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Sisti, Tony

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By Tony Sisti

Westbury—Carmine Abbatiello finds it easy to explain his position among the driving leaders at Roosevelt Raceway. After winning last night's third race with Hollyva (\$14.40), Abbatiello said, "I'm a full-time driver this year and it makes a difference."

"I'm driving six nights instead of just three or four a week the way I did in the past," said the 32-year-old Abbatiello. "I never used to drive on Saturday and a lot of the time I'd take Friday nights off, too. But I'll be driving every night this year."

Abbatiello recently bought 12 acres in Colts Neck, N.J., at "about \$4,000 an acre" and he plans to build a home this spring. "I didn't work this hard before because I didn't need the money," he said. "Now I want to build a home and I have to make the money to pay for it."

Abbatiello, one of the more talented drivers, is even thinking about the track's heat-winning title. "I've never been able to win a driving championship here," he said.

Abbatiello admits he can't remember having a better start than this season. "I can judge how well I'm going by the number of times I've been in the money," he said. "I've been first, second or third in just about 50 per cent of my starts."

Del Insko is the driver Abbatiello believes he'll have to beat. "Insko is just too much," he said. "I could never get ahead of him until about a week ago. I'd get within one or two of him, then he'd win three or four in a hurry and pull away from me.

He's tough. If you can stay close to him, you'll never have much to worry about in this business."

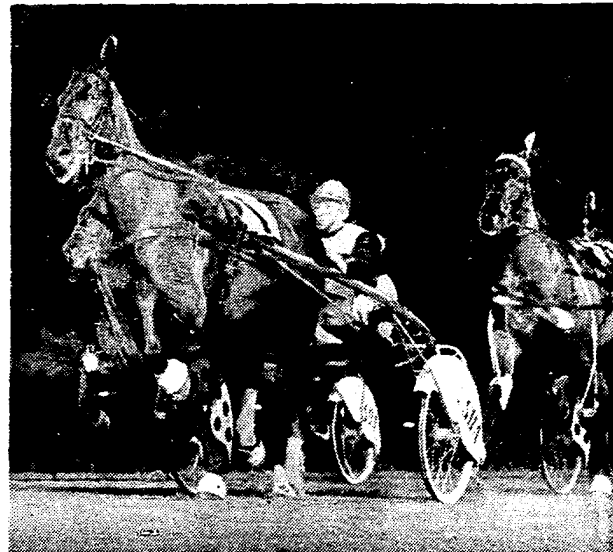
Abbatiello and Billy Myer shared the driving lead with 19 victories each after last night's program. Insko was a close third with 17.

The Inlaw, 2-1 favorite with a crowd of 13,872, snapped a four-race losing streak in the feature, beating Sugar Lump by three-quarters of a length in 2:07 over a sloppy track. Fast Craig was third and J. M. Regal fourth. J. M. Regal, driven by Lucien Fountaine, was leading midway through the stretch when he went off stride. He was first in his last start but was disqualified and placed third for being in a break at the wire with two horses lapped-on.

Commission Probing Race

Presiding Judge Charlie Plumb said last night the State Harness Racing Commission is investigating the circumstances connected with Arden Ned's victory in last Friday's first race. Arden Ned, driven by Mike Gale, paid \$4.40 after dropping from 5-2 to 6-5 on the last couple of flashes. Gale and his three-horse stable were ordered off the grounds by the track on Monday.

"The commission called me today and told me they were investigating," Plumb said. "They requested the patrol films and asked me what I knew about the betting on the race." Arden Ned won in effortless fashion in 2:08 $\frac{3}{5}$ after finishing out of the money in much slower times in two previous starts.



BIG BEN. Ben Webster drives Irish Angler through the slop to 1½-length victory in last night's opening trot at Roosevelt Raceway. Matabeth, No. 4, comes on for the place. Irish Angler coupled with Tobo Rodney for a 1-3 double worth \$130.60. The Inlaw, a 2-1 favorite, won the feature.