# SYSTEM PLAYERS IN LUCK.

*THE RECORD OF THE MEETING AT THE SHEEPSHEAD BAY TRACK.*

**Variations in the Running—Improvements in the Odds and Other Features of the Racing—No Harvest from the Long Shots—Systems That Made Money—The Outlook at Brighton.**

When the Sheepshead meeting began, it was remarked that "the spring meeting has always been more or less unsatisfactory to the system player, with two very bad off days, which will, in all probability, appear at the beginning and close of the meeting. The percentage of winning favorites has always been below the average, and this year, of all others, it appears idle to look for any change." How far this prediction was realized is shown by comparing the tables of the spring meetings of 1896 and 1897. The winning favorites are marked "I," the favorites to get second with better odds than 2—5 on "X," those with worse odds "N," and those unplaced "O."

1896.

| | | Per c't. |
|---|---|---|
| June 23 | N I O O I X I | 3 48 |
| June 24 | I I O I I O | 4 58 |
| June 25 | Dh I I I I I I | 6 70 |
| June 27 | X O X X O O | 0 54 |
| June 30 | O I I I O I O | 4 54 |
| July 1 | O I N I I O | 3 53 |
| July 2 | I O I X O N | 2 51 |
| July 4 | O X O I I O O | 2 48 |
| July 7 | N I I X N I | 3 47 |
| July 8 | N O O I I O | 2 46 |
| July 9 | O O I O I O | 2 45 |
| July 11 | X O O I N I | 2 45 |

Thirty-four favorites won, or 45 per cent. The second favorites won in ten races and ran second in twenty, there being only five at less than 1—2 on for the place. Now turn to the record of the meeting just closed:

1897.

| | | Per c't. |
|---|---|---|
| June 22 | I I O I I N | 4 66 |
| June 24 | N I O I I O | 3 58 |
| June 25 | O I O I O X | 2 50 |
| June 26 | X O Dh I O I I | 3 47 |
| June 29 | I O X I I O | 3 49 |
| June 30 | Dh O I X O X | 1 43 |
| July 1 | O I I X O I I | 4 45 |
| July 3 | I X O O O I | 2 44 |
| July 5 | I I O O O O I | 2 42 |
| July 7 | I O O I X O | 2 41 |
| July 8 | O I X I O X | 2 40 |
| July 10 | O N I O I I | 3 |

Thirty-one favorites won, or 41 per cent. The meeting just past, like that of last spring, will long be remembered for its brilliant racing on some days, its dazzling, stirring finishes, its equally marked reversals of form, especially early in the meeting, and the rush of many outsiders at prices ranging from 12—1 to 100—1 who just managed to lose but gained the place money, while other high-bred, splendid performers like The Friar made the eyes of racing men bulge by their erratic performances. As for the running, it ranged exactly as predicted. The racing began with 66 per cent. of the favorites winning, and then the percentage fell away to the usual off day (of which two were predicted) on June 30, when a dead heat turned in one solitary favorite as a winner in six races. The percentage having dropped to 43 in a steady run of 66, 58, 50, 47, 49, it began to rise again, ran up to 45 the next day, and then continued to fall, and closed below the normal. Thirteen favorites ran second, and of these only three were at worse odds than 1—2 on, these being Forget, 4—5 to win, June 22; Harry Reed, 11—20 to win, June 24, and Sun Up, 9—10 to win, July 10. The second favorites managed to win twenty races as against ten last year, and this brings the percentage of the winning first and second favorites up to 68, showing that the players of the first and second favorites system explained last year must have done fairly well; sixteen second favorites also ran into the place, the only case of less than 1—2 for the place being St. Nicholas II. in the three-horse race on June 26. This also is a good showing. Last year at this meeting six horses started at prohibitive odds for the system player, ranging from Joe Kessler at 1—3 on to the Belmont stable at 1—25 on, but this year only one race saw such odds, and that was the Flying Dutchman-Rifle contest on July 7. Last year there were two dead heats—Sulsin-Burlesque and Oracle-Amanda, and this spring there was the single dead heat between Harry Reed-Rubicon, a losing bet for the favorite backers. The odds on the winning favorite show the same improvement which has been demonstrated at other meetings this year, and instead of an average of about 2—5 to win, as in 1896, the record this year was about 8—7 against. This is a matter not to be treated lightly, as it means that a ticket calling for $210 to $270 last year would call for a ticket for $313 to $270 this year, and when this increase is applied to the winning tickets of twenty-odd meetings it will be found to amount to quite a sum. Another very interesting feature is that last year there was an average of not quite eight horses to a race, while this year the average was just seventeen entries to two races, or eight and a half to a race, an increase of about 12 per cent.

The long shots did not bring their usual harvest, not a single one passing the post in front, but they made many a heart beat quicker by their determined challenges in a number of races, notably when Chum, at 100—1 and 15—1 for the place, ran almost neck and neck with Harry Reed up to the last half furlong on June 30 to drop back to fourth place at the wire as suddenly as if Scherrer had thrown an anchor overboard. The long shots to get second were: June 22, Laudemann at 50—1, 10—1; June 24, Cassette, 20—1, 8—1; June 25, The Swain, 15—1, 5—1; July 3, Laudemann, 15—1, 4—1 (a harvest for those who remembered his race of a week earlier), and the same day Waltzer, third; July 7, Boy Orator at 100—1, 20—1 ran third, and the same day Manessas at 100—1, 20—1 was second, and July 10, Beaumont at 20—1, 6—1 came third, with even money the 1, 2, 3 in a few books. It therefore appears, as before stated in these articles, that it is well nigh impossible to frame any system of practical utility by which long shots can be played with profit. Year after year are found individuals at the track who profess to win money by these bets, but the writer has never found one who has done so the season through since the old days at Monmouth and Jerome.

The system of playing the Bookmaker's Favorite won at this meeting on a maximum capital of $125, June 25-26, and $420, July 10. In this system the horses at 3—1 and less in the opening prices are noted down on a card, and then, as the horses go to the post, the horse marked which is then at the longest odds is backed for the best place, to win, second, or third at not less than even money. The first bet is $10, and then the bet is to cover and win $10, returning to the first bet of $10 after each win. The details are as follows:

| | Bet. | | Won. | Lost. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| June 22— | $10 | Harry Reed, 13—5 | | $10 |
| | 15 | Wolburn, 1, 2, 7—5 | $21 | .. |
| | 10 | Morris Stable, 13—5 | 26 | .. |
| | 10 | Ben Brush, 2—1 | 20 | .. |
| | 10 | Colonial Dame, 2—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Flushing, 5—2 | 25 | .. |
| June 24— | 10 | Rubicon, 1, 2, 1—1 | 10 | .. |
| | 10 | Water Crest, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Lehman, 8—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 20 | Elkins, 11—5 | 44 | .. |
| | 10 | Blewaway, 8—5 | 16 | .. |
| | 10 | Ben Eder, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| June 25— | 20 | Hugh Penny, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | 20 | .. |
| | — | Lady Mitchell, 3—5 | .. | .. |
| | 25 | McCafferty, 1, 2, 8—5 | 40 | .. |
| | 10 | Voter, 6—5 | 12 | .. |
| | 20 | Belfport, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 20 | Sink Stable, 1, 2, 1—1 | .. | 20 |
| June 26— | 15 | Arbuckle, 13—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 30 | Tragedian, 9—5 | .. | 30 |
| | 50 | Blewaway, 2—1 | 100 | .. |
| | 10 | St. Nicholas II., 2—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Wasteful, 2—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 30 | Goth, m, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | .. | 30 |
| | 10 | Mars Chan, 8—5 | .. | 10 |
| June 29— | 10 | Colonial Dame, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 16 | Grosvenor, 1, 2, 6—5 | 32 | .. |
| | 10 | Wild Warrior, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Elkins, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Beldemere, 7—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 30 | Berslayer, 1, 2, 6—5 | 30 | .. |
| June 30— | — | Harry Reed, 2—3 | .. | .. |
| | 10 | Braw Lad, 11—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Mirthful, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 30 | Ben Eder, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | 30 | .. |
| | 10 | Handpress, 1, 2, 6—5 | 12 | .. |
| | 15 | Kilkranny, 2—1 | 30 | .. |
| July 1— | 10 | Beaufort, 1, 2, 8—5 | 18 | .. |
| | 10 | Swamp Ad, 1, 2, 5, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Glorian, 9—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 20 | Woodford, 1, 2, 1—1 | 40 | .. |
| | 10 | Mills, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Belmar, 13—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 20 | Zanone, 6—5 | 27 | .. |
| July 3— | 16 | Cleophus, 1, 2, 6—5 | 32 | .. |
| | 15 | Beldemere, 7—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 35 | Thompson S'le, 1, 2, 1—1 | 35 | .. |
| | 10 | Elkins, 1, 2, 6—5 | 12 | .. |
| | 10 | Nosey, 13—5 | 26 | .. |
| | 10 | Flushing, 11—5 | .. | 10 |
| July 5— | 10 | Miss Tenny, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 30 | Imperator, 1—1 | .. | 30 |
| | 60 | Lincoln II., 1, 2, 1—1 | 60 | .. |
| | 10 | Firearm, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 20 | Ben Brush, 1, 2, 1—1 | .. | 20 |
| | 30 | Hugh Penny, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 30 |
| | 70 | Baronessa, 1, 2, 1—1 | 70 | .. |
| July 7— | 10 | Isabey, 1, 2, 6—5 | 16 | .. |
| | 10 | Azure, 1, 2, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Peep o' Day, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Flying Dutchman, 1—8 | .. | .. |
| | 15 | Concord, 1, 2, 2—1 | .. | 15 |
| | 30 | Forget, 1, 2, 8—5 | 48 | .. |
| July 8— | 10 | Olney, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Cassette, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 35 | Geisha, 1, 2, 1—1 | 35 | .. |
| | 10 | Ben Brush, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Rondo, 1, 2, 5—2 | 25 | .. |
| | 10 | Challenger, 6—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Harney Stone, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 20 | Semper Ego, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 20 |
| | 50 | Proviana, 1, 2, 6—5 | .. | 50 |
| | 75 | Buddha, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 75 |
| | 115 | Isabey, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 115 |
| | 170 | Lion Heart, 9—5 | 216 | .. |
| Totals | | | $1,216 | $750 |
| Deduct losses | | | 750 | |
| Net winnings | | | $466 | |

In looking over this table and contrasting it with published reports of prices, or with prices privately compiled, it must not be forgotten that where there is a doubt as to which horse is to be backed of two or three at apparently equal prices it is the rule to play the most recent runner. It will also be seen that in this system, as in others, a slump is apt to follow a run of winners. On June 22 four winners were scored out of six bets, winning $82 on a capital of $25; in the fourth race on that day it will be noticed that the Smith stable opened at 7—2 and therefore was excluded from further consideration, making Ben Brush the horse to play. Starting with the fifth race on June 26 an extraordinary record of good picking for place horses occurred. St. Nicholas ran second, Wasteful fourth, Gotham won, Mars Chan third, Colonial Dame won, Horoscope won, Wild Warrior was third, Elkins was fifth, Beldemere was second, Beerslayer was second, Harry Reed ran a dead heat, Braw Lad was second, Mirthful was second, Ben Eder was third, Handpress was second, Kilkenny won, and Beaufort won; so out of sixteen consecutive races only two horses failed to get third money. Here is a record for the tipsters to beat! In this run Kilkenny was the choice to back, because he had run since April Fool appeared, and on July 3 Elkins (who ran actually last) was played for the same reason. On July 5 Baroness was the latest to appear, and July 8 Geisha was backed because although prices were equal she had run later than Lady Marian and the Thompson entry. The same reason gave Lion Heart in the last race on July 10. This is a standard rule and is overlooked by many correspondents who ask for information. The fact that the capital has increased since the season began must not tempt the punter to risk more than the initial bet of $10. There is a long time yet to November, and Brighton Beach in past years has dispersed many winnings made at the earlier tracks.

The day-by-day method of playing this system for those who like to make one win a day just to clear expenses was as successful as ever, and showed a gain of $66, the maximum capital required being $320. The details were as follows:

| | Bet. | | Won. | Lost. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| June 22— | $10 | Harry Reed, 13—5 | | $10 |
| | 15 | Wolburn, 1, 2, 7—5 | $21 | .. |
| June 24— | 10 | Rubicon, 1, 2, 1—1 | 10 | .. |
| | 10 | Hugh Penny, 1, 2, 8, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Lady Mitchell, 3—5 | .. | .. |
| | 15 | McCafferty, 1, 2, 6—5 | 24 | .. |
| June 26— | 10 | Arbuckle, 13—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Tragedian, 9—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Blewaway, 2—1 | .. | 15 |
| | 25 | St. Nicholas II., 2—1 | .. | 20 |
| | 40 | Wasteful, 2—1 | .. | 40 |
| | 55 | Gotham, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | 110 | .. |
| June 30— | — | Harry Reed, 2—5 | .. | .. |
| | 10 | Braw Lad, 11—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Mirthful, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 30 | Ben Eder, 1, 2, 3, 1—1 | 30 | .. |
| | 10 | Beaufort, 1, 2, 8—5 | 16 | .. |
| July 1— | 10 | Cleophus, 1, 2, 6—5 | .. | 10 |
| July 3— | 10 | Beldemere, 7—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Elkins, 1, 2, 6—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 35 | Thompson S'le, 1, 2, 1—1 | 35 | .. |
| | 10 | Elkins, 1, 2, 6—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Nosey, 13—5 | 26 | .. |
| | 10 | Flushing, 11—5 | .. | 10 |
| July 5— | 10 | Miss Tenny, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 30 | Imperator, 1—1 | .. | 30 |
| | 60 | Lincoln II., 1, 2, 1—1 | 60 | .. |
| | 10 | Firearm, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 20 | Ben Brush, 1, 2, 1—1 | .. | 20 |
| | 30 | Hugh Penny, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 30 |
| | 70 | Baronessa, 1, 2, 1—1 | 70 | .. |
| July 7— | 10 | Isabey, 1, 2, 6—5 | 16 | .. |
| | 10 | Azure, 1, 2, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Peep o' Day, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Flying Dutchman, 1—8 | .. | .. |
| | 15 | Concord, 1, 2, 2—1 | .. | 15 |
| | 30 | Forget, 1, 2, 8—5 | 48 | .. |
| July 8— | 10 | Olney, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Cassette, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 35 | Geisha, 1, 2, 1—1 | 35 | .. |
| | 10 | Ben Brush, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| | 10 | Rondo, 1, 2, 5—2 | 25 | .. |
| | 10 | Challenger, 6—5 | .. | 10 |
| | 15 | Harney Stone, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 15 |
| | 20 | Semper Ego, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 20 |
| | 50 | Proviana, 1, 2, 6—5 | .. | 50 |
| | 75 | Buddha, 1, 2, 7—5 | .. | 75 |
| | 115 | Isabey, 1, 2, 8—5 | .. | 115 |
| | 170 | Lion Heart, 9—5 | 216 | .. |
| Totals | | | $516 | $450 |
| Deduct losses | | | 450 | |
| Net winnings | | | $66 | |

The duplicate favorite system consists in taking a capital of $515 to every first bet of $10 and dividing it into bets of $10, $15, $25, $40, $75, $150, $200, returning after each win to the first bet of $10, and betting $10 until a loss comes. To start with, no bet is made until a favorite wins, and then favorites are played at $10 each time until one loses; then no bet is made until another favorite wins, the second bet being $15, and so on. The following table shows the results at the Sheepshead Bay meeting just closed:

| | Bet. | | Won. | Lost. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| June 22— | — | Clifford, 11—10 | Won | .. |
| | $10 | On Deck, 8—5 | $16 | .. |
| | 10 | Hamburg, 9—10 | .. | $10 |
| | — | Ben Brush, 2—1 | Won | .. |
| | 15 | Archduke, 2—1 | 30 | .. |
| | 10 | Forget, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| June 24— | — | Harry Reed, 7—10 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Makallah, 9—5 | Won | .. |
| | 15 | Lehman, 8—5 | .. | 15 |
| | — | Elkins, 11—5 | Won | .. |
| | 25 | Blewaway, 9—5 | 45 | .. |
| | 10 | Ben Eder, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| June 25— | — | Beldemere, 9—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Lady Mitchell, 3—5 | Won | .. |
| | 15 | Handball, 5—2 | .. | 15 |
| | — | Voter, 6—5 | Won | .. |
| | 25 | Semper Ego, 8—5 | .. | 25 |
| | — | Sun Up, 11—5 | .. | Lost |
| June 26— | — | Arbuckle, 13—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Tragedian, 9—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Morris stable, 11—20 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Ferrier, 1—2 | Won | .. |
| | 40 | Wasteful, 2—1 | .. | 40 |
| | — | Dolando, 11—5 | Won | .. |
| | 75 | Mars Chan, 8—5 | 120 | .. |
| June 29— | 10 | Colonial Dame, 7—5 | 14 | .. |
| | 10 | Hugh Penny, 8—5 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Varus, 13—5 | Won | .. |
| | 15 | Buddha, 6—5 | 18 | .. |
| | 10 | Cleophus, 11—10 | 11 | .. |
| | 10 | Cassette, 5—2 | .. | 10 |
| June 30— | — | Harry Reed (dead heat) | .. | .. |
| | 15 | Braw Lad, 11—5 | .. | 15 |
| | — | Firearm, 1—1 | .. | .. |
| | 20 | Dutch Skater, 5—2 | .. | 25 |
| | — | Nosey, 9—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Kilkenny, 2—1 | Won | .. |
| July 1— | 40 | Eastern Ray, 2—1 | .. | 40 |
| | — | Santa Catalina, 5—2 | Won | .. |
| | 75 | Central Trust, 7—5 | 105 | .. |
| | 10 | Woodford, 3—1 | 30 | .. |
| | 10 | Don't Care, 8—5 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Tragedian, 2—1 | Won | .. |
| | 15 | Zanone, 9—10 | 13 | .. |
| July 3— | 10 | Voter, 7—5 | 10 | .. |
| | 10 | Beldemere, 7—5 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Mirthful, 11—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | The Friar, 2—1 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Handpress, 1—1 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Forget, 3—5 | Won | .. |
| July 5— | 15 | Geisha, 7—5 | 21 | .. |
| | 10 | Imperator, 1—1 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Dearslayer, 6—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Firearm, 4—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | The Winner, 3—2 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Regulator, 4—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Orinda, 9—10 | Won | .. |
| July 7— | 15 | Murillo, 2—1 | 30 | .. |
| | 10 | Leedsville, 9—10 | .. | 10 |
| | — | Belfport, 6—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Virginia Brennan, 1—8 | .. | .. |
| | 15 | Fireside, 8—5 | .. | 15 |
| | — | McKee, 1—1 | .. | Lost |
| July 8— | — | Olney, 1—1 | .. | Lost |
| | — | First Mate, 4—5 | Won | .. |
| | 25 | Geisha, 8—1 | .. | 25 |
| | — | Clifford, 1—1 | Won | .. |
| | 40 | Salvable, 2—1 | .. | 40 |
| | — | Daly Stable, 8—5 | .. | Lost |
| July 10— | — | Decile, 4—5 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Sun Up, 1—1 | .. | Lost |
| | — | Hamburg, 6—5 | Won | .. |
| | 75 | Scottish Chieftain, 8—5 | .. | 75 |
| | — | Lolterer, 8—5 | Won | .. |
| | 150 | Lion Heart, 9—5 | 270 | .. |
| Total | | | $738 | $420 |
| Deduct losses | | | 420 | |
| Net winnings | | | $313 | |

It will be seen that this is again the most staple system of the year, winning $313, with a maximum capital required of $315. It will not be a popular system for the old-time player, who must play every race, but for the later, up-to-date, system player, who has a good deal of method in his madness, it is the system to follow. On June 25 Semper Ego showed the way to five losses on which not a bet was made. A capital of $165 was wanted June 24-26. On June 29 Varus was played because the latest runner, and the same was the reason for choosing Kilkenny on June 30, while on July 1 Woodford, Dogtown, and Nito were quoted in the post prices at 3-1, and as Woodford ran on June 29, Dogtown on June 22, and Nito had not started this year, the choice, Woodford, won. On the closing day, July 10, this rule gave a badly wanted winner in Lion Heart, that horse and Royal Scarlet closing at 9-5. At Gravesend this system netted $258 on a maximum capital required of $50.

The table for winner riders at the recent meeting is below:

| Jockeys. | Mounts. | Wins. |
|---|---|---|
| Sloan | 15 | 5 |
| Thorpe | 45 | 10 |
| Taral | 42 | 9 |
| Sims | 43 | 7 |
| Martin | 30 | 4 |
| Hamilton | 22 | 3 |
| Littlefield | 18 | 3 |
| Clawson | 21 | 2 |
| Hewitt | 27 | 2 |
| Lewis | 9 | 2 |
| Mars | 5 | 2 |
| O'Leary | 19 | 2 |
| Veach | 8 | 2 |
| Barrett | 4 | 1 |
| Bennett | 4 | 1 |
| English | 7 | 1 |
| Hunt | 1 | 1 |
| Hamilton (G) | 2 | 1 |
| Maher | 10 | 1 |
| McCafferty | 7 | 1 |
| O'Donnell | 1 | 1 |
| Slack | 3 | 1 |
| Scherrer | 34 | 1 |
| Thompson | 3 | 1 |

There appear to be years for jockeys as for other happenings, such as fires and floods. A few years ago Garrison and McLaughlin were on horses which apparently could not lose; then came Tony Hamilton until his fall, which unsettled his nerve for keeps apparently; then Sims and Taral, Griffin, and Doggett, and now Billie Tod Sloan. Altogether there were fifty-two boys with mounts numbering from twenty-eight down to one who could not get past the wire in front, Scherrer nearly making a record at the wrong end by getting one winner in thirty-four races.

All eyes are now turned to Brighton Beach, and it is more or less of a problem which awaits punters of all types. For many years the most advanced system players were content to omit this meeting and take a vacation until the racing at the larger tracks began again, but this is scarcely likely to be the case this season, for a number of reasons. The dates are considerably changed this year, and this is not without its effect on any calculations which may be made. Last year the racing at this track began on July 22, with twenty-two days' racing without a break; this year there are twelve days of racing, then a week at Aqueduct, and then another two weeks at the Beach. The punters who play the first favorite to win, and the users of the charts in general, must therefore take the first half of last season's charts, as given below, on which to base their calculations.

| | | | | | | | Per c't. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 22 | I | O | N | O | I | 2 | 33 |
| July 23 | O | O | X | I | O | N | 1 | 25 |
| July 24 | I | X | I | I | O | I | 4 | 38 |
| July 25 | X | O | I | I | I | I | 4 | 45 |
| July 27 | I | I | N | N | N | O | 2 | 41 |
| July 28 | O | O | N | X | I | O | 1 | 37 |
| July 29 | O | I | O | N | X | N | 1 | 34 |
| July 30 | I | I | X | N | I | I | 4 | 38 |
| July 31 | O | I | O | O | O | I | 2 | 36 |
| Aug. 1 | X | I | O | I | I | I | 4 | 39 |
| Aug. 2 | I | O | O | I | I | I | 4 | 42 |

Twenty-nine favorites won, or 42 per cent. It will thus be seen that this is a very "spotty" meeting, and one which requires the greatest care from almost all system players. Strange to say, this has been the case for the last six years, and any prophecy as to general in-and-out winning of favorites, and total reversals of previous charts, has generally been realized. Possibly with the changes made in the track this uncertainty may be to some extent eliminated (witness the change in the percentages at Morris Park since the Withers mile was used), but it is not safe to bank on what might be, and the wise system player at this track will simply rest a while, look out for slumps in all systems, and wait on the reaction. In other words, whether playing straight first and second favorites or the bookmakers' favorite wait until the heavier runs of losses appear and then play until the wins approach the percentage. The best system at this track this year should be the duplicate favorite, and probably experience will prove it to be so.

## *THE TENNESSEE MELUNGERUS.*

**A Man of Their Race Writes About the Mystery of Their Origin.**

*From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

DATURA, Tenn., July 8.—Much has been written of a community of people in Hancock county, East Tennessee, known as the Melungerus. Many of these articles have both intentionally and unintentionally misrepresented existing conditions. Having been raised among this class and being one of them I desire to present our side of the case and detail a little history in connection therewith. We live in a country which newspapers seldom reach and which is infrequently sought by visitors. This being the case, when an incorrect story goes the rounds of the press the public is inclined to view us as an outcast race, ugly, dishonest, treacherous, and unworthy the confidence and respect of a civilized people.

We have been correctly located on Newman's Ridge, but misrepresented as to general character, color, and physique. As to our origin, we are as much a mystery to ourselves as we are to every one else. We are taught by tradition that we are the descendants of the Aztecs, and the only ones now living. Long before Hancock county was settled by the whites this race lived on that portion of Newman's Ridge which runs through Hancock county to the Virginia State line, covering an area about twelve miles in length by two in width, and but few of our race live outside of this territory to this day. Now and then a family moves to some point in the West. We have had dealings with many of the whites in Hancock and adjoining counties in Tennessee and Virginia, and they regard us as straightforward and honest. Our ancestors first settled on Newman's Ridge, and at the time they came to this country no person could live in the valleys or on any of the water courses, as the old settlers who moved to this section were seized with chills, fever and ague, and other diseases which were prevalent in the lowlands. Our ancestors were fond of hunting, trapping, and fishing as long as game and fish were plentiful, and since this occupation proved to be unprofitable our attention has been turned to farming and fruit growing, and now there is no section of country that has a finer variety of apples, peaches, pears, grapes, and many other fruits than Newman's Ridge. Our people are generally industrious and thrifty.

I have conversed with many of the older ones of our race, and they say their parents told them that they were the descendants of the Aztecs and Portuguese sailors who landed upon the North Carolinian coast and wandered to the spot where we now live. They believed that some of their ancestors were buried in mounds in North Carolina, and their well-preserved relics of pipes, shells, pots, and other things go a long way in confirming this idea. We have been classed with the negroes, but our long, black, straight hair, our high cheek bones, and our reddish yellow complexion is evidence that we have in our veins no African blood.

The marriage of one of our race with a white person or a mulatto excites considerable comment, and when we have a departure of this kind it is always the lowest of our race with the lowest class of some other race, and it is condemned alike by Melungerus and whites. The names which are most common with our race are Goins, Collins, Gibson, Goodman, Bunch, Mullius, Mores, and Mizers.

Many of our people have aspired to office, and there has not been a time in twenty years that we have not had from two to three magistrates in the County Court. We always have from one to two deputy sheriffs, and C. C. Collins was an elector on the Harrison ticket in the First Electoral district of Tennessee in 1892, and carried this district by an increased Republican majority. One man here whose maternal grandmother was a Collins was a Democratic elector several years ago, and served one term in the Legislature, and has on several occasions held important positions of trust.

We have several ministers of our race, Manson Goodman, Abijah Collins, Mrs. Huldah Gibson, and Mary Collins are the most prominent. Each is the pastor of a church. Mrs. Huldah Gibson has held several successful revivals. The whole of our race are missionary Baptists. We have a Post Office at Varda, a place named in honor of Varda Collins, one of the first settlers of our race. This office is six miles north of Sneedville, and the expense of carrying the mail is paid by citizens of our race. Varda Collins was a prosperous, good-hearted citizen, a consistent member of the Baptist Church, and liked by all who lived and knew him in his day.

LEWIS PRETT.

## *TRACKING A BISON.*

**Soon the Tables Were Turned, and He Was Tracking His Trackers.**

*From the Badminton Magazine.*

The tracks are quite fresh, drops of blood are on the leaves he had brushed against, and, with both rifles ready, we get nearer and nearer to him. We are going up a steep hill now, the jungle in places is not quite so thick—open patches here and there. "There he is!" from Chippani, who has eyes like a hawk, and a snort and a short crash above us tell us we are seen. "Shoot!" Chippani says, and to our cost I do. With no cover below him, no open place to meet him, and everything in the bull's favor, I ought never to have fired, as by making a flank march I could easily have got above him and in comparative safety.

However, there is not much time to think of these things, and as I fire one barrel of the 10-bore into the thicket where the bull is standing he comes down the hill like a steam engine. I give him the other barrel, and he, nothing short of instant death would have stopped him then. I turn to get behind a friendly tree I had fortunately noticed out of the corner of my eye, about twenty yards off, and in a second overtake Chippani and Ande making for the same retreat. A noise like a runaway steam engine tells me he is close behind, and he must have been within three yards when I fell flat on my face, bringing the two men behind me on the top of me as the huge brute goes right over us a thousand miles an hour, catching my cheekbone with one foot and treading full on Chippani's thigh with the other. By some extraordinary chance he escaped having his leg broken, owing probably to the ground being very soft, and consequently his leg giving way to pressure. I am up in a second, rifle gone, blood pouring from my face, and dash for the tree, from behind which I peer cautiously out to reconnoitre. I should say, as there he is, ten yards off, head up, tail in the air, a splendid sight, indeed, but that I was not exactly in the position to admire the beauty of the situation. He sees me, and with a snort dashes at the tree. I slip round it, but he is too quicker than I, and I feel his breath and foam on my neck, while on the lower side of the tree, which is on the side of a steep hill, he just catches me on the ribs with his horn, and I am hurled into space to land twenty feet up in the air in a thicket of dead bamboos, where I am transfixed by thorns like spears, really thinking my last moment has come. But no; the side of the steep hill is too greasy for him to stop when he has got the pace on, and he disappears, while I climb out of the bamboos, get hold of my rifle, load it, and count up the casualties.

Chippani is lying on the ground with his thigh nearly ground to powder, but Ande comes up smiling and enjoying the fun immensely. Leaving Chippani behind a fallen tree with the brandy flask, Ande and I run along the ridge to see where the bull has gone. We can just make out his back as he walks slowly down the valley, but as I am beginning to feel faint and sick I return to Chippani, and we lie there for an hour, my chief sensation being as if some one had given me an elaborate thrashing.

**Nearly Strangled to Death in a Well.**

*From the Philadelphia Record.*

SHAMOKIN, July 12.—Thomas Van Gilder was sinking a well near Trevorton this morning. Having business at the surface, thirty feet overhead, he placed a rope about his body and signalled companions to pull him up. Half way up the rope worked to his neck, and his smothered shout for help was unheard. Slowly he was strangling to death until his awful position was seen, whereupon he was quickly lowered to the bottom. Men hurried down the well to find Van Gilder almost lifeless. The rope was removed from his terribly bruised and swollen neck, after which he was hoisted to terra firma and restored.

# AROUND THE WHIST TABLE.

*THE AMERICAN WHIST LEAGUE CONGRESS AT PUT-IN-BAY.*

**Satisfactory Results of the Tournament—Novelties in the Contest—The Scoring—Review of the Congress and Its Results—The Winners in the Various Events—The Prizes.**

The seventh congress of the American Whist League, which took place at Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie, was probably the most satisfactory ever held. The hotel accommodations were excellent, and there were plenty of large, well lighted and airy rooms available for the various matches, and wide verandas and comfortable chairs for the post-mortems. The outside attractions of yacht racing and bass fishing seemed to have little charm for the whist players, who stuck pretty closely to their work in spite of the intense heat, spending the mornings in discussion and the afternoons and evenings in play.

In several respects this congress differed materially from its predecessors. There were more events on the programme, more ladies among the players, and there was a much greater diversity in the systems of play. The management was much better than at Manhattan Beach, and all the events on the programme were carried out exactly as scheduled. The scoring was excellent, and the results of even the most complicated matches were announced a few minutes after the last card had been played. There was not a single error during the whole tournament.

The prizes were hardly fit for such an important occasion, and rather suffered by comparison with those of last year. Everything was a league button, whether it was for the championship of the world or the top score in a progressive pair contest, the only distinction being in the ornaments on the rim. Some of the short-suiters carried off enough of these buttons to supply themselves and their friends for several years to come. At the last congress the winners in the champion four and pair events received solid gold sleeve links, designed by Tiffany, bearing the player's monogram, appropriate emblems, and the date. The A. W. L. winners got lizard-skin cigar cases mounted in silver, and the fortunate ones in the progressive events got solid gold watch charm compasses, solid silver match boxes, and diamond scarf-pins, all designed by Tiffany.

The manner of conducting the various contests was a great improvement on previous years, and left no room for complaint that every team had not had a fair chance actually to defeat every other. In the Hamilton trophy matches each team played twelve boards against every other, and the two teams winning the greatest number of these matches played off a final and deciding match of forty-eight hands for the trophy. This required each team to play two or three of these short matches every day, and there was no such labor attached to it as in former years.

In the A. W. L. challenge cup matches the regular club game of compass whist was carried out, one pair from each team sitting north and south, the other east and west, the total number of tricks won in both directions being credited to the team as a unit. This was continued for four evenings, playing fifteen trays in each round, there being fifteen teams entered. This manner of playing is quite new for a congress, but seemed to meet with general approval, because it was an exact reproduction of the style of game which every player finds at his own club week after week. It is certainly reasonable that when a man does all his training at a certain style of game, such as compass whist, he should have some opportunity to test his strength in it against members of other clubs, all of whom have been trained under the same conditions. It is hardly fair to ask a man who has never played anything but compass whist, one deal against each opposing pair, and a strange adversary every hand, to show his whist ability by playing a set match of forty-eight deals against four men who have spent years studying and practising that style of play. The result may not be as satisfactory as a long match would be, but it is an excellent test of a player's ability in the common club game of America, compass whist, and it is worthy of note that the teams who were next the top last year occupied the same position this year, although the conditions were so different.

The Minneapolis championship for pairs was played on the same principle as last year, except for the manner of scoring, which was a decided improvement, as it made any foreknowledge of the value of a hand impossible. The pairs moved according to an ingenious schedule prepared by E. C. Howell of Boston, so arranged that every pair played an equal number of hands against every other pair, and all over played the same hands, E and W or N and S. There were six sittings, fifteen hands in each, making a total of ninety boards. The score was computed on the system originally suggested by Foster, and used in his correspondence tournament, taking the top score N and S and E and W as the possibility of the hand, and charging each pair falling below the maximum with a loss of so many tricks. After each round was played these losses were all added together, and the pair that had lost the least were given the top score, they having come the nearest to getting all there was out of the hands. At the end of the six sittings the total losses were added up and divided by fifteen, the number of teams engaged. This gave the average value of the hands as they would have been in an ordinary compass game, the player's actual score being then deducted from this average value. For instance: The average loss on the 90 hands was 96 tricks, and as Toledo lost 76 only, they must have made 20 more than the average.

In the progressive events the regular compass whist system was followed for the pair matches, separate prizes being awarded for high score N and S and E and W. In the progressive fours, two matches were played on Howell's system, matches to win, just as in the interclub tournament in Brooklyn, which was described in THE SUN last winter. The other two were played as in straight compass whist, trick scores N and S and E and W of each team to be added together.

The system of scoring in all the events was that described and recommended in THE SUN on May 23. Each N and S pair wrote on a printed slip the number of tricks taken and the number of the team played against. The E and W adversaries O-K'd this slip and the assistant scorers immediately took it up and carried it to the official scorer, who entered it upon a large score sheet ruled for the purpose. As there were no E and W scores taken, mistakes as to the total number of tricks taken at each table were impossible, and the moment the match was over the total number of tricks to the credit of each pair was rapidly added up, checked, and announced. From three to nine minutes was the time between the play of the last card and announcing the result, even with twenty or thirty tables in play.

A great improvement in the progressive events was their being completed in one sitting, instead of being carried over from afternoon to evening, as at Manhattan Beach. This plan secured large entries, and made the contests much more interesting. Many of the teams that were engaged in the A. W. L. matches at night took a little practice spin in the progressive matches in the afternoons, but the pace was too hot for them, the short-suiters winning every afterno