

DOWN THE BACK STRETCH CANADIAN SPORTING NEWS

We acknowledge with pleasure a Christmas greeting from our very good friend, E. L. Willis, Westport, N.B. Mr. Willis is well over four score years but is an annual visitor to our races and Provincial Exhibition. Forty years ago and further back he was one of the leading harness horse owners of the Maritimes and also owned hotels in St. John and Sydney, N.S. Among the horses he raced with great success was Special Blend, a son of the noted Prince Edward Island trotter Black Pilot 2:07 1-4. Special Blend made his debut at Amherst in the Maritime colts stakes October, 1893, where he won against such heavyweights as Israel, Stanger and C.P.R. It was the late ex-Mayor P. S. Brown who drove him the final and winning heat. The next day for \$700 and later on by Mr. Willis for \$700 and later on by the late Arlight and Rampart, Jr., at St. John, and won the free-for-all at Charlottetown.

For years he held the track record at Charlottetown of 2:19 1-4 in a winning race in Maine he reduced his mark to 2:18 1-4. Mr. Willis had him on exhibition at his hotel in St. John, where a lot of the horse had been Pilot Jr., but when Mr. Willis purchased him he paid the required amount by the National Trotting Association. He has his name officially changed to Special Blend. Among other track records which he held was the Halifax trotting record.

An Island horseman who is making good in the race game in Quebec and Ontario is Louis Proulx of Chery Valley, brother of Leo Proulx. Louis shook the dust of the Island scene from his shoes about ten years ago and has trained and raced horses throughout New England, Quebec and Ontario since. He is a good filer, trainer and driver and the sobriquet "Cottonboy" has been attached to him by the Quebecers, probably because Louis in sculling them home uses a western yell that considerably accelerates the progress of the steed he is teaming. At present he is at Dufferin track, Toronto, and recently drove the pacer Joe Harvester a winning race over a big field. "Cottonboy" got a lot of "yapping" from the stands, particularly from the long-shot ticket holders. He has looked over a lot of good ones there and has tentatively picked out two or three that he will make good of during next season anywhere. Island horsemen interested in something that can get away from the crowd might do well to write Louis, who is Johnny on the spot.

Among recent letters none was more prized than one from Walker S. Frazier, Merced, California. Walker, like other Californians, was practically in the front line as the Japs are maneuvering at not too great distance from the coast. However, they are all taking to the hills and it is interfering with interest in harness horse racing, in fact everybody keeps up their hobbies so as not to worry too much, preserving their energies for future use.

Enclosed in the letter was a snap of Walter F. 2:02 1-4, his pacer. Walter won a number of races in California the past season, but in future must be classed as a free-for-all, according to their rules. Walter is not sure whether he will race home this winter, but if not Walter F. will be retired and live the life of Riley. He has several other coming out that look like the goods, notably the 2:02 3-4. He states that she has shown more for 60 days work than anything he has ever seen, trots like an old campaigner, and has lost all coldness. A full sister the year younger, which is 2:17 before being turned out, and will be pointed for the three-year-old stakes in 1942. Another good prospect is a filly by Harry Jim, owned by Lord Jim 2:00 3-4. Walter tells us the weather has been very pleasant this fall and the rainy season has not really set in at date of writing—December 10th. The grass is green and all nature wears a very charming aspect.

In last week's notes we promised to give a more extended account of the former Grand Circuit star driver, Walter Cox, who passed away at Goshen, N.Y., December 15th, with his life-long friend, that great reinsman, Dick McMahon, at his bedside. Walter Cox was born at Exton, N.H., September 18th, 1868, and when a young boy became assistant to his father in business. At an early age he showed a fondness for horses and entered in some small races near Manchester, N.H., where the family had moved and his father was doing business.

As he acquired more skill he took up training race horses for owners and a few years later when his family was well established, purchased the track and plant known as Granite State Park, Dover, N.H. Along about 1908 he became recognized as a leader among trotting horse trainers, and despite the vigorous winter weather of his northern training ground he turned out some wonderful horses, even colt trotters. He was a great man for making friends and his wife who was a woman of business ability and tact, conducted a small hotel near the track which became the headquarters for horsemen from New England states and further afield. Many friends visited there, notably Frank Boutlier, who has the granite state Park. Walter and Mrs. Cox.

Among the first colts of real note that was trained there was Davy Star, that he gave a record of 2:10 as a two-year-old and 2:05 as a three-year-old. Davy Star held the record for four heats by a two-year-old trotter at Columbus, Ohio, September 15th, 1910. Cox was always on the look out for good horses and in 1913 purchased the Hinova Trotter Buggy developed by Frank Butler. He developed it to a 45000. He gave a record of 2:07 1-4, with a couple of good stakes with him on his own tracks and sold him to the late Mr. Willis. He was one time shared with Bill Shatt in the Maritime trotting record.

So widely known had his fame as a Grand Circuit trainer and driver become that when Stoughton Fletcher of Indianapolis, owner of Laurel Hill Farm, headquarters of Peter the Great 2:07 1-4, for whom he had paid \$50,000 three years previously—required a trainer, he engaged Cox. While there he developed many star trotters. The most noted was The Great Volo 2:02 1-4, full brother of Peter Volo 2:02 1-4, who was sold to the late financial difficulties and sold his horses. Cox was quickly grabbed by W. H. Cane, construction tycoon of New Jersey, who made him not only a trainer but manager of his horse interests.

His association with Mr. Cane was a most pleasant and profitable one both together they have done much for the harness horse industry by rehabilitating the Goshen mile track and spending an enormous amount of money on the land and the scene of the Hambletonian Stakes, which annually draw some 75,000 people.

Leafs Can Go Into N.H.L. Lead Over Weekend; Bruins Idle Until Tuesday

(Canadian Press) Maybe the best press the National Hockey League season ends there will be a weekend that doesn't hold out possibilities of drastic changes in the league standings, but that weekend isn't in sight. Tonight and Sunday night provide four weekend fixtures that may make the closely-packed standing look considerably different by Monday morning, with Toronto Maple Leafs in the best spot to do something about it.

The Leafs have another of those two-game weekends in store, and the chance of moving ahead of Boston Bruins again and taking a firm hold on first place. One point behind the Bruins after beating them during the week, the Leafs take the Detroit Red Wings in Toronto tonight and then move on to New York against the Americans. That gives the Leafs a potential four points, in two games against weaker clubs for Detroit and Brook-

East's skiing Looks to '42 for Good season

(By Harold Atkins Canadian Press Staff Writer) MONTREAL, Dec. 26 (CP)—The "Winter Track" has already resounded throughout ski country in Ontario and Quebec as enthusiasts are taking advantage of early snowfalls to get in a few practice runs in anticipation of a big season.

Like most other major sports, skiing has been retarded by the war. For the past two seasons several leading events have been cancelled and the second straight winter the sport will be without its National Championships. Regional officials, however, have lifted some of the restrictions which have curtailed schedules and plan to operate zone programs as fully as possible this season.

In both provinces, extensive work has been done during the off-season to improve facilities. In the Laurentians, more for ski followers in Montreal and district, several new trails have been cut in such favored places as Tremblay, Ste. Agathe, St. Sauveur, Piedmont, St. Margaret's and St. Adele, while additional ski towns are mushrooming at various points.

Women's Meet Despite the fact there will be no National championships, it is believed a women's meet at St. Margaret's on Dec. 28 will be held. The two-day event is expected to bring into competition the best of the United States and Canada can offer.

Ontario ski prospects also look brighter this season than at any time for the past few winters. The provincial government has co-operated in developing the sport in various districts, and individual clubs have taken it upon themselves to make general improvements.

The Toronto Ski Club, which boasts one of the largest membership in the world, 5,075—is the hub for most Ontario ski activities. The club operates four separate courses at Caledon, Summit, Dagmar and Collingwood, all within easy motoring distance from Toronto.

Slopes providing "60-mile per hour" runs, vertical drops for jumping specialists and numerous practice hills can also be found in other Ontario spots at Huntsville, Orangeville, Midland, Hanover, Mount MacKay near Fort William, Bethany near Peterborough, North Bay, Oshawa, Renfrew, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Walkerton, Welland.

Ottawa ski lovers do most of their downhill and slalom work on the ski boards in Quebec. The Ottawa Ski Club has its headquarters at Chelsea, Que., about 12 miles from the Capital City. Some skiing is done just outside the city limits, but the only other good territory within easy distance of Ottawa besides Chelsea is at Wakefield, also situated in Quebec's Gatineau Hills.

FROLIC SKATING SESSIONS 3-5 P. M. and 8-10 P. M. FORUM—To-day

Miners swamp Millionaires 7-0 Kovacs wins Pro tennis debut

GLACE BAY, N.S., Dec. 26 (CP)—Glace Bay's powerful Miners blasted out a 7-0 victory over the luckless Sydney Millionaires tonight to lengthen their lead atop the Cape Breton Hockey League to six and a half games. The erstwhile Eastern Canadian champions looked like anything but champions as they slipped deeper into the loop collar.

NEW YORK, Dec. 26 (AP)—Frank Kovacs defeated Don Budge, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, in his professional tennis debut before a crowd of about 8,000 at Madison Square Garden.

LEICESTER, playing before a crowd of 8,000, defeated Nottingham Forest 2-0 and finished six points ahead of West Bromwich Albion, Cardiff City and Walsall.

NEW YORK, Dec. 26 (CP)—The smartest strategist tennis has seen in a long time climbed back on the throne this year as cagey little Bobby Riggs out-thought lanky Frank Kovacs to win the national men's singles championship.

BATAVIA, N.E.I., Dec. 26 (AP)—Netherlands airmen who have been steadily biting chunks out of the Japanese fleet today reported the sinking of another destroyer or a transport off the Borneo coast where Japanese troops obtained a foothold at Kuching, capital of Sarawak.

SYDNEY, N.S., Dec. 26 (CP)—Fraser Gillis, 33, of Gillis Cove, N. S. died of wounds suffered when a shotgun he was carrying discharged accidentally, according to word reaching here today from the isolated Inverness County village 75 miles west of Sydney.

BRINGING UP FATHER

OH, FATHER, WHERE CAN MY DADDER BE? HE NEVER CAME HOME AT THIS HOUR BEFORE IN THE MORNING.

YOU'RE RIGHT! HE GENERALLY WUZ ALL IN ABOUT THREE O'CLOCK.

TIPPIE AND "CAP" STUBBS

WELL, I'VE GOT A DOLLAR AND SIXTY SEVEN CENTS. HAVEN'T YOU GOT ANY MONEY IN YOUR BANK??

ETHEL! JONES!

COME HERE! I WANT TO KNOW WHERE ALL THAT BOX OF CANDY IS. I'VE BROUGHT YOUR SISTER—!! ETHEL!!

Mary Rose Thacker Named Outstanding Canadian Woman Athlete Of 1941

(By Sydney Grass Canadian Press Staff Writer) TORONTO, Dec. 26 (CP)—Pretty Mary Rose Thacker of Winnipeg, North American figure skating champion for the past three years, was named tonight as the outstanding Canadian woman athlete of 1941. She was awarded the honor by the Dominion's sport writers without opposition.

Twenty writers participated in the annual Canadian Press poll and 15 of them placed 18-year-old Mary Rose at the head of their three choices. This overwhelming selection gave her 45 points to eight for Thelma Golden, Toronto social dancer, and Connie Dubeau, Montreal track star, who tied for second place.

It was the second time in three years that Miss Thacker, who has been skating since she was old enough to stand on blades, was selected as the No. 1 woman athlete. But she barely edged out Jeanette Dolson, a Toronto sprinter, for the honor in 1939, when she first won the North American championship. Her retention of

West was solid On Blue Bombers

WINNIPEG, Dec. 26 (CP)—Western football fans were certainly proud of Winnipeg Blue Bombers who won the Dominion title in Toronto by defeating the eastern champions, Ottawa Rough Riders, 18-16.

DUTCH AIRMEN SINK ANOTHER JAP SHIP

BATAVIA, N.E.I., Dec. 26 (AP)—Netherlands airmen who have been steadily biting chunks out of the Japanese fleet today reported the sinking of another destroyer or a transport off the Borneo coast where Japanese troops obtained a foothold at Kuching, capital of Sarawak.

THROAT SORE? For common ordinary sore throat JUST RUB ON MINARD'S "KING OF PAIN" ANTIMENT

GREEK FREEDOM The last Greek era of freedom lasted from her freedom from the Turks in 1828 to her occupation by the Germans in 1940.

SINGAPORE'S BOOST Singapore grew with commerce that resulted from the opening of the Suez Canal.

By George McManus

TILLIE THE TOILER—

SO YOU SEE WHAT THE INHERITANCE TURNED OUT TO BE—ONE MISERABLE NICKEL—THAT'S ALL.

OH, MAC, GO OUT AND GET ME A PACK OF CHEWING GUM.

LISTEN, TILLIE, JONES— I'M NOT YOUR SERVANT.

I WILL PURCHASE THE GUM, MISS JONES—I AM YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT.