

Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Although the crowd didn't come close to record proportions, President and General Manager Leon Slavin was more than satisfied with the gathering of 3,077 that showed up for the opening program of the 47 - night Jackson - at - Northville late fall and winter meeting Monday at Northville Downs.

"We believe this will be the best of our five meetings at Northville Downs," said Slavin after noting that wagering for the opener was \$346,441.

"That is an indication folks in Michigan aren't going to go to Canada as long as we have good racing here at the Downs." We believe we have perhaps the best group of horses in several years and expect attendance and wagering to hold up."

The much discussed and often cursed single shaft sulky was used in practically every race and six times it went into the winners' circle.

Bea Farber, the Brighton housewife who is one of the nation's top feminine drivers, used the single shaft sulky with Clipper's Comet in the seventh.

Slavin, who introduced the single shaft to Michiganders during the recent Jackson Raceway meeting, said "horsesmen who don't want to compete against the single shaft and won't use it can go elsewhere. As far as I am concerned, it has been accepted by our drivers and they are free to use it."

The Detroit Race Course rings down the curtain on a thoroughbred racing season that probably will be much better than the disastrous 1972 campaign when the final figures are available.

One thing is certain, the final six days will have a happier ring than those of a year ago when track management was feeling the pangs of the worse season in years.

Vice President and General Manager Dick Wilson, who is not one to allow his real feelings to show, arranged a big give-away program for the final week.

Actually it started last Monday and will end on Saturday, the closing day. There was free admission to the grandstand on Tuesday and Wednesday and there will be on Thursday. The reason, the state lottery act provides for no admission charge - when contests are

held for prizes. It might be said free gate when drawings are held for prizes.

The track gave away an automobile Tuesday and Wednesday and follows with a third on Thursday. That's only a small part of the giveaways slated for the week. Prizes slated for Saturday, closing day, include a 1,000-pound steer, 200-pound hog, 12 turkeys, 100 record albums and a chance to meet some of the area's top disc jockeys.

Meanwhile, Jockey Larry Snyder continues his march toward the most victories ever recorded by a rider in the Detroit area.

Snyder shattered the track record more than a week ago and had a total of 157 firsts going into this week.

There's a distinct possibility he'll go well past 160 before the end of the 90 days. Then the runners will switch to Hazel Park where racing will be resumed next Wednesday and continue through Dec. 22.

Michigan's second best harness racing meeting ended Saturday night when Hazel Park Raceway closed the doors on its 82-night campaign.

The east side track wound up with a nightly betting average of \$556,030, highest ever for a fall meeting in Michigan and second only to the Wolverine Raceway spring season which terminated with a nightly average of \$667,000.

All of which makes one wonder what the tracks would average if Racing Commissioner Len Shirley decided to give the big two back-to-back dates next year. Saturday's Hazel Park crowd of 10,209 poured \$31,367 through the mutual machines, third highest single night of the fall.

The nightly average shattered the previous high for a Hazel Park meeting, the \$242,887 former mark was established in 1972.

When the final figures for 1973 were tabulated, they showed wagering up 16 per cent over 1972 and up eight per cent in attendance. Total turnstile count was \$75,620 and the total mutual handle soared to \$53,794,504.

Mike Novick Jr., won the Universal Driver Racing title in the North Farmington High auditorium on Tuesday, 54 firsts, 30 seconds and 29

thirds. Chris Boring was second with a 312 percentage.

Joe Adamsky won one race Saturday and tied with Novick in the race for the most winners in a single meet. The victory gave Adamsky a total of 54, same as Novick who was blanked on the final program.

Canadian Greg Wright was third in the final standings with 52 firsts and Boring took down fourth honors with 51.

All four shattered the previous high of 50 set by Joe Marsh Jr. several years back when Hazel Park had only 60 nights.

Now followers of the pacers and trotters will have to wait until next spring for the Hazel Park campaign to see if the east side plant can better the numerous record set by Wolverine Raceway.

For instance Hazel Park has never hit the million dollar mark for a single night where Wolverine had six such programs last spring. Chances are better than even Hazel Park will do likewise when it opens in 1974. It appears when one of the two major plants - Wolverine or Hazel Park - gets the spring and summer dates, records fall.

We reiterate, it will be interesting to see the 1974 dates when Commissioner Shirley gets around to announcing them next month.

Especially after John Carls, executive director of Northville Downs, made application for 82 nights, all in midsummer. Hazel Park asked for late spring and early summer dates and Wolverine for midsummer and early fall.

There'll be things hitting the fan when Shirley publicly announces his allotments and perhaps a couple of lawsuits. Especially if back-to-back summer meetings are given to the two major tracks.

Basketball Rules Film At North

The 1973 "Basketball Today" film produced by the Michigan High School Athletic Association will be shown in the North Farmington High auditorium on Tuesday, Nov. 13, at 7:30 p.m.

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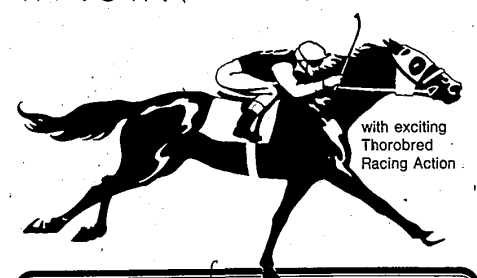
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