Michigan's harness racing campaign opens at Wolverine Raceway, which operates at the Detroit Race Course, on March 22 and then is followed by the Northville Downs summer meeting beginning May 30, Hazel Park's fall meeting starting Aug. 1 and then the out-state Jackson Raceway meeting in early October which concludes the standard bred activities.

MOST OWNERS, trainers and drivers are busy during the win-

ter taking care of a handful of horses, but each is looking for another Dr. Stanton, the most famous bargain in Michigan animals who was purchased for \$350 and then won more than \$200,000 during his illustrious career.

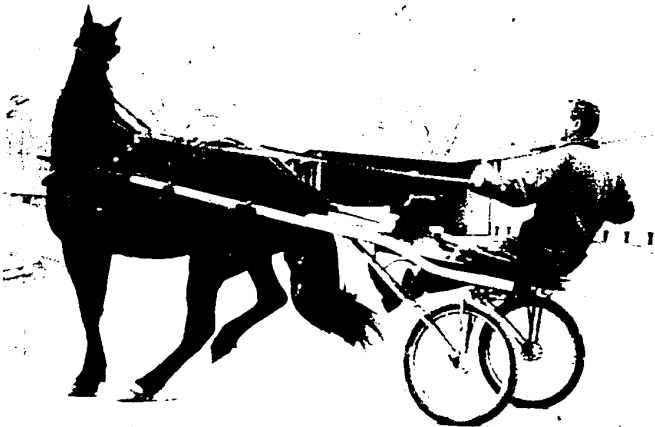
"When this happens," said one of the trainers over a cup of coffee with a faraway look in his eye, "then you can tell everyone to kiss off and I mean kiss off."

The Northville Downs winter

colony includes drivers and trainers from Northville, Plymouth, Livonia, Allen Park, Flat Rock, Pontiac, Pinckney, Ann Arbor, Lincoln Park and most every other small town one can mention within 30 miles

of the track.

The chores will continue until mid-March when the exodus will start for the opening of Wolverine Raceway and the huge facilities of the Detroit Race Course.



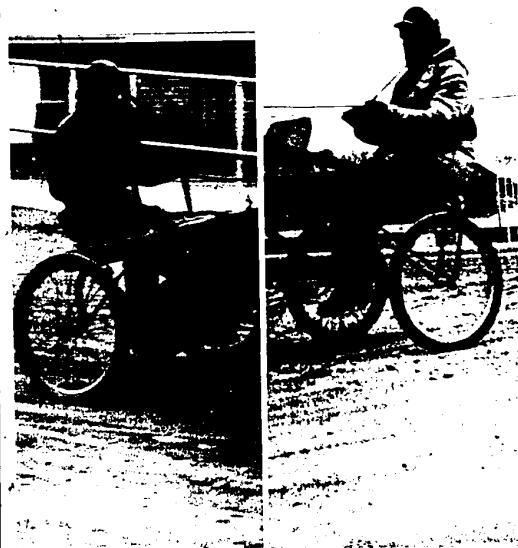
WHOA, NOW! -- The trainer and trotter appear to have different ideas here. The driver

wants to turn and start a time trial, and the horse is objecting to any changes. The driver von after almost getting dumped on the track.

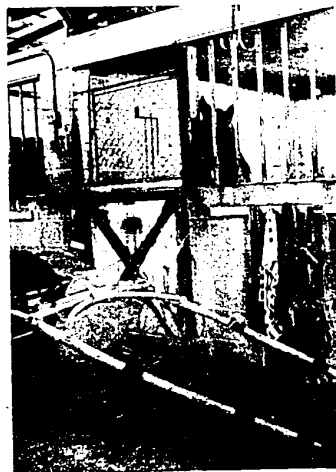
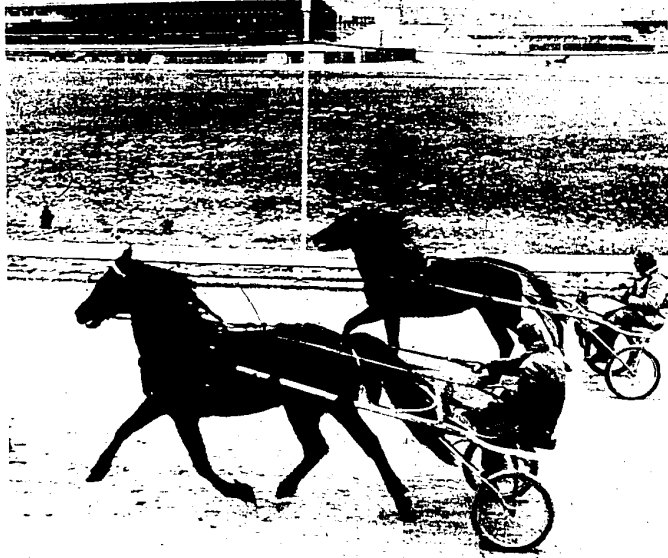


SHEPHERD DOG watches as his warmly-attired master guides a horse out of the barn area

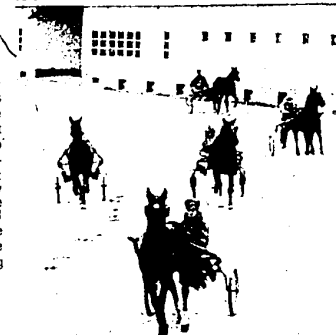
for the morning drills. Hardly a barn in the Northville Downs colony doesn't have a pet of some kind.



IT MAY BE cold outside, but the drivers and trainers pile on warm clothes as shown in these pictures. At left is a cart with a covering to keep the snow and mud from hitting the driver. Center: This driver takes it easy as he starts around the track. Right: A typical morning scene as the carts move out from the barn area to start the long morning workouts.



INSIDE THE winter-type barns, which have stalls opening into the center, are found training carts, equipment used on the horses and a pacer or trotter cooling off after a hot workout.



FAMILIAR SIGHT at Northville Downs in the early morning hours. These horses are jogging around the oval in clockwise style before finally turning around and going counter clockwise for the final workout. Trainers often jog the pacers and trotters for as many as six miles before calling a halt.

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TUESDAY	LADIES' DAY Five movie, free coffee, prizes SQUARE DANCING 8 p.m. in Community Room
WEDNESDAY	SENIOR CITIZENS 12 noon in Community Room
THURSDAY	CUB SCOUTS BANQUET in Community Room GLASS BLOWER IN MALL 10 to 9 p.m.
FRIDAY	BALLROOM DANCING Community Room 8 p.m.
SATURDAY	COIN SHOW in Community Room 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. PLYMOUTH JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT groups in Mall 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. NORTHVILLE HIGH SCHOOL BAND 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 CRITICS BAND 4, 5

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