TOBIAS HAS A STORY

Gift Horse a Nice Thing

By MERV PETERS

The third race at Exhibition Park Friday was the shortest race on the card. The winner paid the shortest price of the day. But the race provided the biggest story.

The story had its beginning more than a year ago when Bill, Bob and Jack, the three Randalls who operate Exhibition Park, inaugurated what is perhaps the most unique race in North America — the Yearling Special.

The winner of this race, run at a classic distance of a mile and one-quarter, receives the large part of a $2,000-added purse, plus a B.C.-bred yearling colt valued at approximately $1,000.

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For the 1955 inauguration, Randalls selected a chunky bay colt by Ab Jr. — Miss Bam, bred at the Red Rock Farm in Westwold, B.C. They called him Tobias.

Dimitri won the Yearling Special and to his owners, Mr. and Mrs. F. Carson, went the purse and Tobias. The colt was turned over to trainer Tommy Fenton.

Tobias made his first start May 25 at Exhibition Park. Breaking from the extreme outside, the colt ran a commendable race to finish second behind the Kentucky-bred Empire Stadium in record time.

But Friday it was a different story. Breaking from the number one slot, Tobias went to the lead away from the gate and won under wraps. His time for the three and one-half furlongs equalled the record of :40.2 which had been set by Empire Stadium.

Tobias was three lengths in front of Donn Baykey at the finish. Considering the track was slightly "off" from the morning drizzle, and the ease with which he won, Tobias stands out among the two-year-olds which have started so far this season.

It's too early to be thinking about the 1956 B.C. Futurity. Two-year-olds are very vulnerable. A champ today can be a bad-legged bum tomorrow. But you could do a lot worse than bet the bundle on Tobias right now.

If he continues to develop, his success could make the Yearling Special the most sought-after prize of the Exhibition Park meeting.

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Possibly fearing to look a "gift horse" in the mouth, punters established Tobias a solid favorite. The payoff was $3.90, $2.60, $2.50 across the board.

POST PARADE — Any misgivings over the early opening and staggered dates have been completely wiped out by increased attendance and mutuel play. Despite a slight drizzle and cooler weather, upwards of 7,000 turned out to help improve the breed, wagering $161,061. It was Exhibition Park's largest Friday handle within recall . . . Also unique was the fact full fields of 10 starters contested each race . . . Favorites scored in all but three races, boosting the average to an unprecedented 43 per cent.

Midlothian Stable made it three for four when trainer **Angus MacPherson** sent out **Rosyth** to win the featured seventh over the fast-closing **Beau Sierra** . . . The latter, making his first start of the season, made a big move on the backstretch after being in trouble at the clubhouse turn and was overhauling **Rosyth** with every stride . . . Two new riders impressive in victory were **William Collier** and **Frank Heaney**, both by way of Phoenix, Arizona . . . Collier, an apprentice, scored with **Fair Reading** and **Western Man** . . . Heaney virtually "stole" the second race with **Grentex**, driving through on the rail at the stretch turn . . . **White Mountain**, second in the sixth race, was claimed by **Benny Shindell** for $1,250.

(Form chart on page 13)