

IN THIS CORNER

Call it the Great Experiment: Weekend thoroughbred racing on March 2 in Upstate New York. Make no comparison with racing at the Big Apple, because the weather in New York City is consistently warmer than Upstate, and the turf is that much easier and safer for horses and riders to handle.

Racing on weekends only, 18 events, makes it possible to fill cards with as few as 350 runners on the backstretch. Thoroughbreds at lower levels can handle two races about every three weeks.

Finding jockeys is no problem, because the unemployment rate among saddlemasters in the off-season is wild.

Finding mutuel and concessions help is another story. Many of the senior citizens who man and woman the wickets and booths like to limit their employment range to qualify for Unemployment Insurance in the normally off-season.

Obtaining officials is perhaps the most expensive problem. Patrol judges, placing and paddock judges and others aren't likely to accept on two-days-a-week employment. So Finger Lakes, which is pioneering this earliest ever flat racing this far north, will use minor officials also as aides to the racing secretary — hustling and handling entries for the Saturday and Sunday racing. For their efforts, two afternoons of racing and two half-days of chasing down entries, they'll be paid for four days work. You can't beat the hours.

Barring major snowstorms, The Thumb can offer safe racing even on a snowfall of several inches. A new surface, new drainage, and tons and tons of stone dust make the track suitable for running. Veteran jocks who have raced occasionally in extreme cold say their hands and feet suffer, but claim no serious complaints otherwise. The multiple-lens wipe-away goggles overcome poor visibility. (Snow removal, incidentally, is no problem.)

The big question is how many human beings are addicted enough to playing horses to gamble away their gasoline on gas-less Sundays? Eddie Arcaro, who has studied racing matters and has been hurt investing in other experimental promotional operations, says the horse players will climb mountains to get their money down.

The entire thoroughbred racing world will be watching little Finger Lakes, starting March 2.

Another Great Experiment: The new college freshman rule. Teams that normally would have needed long-range programs to get back into the big-time hunt are already in the big time.

Classic example is Notre Dame basketball. Coach Digger Phelps couldn't get the Irish out of their own way until this season. Suddenly Notre Dame is a college court giant, racing from No. 1 to 3 (at this writing).

Three reasons, says Phelps. They are blue-chip freshmen. But Phelps is one of the loudest to bemoan the freshman rule.

RETREAT SCHEDULE

The Notre Dame Retreat House has scheduled 10 men's retreats for the weekend of Feb. 22-24. Contact parishes listed for information: St. Stanislaus, 467-3068; St. George, 232-4111; St. Michael, 325-4040; Holy Redeemer, 544-2442; St. Rose, Lima, 624-1005; St. John, Spencerport, 352-5481; St. Paul, Honeoye Falls, 624-1443; St. Catherine, Mendon, 624-1737; St. Mary, Watkins Glen, 535-2786; St. Joseph, Weedsport, 834-7601.

"One of the worst things that ever happened to college basketball," says the ex-Fordham coach. "For us to survive, we have to compete for the kids, but I'm against it and you'll see it abused."

Phelps points out the social adjustment needed from freshmen, with all the added pressure. Socially and academically, his own players have suffered.

But racing wants the money. And college administrators, they want freshmen to play if they help to win. Which is the same as wanting the money. Is college basketball any less hungry, or any less commercial, than pari-mutuel racing?



SCHOLASTIC NOTEBOOK

Cardinal Mooney's Jeff Weston didn't look an awful lot out of place at the press gathering at the Downtown Holiday Inn on the afternoon of the recent Gannett Rochester Press Radio charity awards dinner.

Some of the head table guests, local and professional, working press and PR club members were amazed at Weston's size as they chatted about his potential as a future Notre Dame grider.

Weston, Rochester's high school All-American lineman, met and talked with ND's kicking specialist, Bob Thomas, the McQuaid graduate who won the local athlete of the year award presented by the Italian American Civil Rights League.

He also talked with Manny Fernandez and Larry Csonka of the Miami Dolphins. He obviously enjoyed his first Press Radio Club dinner.

MC Chuck Stevens of WHEC-TV called out Weston's name and Jeff stood up to wave to the crowd, but discovered the spotlight was so powerful he couldn't see anybody.

The next time Weston is at the dinner, short of buying a ticket for it, he will probably be at the head table just like Bob Thomas was.

Thomas broke up the crowd with a story about Alabama's Bear Bryant who, according to witnesses, took three Cokes, two hots, three hamburgers and a couple of pizzas and fed 80,000 people at the Sugar Bowl.

Goodbye for Now

The fuel shortage put the lock on a proposed intersectional basketball test between adjacent sections of the state recently.

Bill Farrell, chairman of the state public school association's basketball committee, submitted

Crowley to Be BK Speaker

James (Sleepy Jim) Crowley, one of Notre Dame's legendary Four Horsemen, will be guest speaker at the Bishop Kearney High School Century Club's 7th Annual Dinner Dance at The Party House Friday, Feb. 22.

It was in their senior season of 1924 that the famed Four Horsemen led the Fighting Irish to a 13-7 victory over Army at New York's Polo Grounds.

Grantland Rice, reporting the famous game, wrote the lead that would make Crowley an imperishable football legend: "Out of a cold, gray October sky, Four Horsemen rode again. They are known in literature and dramatic lore as Famine, Fire, Pestilence and Sudden Death; but these are only aliases. Their real names are Stuhldreher, Crowley, Miller and Layden."

Crowley went on to become backfield coach at the University of Georgia and head football



coach at Michigan State, and Fordham University.

chairman of this year's dinner-dance, the only social event the club sponsors.

In 1962, he was elected by 400 sportswriters and sportscasters as halfback on the all-time Notre Dame football team. Crowley is also a member of the College Hall of Fame at Rutgers University and the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame.

The BKHS Century Club is a group of local business and professional men who annually donate \$100 to the school's general fund in order to aid needy students and to help keep the school's tuition cost at a non-burdensome level. Robert Roth, one of the club's founders, is

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