



RACING.



RACING CALENDAR.

SEASON 1911-12.

FIXTURES.

Sept. 28 and 29—Wanganui J.C. Spring
 Sept. 28 and 29—Geraldine R.C. Spring
 Oct. 4—Hawke's Bay J.C. Spring
 Oct. 5—Ohoka and Eyreton J.C. Annual
 Oct. 5—Kurov J.C. Spring
 Oct. 11—Napier Park R.C. Spring
 Oct. 11 and 12—Marlborough R.C. Spring
 Oct. 11 and 14—Dunedin J.C. Spring
 Oct. 21 and 23—Wellington R.C. Spring
 Oct. 24 and 26—Greymouth J.C. Spring
 Oct. 26 and 27—Poverty Bay T.C. Spring
 Nov. 1 and 4—Auckland R.C. Spring
 Nov. 4, 6, 8 and 11—Canterbury J.C. Metropolitan
 Nov. 22 and 23—South Canterbury J.C. Spring
 Dec. 26 and 29 and Jan. 1 and 2—Auckland R.C. Summer.

NOMINATIONS.

Sept. 29—Canterbury J.C. Metropolitan
 Sept. 30—Poverty Bay T.C. Spring
 Oct. 2—Wellington R.C. Spring
 Oct. 7—Greymouth J.C. Spring (first day)
 Oct. 13—Auckland R.C. Spring
 Oct. 20—Canterbury J.C. Metropolitan
 Oct. 21—Greymouth J.C. Spring (second day)
 Oct. 29—Auckland R.C. Summer
 Nov. 7—South Canterbury J.C. Spring
 Dec. 1—Auckland R.C. Summer

WEIGHTS ARE DUE.

Sept. 30—Marlborough R.C. Spring
 Oct. 5—Napier Park R.C. Spring
 Oct. 6—Wellington R.C. Spring
 Oct. 9—Auckland City Handicap
 Oct. 14—Greymouth J.C. Spring
 Oct. 14—Poverty Bay T.C. Spring
 Oct. 18—C.J.C. Stewards' Handicap
 Oct. 23—Wellington R.C. Spring
 Oct. 27—C.J.C. Metropolitan
 Nov. 2—Auckland R.C. Spring

ACCEPTANCES.

Oct. 6—Marlborough R.C. Spring
 Oct. 6—Napier Park R.C. Spring
 Oct. 13—Wellington R.C. Spring
 Oct. 20—C.J.C. Stewards' Handicap
 Oct. 20—C.J.C. New Zealand Cup
 Oct. 21—Poverty Bay T.C. Spring
 Oct. 21—Greymouth J.C. Spring
 Oct. 27—Auckland R.C. Spring
 Nov. 1—C.J.C. Metropolitan
 Nov. 2—Auckland R.C. Spring
 Nov. 17—South Canterbury J.C. Spring

FURTHER PAYMENTS.

Oct. 20—C.J.C. New Zealand Cup

FINAL PAYMENTS.

Oct. 13—Wellington R.C. Wellesley Stakes
 Oct. 27—Auckland R.C. Spring (three events)
 Nov. 1—C.J.C. Metropolitan
 Dec. 15—Auckland R.C. Summer (five events)
 Dec. 27—A.R.C. Islington Plate
 Dec. 30—Auckland Plate

CURRENT TOPICS.

Racing Prospects in the North.

The racing season of 1911-12, so far as the Auckland province is concerned, was inaugurated with the Avondale spring meeting last week. It was unquestionably one of the most successful gatherings the popular suburban club has yet held. The course was in splendid condition and the weather went a long way towards making the two days' outing a pleasant picnic apart from the racing. In this connection, too, the management are deserving of every credit for the foresight shown in the arrangements made for the comfort of their patrons. It is often a serious complaint on racecourses, situated some distances out of town, that racegoers have to make elaborate arrangements for providing themselves with luncheon hampers and refreshments; but the Avondale club have gone a long way towards minimising this inconvenience by providing their patrons with an excellent hot luncheon, well served and at a reasonable cost. Also a cheering cup of tea, with fresh scones and cakes, was available on the course throughout the two days.

The greatest drawback to Avondale is the fact that it is within the confines of a "dry" district, and consequently the enterprising club is debarred from providing booths for the sale of spirits. However, in this respect, it is wonderful how the "sports" overcome this inconvenience, and a good deal of humour is to be enjoyed at Avondale from the many incidents that go to prove the old adage that "the law is an (h)ass."

As regards the sport. The two days' racing at Avondale was of a distinctly interesting nature and augurs well for a successful season in the Auckland province. There can

be no doubt that the rapid strides the "Sport of Kings" has made in the North during recent years points unmistakably to the fact that in the near future racing will find in this province its true home, and that Auckland will be the most important sporting centre in the Dominion.

It has been declared time and again by Southern critics that racing in the Northern province suffers from the absence of wealthy owners such as Sir George Clifford, G. D. Greenwood, Stead Brothers, Hon. J. D. Ormond and E. J. Watt. On this point we join issue with the critics. The racing public would doubtless welcome sportsmen of the calibre of these Southern owners, but at the same time we have never yet heard a sound argument to prove that a number of small owners did not create a better racing community than a few big owners. In other words we are of opinion that the great advance racing has made in the North is largely due to the multitude of racehorse owners in this province. It creates a healthier rivalry, a wider distribution of prize money, and a keener appreciation of merit when a dozen owners are represented in a race instead of three or four, as is often the case in the South.

The Protection of Sport.

The chairman of the Christchurch branch of the New Zealand Sports Protection League at a recent meeting held in the "City of the Plains" warned those sports organisations that were showing a disposition to stand out and let racing clubs bear the brunt of financing the league, that their attitude was very short-sighted. If it is conceded at the outset that the league sprang from the racing clubs that is no reason why it should be dominated by the patrons of racing or that the protection of racing should be the only object of the organisation. As a matter of fact, the constitution of the league is a broad one and its primary objects, as the name applies, are to safeguard every branch of sport from the attacks of a class of the community who are continuously and blatantly advertising their Pharisaical doctrines and endeavouring to deprive New Zealanders of the birth right—to freely enjoy their recreations and pastimes in their own way.

Since the formation of the Sports Protection League a good deal of attention has been directed to the consideration of a means of protecting the sport of racing against the inroads of "wowsers" interference; but that is only natural, as the racing clubs comprise the largest sporting body, and is the one most fiercely attacked. Sooner or later, however, unless a solid front is shown by a united body of sportsmen throughout the Dominion, attacks will be made on many other branches of sport and on their liberties. The league is not defiant but defensive. The league also, if it receives the unanimous backing of all true sportsmen, will undoubtedly exercise a very potent effect for the betterment of sport in all its branches, apart altogether from the protection such an organisation would ensure on account of its influence to combat the unreasonable onslaughts of a small but very noisy section, which, by the dust it raises, smothered the plaintive appeals of individual sportsmen, who have in the past had to defend their pastimes against a united band of "kill-joys." With a strong representative league of sportsmen the Government would feel that there was intelligent strength behind it, and would not then have to meekly submit to the dictates of the anti-liberty members of the community. It is high time to call a halt to those who show an inclination to trespass into realms where the common sense of the people declare they shall not go, and the best mouthpiece for that command is the New Zealand Sports Protection League.

Trotters versus Pacers.

The controversy on the merits and demerits of the pacer has again cropped up as a result of the Auckland Trotting Club deciding to strike out the restriction "for trotters only" in the Maiden Handicap. Last year only

trotters could nominate for this event but this year the Club has decided to admit pacers. We are inclined to think that this is a retrogressive step the club is taking. It cannot be that there is any likelihood of any paucity of nominations for a maiden handicap; in fact, the reverse is almost certain to be the case. Advocates of the pacing gait are always prone to adduce as their strongest argument the fact that nearly all the records are held by pacers in Australia. That, however, is not a sound reason why the genuine trotter should not receive more encouragement, because the mere building up of records does not improve any sport.

The Auckland Trotting Club did much to popularise their sport when they decided on a more comprehensive system of classing on time limits, and it is somewhat surprising that they have decided this season to delete from one of their events a classification that we consider should be more generally adopted.

The trotter is distinctly a utility animal, and as such is worthy of every encouragement. On the other hand a nobbled pacer is never seen at any other work outside its racing tasks, consequently he is reduced to practically a money-making machine. Now that the sport of trotting is making such satisfactory headway, and is destined to become one of our most popular pastimes, it behoves us to encourage the class of horse that is likely to be of the greatest practical use to his owner, and there is no question that from their point of view the trotter is the finest animal we have. In the United States and America this fact has been fully realised, and the governing body of trotting has passed prohibitory regulations against the use of hobbles, and in a few years a pacer will be an unknown animal on the trotting tracks there, because in the future no pacing records are to be registered. We could not do better in this country to follow the lead that experience has taught the Americans is a necessary expedient to protect their sport.

If all young horses, when first put into work, were allowed to cultivate their natural gait, those that took to trotting would undoubtedly be in the majority, and present results demonstrate that in more cases the pacing gait is a cultivated rather than a natural one. On this question we quote a southern authority on trotting who says:—

"It stands to reason that under the present method of putting the hoppers on a horse, no matter what his natural gait is, converts scores of young ones into pacers, that, if given time, would shine at the trotting gait. So it is that many a straight-out trotter is lost to the light harness industry, who, if allowed to follow his natural instinct, would have developed into a record-breaker."

An instance of this was brought into prominence at the opening meeting of the present Grand Circuit in America. One of the most successful competitors in the trotting classes at that fixture was Argot Hal, whose case is one of the strangest in all breeding history. Though bred on purely paying lines he refused, when first put into work, to follow in the pacing footsteps of the Hal family, and insisted upon trotting. Despite that natural preference, Argot Hal had the hobbles put on him, and every effort was made to compel him to pace. In 1907 he paced a mile in 2.8½, and ten days later, with the same shoes on, trotted a mile in 2.12½. Early in 1908 he was sent to trainer Benyon, who, acting under instructions, tried to make him pace. A mile in 2.11¾ was the best that Benyon could get out of him, and found him to be unreliable, a puller of the worst sort, and thoroughly bad-mannered. After a few months of hopeless perseverance Benyon decided to let Argot Hal trot, and he immediately changed into a tractable horse of good temper. In his races he showed a frictionless trotting gait, and took a record of 2.9¾, time that he is bound to materially reduce as the circuit progresses.

The Auckland Trotting Club is in most respects one of the most enterprising bodies in the Dominion, and it is entitled to every credit for the strong stand it has taken to ensure

clean sport. We therefore feel sure that before the next programme is issued the Club will see its way to show more encouragement for the utility trotter, and gradually eliminate the mere money-making pacer.

TURF TOPICS.

Nominations for the Auckland Cup, City Handicap, and King Edward Memorial Handicap fall due on Friday (this week). At the same time first forfeits must be declared for the Great Northern Guineas.

* * *
 First Barrel, one of the unluckiest horses of last season, is having a spell and will not be again commissioned until after the New Year.

* * *
 Only five first favourites won at the Avondale meeting. They were: Crown Pearl (Maiden Plate), Sedition (Avondale Cup), Jack Delaval (Flying Stakes), Lucille (President's Handicap), and Miss Winsome (Avondale Guineas).

* * *
 Ellerslie-trained horses won eight of the sixteen races decided at Avondale.

* * *
 W. Wilson, a Waikato horseman, has been granted a jockey's license by the Auckland Metropolitan Committee.

* * *
 The biggest dividend paid at Avondale was that the backers of Lady Dot received on the last race of the meeting. The shortest price was paid by Lucille.

* * *
 A two-year-old colt that has not yet sported silk, by Monoform, out of Graceful, is very enthusiastically spoken of by those who have seen him going through his early schooling.

* * *
 A half-sister, Monoline, and a half-brother, Monorail, each registered wins in two-year-old races at Avondale. By the look of things at the opening of the season, Monoform's progeny bid fair to gain distinction.

* * *
 The most talked of two-year-old previous to Avondale was Prince Soult, and his connections were quite sanguine of his ability to capture the Avondale Stakes. Lady Hester's son, however, failed to come up to expectations. He got well away at the start, and in the early stages showed a lot of pace, but at the crucial period of the race was found wanting. Prince Soult is a splendid out of a youngster, and may improve later on in the season.

* * *
 Miss Winsome, who won the Avondale Guineas in such attractive style and in record time (1.42 4-5), has only met one defeat in her six starts. She lost to Miscount in the Northern Champagne Stakes, at the last A.R.C. autumn meeting. The best previous time the Avondale Guineas was done in was last year when King Soult took 1.45 1-5.

* * *
 In the days before the South African war, Johannesburg was regarded as perhaps one of the greatest sporting centres in the world, where punters on horseracing were unhampered in their betting, and as a consequence some very heavy wagering was indulged in from Jo'burg. Now, apparently, the "wowsers" has made his presence felt in the South African Union Parliament. Last month the Government introduced a Bill, quite as drastic as our own Gaming Act, which proposes to restrict race meetings and prohibit betting at any sports, with the exception of horseracing, and then only on the racecourse. It prohibits the publication of anti-post betting or information relating to races run either in the Union or outside. The Bill also proposes the abolition of the bookmaker, and provides for the Government collecting two per cent. of the gross takings of the totalisator, plus two per cent. of the profits.