

REVIEW

Illinois horse racing continued to thrive in the face of a multitude of changes in 1994. Although handle on horse racing exceeded \$1.2 billion for the fifth consecutive year and allowed us to retain our status as one of North America's few billion dollar jurisdictions, it experienced a decline of more than 3% from 1993 to \$1,238,762,950. As a consequence, state revenue from racing declined by 2% to \$46,624,337. Bitter winter weather, the termination of live racing at Quad City Downs and increased competition from riverboat casinos were major contributors toward this decline.

Off-track betting parlors, however, experienced a boost in 1994 with the establishment of two new facilities near riverboat casinos. The Joliet Empress OTB opened its doors for business on January 20th and the Alton-Belle on August 18th. Total additional revenue for the cities and counties of off-track parlors was \$10,477,457. The percentage of total Illinois handle wagered at OTBs has now reached 42%, while on-track handle and inter-track handle were 34% and 24%, respectively.

Illinois handle benefitted greatly from commingling of other states' pools into Illinois. Total out-of-state handle on Illinois races equalled \$233 million, up sharply from the \$127 million that was wagered in 1993. The State receives 7.5% of the commission paid to the host track for interstate races.

Races of national interest continued to attract the attention of the betting public in 1994. Patrons wagered \$56.8 million on 253 simulcasts broadcast in Illinois from all over the

nation. Racing fans wagered \$3.6 million on the Kentucky Derby and over \$5 million on the seven Breeder's Cup races.

Racing at the Springfield and DuQuoin Fairs experienced a banner year in 1994 as patrons wagered a record \$3.2 million. Three harness programs were broadcast throughout the Illinois off-track network and over \$2.4 million was paid out in purses.

On the negative side, a substantial number of racehorses tested positive for cocaine in several North American jurisdictions, including Illinois. By the end of the year the Board Laboratory reported 46 cocaine positives in saliva, urine and blood samples, and tongue ties, taken from both harness and thoroughbred horses. To combat this problem, the Board developed and initiated the first pre-race saliva screening program for cocaine in horses using a simple two-minute immunoassay field test. This pre-race procedure effectively ended the cocaine problem as not a single positive was reported during the latter half of 1994.

The Illinois Racing Board Laboratory also expanded its menu of ELISA screening tests this year, thus enabling the laboratory to identify and report the beta blocker family of drugs for the first time. As a consequence, a record total of 82 positive drugs were reported in post-race urine samples.

The Board Laboratory has continued its participation in the International Association of Racing Commissioners Quality Assurance Program (ARCI QAP) by performing at 100% accuracy in all blind and proficiency testing trials, including participation in an international blind testing program conducted by the

Association of Official Racing Chemists (ARC). Shelley Kalita, Director of the Board Laboratory, was elected to the Executive Board of the International ARC, and State Veterinarian Dr. Ronald Jensen continued to serve as the Veterinary Consultant to the ARCI QAP Committee.

The Racing Board collected \$179,608 in fines in 1994. Stewards rulings totaled 1,249 for harness and 559 for thoroughbred. Rulings extended beyond the backstretch in 1994, with the totalisator company, Amtote, incurring a \$30,000 fine for a series of operator and computer errors. Following these sanctions, Amtote's record proved flawless for the remainder of the year.

On the thoroughbred racing front, POLAR EXPEDITION had the distinction of being selected Illinois Horse of the Year for the second straight year. Trained by Hugh Robertson, this gelding had a 1994 record of 3-1-1 in nine starts. Its crowning achievement was winning the prestigious Grade II Jim Beam at Turfway Park. POLAR EXPEDITION is owned and bred by James Cody and has lifetime earnings of \$753,025.

The 1994 Harness Horse of the Year was WITHOUTREPROACH, who currently holds the record as fastest harness horse ever bred in Illinois. At the Illinois State Fair Final, Dave Magee drove this son of IDEAL SOCIETY to a winning time of 1:50. Owned and bred by Bruce Johnson, this gelding has 15 lifetime wins and total earnings of \$306,004.

Substantial capital improvement at Illinois racetracks was funded by the Racetrack Improvement Fund. Arlington International Racecourse performed painting and roof work on several barns, dredged the infield lake and upgraded the stable area water supply at a cost of \$325,000. Balmoral completed a number of

improvements for both its backstretch and grandstand areas totaling approximately \$450,000. The backstretch projects included new roofs on all the south area barns, barn restroom repairs, asphalt paving and maintenance equipment purchases. The grandstand projects included installing new drains on the roof, window tinting, and the purchase of satellite dishes and additional televisions. Fairmount expanded and renovated its detention barn, paved part of the general parking lot and purchased bench seating for the apron at a cost of \$150,000. Hawthorne Race Course replaced several barn roofs, performed some barn fascia, purchased maintenance equipment and upgraded its track surface at a cost of over \$475,000. Maywood Park renovated portions of its roof, purchased tables and chairs for the clubhouse, made racing oval upgrades and installed a new electronic wagering photofinish system and new electronic display signs at a total cost of \$450,000. Sportsman's Park replaced a roof on one of its barns, installed a new ventilation system in the security barn and purchased concession equipment at a cost of \$75,000. Quad City Downs remodeled the grandstand area for its inter-track patrons at a cost of \$325,000. Finally, the Department of Agriculture purchased a new tote board and horse ambulance for the Springfield and DuQuoin racing facilities at a cost of \$40,000.

There were some personal milestones to note in Illinois racing in 1994. Harness driver Dave Magee won his 6,000th race in February, a feat that had previously been accomplished by only four other drivers in the history of the sport. His driving record for 1994 earned him the title of North American Driver of the Year.

Commissioner Saul Epton retired in June 1994 after a six year career with the Racing

Board. Judge Epton, a former Circuit Court judge, is a member of various civic and professional organizations in the Chicago area, and continues to practice law at the firm of Shefsky & Froelich.

The Racing Board was saddened this year by the death of Commissioner Cecil Troy. Commissioner Troy, a lifelong resident of

Chicago, served on the Board for seventeen years. In addition to his vast achievements in the racing industry, he was President and CEO of Grove Fresh Distributing, a member of the Urban League, a trustee of the Push Foundation and a member of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce. His presence on the Board will be sorely missed.

1994 LABORATORY TEST SAMPLES

<u>PRE-RACE</u>	<u>SALIVA</u>	<u>COCAINE POSITIVE</u>
Thoroughbred	3,938	1
Harness	4,865	3
Total	8,803	4

PROHIBITED DRUG POSITIVES

Thoroughbred	31
Harness	51
Total Prohibited Drug Positives:	82
Total Different Drugs Reported:	21

<u>POST-RACE</u>	<u>URINE</u>	<u>BLOOD</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Thoroughbred	5,850	5,981	11,831
Harness	9,367	9,781	19,148
Total	15,217	15,762	30,979

PHENYLBUATAZONE OVERAGES

Thoroughbred	87
Harness	41
Total	128

PROHIBITED DRUGS REPORTED

