

# More Records Topple At Wolverine Raceway

Making a spectacular comeback in the closing 25 yards to lead on again after losing the lead at the sixteenth pole. Justly Ann, a four-year-old, nipped Oppy, a four-year-old Florida horse, by a head and won the 25th renewal of the \$25,700 Merchants and Manufacturers trot at Wolverine Raceway.

Owned by Mrs. Beatrice Tomicic, of Grosse Pointe, Mich., the slick, trotting mare, became the first of her sex to win two of the major trotting stakes in the Detroit area the same year. Earlier she took the Michigan Trotting Derby at Northville Downs.

The victory on Friday night was one of the high spots of a program jammed with new records. Justly Ann accounted for one when clocked in 2:01.4 in the M&M finale. That was a new standard for the big mile track, bettering the 2:02 mark held jointly by Maximilian and Cyran.

It also was a low for the stake, shattering the 2:02.3 time set by Annette Sue in 1968.

THE 10,871 spectators was the most for a Friday at the track and the handle soared to \$761,478, another high for a Friday and the third highest mutuel handle in Wolverine history.

It was a slightly different story on Saturday when day-long rains left the track in a sloppy condition that erased any possibility of lowering the track record from the 1:58 set a week earlier by Knox Patch. Knox Patch, the five-year-old Knox Hanover horse, who set the track record of 1:58 a week earlier, fought off Fanny Mite, Michigan's premier pacer, in a brilliant duel to win his second straight invitational. This time it was 2:06 over the heavy going on Saturday before a crowd of 9,387.

It was the 10th victory in 16 starts for Knox Patch and boosted his season earnings to \$29,000.

Sharon Mamie, a seven-year-old mare, found the go-go going to her liking in the preferred pace and stormed to her second straight victory in 2:07.3.

Sharon Mamie had the hard way to go, zooming down the stretch five wide to finally get

in front just ahead at the finish line. Compass Point was second and Royal Kim third.

For a young married couple from Monroe, Mich., Saturday's Big Perfecta was the answer to a lot of dreams. There was only one ticket on the combination of General Knox (\$25.40) and Merry Ruler (\$7.80) and it paid \$56,689.80, most ever for the Big P at Wolverine.

But Marsh changed tactics in the finale, sending Justly Ann after the lead at the start. Portfolio kept the mare on the outside in the first quarter before Marsh finally went ahead.

Justly Ann stayed in front for the remainder of the mile, with the exception of the time when Oppy grabbed the top

spot, but it wasn't a simple task.

First Smart Fella, winner of the second elimination, came rushing up at the halfway point to challenge before fading out of contention. Then Stylish Season took a crack at the leader at the three-quarter pole and also was found wanting.

OPPY, owned by R. D. Ricketts of Houston, Tex., and driven by Lou Huber, was fifth as the field turned into the stretch with Justly Ann almost two lengths in front.

The son of Floris found an opening along the rail as the field turned into the long homestretch and charged up to finally overtake Justly Ann at the 16th pole.

That's when Marsh closed

the hule along the rail and Justly Ann had just enough left to come on for the second time and nip Oppy at the wire by a head.

Spectator Ros was a fast-closing third and Stylish Season hung on for fourth.

Justly Ann, winner of the first elimination in 2:02.2, added \$8,995 to her owner's bankroll with the double triumph.

Smart Fella, shipped in from Yonkers Raceway for the stake, shocked the big crowd with a length victory in the second elimination.

With Gerry Bookmyer at the reins, Smart Fella took the overland route in the final quarter to come from far back

## observing sports

Amidst all the excitement created by Farmington's Little Leaguers...the success story of Garden City's Pony Leaguers...the landing of Redford Township in the All America Boys baseball tourney at Johnstown, Pa...the opening of high school football drills...the fast approaching get-away day for the Pistons...one needs to take a moment or two for relaxation.

So what better place than to visit the Detroit Race Course where currently the Wolverine harness-meeting is setting record after record when it comes to attendance and betting.

You don't find a more plush dining establishment anywhere in these parts than in the clubhouse at the Middle Belt-Schoolcraft raceway.

IT'S PLUSH to say the least. The food is excellent from the first cracker to the ice cream dessert, neither of which you really need.

But dinner at the trotters is not like dinner elsewhere.

It's the only place where the diners bring with them reading material and a pen or pencil and constantly are working away in between nibbles; when their food is concerned.

I can just imagine what would happen at home if in the midst of devouring a piece of chicken, I started writing some notes. The other half would explode. At times, she has.

But at the racetrack dinner it's different.

Studying the horses is of paramount concern. Far more, really, than eating.

The track program is detailed for every race. It tells you everything one should know about each horse...who his (her) parents were, the name of the trainer and driver (jockey), where the horse has run in the last few months...exactly where he was at the quarter-mile, the half, the three-quarters and at the finish.

You can see for yourself how fast each race was timed in which each horse has appeared...who beat him and whom he beat...etc.

So, in between bites at the salad, you peer into the program's contents.

Your ears become like telescopes...after all you might pick up something in the way of a hot tip from the guy next to you...or two tables away.

The name of the horses don't mean much, except maybe to women who play hunches...like our better half picked a Julia because there's a daughter at home by the name of Julie and wouldn't you know that Julia came in and paid something?

But, mostly, as you attack your steak...you talk numbers: "No. 6 looks sharp. No. 4 has some fine times...and Sid (the builder) says he clocked No. 1 and you must bet him."

Sid, like other regulars at the trotters, brings a stop watch with him. When the horses warm up two or three races before they're actually to compete, the stop watch crew check them out.

"It's important," says Sid. "That way you can see for yourself how fast they are on the night they are racing."

Great advice, unquestionably, except that most of Sid's supposedly great tips that night ran afoul.

But, to each his own way of picking and betting. The elderly gent across the way, who once was in the advertising business before he retired, comes out to the trotters every night with his wife.

"This is the finest way to spend an evening," he says. "There's no better racing (are you listening, Bill Kofender?) than what they offer here at the trotters."

BUT THE MAJOR excitement at Wolverine comes when they stage the Big Perfecta. That's the wager in which if you pick the horses that'll wind up one-two in the fifth race and again in the seventh...you really can collect a bundle.

Like the night we were there, a long shot at 50-1 won the fifth race. So there couldn't have been many in the crowd who had bet the No. 8 horse to win and the No. 6 horse to finish second in the fifth race.

A huge payoff was assured...and one lucky man with an 8-6 live ticket after the fifth race stood four tables down.

He was jumping...sensing the possibility of collecting around \$8,000 or \$10,000.

Now all he had to do was to select the horses which would finish one-two in the seventh race. Unquestionably, the gent had plenty of advisers on the subject.

He could have looked at the program he bought and noted that the track's own selector had picked the 3-5 horses to run one two.

Had he...well, he'd have cashed for himself a ticket worth \$8,400. Instead he decided on 3-6. The result, he wound up with nothing, or out the \$2 he originally wagered and with a heavy heart.

And, what about you yourself? While since an esteemed editor friend wasn't nice enough to tell us about the 12-1 shot he picked to win...and the horse won...we settled for the advice of the guy across the table...and just picked horses to finish third.

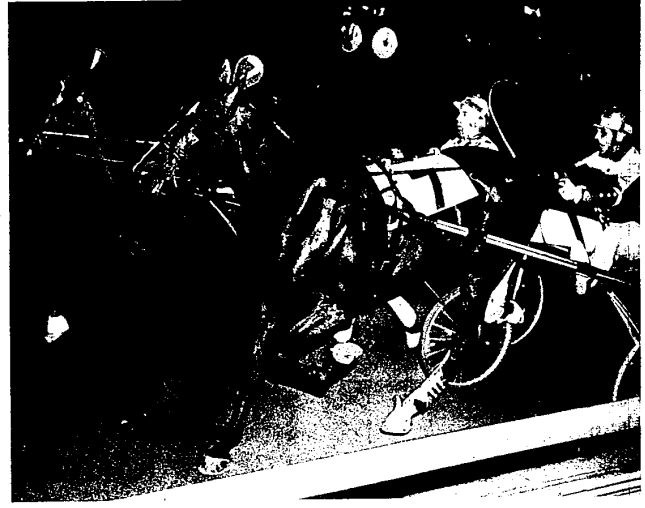
The one deviation was on the 10th race where they have a small perfecta...just on that race.

The better half was convinced it had to be 6-7 or 7-8. So we bet it both ways.

As they rushed for the wire, it was 7-6...but somehow No. 4 slipped in between them. That fouled up the perfecta for us...but at least the two other show tickets helped to soothe the pain.

Checking the bankroll on the way out...we detected a net gain of \$3.

Now where else could you have so much fun...dinner and a drink...and still finish up \$3 richer?



COMING ON AGAIN on the outside is Justly Ann (1), the speedy four-year-old mare driven by Joe Marsh Jr., to win the \$25,700 Merchants and Manufacturers Trot by a head over Oppy (7). The clocking of 2:01.4 was a track and season record. Justly Ann is owned by Mrs. Beatrice Tomicic of Grosse Pointe.

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