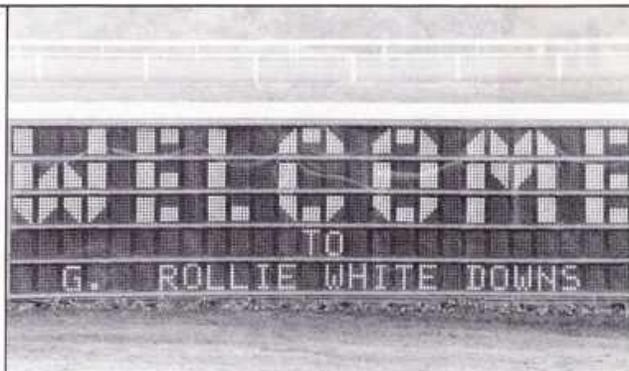


A 52-Year Dream Comes True In Brady



Friday, October 6, 1989. A historic day at G. Rollie White Downs in Brady, where the first pari-mutuel racing in Texas since 1937 commenced under stormy skies and a flurry of last-minute preparations.

Frequent rainstorms throughout the afternoon failed to dampen the spirits of the capacity crowd of 4,000-plus, most of whom would probably not have wanted to be anywhere else — in the very rural heart of Texas, halfway between San Antonio and Abilene — on that particular soggy day.

And despite some elements of the Class II facility that were still incomplete at the first call to the post (such as a 200-seat section of the clubhouse), the management and staff at G. Rollie White rose to the occasion to provide a fun, safe, and entertaining inauguration of modern pari-mutuel racing in the Lone Star State.

"I've waited all my life for this," declared TTBA President Stanley Beard of Brenham, whose Texas-bred two-year-old Al Bidness finished third in the first of three pari-mutuel Thoroughbred races that day. "I think it's absolutely great. I used to skip school and hitchhike to the brush tracks, and this is the nicest track I've been to in Texas.

"The people here who are running the facility are all pleasant, enthus-

By ANNE LANG

astic and helpful," he continued. "The place is neat and clean, it has a fresh face, and the track's in good shape. What more could you ask? There are going to have to be some adjustments made, I'm sure, but overall I couldn't be more pleased."

The first Thoroughbred race — a four-furlong allowance for maiden juveniles — was won by Bonaparte, a Texas-bred son of Ambernash/Little Lilith owned by Wilburn Jones of Fizhur, Texas, bred by Jimmy Womack of Waco, and trained by Vernon Pullin. Accredited Texas-bred colt Gifted Pet (Gifted Dancer/Dixie Lilly, by I'm For More) was second. The Kenita McKay trainee is co-owned by Odessa residents Gary Garrison and Jim Brantley, and was bred by Buster Phipps of Tahoka.

About his third-place finisher Al Bidness, Beard said: "The little horse ran well. I don't know if he's any better than what he ran, but he's here, he's the only Texas-bred I had in training that I could bring, and I wouldn't have missed this opportunity for the world. I'm going to leave him here, and we may bring in another horse or two in the next few weeks."

(Al Bidness subsequently broke his maiden at Brady on October 13.)

The featured race of the day was the six-furlong, \$8,150 Heart of Texas Stakes for Thoroughbreds three years old and up. The winner was Justa Stepahead, owned by Devon Kelly and Jerry Lawhon (who also trains the horse) of Blackwell, Texas. The three-year-old gelding by Starmaker Machine was bred in Florida and had finished in the money in all five of his previous starts (at New Mexico's San Juan Downs), with three wins, a second and a third.

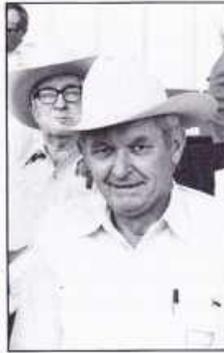
Second in the Heart of Texas Stakes was Gent Away, a Texas-bred Pukka Gent gelding bred by J.L. Perkins of Navasota and owned by his trainer, Jack Carson of Austin. Accredited Texas-bred Bob's Bambino, owned and bred by TTBA Board member Bob Kimbrough of Abilene and his wife, Ruth, was third. Scott Gray conditions the three-year-old son of Caro Bambino.

The third Thoroughbred race was a six-furlong maiden allowance for three-year-olds and four-year-olds. It was won by North Gate (Schlante/La Kay), Texas-bred by Mary Williams and owned by Jack Gass of Big Spring, Texas. Second was Texas-bred Mekinwin, owned by Wade Brincefield of Brownwood, Texas and bred by Robert Morisak. Flight Knight, a Virginia-bred owned by



Left to right: TTBA Past President Bill McMorris; TTBA President Stanley Beard; TTBA Board member Mike Burtleson; Racing Commissioner Hugh Fitzsimons Jr.; TTBA Executive Director Jeff Hooper; Chris Cahill DVM; TTBA Board member Steve Hicks DVM; Bonaparte, winner of the first Thoroughbred race

Photos by Anne Lang & Pete Hata



Left to right: Racing Commissioner James Clement; TTBA Board member Charles Graham DVM; North Gate, winner of the third Thoroughbred race; TTBA Board member Bob Kimbrough

Jerry Stovall of Weatherford, was third.

All of the 81 horses (Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses combined) that ran on opening day were Texas-owned.

What The Numbers Showed

Three major factors probably contributed to the slightly less-than-expected total amount wagered on opening day: the long lines at pari-mutuel windows (manned by clerks understandably slowed by their inexperience), the wet weather, and the average fan's relative unfamiliarity with the concept of pari-mutuel wagering.

Track officials had hoped to top \$200,000 that first day, but \$188,975 was wagered on the 10-race card, which breaks down to less than \$50 per capita. However, the numbers — along with the weather — improved somewhat on Saturday and Sunday, resulting in an inaugural weekend betting pool of \$591,083 wagered by an estimated 13,000 people. (The state's five percent share of that handle was \$29,554. See box accompanying this article for a summary of the attendance and handle average for the first three weekends of racing.)

Racing's Elite Were On Hand

The Texas Racing Commission (TRC) was well-represented on opening day by commissioners and employees. All three of the TRC panel's horse section representatives — Glenn Blodgett DVM, Hugh Fitzsimons Jr., and James Clement — were present, as was TRC Executive Director Bill Meincke, Licensing Director Tom Hagadone, and numerous other staff members.

From his seat in the grandstand, Fitzsimons shared his perspective of

want to see the facilities more completed; for instance, there aren't any TV monitors for the crowd to watch, and I think that adds a lot to the fun of racing for most fans. But I'm sure that's going to happen.

"One reason I'm excited about Brady opening is, it will keep me from being embarrassed when I go to the international racing commissioners' meeting next spring," Fitzsimons went on. "You see, I promised them last spring in New Orleans that the next time they saw me at a racing commissioner's convention, I would no longer be a racing commissioner without a racetrack."

Meincke also said he was pleased with G. Rollie White Downs' debut.

"Really, for the most part, everything went pretty well," he stated. "I think there are some things we'll have to look at for improvement, such as the photo-finish camera and the videos; that sort of thing. But we'll be meeting with the staff here to discuss the things that can be done better."

Meincke commended the track management and staff for their hard work and conscientiousness, saying that they worked well with the TRC staff and were very cooperative.

Continued

Looking at the Numbers

The following figures reflect the first twelve days of racing at G. Rollie White Downs, from October 6-October 29 (Friday-Sunday racing).

- Total Attendance:** 31,440
- Total Pari-Mutuel Handle:** \$1,872,721
- Average Daily Attendance:** 2,620
- Average Daily Handle:** \$156,060
- Per Capita Wagering:** \$59.56
- Total Dollars Paid Directly to the State of Texas General Fund:** \$93,636

(Sources: the Dallas Morning News and Austin American-Statesman)

opening day activities with the *Texas Thoroughbred*.

"Things went as well as could be expected," he said. "I don't see any major problems. Naturally you would



Left to right: Racing Commissioners Glenn Blodgett DVM and Hugh Fitzsimons Jr.; Justasteahead, winner of the Heart of Texas Thoroughbred Stakes; Racing Commission Executive Secretary Bill Meincke

"They're safety-conscious like we are," he noted. "And just look around: the crowd is happy, everyone's had a good day, and that's what it's all about. All of a sudden racing's here, and I think this will be the start of a glorious new industry for the state. You can see the interest people have in racing here today."

TRC/TTBA Working Relationship Looks Good

Meincke also expressed optimism for the success of TTBA's recently-completed system for distribution of monies to owners, breeders and stallion owners from the Accredited Texas-Bred Program. The payout plan, which bases distribution of incentive fund monies on a percentage of the horse's earnings, went into effect with the opening of G. Rollie White Downs. All TTBA calculations and records will be available for audit by the TRC.

"The commission is vitally interested in the horse business in Texas, and the [Thoroughbred] horse business is the TTBA. We want to stimulate that horse business."

Meincke said he feels Texas Thoroughbred production will continue to increase and improve, even before Class I racing comes on line.

"I think it's bound to grow," he said. "We're talking about an industry that's certainly not in its infancy, because Texas has raised horses for years, but now all of a sudden people can say, 'wow, racing's here,' and they can look forward to the number of tracks that are going to come on."

"An economist would say we're looking at the demand side, right?" he continued. "The supply side needs to be angled upward. So I think even Class II racing's got to have a very positive effect on the whole industry."

Brady Cuts Friday Racing

Just before presstime, the management of G. Rollie White Downs received permission from the TRC to eliminate Friday racing due to low attendance. Racing on Saturdays and Sundays, beginning November 3, was to have increased from 10 races per day to 12 races per day.

A reported average of \$180,000 has been wagered on weekend days during the first month of racing, while the Friday average has been \$75,000.



Accredited Texas-bred Program Award Earners

Through the first nine race days at G. Rollie White Downs in Brady, the following persons have earned Owner Awards, Breeder Awards, or Stallion Owner Awards through the Accredited Texas-bred Program, as administered by TTBA.

As stated in the Texas Racing Act (Senate Bill 15), eligible owners, breeders and stallion owners of Accredited Texas-bred racing stock that finish first, second or third in all recognized pari-mutuel races in Texas will receive monetary awards through this program. (There are no owner awards through this program for Accredited Texas-bred stakes races. However, additional funding for purses for these Accredited Texas-bred stakes races is made available through an additional 10 percent of the breakage.)

Owner Award Recipients

Date	Owner Names	Horse Name	Race #	Finish		Purse \$
				Order		
10-06	Wilburn Jonas	Bonaparte	2	1		\$720
10-06	Stanley M. Beard	Al Bidness	2	3		\$120
10-06	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Bob's Bambino	7	3		\$815
10-07	Nancy E. Morgan	Choice Runner	2	3		\$120
10-07	Morris Whitney	Six Is Plenty	10	1		\$720
10-08	Gary R. Gandy	Loomona	5	3		\$120
10-08	George Frye	Its Peanuts	6	2		\$264
10-13	Stanley M. Beard	Al Bidness	4	1		\$720
10-13	Lee Barry Davis	Little Lonetta	10	1		\$720
10-15	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Lady Pepper	2	3		\$120
10-20	Lee Barry Davis	Grayson Royal	2	2		\$264
10-20	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Raise a Chanel	8	3		\$150
10-20	M/M L. G. Rhodes	I Want to Run	10	2		\$264
10-21	James L. Kelley	Nalees Promise	7	3		\$140
10-22	C.J. Renken Ranch	Heres Queenie	2	1		\$720
10-22	Helen/E.B. Burelsmith	Goodie Gold	2	2		\$264
10-22	Smith/McShane	Miss Super Ego	9	1		\$720
10-22	Charles R. French	Quitesimplythebest	9	3		\$120

Breeder Award Recipients

Date	Breeder Names	Horse Name	Race #	Finish		Purse \$
				Order		
10-06	Jimmy L. Womack	Bonaparte	2	1		\$720
10-06	Stanley M. Beard	Al Bidness	2	3		\$120
10-06	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Bob's Bambino	7	3		\$815
10-07	Nancy E. Morgan	Choice Runner	2	3		\$120
10-07	Morris Whitney	Six Is Plenty	10	1		\$720
10-08	Gary R. Gandy	Loomona	5	3		\$120
10-08	Great Western Ranch	Its Peanuts	6	2		\$264
10-13	Stanley M. Beard	Al Bidness	4	1		\$120
10-13	Vernon Pullin	Little Lonetta	10	1		\$720
10-15	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Lady Pepper	2	3		\$120
10-20	Lee Barry Davis	Grayson Royal	2	2		\$264
10-20	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Raise a Chanel	8	3		\$150
10-20	M/M L. G. Rhodes	I Want to Run	10	2		\$264
10-21	Jim Thomas Enterprises	Nalees Promise	7	3		\$140
10-22	Agvest Int. Ltd. 2	Heres Queenie	2	1		\$720
10-22	Shirley Burelsmith	Goodie Gold	2	2		\$264
10-22	Smith/Harden	Miss Super Ego	9	1		\$720
10-22	J. R. Holmes	Quitesimplythebest	9	3		\$120

Stallion Owner Award Recipients

Date	Stallion Owner Names	Horse Name	Race #	Finish		Purse \$
				Order		
10-07	J. R. Holmes	Choice Runner	2	3		\$120
10-07	Ken/Sandy Hammans	Six Is Plenty	10	1		\$720
10-08	Loom Syndicate	Loomona	5	3		\$120
10-08	McDermott Ranch	Its Peanuts	6	2		\$264
10-15	Bob/Ruth Kimbrough	Lady Pepper	2	3		\$120
10-20	R. H. Shepherd DVM	I Want to Run	10	2		\$264
10-22	Lucky Legend Syndicate	Heres Queenie	1	2		\$720
10-22	Bold Ego Syndicate	Miss Super Ego	9	1		\$720