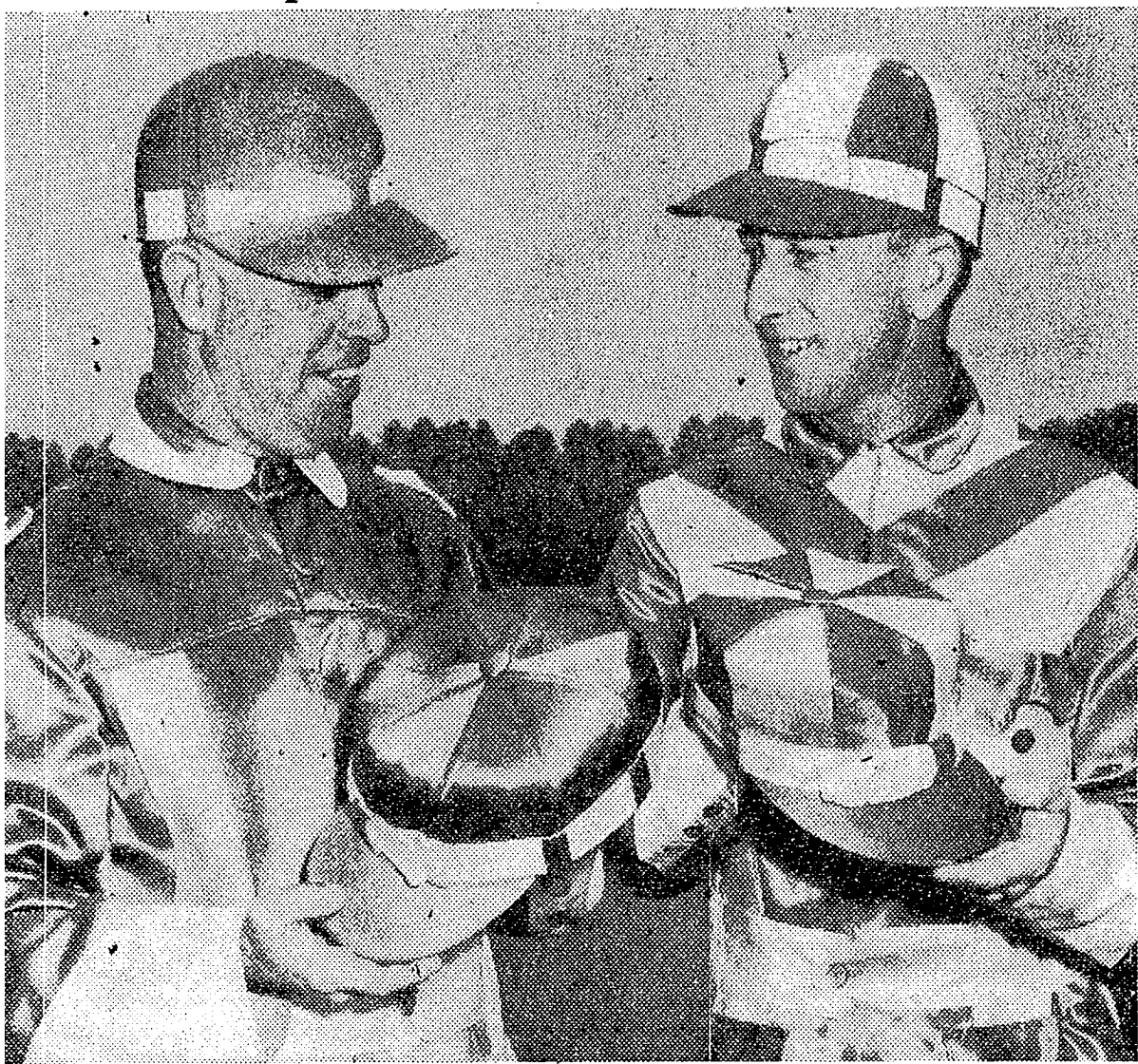


Protective Caps for Drivers to Make Harness History



Jack Richardson, left, and George Phalen, holding caps of the kind that they have been using, try on protective headgear that will go into use tomorrow at Yonkers Raceway.

When harness racing drivers at Yonkers Raceway don protective caps tomorrow night it will mark the first change in harness racing apparel in more than a century—since Hambletonian sired his first foal in 1851.

The man responsible for the protective hat's debut at Yonkers is Lewis Burton, the raceway's general manager and vice president.

Burton was faced with two obstacles in his campaign to institute protective caps at the Yonkers track. He had to overcome the resistance of some of the drivers, who had refused to concede that a change in costume was necessary.

After Burton had convinced the drivers that a change was needed, he had to find a cap that would offer proper protection against injury caused by spills or other accidents.

Several severe accidents in

recent years—particularly a crash at Roosevelt Raceway in Westbury, L. I., in 1953 in which three drivers suffered head injuries—helped break the drivers' resistance to the cap.

The engineering force of Branch Rickey's American Baseball Cap Company helped Burton with his other problem. Rickey's outfit, which manufactures a protective baseball cap, produced a headpiece for Yonkers Raceway that combines the best features of the baseball cap and Burton's plan.

The most important improvement was the lowering of the back of the cap three-quarters of an inch to afford added protection at the base of the skull.

The cap, which is made of fiber glass, is equipped with a three-inch foam rubber cushion at the top. It weighs slightly less than ten ounces. A sweat band of foam rubber covered

with suede adds to the general comfort and protection of the headpiece.

The caps have been tested by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company and the Electrical Testing Laboratories of New York.

They received a pressure test rating of between forty and fifty pounds per square inch (a sixteen-ounce plumb bob with a steel point was dropped on the hat in the penetration test) and an impact test that was made by dropping an eight-pound steel ball on the cap from a height of five feet.

Tomorrow morning the raceway will present a cap to each harness racing driver who is competing at Yonkers.

The drivers won't have to do anything with the headpieces except wear them. Besides being custom-fitted, each cap has been painted to match exactly the racing colors of the owner.