

Don't look for favorite in 45th Mile

By C.J. RIBAK
STAFF WRITER

First, understand this: There are no favorites.
Not really. At least that's what the staff at Livonia's Ladbroke DRC — which will host the 45th running of the Michigan Mile Saturday — are insisting when asked about this year's edition of a race that should be renamed "Longshot's Domain."

Why? Because in the 44 previous races, only nine favorites have prevailed. Which makes betting the favorite pretty risky.
Last year, 35-to-1 shot Classic Seven shocked a strong field to win the \$250,000 race. And what of the favorite? Chief Honcho failed miserably, never making a serious bid while finishing 11th.

Saturday's race, which features a \$200,000 purse, is "one of the better matched fields," said John Cooney, an assistant DRC publicity director. "It's got quality — it's long on quality."

"In previous years, there was one standout. This is a tremendously competitive field."

Through Tuesday, there were 12 horses expected for the race, the state's premier thoroughbred event. The dubious honor of "fa-

vorite," according to Cooney, falls to Root Boy, out of Baltimore. There's a good reason: He's won three-straight races, the last the Stephen Foster Stakes at Churchill Downs in Louisville June 19, a race that Cooney said has served as a springboard for Michigan Mile winners. Both races are 1 1/4 miles. His other two wins were a \$28,000 allowance race May 31 and the Never Bend Handicap May 16, both at Pimlico in Baltimore.

If you require a bit more history, Root Boy was third in his previous two races, meaning he's finished in the money in all five of his races in '93.

Is that a Michigan Mile jinx or what?

Particularly since the field is so well-matched, said Cooney. "Root Boy is a slight favorite, but looking at second, there are five or six horses that are very competitive."

That includes Dignitas, a "very capable" horse and winner of the '92 Illinois Derby. However, Dignitas is coming off a disappointing sixth-place finish in the Stephen Foster.

Split Run is another strong challenger, following a win in the Smoke Screen Handicap at Arlington (N.Y.), in which he com-

pleted the mile in an impressive 1:43. Still, even though Split Run is one of the nation's more impressive three-year-olds, he may not have the necessary experience for a quality field.

Count the Time, according to Cooney, is on the "verge of stardom." Out of Chicago, he's finished second in two of his last three races — but he's a stretch runner, which means he'll need a strong pace to set up his finish.

American Chance, from Kentucky, has over \$500,000 in career winnings and third and first-place finishes in his last two efforts, both allowance races at Churchill Downs.

If you're after a horse that knows the track, try Grand Circus Park. He has four victories in five DRC starts over the last two years and was second in the Breeder's Governor's Cup June 19.

Then there's Punched, out of Cleveland, another entrant on a roll. He has four-straight wins, the last coming in the Motor City Handicap at DRC July 3. According to Cooney, Punched possesses "good tactical speed, but he's never faced this kind of quality."

The Mile will be international, with Candia Cameron coming in from Toronto, where he won the

Dominion Day Handicap at Woodbine in his second-straight victory. Finishing second to Cameron in the Dominion was Powerful Punch, an entrant out of Arlington. Before the Dominion Day race, Punch won the Washington Park Handicap.

Another in the prospective field that has a chance — at least as good as one as Classic Seven did last year — is Vying Victor, a strong challenger from California with more than \$500,000 in earnings. Victor was one of the better three-year-olds last year, but hasn't done much in '93.

Gerald Bennett, DRC's leading trainer, will be represented by Fred's Dancer, a three-year-old that's listed as a strong stretch runner but is too inexperienced. And then there's Lofly Sisu, who was fifth in the Motor City but won the Breeder's Governor's Cup at DRC June 19, beating Grand Circus Park. If the track is wet, Sisu could do well.

It makes for a well-rounded field, one that should provide a challenge for bettors, too. The 12-race card starts at 1 p.m.; the Mile will be at 6:15 p.m., and is being simulcast to several sites around the country.

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Bowlers have increasing equipment choices



AL HARRISON

Ball talk. That's the usual topic these days as many bowlers are thinking up new ways to attack the lanes this fall. There's a new product out every time you look.

Now from AMF, which had a regular urethane ball called the "Sumo" (you remember those TV commercials?), comes a trio of reactive resin balls, each a different version of the "Ninja" series.

The Ninja has been out on the market already, but now there will soon be a "Ninja Fury" and the "Ninja Master." Look for them soon in your local pro shop.

Did anyone else happen to catch the latest airing of the "Senior Pro Bowlers Tour" on ESPN? The big daily papers hardly gave it a mention, but Ron Winger put on the best display of strike shooting I have ever seen on TV. Winger rolled 23 strikes in 24 attempts and won a \$10,000 bonus for a perfect game.

Winger rolled a 300 in the final match against Jimmy Certain. In his first match he beat Gary Dickinson, rolling 11 of a possible 12 strikes for a 279. The only frame

he failed to strike was the ninth, where he left the 10-pin standing.

While we're on the subject of senior bowlers, this will be the inaugural season for the Senior Men's Classic, which will compete at 10 a.m. Wednesdays at Mayflower Lanes in Redford Township. It will be comprised of four-man teams and is restricted to those with averages of more than 170. The pre-season meeting will take place at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 18. There are still a few openings left, either for regulars, substitutes or fifth men. If interested, call Ove Hovepainen at 277-1249 or Mayflower Lanes at 337-8429.

■ Hall-of-fame bowler Mary

Mohacsi of Livonia will be conducting a bowling clinic for seniors only 2-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 13 and 2-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 27 at Merri Bowl Lanes. Bowlers are welcome. The more experienced bowlers will learn to sharpen their skills. Cost is \$5 and includes coffee and free bowling passes.

BOWLING HONOR ROLL
Woodland Lanes (Livonia): Summer Tno Casse — Doug Soper 273 (game) and 844 (for game); Chuck Bell 289/277; Jon Curtis, 299 (100 pins over average); Ken Bashara, 255/271; Dave Carol, 225/250.

Oak Lanes (Westland): Wednesday Summer Men's Tno — Jim Hoja, 300/205; Gary Via 250/211; Dave Carol, 225/250.
Plum Hollow Lanes (Southfield): Ladies Nitc Dnt — Toni Goodwin, 280/613; Loretta Moss, 235.

der-17 championship. Cleveland United dominated under-16 play, blanking four opponents 17-0 before shutting out the Blazers (Birmingham) 5-0 in the title match. Dynamo's penalty-kick win over Vardar III in the under-15 final was preceded by a 4-0 victory over the Canton Strikers in the semis.

The Farmington Bandits proved no match for the Red Barons in the under-14 division, losing 4-0. And the DSC Hornets' 2-1 victory over the Waterford Warriors earned them the under-14 boys' recreation title and gave the Hornets a 4-0 tourney record.

Over 130 teams competed in the three-day tournament, with fore falling 2-1 to WSL in the un-

Wolverine from page 1B

Fireballs (Livonia) were second at 3-1.

The Hawks blanked the Blue Stars (Detroit) 3-0 in the championship match of the under-14 girls. The Hawks were unscored upon in five tournament matches.

The LYSC Strikers reached the under-19 girls finals with a 2-1 record in pool play and a 1-0 triumph over Boots' Babes (Livonia) in the semifinals.

In the boys' division championships, the Club Ohio/Dynamo Blues exploded to a 3-0 lead before the first half was over en route to a 4-2 thrashing of the Michigan Wolves (Plymouth) in the under-19 title match.

Rochester Arsenal had four-consecutive wins to its credit before falling 2-1 to WSL in the un-

der-17 championship.

Over 130 teams competed in the three-day tournament, with fore falling 2-1 to WSL in the un-

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