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THE HOPPLED PACER

BY W. H. GOCHER. During the past twenty-five years over half of the most closely contested races seen on the mile and half-mile tracks were between pacers. Many of them were hopples which were for a number of years the storm centre of light harness racing. The first ripple was seen in 1898 when a rule was adopted barring them after January 1, 1899. When it was enacted those who were responsible for it were getting that all they had to do was to lift their hands and the owners of pacers would obey. When the date arrived, however, there was such a protest from all sections of the country that the rule was amended so that it could be excepted in the published conditions for a race meeting. All but two associations excepted it while they came over in a few years. In 1906 the rule was dropped, but in 1910 William Russel Allen, who was always opposed to pacers and especially hopped pacers, drafted the following rule and succeeded in getting it into the racing code: No hoppers shall be used in races or performances against time on two-year-olds in 1910, on three-year-olds and under in 1911, on four-year-olds and under in 1912, on five-year-olds and under in 1913, on six-year-olds and under in 1914, after which hoppers shall be barred. No one paid any attention to this rule for two years as very few people were racing two or three year old pacers. In 1912, however, when the four year olds were to be cut out the race managers of the fair associations which give over seventy-five per cent. of the race meetings made a drive against it. Up to that date the mile track associations and the clubs giving race meetings over the double ovals made the rules of light harness racing. When the fair managers decided that their race programs were going to be weakened on account of the reduction in the number of available starters, they jumped into the ring and gave the hopped rule such a slam that the regulators were barred only in events limited to two, three or four year olds. In 1914 the four year old restriction was cut out and now the promoters of futurities are asking to have that restriction removed on account of the racing divisions of these events rarely resulting in a contest or fields large enough to make even a fair looking race. While the use of hoppers on modern racing pacers dates from the eighties, they are not a new appliance. They were used in England over three hundred years ago to gait pacers or amblers, as they were called in those days, for the saddle. When carriages appeared under the late Tudors and early Stuart kings, the pacers disappeared. North America also had a flood of pacers prior to the Revolution. They were so common and fast that Maryland in 1747, New Jersey in 1748, and Pennsylvania in 1750 passed laws to prohibit pacing races. In the new world, the Narragansett pacers of Rhode Island were the leaders. They became an important trade item between the colonies on the Atlantic coast while a number were shipped to Cuba where the Spaniards added the first horses brought to the new world. The American pacers disappeared like the English as soon as roads were opened and coaches took the place of the saddle horse. Very little was heard of them except on the frontier until after Boston Blue trotted in three minutes in 1818. As almost all of the early trotters traced to Messenger there were very few pacers among them. Finally in 1838 the pacer Onida Chief by Ken tucky Hunter drifted from Central New York to the Long Island tracks where he appeared in races with the trotters Arvil, Lady Suffolk and Dutchman. He was followed in the forties by Roanoke, Tippicanoe, Cayuga Maid, and James K. Polk. In the next decade the Vermont Black Hawk, Pet, 2:18 1/2, Andrew J. Polk and the Ohio bred mare Pocahontas were raced. The last named placed the world's record to wagon at 2:17 1/2, in 1855. Another group fitted on the turf screen in the sixties. They were led by Longfellow, DeLancey, Magwooder, Yankee Sam, who set the record to 2:16 1/2, and Billy Boyce. The latter paced in 2:14 1/2 under the saddle when he defeated Rolla Goldust at Buffalo in 1868. The modern racing pacer dates from the seventies, the most conspicuous in that sector being Bay Sally, Sorrel Billy, Copperbottom, Harry, Sleepy George and Sleepy Tom, the blind horse that reduced the record to 2:13 1/4. A few of them also lapped over into the eighties when Bay Billy, Ben Hamilton, Mattie Hunter, Rowdy Boy, Buffalo Girl, Gem, Lucy, Sorrel Dan, Flora Belle, Sweetser, Little Brown Jug and Johnston, the greatest of them all, entertained the spectators at race meetings. The racing associations were very slow about putting on pacing races. When they did, the regularity with which one or two of them were distanced after they had won a couple of heats made people shy when it came to betting on them, while in a number of cases the results developed into what looked much like turf scandals. William Edwards, the father of General Clarence R. Edwards, who led the Yankee Division in France, was one of the first to advocate pacing races. He induced the members of the Grand Circuit to offer one at each of their meetings. After a few disastrous experiences, he also notified the owners of pacers that if their horses did not perform more consistently that style of racing would be cut out. For a time the white gelding Arcyle was the worst offender. He would win a heat or two and when it looked as if the race was all over he would make a standstill break and be distanced. There were others, however, and no one could tell whether it was the horse or the driver that was at fault. While this haze of uncertainty was hovering over pacing races, a conductor on an Indiana railroad was training a pacer that had the breaking habit. He decided to tie his legs together. His first appliance was rather crude but it did the work and it was not long before others adopted the

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idea. The harness maker was consulted and it was only a few weeks before the hoppers as they exist today were being hung on unsteady pacers. They were used for several seasons on the harness tracks before they appeared on the larger ovals. Coleridge and Ben D. being the first pair of fast horses that wore them in the Grand Circuit. This was in 1895 when Coleridge defeated Ben D. in a five-heat race at Detroit, after Angie D. was loaded with what was called a speed sustaining elixer and flashed a heat in 2:07 at a hundred to one in the book. The success of this pair prompted others to give them a trial and before long the regulators were found in the equipment of all the leading stables. At present after a run of over thirty years, Geers and McDonald are the only public trainers who do not use them. At one time Murphy decided to get into the same class notwithstanding his success with Hetty G. but the winning way of Frank Bogash Jr. tipped him back among the reinsmen who will use any appliance that the rules will permit to get the money on race day. No appliance that has ever been devised has been instrumental in keeping on the turf as many racing pacers. Without hoppers the public would not have been entertained by Frank Bogash Jr., The Eel, Grace Pointer, Direct C. Burnett, Peter Stevens, Flower Direct, Roan Hal, Earl Jr., Hal Boy, Hal B. Jr., Verlie Patchen, Directum J., Lillian T., Prince Albert, the king of the hopple brigade, and hundreds of others whose speed and splendid racing qualities thrilled thousands. For a time many claimed that the hoppers made anybody a trainer and resulted in many incompetent men being seen in the sulky. Results, however, show that this was not correct

of four dredges were employed before to keep the channel clear, now the current of the Mississippi scours its own bed. When the construction innovations are made world's ships will be able to come safely and swiftly into New Orleans in unfavorable conditions of wind and tide and river level, and all but eight of the Atlantic liners will be able to do so when the conditions are favorable. "It'll be a good thing," said the street car conductor, "if they increase the rates to the public a few more times in rapid succession." "It will increase the cost of travel." "But it will save valuable time." "I hope to see cars so high that nobody will think of stopping to argue." SAVE TIME about who shall pay it.—Washington Star.