

# Confusing the issue in Texas

As Trinity Meadows buries itself beneath an avalanche of righteously indignant lawsuits that will do nothing but muck up Texas' entire fledgling industry, a good many racing fans are bitterly reminiscing about a glorious event that took place at the Class II track only a scant seven months ago.

It was the inaugural Texas Day, a full card of stakes races for accredited Texas-breds offering more than \$350,000 in purses. A day of pride and pageantry capped by the participation of a gung-ho governor. The grandstand was bulging, nearly \$2 million passed through the mutuel windows, and horsemen, management and fans celebrated the historic occasion in a rare spirit of camaraderie.

On that day - June 20, 1993 - Trinity Meadows gave us a shining preview of Texas racing's

unlimited potential.

Fast-forward to Jan. 5, 1994. Trinity Meadows files a \$27 million lawsuit in Parker

County, naming the state's racing commission, THBPA, thoroughbred and quarterhorse breed organizations and everybody but Mother Teresa as defendants.

So much for shining examples.

You see, the folks who run Trinity just have never gotten over being rejected for a Class I license in 1992. Naturally, they filed a lawsuit on that issue back then, which they've refused to drop. So the folks trying to build Lone Star Jockey Club, who were granted the license fair and square, promised Trinity Meadows a million bucks to back off.

ANNE LANG



But the money alone wasn't enough. Trinity owners arrived at the ludicrous conclusion that racing commis-

sioners, who are as anxious as anyone to get a major-league north Texas track underway, will grant Trinity a Class I license with no requirement to upgrade their track to Class I standards - plus a guaranteed minimum of 100 annual race dates through the year 2000.

The unofficial word from the commissioners: no dice.

The official word from the horsemen's groups: cease this nonsense, or we're not going to sign off on out-of-state simulcasting during the dark months of January and February.

Specifically: settle with Lone

Star, fix the holes in the track and, oh yeah, please tell us what breed we're supposed to prepare for the live meet in March.

Trinity officials thumbed their noses and, when the horsemen acted on their warning, Trinity scuttled off to the courthouse. The parties referred to in the lawsuit as "conspirators" against Trinity will in turn be forced to counter-sue.

Tune in to today's game of grand-scale Texas racing. The bases are loaded, it's the bottom of the ninth, and the fans are looking on in utter disbelief as Tragedy Meadows runs from the dugout and seizes the umpire in a desperate chokehold.

Change the channel. I can't bear to watch.

□ Anne Lang is the Texas breeding correspondent for Daily Racing Form.

## THE THINGS THEY SAY

*« If Trinity Meadows spent half as much time on improving their track as they spend at the courthouse, they'd have a darn nice facility. »*

JEFF HOOPER, executive director of the Texas Thoroughbred Breeders Association, after Trinity Meadows filed a lawsuit seeking \$2 million in damages from several state associations.