

Racing On P. E. I. Then --- And Now

James Pendergast

The good old timers who did so much to inaugurate harness racing as the major outdoor sport in this Province, would be astounded if it were possible for them to get a glimpse of the streamlined and glamorous panorama of race horses and drivers on our present-day race courses.

In early days conditions were very primitive. Before the advent of road machines, the old iron plough, harrows and roller would be the obvious utensils used to make a new track. Today it is possible to make a race track very easily and quickly with bulldozers and other "power" machinery available.

The tracks of early days would naturally be soft and treacherous. It is little wonder that the "time" was slow and quite often the best horses didn't win. The high-wheeled sulkeys and road carts used were another retarding factor. Nevertheless interest was intense. The uncertainty was greater than in present day races, caused by "breaks" due to holes in the track and the drivers forcing their horses too much, and lack of consistent training. Many of the races were unhitched directly from farm machinery and raced at the tracks.

Old-time racing men in Summerside, viz. W. B. McNeill, Capt. Sampson Grady and Jim Millman are of the opinion that the track at Travellers Rest was the first public race track in this Province. It was built by Stephen McNeill, uncle of W. B. McNeill, retired fire chief of Summerside. The farm and track were bought later by MacArthur, Kensington, was at a race there in 1885 in which he drove a winner. The Dr. Jenkins Sr. family had a race track called "Upton," at Charlottetown, but it was private (or semi-private). The MacMillan brothers had a track called Cumbrina, a short distance east of Rustico. There were also some early built tracks at or near Marie or Midval, and the writer was shown one of ancient vintage between Mt. Stewart and Georgetown. There was also one at Covehead in early days. James Landrigan, Charlottetown, says he was at a race there 70 years ago. Quite a number of speed owners had training ovals on their farms.

One of the most prominent was Robert Fitzsimmons of Long River, who had two fine horses bred for racing in his stable in the year 1891. The most prominent were called "Dean" and "Island Chief". They were outstanding. They were raced on the mainland tracks on or about 1889 and made almost a clean sweep of the races they entered.

About this time different lines of thought developed among race fanciers regarding the relative merits of the older "Island" stock and recent imports of "Standard" bred horses. The adherents of the "Island" stock resented quite bitterly the importations of "Standard" breeds. Newton Lee, uncle of W. B. McArthur, of Port Hill, imported a highly bred stallion called Allright. The old school of race fanciers cried down the merits of Allright, but Lee was determined and highly emotional and fought the directors of his horse to a successful conclusion. The Lee's had been race horse owners in England. They emigrated about the same time as the Yeos and Richards, who established a large shipbuilding plant at Port Hill in the days of "wooden ships and iron men". By the way, Capt. Richards Jr. contributed immensely to speed development on this island by the importation of the great trotter Capt. Aubrey (2074).

The Capt. Aubrey blood is impressed in a large number of our best race horses. In memory serves right, Colonel Aubrey, a son of Capt. Aubrey owned by J. W. O'Brien and driven by Lieut. Col. D. A. MacKinnon was the first Island bred horse to make a 2.10 mark. The Lee-imported Allright sired the famous Black Pilot, which gave a great boost to Island bred stock.

The Hernando - Black Pilot Race
In the year 1888 the Green brothers, original owners of Green's Shore shipyard (Summerside) built a race track in the drier portion of their large farm. It was situated to the N.W., a considerable distance from the then small town, which has since extended and almost envelops the famous race track.

Mr. Robt. McLeod, Summerside business man had imported quite a famous horse called Hernando, by Almost, dam Terry Clay by American Clay. Hernando's record was 2.27 1/2.

The Dockendorff family of North River had raised a fine colt named Black Pilot, sired by Allright, whose dam was Black Jennie by McInnis' Pony. The adherents of "Island" bred stock became so clamorous in their protests against importations as to be almost fanatical. The natural upshot was an arrangement for a match race between Black Pilot and Hernando which took place on the new track built by Green Bros. at Summerside on Aug. 30th, 1888.

It had the most stupendous attendance of any race meet held in the East. It was estimated by competent judges of crowds to be between five and six thousand persons. It is quite possible that there was no admission fee charged for women and children in those early days. Special passenger trains were run from Charlottetown and Tignish. Communication with the mainland at that time was by boat from Summerside to Shediac. The

boat Express and a special train brought 900 people more. The western trains brought hundreds more. They came by driving wagons, carts, team truck wagons and on foot. Congestion at the gates was such that the race didn't get started until after 2.00 o'clock. It was scheduled to start at 1 o'clock. The Point Du Chene boat made a special extra trip. The judges were James McLeod, Summerside, A. N. Large, Charlottetown, and James Sharpe, Summerside; starter, James Sharpe; timers, J. J. Davies, Charlottetown; George Godkin, Summerside; T. B. Grady, Summerside. Black Pilot was driven by the late William Horell (pron. Earl, Eng. silent H.) Hernando was driven by the late P. S. Brown of Charlottetown.

In the first heat there was much scoring and it was 2:35 p.m. when the word "go" was given. There was much "breaking" by both horses. At one time Black Pilot, which had taken an early lead, made two short "skips" in the heat. The time was 2:41. Hernando won the heat.

In the second heat they got a dead even start. Black Pilot forged ahead at the quarter and held his advantage till the finish. Time, 2:35 1/2.

In the third heat they "scored" six times. Black Pilot again took the lead, which he held to the finish. Time, 2:33. Hernando had made two short "skips" in this heat, he also had done in the second heat.

In the fourth heat they got away with three scores. Hernando took the lead at first, but soon went to a break, and Pilot took the lead and won the heat and race in a very pretty finish. Time, 2:32 3/4.

The final outcome of the famous match race was extremely beneficial to racing in the Province. There were no grievances or recriminations. A "new Heaven and a new Earth" was developed for breeders of race horses. The finale was an "Alphonse and Gaston" brotherly love affair among the owners and drivers. Mr. McLeod, owner of Hernando told a newspaper reporter: "I am well pleased with the fairness of the race—the impartial and honorable conduct of the judges, and the showing made by my horse". That Hernando had injured a tendon at the end of his race was not in as good shape as he appeared, and that if the driver had pressed him harder in the first heat he might have "distanced" Black Pilot.

Mr. P. S. Brown, driver of Hernando, told a reporter that "the race was well run and well won". The "stake" in the race was \$2500—a sizable chunk in those days) and half the gate receipts. The Green Bros. realized enough to pay the cost of the track—and all concerned were pleased. The original Green Bros. track must have been grand in its day. Commodious stables were built, a high board fence enclosed the entire oval. Lumber was cheap. It would be safe to estimate that the present New River Association's track at Summerside would cost more than the total outlay for the new race course in 1888.

(To be continued)

Bobo Olson In N. Y. For Training

NEW YORK, (AP)—Carl (Bobo) Olson, United States middle-weight champion, arrived Tuesday from San Francisco to finish training for his world title fight with Randy Turpin of England at Madison Square Garden, Oct. 21. The transplanted Hawaiian will head for his training quarters in Asbury Park, N. J. Turpin already has pitched camp at the Grossinger, N. Y. airport.

Pirates Purchase Southpaw Pitchers

PITTSBURGH, (AP)—Pittsburgh Pirates purchased two southpaw pitchers from New Orleans Tuesday and sold two other players to the farm club.

Bob Schultz and Lenny Yochim return to the Pirates next season. Schultz, obtained in the Ralph Kiner deal, won nine and lost four with New Orleans. Yochim finished with 14 victories and 14 defeats.

Sold to the Southern club were shortstop Clem Koshorek and righthand pitcher Bill Dunn.

LITTLE SPORT



New Talent For Islanders As Coach Trainor Begins Job Of Rebuilding Team

"We're going to build the team from the goal out," was the word last night from Wes "Bucko" Trainor, recently appointed coach of the Islanders. He, together with Club President Frank MacDonald, returned yesterday from an 11 day trip to pre-season professional hockey league training camps.

The word has gone out to former members of the Islanders' team that practice sessions will get underway over the coming weekend. Dr. Yeo of the Forum management has set the end of the week as the target date for ice.

Coach Trainor borrowed some army terminology in stressing the early aims of the Islanders—strength in depth. Until the pro leagues whittle down their squads, it will not be definitely known what talent will be available. However the Islanders are losing no time, and as a result of their scouting trip two goalies, a defenceman and a left winger will be among new faces turning out with the locals.

New Goals

Roger Bessette has been acquired from Shawinigan Falls and looms as the best bet to take care of the net minding. He also played with Sherbrooke in the Quebec Senior League. Bucko stated he was "quite happy" over the deal. Insurance in this department is Roy Boily who comes highly recommended by Ottawa.

A husky defenceman by the name of Roland Pilon will give added weight to the rear guard. He played last season with Junior Canadiens and is rated highly. The left winger is Rheel Charlebois of the Quebec Senior League. He was out of action last year due to a groin injury.

Coach Trainor last night stressed that every opportunity will be given local talent to make this season's team and invitations have been issued likely candidates to attend the training sessions. These include Orrin Carver, Allie Carver, Cecil Dowling, Thane Doyle, Arnold McCallum, Willie Dunn, who played last year with North Sydney, Franklins, Paul Schurman and Brian Lewis. Billie Purcell has been released by the local club and will join a Junior club in Ottawa.

Bucko is looking forward to the return of a number of last year's players including Gustavson, Wiseman, McLagan, Whitlock and Gray. Other members of last year's team that Bucko hopes to see with the Islanders this year include Marcel Clements, "Chuck" Holdaway, Erwin Grosse, Steve Brklacich and Ted Powers. The future of the above players will not be decided until a later date as most of them are attending professional training camps.

Queried re report that Beaudry and McLagan may see action with a Cape Breton club, Bucko denied knowledge of this. Providence was seeking to have Beaudry sign a pro contract but he is anxious to play in his home town, Sudbury. Failing this he will again come here. McLagan was being sent his transportation to report to the local club. Ronnie Hurst is slated for Sault Ste. Marie.

Make Contacts

Coach Trainor renewed many old acquaintances as he and the club president swung through the various training centres. Many valuable contacts were made which augurs well for strengthening the 1953-54 Island entry in the Big Four.

Among the places visited were Quebec City where good relations were established with Phil Watson of the Citadels, Grand Mere where Bucko conversed freely with Pat Egan former Bruin and Ranger star and now coaching Providence, Shawinigan Falls where the deal of goalies Bessette was made with manager Rachelette, Montreal where talks were held with Frank Eddolls of the Buffalo Bisons and Buddy O'Connor, coach of Cincinnati last year. At Ottawa the Islanders spent a day and a half with Tommy Gorman and prospects for good players arose with bright if the need should arise. While in Ottawa the pair saw Fredericks perform for Ottawa in a game against the Maple Leafs. Bucko termed Fredericks' showing "outstanding".

The Leafs won as a result of a "cheap goal" scored by Gerry Coleman available for a full season, pitcher Tom Morgan dug back from service and such brilliant prospects as pitcher Steve Kraly and catcher Gus Triandos.

Brooklyn counts on the return of Don Newcombe to make them even better in '54. Manager Chuck Dressen will stay in town a few days to go over the plans with the front office.

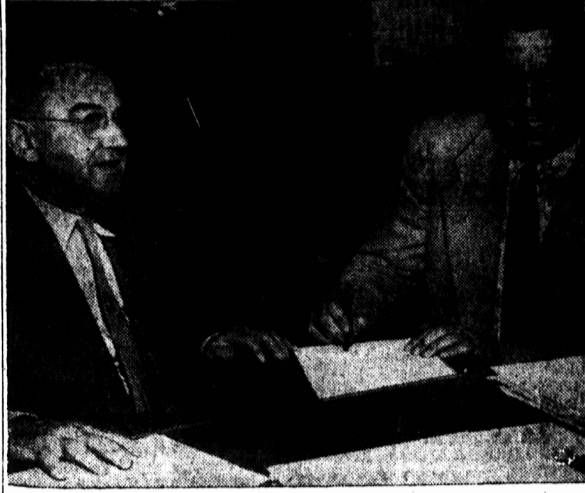
Couple of Deals

"I got a couple of deals I've been thinking of," said Dressen. Obviously he is interested in pitching and some outfield help.

Most Dodgers gathered at the Ebbets Field clubhouse to pack up for exhibition trips. Roy Campanella has a team that opens Friday with Junior Gilliam and Joe Black on the squad. Jackie Robinson has his own team, also heading south. Players on both sides will watch the mailbox for the Jumbo-sized series cheques.

Commissioner Ford Frick said he hopes to be able to announce the size of the shares "by the end of the week." Counting an extra \$83,000 from a daily pre-game television show, the player pool was a record \$691,341.61.

Beliveau Signs With Canadiens



Big Jean Beliveau, hockey's prize rookie, finally signs a contract with the Montreal Canadiens of the National Hockey League. At left is Frank Selke, managing director of the Canadiens who beamed and said: "It is the highest contract ever given any player—highest by a city block." Conferences during the last three years culminated in the signing of one of the game's most-talked about players. (CP Photo).

Orioles Looking For Manager

CHICAGO, (AP)—The top spokesman for the new big league Baltimore Orioles said Thursday he is shopping for "the best general manager possible," but hasn't found him yet.

Clarence W. Miles, Baltimore attorney heading the syndicate which bought the St. Louis Browns, conferred with Chuck Comiskey, vice-president, and Frank Lane, general manager of the White Sox.

It was reported Miles was strongly interested in signing Lane to direct the new American League entry, but all concerned were cagey on the subject.

Miles said "I'd rather not comment" when asked if he intends to ask Comiskey to release Lane, who has a White Sox contract extending through 1955.

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Saints And P.W.C. To Play Exhibition Game Today

Girls Softball Finals Open Here Tonight

The girls' Island softball finals get underway at Memorial Field this evening when George's Gals of Summerside meet the Abbie Sisters. The Abbies are asked to report to the field at 5:15. Game time is 5:30.

\$6,626 Daily Double Payoff

DEL AIR, Md., (AP)—Three bettors hit a \$6,626 daily double at Del Air race track Tuesday, the seventh largest payoff ever recorded in United States racing. One of the lucky three was a woman.

DEL AIR, Md., (AP)—Cocleco and Lano Barto, two long shots, came through Tuesday for a gigantic \$6,626 daily double, seventh largest in U.S. racing history, at the Del Air track.

Cocleco won the first race for a \$48.60 for \$2 payoff. Lano Barto won the second and paid \$73.60 for \$2.

Ticket holders of the Cocleco-Lano Barto combination received \$6,626.40 for \$2.

The record daily double was set on Aug. 15, 1939 at Washington Park, when Joy Bet and Merry Carline combined for a \$10,772.40 for \$2 payoff.

Prince of Wales College football team will play the Second Saints at the Saint Dunstan's field this afternoon at 3:45 o'clock in an exhibition game. The game was arranged between the two teams because of the great number of men turning out for their respective teams and it will give coaches E. Green and G. Bennett a chance to look over their players and to pick a team to represent their Colleges.

The following are the lineups for today's game:
Prince of Wales—Forwards—N. Hansen, B. MacKinnon, B. Chandle, G. Tweedy, J. Russell, R. Hutcheson; Halves—Don MacLeod, Brewer Auld; three-quarters—N. Mizuno, B. Leitch, Dave MacLeod, M. MacFadyen; fullback—M. Ladner; subs—O. Wood, A. MacLean, G. Court, Ken MacDonald.

Second Saints—Forwards—F. Webb, M. Callaghan, G. MacGulgan, L. Clarkin, L. McGaugh, L. MacDonald; halves—J. Fisher, J. MacIsaac, J. Kelly, G. MacCarthy, R. Gaudet; fullback—Bud Lawlor; subs—D. Levesque, L. Hickey, I. Tierney, J. Gaudet, A. MacKinnon.

Tallin, Estonia, was founded in 1219 by King Vlademar of Denmark on the site of an ancient fortress.