

Turf Tips, Oulps

By Doc Minard

The racing business is booming every place and especially in the state of Michigan where the Detroit Racing Association and Northville Downs seem to be picking up steam daily and nightly.

The DRA opened its 90-day spring and summer meeting Tuesday with one of the biggest weekdays of the year. When the final tally was made at the end of the ninth race, a crowd of 8,019 had wagered \$813,640. That happens to be the best weekday in two years outside of Good Friday last week.

Northville Downs, in its final week of a meeting which ends next Tuesday, set wagering records on three successive nights. It started last Thursday when 5,028 poured \$510,432 through the wickets.

Then came Saturday when the largest crowd ever for a winter meeting in Michigan, 7,038—bet an all-time high of \$678,028. That was the biggest night in the track's 32-year history, bettering the previous high of \$608,097 on July 3, 1971.

Then came Monday, when the 'Downs had the only game going in the area since the DRC was dark, and the turnstile count soared to 5,050 with a total handle of \$559,387, some \$50,000 better than any Monday.

The total for the three nights was \$1,747,857 for an average of \$582,956.

That's a record the track management dreamed of for years and now it becomes a reality with only six nights remaining of the season.

Despite the unprecedented mutual play, Northville executive manager John Carlo is still unhappy with the track's 1975 date assignments. Earlier he filed suit against Racing Commissioner Leo Shirley complaining that summer dates had been taken from Northville Downs and turned over to Wolverine Raceway and Hazel Park Raceway for 'back-to-back summer meetings.'

Carlo has asked for a rehearing through his attorney, Arthur Bruner, of the lawsuit. Circuit Court Judge Thomas Foley will consider the matter Friday.

TOM MERRIMAN, who has won numerous races for Owner Bob Kalish of Southfield during the Northville meeting, will be back to defend his driving championship when the 32 night Hazel Park campaign begins next Wednesday.

Tom beat out Greg Wright, the brilliant Canadian, by the slimmest of margins, 341 to 334. Merriman made his last start of the meeting in the eighth race on the final night and finished second. If he had finished out of the money, Wright would have been the champion.

Tom's brother, Jim Jr., was eighth among the reinmen at Hazel Park last season. He will return to improve on last season's effort. So will all the others who wound up in the top 10: Wright, Wally McLintury, Chris Borine, Ray Remmen, Bob Williams, Mike Novick, Shelly Goudreau and Pat Crowe.

At Hazel Park last year, Tom finished in the money in well over half of his races. He had a record of 15-26-19 in 117 starts. He has won \$1.2 million in purses and more than 1,800 victories.

Horses are expected to pour into Hazel Park during the latter part of the week with the anticipation that all stalls will be filled by the time of the first race.

Racing Secretary Bill Connors was scheduled to check in Thursday and handle the drawings for the opening program Saturday morning.

There will be 30 races nightly, with the exception of Sundays, with a post time of 8 p.m.

Saturdays, Sundays and holidays will be 2 p.m. with 18 races. Weekday programs will total nine events with a 3:30 p.m. post prevailing.

The DRC admission prices for the summer meeting will be the same as in 1974, \$2 to the grandstand and \$3 to the clubhouse.

Trainer Jack Foran took the trophy for sending the most winners to the starting gate and Don Holmes was the leading jockey.

The big mile track averaged 7,375 in attendance for the 13-day spring season with the mutual handle up 17 per cent for a daily average of \$987,277.

FOLKS HAVE OFTEN asked about the meaning of the words "Three Guys From RPI," a stable which has had a great deal of success on Michigan tracks in recent years.

Turns out the three guys, who own the stable, were all graduates from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Rochester, N.Y. and used that in naming their stable.

Folks never will get to meet the three guys since one, Kip M. Siegel, an Ann Arbor industrialist and a world famous physicist and inventor in the field of optics, died recently in Washington, D.C. He suffered a stroke while testifying before the joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy.



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