

SPORT

by

S. V. McEwen

The best thing I can wish readers of this page next to a healthy appetite and a strong digestion to steer them through next Sunday's gastronomic activities, is fine weather to permit everyone to enjoy the round of sport which is listed for the Christmas week-end. There are fun and games for all who seek to spend part of the festive season out of doors.

THE sporting event of major importance, and which will command the interest of the majority, even though many of them will not be able to attend, will be the running of the Auckland Cup, which is the richest flat race handicap for thoroughbred horses in New Zealand.

The Auckland Cup, which is run on Boxing Day each year at the beautiful Ellerslie racecourse, was founded 64 years ago and it has provided New Zealand's Turf history with some of its brightest chapters.

Two horses, Ariel and Nelson, won it three times—Ariel in 1876, 1878 and 1879, and Nelson in 1885, 1886 and 1887.

Blue Jacket won in 1899 and 1900; All Red in 1908 and 1909; To Kara in 1923 (dead-heat with Muraahi) and outright in 1924; and more recently Cuddle won in 1935 and 1936, establishing a time record in the first year and breaking it the following year.

The weight-carrying record stands to the credit of Nelson who had 9.12 on the occasion of his third consecutive victory in 1888.

No Favourite

The turf writers, whose job it is to offer you guidance on these big racing events, have not yet made up their minds what will win next week's Auckland Cup. Their hesitancy to declare themselves is due, I think, to the open character of the race.

My preference is for Wotan, who won the Melbourne Cup in 1936, although his racing record since performing that unexpected feat at Flemington is one that nobody could enthuse about.

He has won two races only in the meantime, and both of them on the Fellingid course, but quite recently he showed us that he is in the right physical condition and we know him to be a true stayer because he has won at the Auckland Cup distance (two miles) and in doing so established a New Zealand and Australian time record for the distance.

All other things being equal, handicap racing is mainly a question of weight. Other matters have an important influence such as the state of the track, the ability of the rider, and the luck of the running which, in other words, means avoidance of interference from tiring horses and incompetent riders.

In my opinion Wotan has come down sufficiently in the weights now to make him a gilt-edged proposition in the Auckland Cup if he chooses to run generously.

Unfortunately, horses don't always warn us when they are going to get the sulks on race-day. Many of them are moody beasts and their failure to run up to anticipated form makes racing largely a matter of glorious uncertainty. Perhaps that is all to the good, for, if everything went according to

schedule in horse-racing, there would be too many winners and not sufficient losers.

A Brilliant Filly

LINKED with the Auckland Cup on Boxing Day is the Railway Handicap, a valuable event, run over six furlongs, and if you are fortunate enough to select the winner of this race as well as that of the Auckland Cup your bookmaker (if you know one) will arrange to pay your next few instalments on the car.

The Railway Handicap was not established until 1890 and its records are studded with the names of many of the Dominion's most brilliant sprinters.

My fancy for this race is the three-year-old filly Disdain who has been very favourably handicapped at 7.4.

Disdain ran only twice last season as a two-year-old, winning each time, and although she never

The Modern Fred Archer



An artist's impression of Gordon Richards, who is again England's leading jockey. He rode more than 200 winners this season.

met Defaulter, who was the champion juvenile last term, there were plenty of trainers at Riccarton, where both youngsters were stabled, who were quite prepared to back Disdain to beat the colt.

When Disdain won her initial race, the Canterbury Jockey Club's handicapper was so impressed that he raised her 21 pounds for the second day—a most unusual rise—and she won just as easily.

Disdain won a set-weight hack race at the New Zealand Cup meeting when not in the right condition, but failed as a stayer in the Oaks Stakes over a mile and a half.

Recently she changed stables and her new trainer may not have had her long enough to harden her up to the necessary muscular condition, but she is such a brilliant beginner, and so speedy, that she may not need to be thoroughly tuned up.

A Riccarton trainer who has had a long experience and whose opinions I value greatly because he has watched the development of all the great horses at Riccarton

FOR YOUR TURF NOTEBOOK

Silver-Stick—Any two-year-old handicap.

Beaulivre—Any two-year-old classic.

Bing Boy—Any hurdle race.

White Gold—Any hack sprint.

Black Thread—Any provincial open sprint.

Lady Rosette—Any distance hack race.

Sternchase—Any hack sprint.

Peerless—Any open handicap up to 12 furlongs.

Lady Montana—Any open handicap between 8 and 10 furlongs.

HOLIDAY SPORTING BROADCASTS

RACING—CRICKET—TENNIS

DECEMBER 26.

A running commentary on the Auckland's Racing Club's meeting at Ellerslie racecourse will be broadcast by 1YA at 12 noon.

A summary of play in Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Otago, will be broadcast by 2YA at 11 a.m.

A description of the running of the Auckland Cup at Ellerslie racecourse will be broadcast by 2YA, on relay from 1YA, at 2.5 p.m. A recorded description will be broadcast by 2YA at 6.50 p.m.

Progress reports of the Plunket Shield cricket match, Auckland v. Canterbury, and of the Canterbury tennis championship at Wilding Park, will be broadcast by 3YA throughout the day. A summary of the day's play in the cricket match will be broadcast at 7.20 p.m.

At 12 noon and at intervals, running commentaries on the racing at the Dunedin Jockey Club's meeting at Wingatui, will be broadcast by 4YA.

DECEMBER 27.

A running commentary on the Auckland Trotting Club's meeting at Alexandra Park will be broadcast by 1YA at 12 noon.

A summary of play in the Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Otago, will be broadcast by 2YA at 11 a.m.

A description of the running of the Auckland Trotting Cup at Alexandra Park will be broadcast by 2YA, on relay from 1YA, at 2 p.m. A recording of the description will be broadcast by 2YA at 6.50 p.m.

Progress reports of the Plunket Shield cricket match, Auckland v. Canterbury, and of the Canterbury tennis championships will be broadcast throughout the day by 3YA. A review of the day's play in the cricket match will be broadcast at 7.20 p.m.

An interview with Mr. Roy Sheffield, former Essex professional cricketer, and now coach to the Wellington Cricket Association, will be broadcast from 3YA at 9.5 p.m.

At 12 noon and at intervals running commentaries on the racing at the Dunedin Jockey Club's meeting at Wingatui will be broadcast by 4YA.

DECEMBER 28.

A running commentary on the Auckland Racing Club's meeting at Ellerslie racecourse will be broadcast by 1YA at 12 noon.

A summary of the play in the Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Otago, will be broadcast from 2YA at 11 a.m.

Progress reports of the Plunket Shield cricket match, Auckland versus Canterbury, and of the Canterbury tennis championships will be broadcast throughout the day by 3YA. A review of the day's play in the cricket match will be broadcast at 7.20 p.m.

In the Sports Club: Mr. A. L. Gatland, assisting superintending engineer, U.S.S. Co., gives some interesting information regarding the steamer express Rangitira, from 3YL, Christchurch, at 8.15 p.m.

DECEMBER 29.

A running commentary on the Auckland Trotting Club's meeting at Alexandra Park will be broadcast by 1YA at 12 noon.

DECEMBER 30.

Popular sports announcer, Gordon Hutter, gives a sports talk from 1YA at 7.30 p.m.

"Scenes from the Sporting Past: The Melbourne Cup, 1890." A running commentary on the famous race when Carbine, the New Zealand horse, carried a record weight to victory in record time, will be presented from 1YA at 7.45 p.m.

Progress reports of the Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Canterbury, will be broadcast throughout the afternoon by 3YA. A review of the day's play will be broadcast at 7.20 p.m.

DECEMBER 31.

A running commentary on the Auckland Trotting Club's meeting at Alexandra Park will be broadcast by 1YA at 12 noon.

At 11 a.m., and at intervals 4YA will broadcast commentaries on the play in the Plunket Shield cricket match, Otago v. Auckland.

Progress reports of the Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Canterbury, and of the Canterbury tennis championships will be broadcast throughout the day by 3YA. A review of the day's play in the cricket match will be broadcast at 7.20 p.m.

ton for the last 40 years, declares that Disdain is the second best sprinter he has seen raised in that locality. I accept his say-so that if Disdain regains touch with her two-year-old form next Monday she will be a good thing for the Railway.

Hoodoo A Myth

REFERENCE earlier on this page to Wotan and his Auckland Cup chance reminds us that Melbourne Cup winners who maintain their form are in the minority.

So many have failed to do so, that a totally unwarranted hoodoo has grown up around the winning of the Melbourne Cup.

Probably the cause of the subsequent failures was due to Cup winners being too harshly penalised to permit of further wins in the handicap class, and they did not measure up to weight-for-age class.

Carbine, who won the Melbourne Cup in 1890 with 10.5 from a record-sized field, did not find any trouble in going to further successes. He ran in seven more races and won six of them.

Coming a little nearer home, Nightmarch, the last New Zealand-owned Melbourne Cup winner until Wotan scored, returned home to win the New Zealand Cup with 9.6, the maximum weight then allowed under the conditions of the race. This was a feat which no horse had accomplished for half a century.

The previous New Zealand-owned Melbourne Cup winner was Sasanof, winner at Flemington in 1916. Two seasons later he, too, won the New Zealand Cup.