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Turf Tips, Quips

By Doc Minard

Northville Downs rings down the curtain on its winter meeting tonight (Wednesday) and indications are that the handle will show an increase of more than 15 per cent over figures for the meeting a year ago.

The past weekend was the best of the Jackson-Northville and the Northville Downs campaigns with wagering going over the \$400,000 mark for the first time of the year.

The 'Downs had a season high attendance of 5,908 for Saturday's perfect weather and the mutuel handle soared to \$423,426. That's far and away the best business of the year and makes things look very good for the Wolverine Raceway season which opens tomorrow (Thursday).

Northville handled \$801,495 Friday and Saturday for the biggest quite a bit this year and will know what problems it will have to overcome come another winter campaign.

Veteran driver-trainer Don McMurray gave everyone a big scare Saturday when his pacer went down behind the starting gate enroute to the start, flipping the cart and tossing him to the hard track on his head and shoulders.

The impact knocked him unconscious and those close by knew that he was badly hurt

and were over the fence at his side immediately.

The ambulance, which was only a few yards away, was at the scene within a matter of minutes and he was rushed to the track's first aid room.

It didn't take Track Physician Dr. L. W. Snows long to order McMurray removed to St. Mary Hospital in Livonia for additional treatment and x-rays.

It was a very serious situation for a time but fortunately Don is recovering from severe contusions and a concussion and resting comfortably at the hospital.

There isn't any indication at the time this was written when he would be released but he probably will resume his driving and training after a week or two at Wolverine.

As predicted here a couple of weeks ago, Creeder Linbo, the outstanding three-year-old pacer who stood out over all competition of his age at Northville Downs, has been moved to Chicago for a winter stakes series there.

Creeder Linbo and Driver Tom Harmer carried on as expected with a victory in the opening leg. It will be interesting to follow the colt's activities and see how it fares in the remaining legs.

We'd like to predict a series of victories but the competition is stiff and Creeder will be going against pacers that haven't been competing during the winter.

Fresh horses could make a big difference.

Complete dedication to his profession has made John Bacon the sensation of the first nine days of Michigan's earliest and longest racing season.

With 21 wins in 61 tries Bacon has ridden 44 horses into the money for a spectacular average of 73 per cent. A ball player who reached first safely in 44 out of 61 times even in batting practice would be the talk of the town.

IN THE POCKET
 By W.W. EDGAR

TOM VALLONE was the top man in the Westland Classic with a "sliding" 681. After opening with a 256 he slid to 221 and then slid a bit further with a 204 finish.

Bill Spargo took over the runnerup spot with a 679 and Randy Rehendorf was five pins back in third place with 674.

Pat Coshatt played the star role in the Junior House League with a 277.

THE FATHER & SON League is producing some unusual performances at Merril - Bow.

This week Bud Moran and his son Mike, teamed with Ken Ausland and his son, Carl, for an 84 game and a 2282 series. In the big game Bud had a 222. Mike a 244, Ken 211 and Carl 172.

WITH SCORES a bit on the low side, Dorothy Thomas finished on the top in the Ladies Classic at Livonia Lanes with a 480 - 117 - 595 that included a single game of 184 - 39 - 223.

In the other games honors went to Lee Schuyler with 203 - 25 - 228 and Loretta Moersch with 179 - 25 - 204.

ONE OF THE BEST performances of the week came in the Parks and Recreation League at Livonia Lanes when Ronald Joseph, a 107 average youngster, rolled games of 163 and 185 to go 130 pins over his average.

INSTRUCTION paid off quickly for Wayne Murray at Country Lanes.

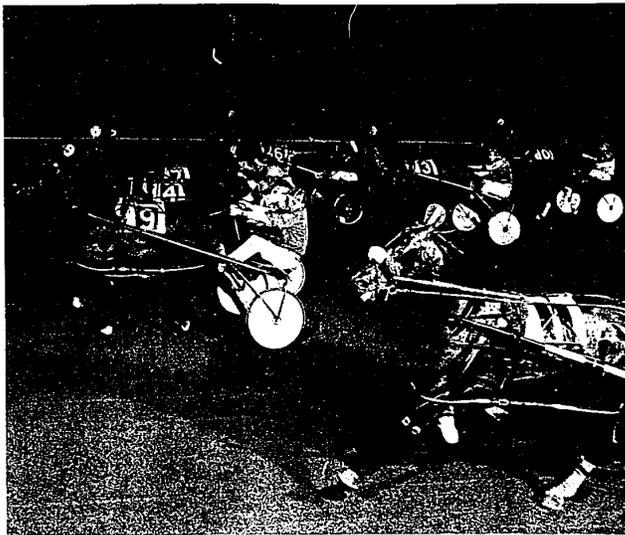
After taking instructions on Saturday and Sunday he banged out a 268 in 650 to lead the Junior House League on Monday.

In the other leagues, Leonard Johnson topped the Auto Dealers with a high single of 250, while Leo Hasley and his wife, Jennie, showed a spirit of togetherness when he posted a 247 and she added a 242 in the Mixed League.

Other fine performances among the ladies was a 224 rolled by Mary Ann Jonecscu, a 117 average bowler.

THE LADIES also had a fine time of it at Mayflower Lanes. Jo Joslin topped the list with a 238 in 537 and Doris Erickson had a 205 in 555. Louis Lauer was third high with 533.

In the Junior House League, Gary Krause converted the 4-6 split and Ron Schmidt went 104 pins over his average with a 258 game.



WOLVERINE OPENING -- This scene will be a commonplace at Wolverine Raceway with opening night this Thursday for an 84 day meet.

More than 500 horses have arrived with a full capacity expected.

'They're Off' Thursday At Wolverine Raceway

Still aglow from its record smashing fall meeting of 1971 when it became the first Michigan harness racing track to pass the \$800,000 barrier for a single night, Wolverine Raceway opens its 23rd season Thursday with logical expectations that springtime will see yet a greater crop of all-time highs.

Not only did Wolverine establish season attendance and wagering marks last year, but an unprecedented 22 magic two - minute or less miles were posted over the big mile championship track.

The colorful speed epidemic has helped attract some of the sport's top stables for the 82-night meeting and Vice President and General Manager Dick Wilson announced earlier in the week that all of the 1,200 stalls have been allotted.

More than 500 standardbreds were bedded down Wednesday morning and more are expected to pour in over the weekend. Stables from California are expected after April 1 and those at Pompano Park, Fla., will make the move about the middle of next month.

Wilson said that top drivers of 1971 are returning. They include: Champion Don Hall, Gerry D'Booye, Jim Curran, Chris Boring, Merritt Dockey, Greg Wright, George Davis, Mike Novick Jr., Keith Crawford and Tom Merriman.

Extending through June 20, the meeting will include Grand Circuit week, June 9-16, during which the rich Matron stakes and the Motor City Pace will be presented. The Matrons carry an estimated purse total of \$175,000.

The wagering format will follow that of last fall with a nightly double, triecta betting on the sixth and 10th races and win, place and show on each of the 10 events.

Wilson emphasized that post time will be 8:30 p.m. sharp and that means the first race will go off at 8:30 nightly.

THE TRACK management has installed several new items for the benefit of customers. Closed circuit color television will be offered within two weeks after the opening night. It was slated for the opener but the company making the installations was unable to get necessary parts due to the longshoremen's strike on the west coast.

Fans will have a chance to see and know exactly what's expected from the daily double in a new gimmick, the "double as it is" which will be flashed on the odds board during the time of the ticket sales prior to the first race.

The "double as it is" flasher will show the probably payoff

prices after the first 15 minutes of the opening sale. It will tell the prices and at the end of the double sales, when the first race starts, each ticket holder will know exactly what he will collect.

A new "Top of the Turf" room has been installed on the top floor of the new clubhouse, with new flooring, lavatory facilities and management will have a mutual line there once the weather breaks. The room will take care of more than 1,500 patrons and is expected to become one of the most popular spots at the plant.

WITH DRIVERS already on opening ceremonies Thursday hand from the southland and then the first of far west. Thursday's opening Michigan's major harness program is one of the best arranged by Racing Secretary Bill Connors in several years.

Heading the opener is the \$2,000 Inaugural Pace that drew eight starters including Game Gene, fresh from successes at Pompano Park; Lee Bunter, a standout at Windsor Raceway; and such Northville speedsters as Territorial Queen, A. E. Crosby, Timely Farr, Shifty Gier and Warhops.

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Ski Heil
 By **BILL CAMERON**

"Randrops keep falling on my head." It's difficult to believe that I was skiing at Boyne Mountain this past weekend after looking at the rain and mud outside my window.

There are great snow conditions in Boyne Country. They have expectations of skiing until April 9. There is still time to get one last weekend in.

Unless a miracle occurs, Mt. Brighton has had it, along with the other local areas. Gene Hill tried his best at making snow but the weather was against him.

THIS WILL probably be the next to last Ski Heil column until next fall. I hope you found them informative, educational, humorous, or whatever.

There were times I was tempted to use one of last year's columns in order to meet a deadline, but I always managed to come up with an idea to bail me out. It has served as a vehicle to meet a lot of very nice people. I've yet to find a skier I didn't like!

The response on my proposed Zermatt, Switzerland trip has been most rewarding. Ten couples have reserved a spot and we only have room for 15.

If you would like your appetite whetted a little more, read the January-1961 issue of National Geographic. It was a well written story and the place hasn't changed that much.

There is a great picture of the hotel we're hoping to stay at, the Christiania. You can throw a snowball and hit the chairlift from there. Get your name on our mailing list.

Are your skis in need of repairs? Are the tops chewed up? I ran across an interesting shop last week. It is called Mod-Tops, located on 6 Mile near Telegraph.

They customize your skis with a laminated surface and have 125 colors and styles to choose from. If you want to recognize your skis in a crowd, check this place out. Hold on to your old equipment - a giant sale this spring at the Livonia Family Y. More details later.

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