

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023

2023 Pari-Mutuel Handle is Moving On Up

ECONOMIC INDICATORS ON U.S. RACES

Through February 28, 2023 (Courtesy USTA)

	2023	2022	% CHANGE
TOTAL WAGERED	\$233,384,627	\$214,396,907	+8.86%
PER RACE AVG.	\$66,152	\$58,675	+12.74%
PER BETTING INTEREST	\$8,037	\$7,385	+8.83%
PURSES	\$37,749,450	\$38,824,575	-2.77%



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner

[@harnessyeguy](#)

In Harness Racing we often hear a cry of "The sky is falling" when it relates to handle. In 2022 it seemed like article after article kept pointing out that United States wagering on races had declined as I poked holes in the theory with alternate facts. Thankfully my services aren't needed this year, at least not yet.

In what has to boggle the mind a bit, total Standardbred wagering is up in the U.S. by \$19 million as of March 1 (stats courtesy USTA). The strange part about the increase is the 12.69% decline in racing dates due to the closure of Pompano Park. So, for some reason, average handle per race is up 12.74%, and yes, this is amidst the continuing growth in sports wagering in New York as well as the January 1 introduction into the Ohio market.

Harness racing isn't just "hot" on the south side of North America this winter. Wagering in Canada is up 9.24% (just over \$8 million CAD) in 2023 according to Standardbred Canada, which is quite an accomplishment when you consider the

number of dates that have been canceled north of the border due to weather issues, warm and cold.

In fairness, technically handle in the U.S. on harness racing was down 8.44% in 2022. Much of this was offset by a 39% increase in Canadian handle. The upward and downward movement was a direct result of greatly reduced racing in Canada during the early part of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it is impossible to predict the future and we can only wonder whether the early indicators will become a trend that lasts throughout 2023, it is uplifting to the industry to see such strong gains across multiple outlets. The Meadowlands is leading the way while riding a 15-race streak of \$3 million-plus handle cards (Fridays and Saturdays only) and posting an average per card of just over \$3.1 million. Year-over-year wagering on the track is up 17% each live racing night.

For Meadowlands COO/General Manager Jason Settlemyer, the increase boils down to the product and ability to offer full competitive fields, something which has continued despite regional competitors Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania and Saratoga Raceway and Casino opening in February.

"The race office has done an excellent job in

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Arden Downs
Breeders Crown®
Cane Pace
Currier & Ives
Dexter Cup
Jim Doherty (Filly)
The Elevation
Fox Stake
Hambletonian®
Peter Haughton (Colts)
Hoosier Stake
The Horseman
Kentuckiana Stallion Mgmt.
*Fillies ONLY - Pace & Trot
Keystone Classics
Landmark Stake
Liberty Bell
Madison County (Colts ONLY)
Matron Series
MGM Grand Messenger
PA All-Stars
Progress Pace
W.N. Reynolds Memorial
John Simpson Sr. Memorial
Tompkins-Geers
Ralph Wilfong
MGM Yonkers Trot

3-year-olds

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(Previous payment must have been made to be eligible)*

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Earl Beal Jr. Memorial
Breeders Crown®
Circle City
Colonial Trot
Crossroads of America (Filly)
Delmonica Hanover (Filly)
Carl Erskine
Max Hempt Memorial
Jenna's Beach Boy
Keystone Classics
Landmark Stake
Phil Langley Memorial
Liberty Bell
James Lynch Mem. (Filly)
Matron Series
Monument Circle
PA All-Stars
Pegasus Series
Paul Revere Pace
W.N. Reynolds Memorial
John Simpson Sr. Memorial
Star Destroyer Series
Thanksgiving Classic Series
Tompkins-Geers
USS Indianapolis Mem. (Filly)

Open Events

*For these 2023 Events:
(Previous payment must have been made to be eligible)*

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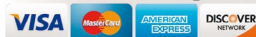


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putting together full competitive fields for our customers to wager on. The number of entries is up year over year. As we have always spoke about, average field size means quite a bit, especially when you're the Meadowlands," said Settlemoir, who added that they were very thankful to the horsemen/women and the betting public for their continued support. "Our wagering format is part of the success story, too, along with our low takeout rates. Our customers love the carryovers and low takeout rates. We're on a roll right now and hopefully it will continue for the rest of 2023."

While they may be driving the car, The Meadowlands is far from the only track reaching new heights.

According to an [article](#) on [ustrotting.com](#), The Meadows has seen a 70% handle bump YOY (35% per race) and Pocono reported a modest 15% gain through four cards contested in February. Dover Downs is tracking up just under 20%, Woodbine Mohawk Park is showing a per-race gain of 15% and Northfield has seen a 16.8% uptick in total handle.

Over three cards from February 25 to 28, Northfield averaged \$1.53 million in handle per program, over \$102,000 per race. Clearly Northfield is firmly entrenched as third in the North American Standardbred handle hierarchy behind just The Meadowlands and Woodbine Mohawk Park.

Obviously some of the Northfield bump – as well as other tracks – has been residue of the closure of Pompano Park, which raced multiple nights per week from November through April. But Pompano in theory would have no effect on a track like Monticello, which races during the daytime hours. There have been many races in 2023 where Monticello, despite carding fields of no more than eight horses, has eclipsed \$100,000 in handle, and even a few occasions where wagering topped \$125,000!

Looking closer at the upstate New York oval, average daily handle is up 47% YOY and inching towards \$700,000 per day. Per-race average handle checks in at just under 20%, lower because Monticello is averaging close to 10 races per day versus just eight in 2022.

Since Pompano and Monticello never occupied the same timeframe for live racing, clearly its closure had no impact, right? So, where is the money coming from? With temperatures being abnormally mild, especially on the east coast, some executives tossed around the idea of weather being a factor. While perhaps people prefer to wager when track conditions are fast, there have been a number of cards this year contested over less than ideal situations which produced strong handle totals. Certainly more people will show up at the track when weather is warmer, but with maybe 5% of handle coming from live attendance, it is hard to attribute a 12.74% increase in nationwide handle to climate.

Going back to Jason Settlemoir, he may be on to something in terms of field size. During January and February, Pompano Park would host 350 to 400 horses a week. Now those horses are spread throughout the country. With only about 12 tracks currently in action, that's an extra 25-30 horses available per track, assuming they were equally dispersed, which they likely weren't.

The additional horses have a dual effect on the tracks currently racing. First, they lead to larger field size, which means more betting options in each race. So a \$1 Trifecta ticket of 5 with 1.3 with ALL could go from a cost of \$8 with a six-horse field to \$12 with eight horses in the race. All of those \$4 bumps in price add up!

A larger horse population also means more races. We already mentioned that Monticello is carding an average of two additional races a day. The Meadowlands averaged an extra race (14 vs. 13) for every 2023 card in February with the exception of one. The Meadows was able to go with 13 races per day in 2023 versus 11 in 2022. While a more modest increase, Dover Downs has also seen a handful of additional races contested in February.

The possibility also exists that more people are wagering this year and that theory will certainly be tested as the 2023 plays out. If U.S. handle is still up over 10% come September, that seems like a clear signal that there is some fresh money being sent in that wasn't being invested a year ago. Let's hope that is the case, because while less may be more in some realities, more is more when it comes to handle.

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AMANDA STEPHENS

Bamboozler displayed plenty of raw speed as a 2-year-old and will look to add maturity to his game in 2023.



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [@BergmanJay](#)

Speed and education the key components

There's an expectation when watching horses in qualifiers for the first time that they are ready for competitive action. As someone that's watched young horses go behind the gate for the first time for nearly 50 years, you want to believe in the first impression a horse gives. For the race-watcher looking at the overall demeanor of a horse is a link necessary to confirm talent.

Regardless of how good a horse might look at first glance, ultimately it's the fractional times that determine a horse's true potential. Yet despite the looks and the speed a horse might indicate in the first few chances against real competition, racing for money is what matters most and if a horse falls short when there is something on the line, even those with solid opinions can question themselves.

It's a habit of mine that has turned into an obsession over time. That is, looking for the next great horse while watching 2-year-olds through baby races and inevitably stakes competition. Going back in time, there was good money to be made if you could come up with a horse that qualified in slow time and was ready to race much faster. Those days are long gone now as horses need to be ready to go near race speed before trainers have the confidence to even enter in stakes competition.

Still, going fast enough is only part of the equation as horses also need to be able to handle the speed as well as the start-stop nature of many a horse race. That kind of experience can theoretically be trained into horses as they process a racing future through months of conditioning. Yet, despite all the sparring among stablemates, the going changes dramatically when the speed is ramped up and horses are suddenly shifting gears unexpectedly.

In speaking with a multitude of trainers over the years, there is a constant in their assessment of horses and one that is hard to process from a strict race-watcher perspective. When the subject of a horse's intelligence is raised, it seems clear some horses learn faster than others

and some never learn well enough to become racehorses. Blinding speed can only take you so far in this game if a horse lacks the capacity to recognize the objectives. The difficulty for trainers who generally speak with owners in decision making is the fine line between brilliant speed and horses with intellect. When a horse shows high speed there is generally cause for excitement. As with all children, the timeline between learning new concepts can differ from one to another. Generally, we all presume that no matter how long the learning curve, all will eventually figure it out. The process is more difficult in horse racing than specifically raising kids, as the lucrative 2-year-old stakes programs put demands on trainers and owners alike. The race-watcher may see two extremely fast horses in a race and determine one is better than the other, when the only actual truth is that one is more mentally advanced than the other and understands the rigors of racing. It's an impossibility to define success from failure without understanding whether the actual horse is mentally prepared for the assignment.

In canvassing many freshman races from 2022, there was one horse that looked like a potential star from the first time I watched him on the track. The Captaintreacherous-sired Bamboozler was a well-bred colt with an imposing look in the post parade. He appeared to have a gait to match his looks and everything about him suggested high-stakes level potential.

I did not see Bamboozler's debut live at Pocono when he won in 1:55 3/5 on June 15 for then trainer John Butenschoen. Though, 10 days later when he debuted at The Meadowlands, it was quite clear the horse had plenty of talent. Content to sit second to the Tony Alagna-trained Hungry Angel, Bamboozler would be right there on the wire just a neck shy in a 1:51 4/5 clocking. A final half of 54 3/5 and an individual final quarter of 26 1/5 was impressive in itself. The four second drop he had made in 10 days was once considered amazing, but in 2022 it appears to happen with more regularity. A further analysis given the unknown competition in some of these baby races was that trainer Tony Alagna generally has his horses tight when they baby race and finishing right with them is a solid indicator.

Bamboozler did everything right in his stakes debut, cutting a well-rated pace only to be outspurred while losing a neck in a 1:51 3/5 mile in a Pennsylvania All Stars to Annapolis Hanover, an unknown at the time that would go on to win seven of his 11 starts racing exclusively in Pennsylvania stakes competition.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 7](#)



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Bamboozler made a nasty break taking the lead in his first Pennsylvania Sire Stakes try in late July and would go to Kentucky where he was eligible to the rich stakes program. A 1:51 1/5 overnight win on July 31 at The Red Mile appeared another strong indication of a bright future, but Bamboozler would not get one victory through four \$80,000 legs of the Kentucky Championship series. Despite the losses, what was impressive was the fact that Bamboozler continued to get faster and show the kind of blistering speed reserved for champions. His August 28 mile in a Sire Stakes leg where he paced a middle half in 53 1/5 only to come up a nose short in a 1:49 2/5 mile, was typical of the hard luck he would face.

In the September 18 \$400,000 Kentucky championship, driver Dexter Dunn would attempt again to optimize Bamboozler's incredible speed and hopefully separate enough from the competition to score the upset. Dunn had Bamboozler motoring through three nearly equal 27-second quarters and had a four length lead in the stretch. Though tired at that point, only one horse passed Bamboozler and that was Confederate, who scored by three lengths and would be the 1-2 favorite in the Breeders Crown. Still, finishing second in a field that also included Governor's Cup winner El Rey was not all bad.

The owners moved Bamboozler to trainer Virgil Morgan Jr. following that race and Morgan had a tough job finding the winner's circle as well.

"Things would get him fired up," said Morgan, who is currently preparing Bamboozler for his sophomore campaign. "He would hit the bike and then be uncontrollable."

In the first try for Morgan, Bamboozler would make a break while racing off the pace in a Red Mile Grand Circuit stakes. On October 8 the secret to Bamboozler's incalculable speed was revealed but not exactly as the stable would have preferred.

"He got wound up behind the starting gate and Dexter just let him pace," said Morgan.

Blasting out of post nine in a division of the International Stallion Stake, Bamboozler had the top in a blistering 26-second first quarter fraction. Dunn just let him pace and Bamboozler would hit the half in 52 and three quarters in 1:20 2/5 before feeling the effects and tiring.

"I think he could have paced a half in 51 and change," said Morgan. "Not many horses can do that."

Bamboozler would recover from that mile, something Morgan was grateful for, and close out his 2-year-old season with a hard-fought second place finish behind the improving El Rey in the \$70,000 Corbin stakes final at The Red Mile on October 30.

"He's a very well-bred horse and a great-looking horse," said Morgan. "It's a speed game but you can't send them out like that every start. We've trained him back and gone sets of three and four with him racing from behind. We're trying to educate him."

Morgan likes what he sees so far, but as perhaps was the case as a 2-year-old, the proof will be what happens once Bamboozler is in a race.

"The good thing about him is that we'll be able to start him out in non-winners of 2," said Morgan, who has his sights set much higher than that. "He's staked to everything."

Everything would include the \$1 million North America Cup in June.

With just one win in 12 starts last year, Bamboozler's numbers tell one story. Yet a close look at his pedigree suggests there's room for improvement. That's because the near \$1.5 million-winning Catch The Fire hails from the same immediate maternal line and was also by the top stallion Captaintreacherous.

For Bamboozler to reach seven figures in career earnings he's going to need to learn how to follow and pass horses in the homestretch. If he does that the sky is the limit.

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Time to halt Jackpot Wagers



AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali [@TheTrack7](#)

Jackpot wagers are not a friend to all horseplayers. They are a friend to horseplayers with deep pockets. The problem is the jackpot wager is promoted like it is a great thing for the average horseplayer, like a progressive jackpot slot machine is promoted in a casino.

Much like many of the casino customers don't have a real understanding of the difference between a progressive jackpot slot machine and a standard slot machine, many horse racing customers don't understand the intricacies of a jackpot wager. Quite frankly, I am not sure all racetracks understand it either, because if they did, they wouldn't be offering the wager, let alone incentivizing players to take part.

A jackpot wager offers an opportunity at a life-changing score, putting big numbers with dollar signs in lights, much like a Mega Millions or Powerball Jackpot would be promoted. Your chances of hitting a Jackpot Pick 6 or Jackpot Super High-5 are not much better than becoming a millionaire overnight in a state lottery.

There are two reasons for this. First of all, a player needs to have the only winning ticket in the pool. That doesn't just require skill, it requires a lot of luck. Out of the tens of thousands or in some cases hundreds of thousands of tickets bet into the pool, to have a unique combination of winners is hard; having a unique combination of winners that wins is almost impossible.

Second, the presence of large bettors in the pools adds to the impossibility. By large bettors, I don't mean someone who can put in a \$400 ticket when another customer is only entering a \$40 ticket. I am referring to the players who use computer programs based on algorithms to send in thousands of bets in rapid-fire succession who will most likely have your combination of runners covered, and if there is a unique combination that remains, it is that player who will have that winning combination, not the average player.

There is an added element to the jackpot wager that makes them detrimental, not to just the customer, but to the racing industry in general...it ties up money for a long period of time.

If a jackpot pool begins on June 1, it could grow for months and seemingly not be paid until August, September, or even later. If a player is routinely wagering into this pool and not hitting, instead of churning that money through other pools, it just sits there, almost in escrow, for as long as the track wants. The racetrack doesn't seem to understand how this hurts their own product. When a pool grows to a million dollars, all that means is they took one million dollars and its subsequent churn out of other pools, because every dollar is churned at rate close to 70 percent. Churn is the act of a player winning money and betting it back into the pools. So for example, if you bring \$100 to the track and churn your winnings, that \$100 will produce over \$300 in wagers, on average.

Sure, in most of these pools you don't have to be the only winner to collect something. But if there are multiple winning tickets, you share in a small percentage of ONLY the money that is wagered on that given day and not the carryover jackpot pool. Therefore the effective takeout of the wager on these days is astronomical. It could be 40, 50, even 70 percent depending on the wager. Players are literally wagering into a pool where only 30 percent of the money bet is paid out.

When the pool is paid out through a "mandatory payout" is entirely at the discretion of the racetrack as well, and that is where their bread is buttered. The racetrack promotes a pool approaching \$1 million, where now on a specific day, you no longer have to be the only player to hit a "jackpot," as it now becomes a standard pool on that set day and the money comes pouring in.

Think about how ironic that is. For weeks or months at a time, the racetrack promotes a wager to its players to try and build a pool so that for one day they can tell you that you no longer have to worry about the jackpot

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Jimmy Freight preps for Borgata in Meadowlands Saturday feature

By Jay Bergman

It's a rarity to see a \$45,000 featured pacing event at The Meadowlands on the first Saturday in March. Fortunately, on Tuesday 10 horses were entered and a handicap was created to make the event fair enough for the combatants, nine of who will try to upset Jimmy Freight in his second start of the year.

The 8-year-old Jimmy Freight starts from post 10 in Saturday's tenth race feature and trainer Brett Pelling is happy, perhaps not with the post but most definitely the race.

"I wanted to keep him on the big track," said Pelling. "It's a handicap but I'm glad the race filled."

In his seasonal debut two weeks ago, Jimmy Freight came first-up with driver Scott Zeron and managed to squeak out a short victory over pace-setter Carbine in a 1:50 clocking.

"He's such a smart horse," Pelling said. "I spoke to Dexter [who drove Carbine that night] at the Awards banquet and he thought he had Jimmy Freight put away in the stretch." The veteran proved too tough in his debut and Pelling is hopeful that's a positive sign moving forward.

"He's going into the Borgata [at Yonkers Raceway] in a couple of weeks and this should be a good prep for that," Pelling said.

As for the \$45,000 purse Jimmy Freight will race for on Saturday, the trainer was more than pleasantly surprised. "I had no idea whether the race would fill or what the purse was going to be when I entered him. It's great."

Scott Zeron will again pilot Jimmy Freight, who sports a career bankroll in excess of \$1.6 million, a number more than a million ahead of Nandolo N (post 6), the second-highest earner in the field. Nandolo N returns to the big track for trainer Shane Tritton after skipping last Monday's (February 27) Yonkers' feature due to weather. The 9-year-old son of Betterthancheddar took a career mark of 1:48 3/5 on January 22's Sunday afternoon Meadowlands program.

Captain Crusader A (post 5) is making his third Meadowlands start after arriving from Ohio for trainer Jeff Cullipher. In his first two outings he sprinted home in sub 26 territory without earning a win. On February 18 he fell just a neck shy of Jimmy Freight while third in a wicked sprint to the wire.

Saturday's ninth race finds Pelling with the 4-year-old BB Lucky Boy making his seasonal debut after a pair of qualifiers that were good but not great.

"I wasn't sure what to make of his last qualifier [February 18]," said Pelling of the second-place finish in a 1:53 1/5 mile. "Then the horse that beat him came back and won his first start, so maybe it was pretty good."

The return winner was Shadow Cat (post 2), who is back after a 1:50 3/5 victory in his 2023 first outing last Saturday (February 25) and finds himself in the same field with BB Lucky Boy, who landed post five for driver Jordan Stratton.

"He was a bit of a wild horse when he came to me," said Pelling, who sent the horse to consecutive victories towards the tail end of 2022 at Yonkers before giving him the needed break. "He's trained back and been nice and calm."

Whether the more relaxed version of BB Lucky Boy will exhibit the same blistering speed he showed as a 3-year-old when he blew out a field in 1:49 1/5 at Pocono last October remains to be seen.

Saturday's field will certainly be a good barometer for Pelling to find out just where BB Lucky Boy will fit in the coming weeks, as it includes some classy veterans and a returning 4-year-old with ability. Bettor Memories (post 3) and My Pal Joe (post 4) have been Open types for

ZOCALLI CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

and being the only player, which is what they have sold you on the entire time, because now everyone has a chance to share in a huge pool. It almost feels like a bait and switch.

The good news is there is something the horseplayer can do to make these wagers go away. Stop playing them.

If you understand how to properly construct a ticket, there is nothing wrong with standard pick 4, pick 5 and pick 6 pools. But a big part of the horseplayer and racing's problem is the lack of churn of betting dollars. Money is being tied up in multi-race or multi-day carryover pools, rather than going through normal pools paying out the winners.

If you really want to understand why handle in racing has declined over the last 30, 40 or 50 years, you have to look beyond the macro-economic factors and other intangibles. When you went to the track, you used to be able to bet Win, Place and Show and sometimes Exactas and Daily Doubles. These pools have the highest rate of return because they are the easiest to hit. As handle has shifted away from these pools to the more difficult or even multi-race exotics, fewer people won, more betting dollars got tied up, churn of gambling dollars decreased and thus, handle decreased.

Sometimes keeping things simple works. This is a prime example of that. Bettors need to stop putting money into jackpot pools and racetracks need to stop offering and promoting these pools like they are a good thing.



LISA PHOTO

Jimmy Freight (6) kept his head in front of Carbine (5) and a neck up on Captain Crusader A (4) in his 2023 pari-mutuel debut on February 18 at The Meadowlands.

years, with the former nearing the \$1 million mark in career earnings while also searching for his 50th career win. My Pal Joe had a brutal journey last week racing parked out the entire mile yet still finishing second.

The 4-year-old Soaring Now (post 7) makes his debut for trainer Noel Daley following a December purchase. The Indiana-bred son of JK Endofanera was a star on the Indiana Sire Stakes circuit a year ago, winning six of his 14 starts with a fastest win time of 1:48 1/5.

Pelling is looking forward to the Borgata Series (first leg at Yonkers on March 20), with Jimmy Freight hoping to see some short fields in the process.

"I think the good thing for him is that he won't have to race against Tattoo Artist or Leonidas A in the preliminaries," Pelling said, as both horses share common ownership with Jimmy Freight's connections.

As for the likely Borgata Series competition, Pelling has a ton of respect for the recent Down Under arrival Lochinvar Art A. "He's a top-class horse," Pelling said, suggesting the horse was a more dominant force in his prime than Leonidas A was when he came to the States.



2023 Breeders Crown Foreign Stallion Nomination Form



Up to 15 North American Foals of 2024 by Foreign Stallions may be made eligible to the Breeders Crown with a payment by **March 15, 2023** of a Foreign Stallion Nomination Fee equal to the amount of the North American advertised service fee for a 2023 breeding. (\$500 U.S. funds minimum)



Additionally, any foals that are **foaled & registered in North America which are produced from mares bred outside of North America** may also be made eligible by a payment of the advertised stud fee in the country where the stallion stands. This payment provides Breeders Crown eligibility for a North American crop of up to 15 foals.



If the Foreign Stallion's **North American Crop is 15 foals or less**, that payment is the total amount due for these North American foals to be eligible to make the 2025 Yearling payment and maintain eligibility by the future payments to the Breeders Crown. Any additional amount ("surcharge") or refund of this nomination fee will be determined by the number of 2024 foals ("North American Crop") by these stallions standing outside North America ("Foreign Stallions") and foaled and registered in North America (either with the U.S. Trotting Assoc. or Standardbred Canada) as of August 15, 2024. All foals which are nominated as yearlings must be registered in North America at the time of nomination.



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For more information, forms & complete conditions, please visit our website at: www.hambletonian.com



Stallion Information

NAME of Stallion:

Stallion AGE:

North American Service Fee:

Sire:

Dam:

Nominator:

Sire of Dam:

Farm & Country of Stallion:



Owner Information

Owner NAME:

Owner ADDRESS:

Owner EMAIL:

Owner PHONE:



USHWA's path from 12 members to 75 years of existence

When the voters in the State of New York approved a referendum legalizing pari-mutuel wagering in November 1939, it foretold an exciting chapter for horse racing generally and the American-born sport of trotting that took place on country roads in the 1800s.

The New York State Legislature had passed the necessary bill earlier that year for the voters to decide the wagering question. It didn't take long for voter approval to become a reality.

By September 1940, George Morton Levy, a nationally renowned criminal attorney with high profile cases, and business associates leased an abandoned track used for auto races and founded Roosevelt Raceway in Long Island, NY. He later became known as the godfather of modern harness racing and the pioneer of night harness racing.

Sports writers from Long Island newspapers began regularly covering harness racing at the track. On May 8, 1947, 12 of them formed the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), becoming the organization's charter members.

Being close to the sport's leading figure, they decided then to ask track owner and attorney Levy to draft a certificate of incorporation to make it official. That legal document was filed with the State of New York on July 16, 1947.

There you have it—12 harness writers formed an association that hit its 75th anniversary in 2022.

USHWA has recognized this milestone throughout 2022 and chosen its annual Dan Patch Awards Banquet, presented by Caesar's Entertainment, to celebrate this milestone at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Florida, keeping with efforts to host the sport's award winners in a first-class atmosphere.

Upon his election in 2022, USHWA President Barry Lefkowitz, whose career included director of public relations at the legendary Roosevelt Raceway, made USHWA's 75th anniversary a priority for his administration.

It has grown into a world-class organization that is the industry's largest group of communicators and the only media organization promoting harness racing, its equine and human participants, and leading performers.

From the original 12 writers, the membership grew in numbers and geographically across the country wherever there were harness race-tracks and standardbred breeding and training farms to the point that there are currently 12 active membership chapters with 200 members.

In order of their being established, USHA now has chapters in New York City (1953), Ohio (1956), Monticello-Goshen (1959), New England (1961), Delaware Valley (1963), Florida (1964), Kentucky (1977), New Jersey (1987), Keystone (2006), Upstate New York (2008), Canada (2014), Indiana (2019), and At-Large, category created for those members who were not in proximity to a racetrack.

The original purpose enunciated in the incorporation papers were "to permit greater interest in the sport of harness racing through creating closer cooperation between writers of the sport and racing officials, trainers, owners and drivers in the harness horse field."

During the past 75 years, USHWA has developed that purpose into a reality by shining the spotlight on the industry's major racing events and the leading participants that keep it going strong.

USHWA members are responsible for voting annually for harness racing's most prestigious awards—Horses of the Year, Living Hall of Fame inductees, Stanley F. Bergstein-Proximity Achievement Award and leading drivers, trainers and other human and equine awards.

One of the first efforts of the organization was recognition of the outstanding horses with the selection of Victory Song as Horse of the Year, an award that now highlights USHWA's annual awards banquet, the first of which was in 1948.

Over a 6-year span in the 1960s, only two horses won that award consecutively, back-to-back three times—Bret Hanover for 1964, 1965 and 1966, followed by Nevele Pride for 1967, 1968 and 1969.

There were only eight two-time Horse of the Year winners, most notably Good Time, the winner in 1949 and 1952, and the only mare, Moni Maker, for 1998 and 1999.

The other 2-time winners were Mack Lobell (1987-88), Cam Fella (1982-83), Niatross (1979-80), Albatross (1970-71), Adios Butler (1960-61), and Scott Frost (1955-56).

Coincidentally, USHWA's most cherished individual honor, the

Bergstein-Proximity Award, includes the name of the mare Proximity, chosen Horse of the Year in 1950, following Good Time's first win. Proximity also is one of only 14 mares or fillies to be Horse of the Year.

Another unusual coincidence connecting the name of Proximity to the USHWA banquet came in 2018 when Foiled Again, the sport's richest harness horse of all time, was walked into the banquet room in front of hundreds of people to receive the aforementioned Bergstein-Proximity Achievement Award and be honored as Pacer of the Year. It was a unique moment in USHWA history when a horse was honored "in person" indoors.

There have also been only six geldings to receive the top equine award, Wiggle It Jiggle It (2015), Gallo Blue Chip (2000) Staying Together (1993), Savoir (1975), Su Mac Lad (1962) and Pronto Don (1951).

USHWA recognizes the best of harness racing's media people with the John Hervey Award for excellence in writing, George Smallsreed Award for photography and Sam McKee Award for broadcasting and votes to elect membership chapter nominees to the Harness Racing Communicators Hall of Fame.

It has also opened the door to future interest in harness racing by creating a Youth Membership and created a path for budding young journalists to participate in the Clyde Hirt Workshop on Hambletonian Day at the Meadowlands Racetrack.

USHWA is involved with the Harness Horse Youth Foundation, hosting a silent auction at the Dan Patch Awards Banquet that provides funds for HHYF summer camps of hands-on experiences for young people about working with the horses.

Because of its role in voting to induct Hall of Fame honorees, USHWA works closely with the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame in Goshen, N.Y., makes a direct annual donation and requires its members to become dues-paying members of the Hall of Fame.

What the New York State Legislature did in 1939 to launch pari-mutuel wagering led to the 1947 creation of USHWA by sports writers covering harness racing. In 2022, the New Jersey State Legislature adopted a special commendation recognizing USHWA's 75th anniversary milestone.

-By Leon Zimmerman for USHWA

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SET FOR MARCH 9 AT MOHAWK PARK

Woodbine Mohawk Park is proud to celebrate the women of harness racing for International Women's Day during live racing on Thursday, March 9.

The International Women's Day race will highlight the evening's celebrations on March 9. A field of 10 women drivers will take the spotlight for the race. The field of drivers for this year's race is listed below:

Anita Ouellette
Debi O'Brien-Moran
Jesse Turenne
Julie Walker
Kayla Chappell
Maggie Jones
Marie Claude Auger
Marielle Enberg
Natasha Day
Samara Johnson

Natasha Day captured last year's International Women's Day race. Day enjoyed a career year in 2022, capturing the OLG Ontario Women's Driving Championship and the Holiday Drivers Challenge at Western Fair. Day finished the 2022 campaign with a career high 74 wins and \$477,489 in earnings.

The International Women's Day celebration night at Mohawk Park will see the simulcast anchored by Monique Vág, Woodbine racing host/analyst, and special guest Elissa Blowe, former Woodbine racing analyst.

Trackside Bar at Woodbine Mohawk Park is open for reservations and will be offering an event drink special. To make a reservation, click [here](#).

Post time for the International Women's Day celebration on Thursday, March 9 is 7 p.m.

-edited release (Woodbine)



MARCH 2023 STAKES PAYMENTS

NOMINATION FORMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.REDMILEKY.COM

Grand Circuit Events

FOR SPONSORSHIP CALL CINDY SOLVERSON 847-845-0659 • REDMILESCINDY@GMAIL

#4) Kentucky Futurity #132

Foals of 2021 to Race in 2024

#5) Tattersalls Pace 2024

Foals of 2021 to Race in 2024

PAYMENT DUE FOR EVENT #4 & #5

	OPEN	FILLY
March 15, 2023.....	\$500	\$300
a) Supplemental Payment due March 15.....	\$1,500	\$750

a) Those horses not nominated to these events by the yearling payment may be eligible by making the two-year-old supplemental payment of the fees designated above.

#6) International Stallion Stakes #121

Foals of 2021 to Race in 2023

#7) Bluegrass Series #49

Foals of 2021 to Race in 2023

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENT #6

March 15, 2023.....	\$300
April 15, 2023.....	\$400
May 15, 2023.....	\$500
b) Supplemental Payment due March 15...	\$1,000

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENT #7

*March 15, 2023.....	\$350
April 15, 2023.....	\$450
May 15, 2023.....	\$550
b) Supplemental Payment due March 15...	\$550

b) Ineligible two-year-olds may be supplemented to these events in 2023.

Payment designated above on March 15 plus the April 15 and May 15 payments.

Future Eligibility: *The March 15 payment guarantees eligibility to the Bluegrass Series #49 as a three year old.

The Allerage Farms Series

Early Closing Events For All Divisions Of Older Horses

#8) Open Pace

\$150,000E Sunday, October 8

#9) Open Trot*

\$150,000E Sunday, October 8

#10) Open Mare Pace - FanDuel Series #11) Open Mare Trot* - FanDuel Series

\$70,000E Sunday, October 8

\$70,000E Sunday, October 8

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENTS #8 & 9

March 15, 2023.....	\$1,500
April 15, 2023.....	\$2,000
May 15, 2023.....	\$2,500

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENTS #10 & 11

*March 15, 2023.....	\$1,000
April 15, 2023.....	\$1,500
May 15, 2023.....	\$1,500

*The Red Mile reserves the right to invite one horse to race in each of the trot finals subject to payment of all fees associated with this series.

To Be Raced At Hoosier Park Racetrack & Casino

Three Year Old Filly Early Closers (Open)

#12) Nadia Lobell - 3YO Filly Pace

\$150,000E Friday, June 30th

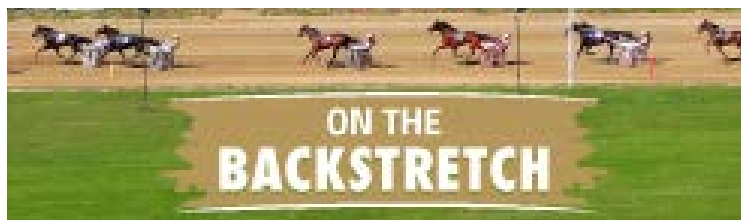
#13) The Moni Maker - 3YO Filly Trot

\$150,000E Friday, September 22

PAYMENT SCHEDULE EVENTS #12 & 13

March 15, 2023.....	\$1,500
April 15, 2023.....	\$2,000
Declaration Fee.....	\$2,500

COMPLETE CONDITIONS FOR ALL RED MILE STAKES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE USTA STAKES GUIDE. CHECKS (US FUNDS) MADE PAYABLE TO THE RED MILE @ 1101 WINBAK WAY, LEXINGTON, KY 40504859) 255-0275 Ext. 224. For Staking info call Connie Hochstetler at 708-921-1719 • hornhoc@aol.com.



BY DERICK GIWNER

Rob Harmon has been around the sport since he was a kid and has been a listed trainer for more than 30 years. During the last three decades he has been a rock on the overnight racing scene from Michigan to New York and climbed the leaderboard for career wins. The 53-year-old ranks 12th all-time in training victories and is closing in on 11th with each passing day.

An Albany, New York native Harmon currently competes regularly at tracks like Monticello, Yonkers, Pocono, Saratoga and The Meadowlands, among others. Despite the busy schedule and a full barn to watch over, Harmon took the time to discuss his harness racing journey.

TRAINER ROB HARMON

How did you get started in harness racing?

My mom and dad were in it, Reid and Nancy Harmon. From as early as I remember we were in New Hampshire at Hinsdale Raceway. We were there in 1976 I believe and then we went to Florida. We would go back and forth between Seminole Raceway and Pompano Park. In 1980 we moved to Lexington and I stayed in Florida with my coach to play baseball. Eventually we moved on to Toledo and Michigan until 2009 when I moved back east.

Can you drop some names of people who helped you in your career?

My dad and my brother, Don Harmon. I worked for Keith Crawford and Gordon Norris. Gord was the leading trainer in Michigan with like 100 head when I was with him. He was the kingpin in Michigan forever.

You were born in Albany, New York but ended up as a driver/trainer in Michigan. How does that happen?

I was born in Albany and my dad was racing at Saratoga at the time. We then went up to Brattleboro Vermont, which is like five minutes from Hinsdale. I don't really remember Saratoga. As far as Michigan, my dad just wanted to go somewhere there was year-round racing. We went to Kentucky on the way up, stayed at Toledo for one summer and then it was Michigan. At that time in the early 1980s they had Jackson and Hazel Park which was kind of a decent circuit. You had the good horses at DRC and Hazel Park. Northville was open in the winter. When they built Sports Creek that is where the B horses went.

Is it true you won a training title back in Michigan?

Yes. I won it there and at Windsor in maybe 2003 or 2004.

How did you end up coming east?

I think it was spring 2009. We had some horses in the winter late closers that year that my wife [Patti] and brother came out. I had an owner named Chuck Campbell and he made a comment to my wife that the horses were going to stay out east and if we wanted to keep them we needed to either stay out here or send someone to be with them. I didn't want to lose what were three decent horses, so my wife went out there for a few weeks. It was just going to be temporary, but I brought a few more horses and we did well at Yonkers when the money was good back then, so we decided to stay. At the time I had about 70 horses back in Michigan.

You have over 3,500 career training wins. What does that number mean to you?

It means we've been in it a long time. I didn't set any major goals. We just race a lot of overnight horses.

You also have 674 driving wins and compete in the GSY Amateur series at The Meadowlands. Do you think it is fair for such an accomplished driver to compete in amateur races?

I quit driving professionally when I was about 22 years old after my dad died from brain cancer. It just wasn't fun anymore. My brother was the driver in the family and I was more of the trainer. My dad and I were really tight and he showed me how to shoe and stuff like that. I just wanted to focus on my own horses. We were racing in Michigan at tracks like Jackson for \$800 and you don't make any money. If you drove for other people it was just for the fun of it. How much can you really make getting 5% of \$400?

Why did you decide to drive in the amateurs now?

I first started doing it because it was trotters and I could race them much easier in the series. It is fun racing at The Meadowlands but it is harder to drive against the amateurs. It is a lot easier with the regular drivers.

I have a horse named MV OK Palacio BR who made \$55,000 last year and \$49K of it was in the amateurs.

I saw you got fined for a whipping violation on that horse last year. What was that about?

Go watch the race. I got a violation because right at the wire I tapped him four times with the whip – tap, tap, tap – and the Judge said I could only do it twice. I said 'are you kidding me' and they said 'a rule's a rule.' I think they gave me five days and \$500 for that, but they do it to everybody.

What are your thoughts on amateur racing in general and what it offers the sport?

If they get back to just amateurs, and this would take me out of it, it would be better. I think the amateur series should be for younger people. Some of these guys are driving for 30 years and still considered amateurs. I'm one of them. Yet I'm still not eligible to race in some amateur races. GSY is not amateurs, it is a driving club. The one at Yonkers or at Freehold, I should be able to drive in those but I can't. Yet some of the other guys can.

What is your favorite track to race at? Why?

I didn't make a lot of money but Jackson Raceway was the most fun; it was six-wide with two trailers. It was at the Jackson County fairgrounds. The crowds were unbelievable. There was always four to five thousand people. It just felt like a sold-out event and it was always fun.

What is your favorite big event in racing? Why?

When I was back home, Little Brown Jug week. We would train four or five Ohio-breds and take them. We would stay at the track all week with a camper. We don't get to do that anymore because I rarely get that way. Out here it is Hambletonian Day. That is fun.



Rob Harmon has trained 3,580 (as of 2/27/23) winners since the USTA started keeping records in 1991.

LISA PHOTO

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

What is your favorite thing to do outside of harness racing?

Play hockey in a men's league and watch my son play. He played five years at the University of Vermont and now he's at Mercyhurst University for his grad year. They gave him five years because he had a redshirt year.

What is one thing about you most fans/bettors don't know?

I was supposed to go to college. I was getting a scholarship to Big Rapids [Ferris State University] to play baseball. My dad told me not to start driving; people started to put me down because my brother was the leading driver and I had the name Harmon. I drove and I went down. It was opening year at Sports Creek in 1986. I was driving Lightning Renvaeh and went down at the three-quarter pole. I was just stepping out of the bike and a horse that was like 10 lengths back – I don't know if the guy had his head down or whatever – ran me right over and his horse fell on me and I dislocated my shoulder. After that I couldn't play baseball anymore. Then Kevin Johnson, who was a military recruiter was going to get me in, but I couldn't pass the physical because I couldn't do the pull-ups due to my shoulder. That was my plan B. So I went to my plan C to be a horse trainer and driver. My dad was disappointed but that was all I knew how to do. Then he was diagnosed with cancer when I was 20 and he was gone when I was 21. It's fine, but I never really got to grow up with him. I knew him as my dad but never really got to know him as a man.

What is one word that describes harness racing for you?

There are a lot of ups and downs. I don't think one word can do it justice.

How many horses do you currently train and where are you stabled?

36 horses when all are in but 27 or 28 training right now. My numbers are down but I'd rather them be lower. I'm at Big Z Training Center and have been since September 2019. We are about 25 miles from Mark Ford's place and on the Pennsylvania/New York/New Jersey border.

What is the best advice you've ever gotten or given about harness racing?

Race them where they belong.

What was your best moment in harness racing?

In 1988 I won a Michigan Breeders Futurity when I was still in high school. I was the driver and the horse was named Casey's Mistral. Keith Carlisle owned the horse.

Does it say something that your best moment was 35 years ago?

Honestly, that is when horse racing was fun. Back then I was living at home and mom and dad were paying the bills. Now it is tougher. I think everyone will agree that back in those days horse racing was a lot more fun.

Which is the best horse you've ever trained?

CC Spice. She was a homebred Chuck Campbell had bred to In The Pocket. She was the Ohio State champion as a 2- and 3-year-old and she made almost \$700,000. She was our biggest horse from scratch.



LISA PHOTO

Rob Harmon driving his amateur cash cow MV OK Palacio BR to victory.

You are racing all over the east coast and often at multiple tracks in a day. Does that wear you thin?

It does. You put a lot of miles on your truck and pay a lot of tolls. I have good guys that work for me now. We are racing three places today – Monticello, Saratoga and Yonkers – and I got guys going to all places.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

I know I'm going to say this and next thing you know I'll get a positive [laughing]. I think when someone gets days, I wish they would get the days. This should go for me or anyone, and maybe this is just you and me talking, but if I get a positive test and the split sample comes back and it says I'm guilty, I shouldn't be able to appeal that. You should have to serve your days. People get positive tests and they seem to go on forever on appeal. I don't know if it can be changed.

How do you view the future of harness racing?

It is going to be a lot tougher. There will be less racing opportunities the way things look around here. I do a lot of racing at Tioga and a lot of guys aren't coming back because Pompano closed. They found somewhere else to set up shop year-round, like The Meadows or Saratoga. I know Tioga will have short fields and they don't want to go short fields. I wish tracks wouldn't race against each other, but everyone wants to race on the weekends. To me, I don't understand why the tracks don't try to avoid each other more.

Time for the stretch drive.

Best Horse you ever saw: Direct Scooter. He was at Walnridge Farm. When I first started dating my wife we would go out on the farm and there was this tree with a tire hanging on it and boy would he beat up that tire.

Best Driver Ever: When I was growing up in Michigan, the first horse John Campbell ever drove for us was named Frette. We claimed her out of Hazel Park for \$15,000 or so and we took her down to Lexington and he won with her. So I'll go with John Campbell.

Lasix – Yes or No: If they need it. I think it should be a lot harder to put horses on Lasix. If I could race all my horses with Lasix I would. If you look up my horses you'll see I take more horses off Lasix than put them on it.

Favorite TV Show: Blue Bloods and FBI International.

Trotters or Pacers: Trotters.

MEADOWLANDS

FRIDAY, MARCH 3 - \$7,627 PICK 6 CARRYOVER - BY DERICK GIWNER

Race 8: (8) I DA PRINCESS seemed to lack a knockout punch as one of the favorites last time, but she was facing a much, much better group than she catches this week. I'd expect Gingras to be sending her to the front tonight. (4) FIX-IT-UP didn't appear loaded with trot when she was run into last time. That said, he would've kept pace with the leaders.

Race 9: (4) CASH ROLL rolled down the road with a purpose the last time she was in this class. Her follow-up races versus better have been fine. (9) SHIELD MAIDEN became a new horse on the barn change as she dropped her career mark nearly two seconds. A repeat effort to last week makes her a winner.

Race 10: (2) FOX VALLEY EXPLOIT was a sharp winner when last seen three weeks ago. Normally the missed time would concern me but perhaps she just couldn't get in considering her lofty "last 5" earnings. Although she bumps on in class, she's very much a fit.

Race 11: (3) COOLNCALCULATING N was racing perfectly well before getting distanced in her last start. That was followed up with a subpar qualifier, though I can let that go without a regular driver in the bike and facing fast fractions. Mare drops on the return here and maybe she'll surprise. (1) AMERICAN JAZZ hasn't been finishing her miles and now she adds Lasix and Dunn to the equation. (9) ITS MESMERISE N is another class dropper and this gal has the speed to gun to the top.

Race 12: (6) GOLDEN CROSS STONE tried to rally and went nowhere in her first start for this barn. In a field with more questions than answers, expecting her to awaken in her second try isn't farfetched. (2) KARETS went a tough mile last time but has a win over the track a month ago. I'd like him more if Gingras didn't choose the top pick. (1) GOES DOWN SMOOTH has taken too much of my money south with him this year. He's good enough but doesn't seem to be tight right now. (5) HP MIGHTY ANGUS has early speed, comes off a win and gets Dunn; maybe.

Race 13: (9) TRANS MEANIE adds Lasix and I'll take a shot because most of these don't look enticing and (6) WILDCAT ANTONIA is going to be bet off the board moving into the Burke barn despite having missed four weeks of action. (2) ONE MORE TRY has been racing well every week and the inside post should keep her in striking range.

4,8 / 4,9 / 2 / 1,3,9 / 1,2,5,6 / 2,6,9 = \$28.80

'PRIME TIME HI-5' ADDED TO RACE 7

Effective this Friday (March 3), The Meadowlands will celebrate their own March Mania after an extremely memorable February with the addition of a second 10-cent Hi-5 to one of the most popular wagering menus in racing.

The mile oval will have 14-race programs this Friday and Saturday (March 4) that have a first-race post time of 6:20 p.m.

[READ MORE](#)

WINTER RACING

\$100,000 GUARANTEED
EARLY PICK 5 EVERY RACE NIGHT

WOODBINE MOHAWK PARK

DRF Bets Handicapper's Corner

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At DRF Harness we strive to provide the best handicapping information in the sport. Each week we'll use this space to bring you some of our handicappers' best bets and value plays. Use this information as one of your tools when wagering or simply click on the link above and head to DRF Bets to wager now.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

RACE 4

(4) TACHYON comes into this race with two straight impressive victories for the Buccì barn, and I anticipate he'll make it three.

-Greg Reinhart

EMPIRE CITY CASINO
YONKERS RACEWAY

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

RACE 6

We haven't "seen" it yet but (4) ICANGOGO has ability and this is the perfect spot for him to put it on display. He had no shot last time from the outside post and I'm all-in on him here. Let's hope the track holds up nicely since heavy rain is expected.

-Derick Giwner

MEADOWLANDS RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

RACE 8

(2) NEED TO BREATHE went the toughest trip and she was only a 1/2 length short last week. I think Cullen moves early this time and tries to control the race.

-Garnet Barnsdale

WOODBINE MOHAWK PARK

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

RACE 11

(7) CHASER HANOVER has been racing much better in his last two starts as the barn has turned around a 2-for-39 start by going 4-for-13 over the last two weeks. Down the road!

-Giwner

MEADOWLANDS RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Meadowlands Analysis [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Yonkers Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#)

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

PAYMENTS UP SIGNIFICANTLY FOR MEADOWLANDS PACE

The Meadowlands saw an enthusiastic response to the February payment for the track's signature event, the \$700,000 Meadowlands Pace. The first payment for 3-year-old colts and geldings saw 55 sustain eligibility and two pay the \$7,500 supplement for a total of 57 paid in. This represents a 27% increase over the 2022 February figure.

Among the more renowned are Dan Patch and O'Brien year end award winner Stockade Seelster, Breeders Crown winner Ammo, Governor's Cup "king" El Rey and PASS champ Fulton, who came aboard via the supplemental payment.

The \$175,000 filly companion to "The Pace", known as the Mistletoe Shalee, also saw a significant bump of 33% year over year with 32 fillies paid in. All the girls are RSVP'd for "The Biggest Party in Harness Racing" on the evening of Saturday, July 15 including Canadian debutante Sylvia Hanover, who completed the difficult Dan Patch/O'Brien award double and America's best freshman filly Twin B Joe Fresh.

Overall, the February 15 payments for the marquee stakes at The Meadowlands came in slightly over the 2022 results. The lists of nominees are being prepared and should be posted on the track website shortly.

-edited release (Meadowlands)

OHIO STAKES PAYMENTS DUE MARCH 15

Nominations and staking payments for 2- & 3-year-olds in Ohio Sired Stakes races are due Wednesday, March 15.

Staking payments for the Ohio Sires Stakes, Buckeye Stallion Series, Ohio Fair Racing Conference, the Ohio Fair Championships, and the Ohio State Fair Stakes should be sent to the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association. All payments must be received at the OHHA office by close of business on March 15 or have an official United States Postal Service postmark.

For all Ohio stakes races, eligible foals are those sired by a registered Standardbred stallion with the Ohio State Racing Commission during the year of conception.

The cost to nominate one horse to the Ohio Sires Stakes is \$700 for all five legs of the series or \$200 per leg. The cost to nominate a horse to the Buckeye Stallion Series is \$250 for all legs, while the cost to nominate for all twenty-one Ohio Fair Racing Conference fairs is \$420. The nomination fee for individual fairs is \$75. The nomination fee for the Ohio Fair Championship is \$100. The nomination fee for the Ohio State Fair Stakes is \$250.

Completed forms should be sent to the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association, 2237 Sonora Drive, Grove City, Ohio, 43123.

Forms for all nominations are available on the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association website, OHHA.com, in the 2023 Ohio Stakes Guide.

For more information: Frank Fraas - ffraas@ohha.com - 614-221-3650

-edited release (OHHA)

SEA SILK TO JOIN DIAMOND CREEK FARM BROODMARE BAND

Diamond Creek is excited to announce the addition of Sea Silk to the broodmare ranks. She will be owned in partnership with a group that includes many of her original owners and her resulting offspring will be sold at the fall yearling sales.

A daughter of Downbytheseaside, Sea Silk was one of the standouts from that strong first crop. During her two-year-old campaign, Sea Silk won 9 of 11 races, including capturing the Ohio Triple Crown made up of the Ohio Sire Stakes final, the Ohio Fair Stakes and the Ohio Breeders Championship. Her win in the Sire Stakes final in 1:51.1 clinched her a record for a two-year-old on a half mile track. She crowned her two year old season as the 2021 Ohio Two-Year-Old Pacing Filly of the Year. She had other wins in Kentucky in the Bluegrass, was the winner of the Next Generation and was 2nd in the Breeders Crown Final.

Sea Silk followed that up with an equally impressive three year-old season. She swept all four legs of the Ohio Sire Stakes and was second in the Jugette. Ultimately, Sea Silk was on the board 11 times in 14 starts, with eight wins, and she was named the 2022 Ohio three-year-old Filly Pacer of the Year.

Sea Silk has now been retired to Diamond Creek and will be bred to the fully booked Sweet Lou in 2023.

-release (Diamond Creek Farm)

CHRRF 2023 NOMINATIONS CLOSE MARCH 10

The Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame (CHRRF) invites the public to participate in the nomination of people and horses who have made a significant contribution to Canadian Standardbred or Thoroughbred horse racing, for induction to the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame as part of the CHRRF Class of 2023.

All nominations received before the nomination deadline of March 10, 2023, at 5:00 pm EST, that meet the eligibility criteria, will be considered by the Nomination Committee of the appropriate breed.

Nominations in the following categories are being sought:

PERSON: Trainers, Drivers and Jockeys. BUILDERS: Includes, but not limited to, Breeders, Owners, Officials, and others. COMMUNICATORS: Includes, but not limited to, Writers, Broadcasters, Photographers, Announcers, Bloggers. VETERAN PERSON: Trainers, Drivers, Jockeys whose careers have been concluded for 20 years, but less than 50 years. MALE HORSE: Stallions or geldings whose contribution to Canadian racing occurred in the past 20 years. FEMALE HORSE: Fillies and mares whose contribution to Canadian racing occurred in the past 20 years. VETERAN HORSE: Horses whose careers have been concluded for 20 years, but less than 50 years.

For additional information, click [here](#).

-edited release (CHRRF)

FIRST MARE BRED TO REBUFF HAS BEEN PRONOUNCED IN FOAL

Reported by Jeff King of Victory Hill Farm, the stakes winner and multiple stakes producer Hernameissylvia was the first mare bred to Rebuff on February 13, 2023 and the 100% producer by Cantab Hall is now in foal to the fastest son of the great Muscle Hill.

Multiple stakes winner and Breeders Crown champion Rebuff 3,1:49.4 (\$962,490) is the fastest trotter to ever stand in the Hoosier state. He is standing his first season at stud at Victory Hill Farm in La Grange, Indiana for the fee of \$7,500 and is booked full and closed for 2023.

-release (Victory Hill Farm)

MEADOWLANDS SRF SERIES GENERATES \$70,000 FOR RETIRED HORSE CARE

The Meadowlands and the Standardbred Retirement Foundation (SRF) are pleased to announce that the SRF Series, new races for 3-year-olds throughout the month of April, has strong support; one hundred seventy-five entries were received. Each entry brought a \$200 donation to SRF, and with the generous match by the Meadowlands, this will bring the total donation to SRF to \$70,000.

SRF Founder and Executive Director, Judy Bokman, was thrilled to hear of the concept when conceived by Jeff Gural a few months ago and appreciative of the unexpected windfall for the organization. Mrs. Bokman shared today, "This is a very generous gift and opportunity. This sets the pace for a new narrative in racing while giving these well deserving horses a chance. Mr. Gural has always recognized this need and has been supportive all along. We hope others in racing continue to recognize and support these efforts not just for the horses, but for the public to see that racing is doing something and doing it with lifetime welfare in mind. Lifetime welfare is part of SRF's unique work, it does all it can to protect each horse for life."

Meadowlands CEO Jeff Gural was happy to build this bridge between racing and repurposing, "We are pleased to provide these races for 3-year-olds leading into the stakes season and to benefit SRF and the important work they do makes it even more satisfying."

Pertinent info including the dates for the races may be found [here](#).

-release (Meadowlands)

BUFFALO 2023 LIVE RACING MEET STARTS SATURDAY

Buffalo Raceway will begin its 57-day, 2023 live harness racing season on Saturday evening (March 4) starting at 6 p.m with a 13-race card on tap.

There will be a \$17,500 Open Trot and a \$15,100 Open II Pace as co-features on the program. There are also seven other events on first night that will go for at least \$11,200 with total purses on the card near \$150,000.

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