



Nobody Can Win

Andrew Tully

DURING his sports writing days, Bob Considine once surveyed the field for the Kentucky Derby with an expert, if jaundiced, eye. "None of those goats can win," he proclaimed.

At this stage, one is tempted to steal Considine's line in application to the 1976 presidential race. Everywhere one looks, the field seems to consist entirely of candidates who for one reason or another can't be elected the Republic's top banana.

Consider President Ford. He continues to be a nice guy, but both the Gallup and Harris Polls have him declining in popularity. Gallup found that Mr. Ford ended his first year in office with only a 45 per cent approval rating, down seven points from his high point this year — in June. Harris says Mr. Ford's rating has slipped to 60 per cent disapproval, with only 38 per cent of those polled giving him a positive vote.

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THIS WOULD make the Democrats pretty happy except for one thing — their candidates are so far just names, some old and some new and some in the Joe Who? category.

Senator Henry Jackson has been running for the party nomination ever since the day after the 1972 election, and he's still barely moving. Texas' Senator Lloyd Bentsen is a virtual unknown. Hubert Humphrey still gets his name in the papers, but the voters don't seem to notice it. Maine's Senator Ed Muskie apparently is waiting for a draft, which he won't get. Sargent Shriver's candidacy is being

snooted by the still potent Kennedy organization. Fred Harris has to introduce himself everywhere he goes.

Then there are the two Republican glamor guys — California's Ronald Reagan and Texas' John Connally. They've got the old pizzazz, but that's about it.

Reagan can't make up his mind whether to challenge Mr. Ford for the GOP nomination or run as the choice of the Ronald Reagan Party. Connally is running around the country making speeches to raise dough for the more conservative GOP organizations. But he's a new Republican with a lot of enemies in both parties. What he really seems to want is to have somebody else — like Reagan — lead a revolt against Mr. Ford and then step in and accept the nomination.

George Wallace? He's got more support than most pundits credit him with, but he'll have a tough job trying to convince most voters that he's healthy enough to do a president's job.

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APRETTY FAIR straw in the wind may be another Gallup Poll which shows that 38 per cent of Americans consider themselves conservatives. That is a whale of a showing, and should give candidates in both parties cause for deep thought. The poll also reported that only 26 per cent of Americans call themselves liberals and 36 are independent or undecided.

Indeed, Considine's line does seem to apply to the political scene this time around.