

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024

Are you not entertained?



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner
[@harnesseveguy](#)

The NCAA tournament is on just about everyone's mind right now. Whether you are following the Cinderella run of DJ Burns Jr. and NC State on the men's side or tracking the historic exploits of Iowa basketball star Caitlin Clark in the women's game, there is a story for everyone to grab onto and enjoy.

Not so much in college where the atmosphere is seemingly electric from start to finish of every tournament game, on the professional level at the NBA the sport is sometimes publically viewed as something to tune into during the last two minutes only. Generally games in the NBA are like rollercoasters, where the lead can change countless times over 48 minutes of gameplay and seemingly no early advantage is every truly safe.

So, the thought is that if you tune in for the final two minutes the game will either be over and you can shut it off or you can watch what should be an exciting conclusion. In theory you could make the above "two minute" argument for any sport, though you simply don't get those wild swings and lead changes as often in baseball, hockey and football.

Which brings me to racing, where two minutes of action is our comfort zone. From start to finish the majority of our races provide two minutes of entertainment. You could argue that two minutes is longer than the attention span of some people

nowadays as 10-second videos on apps like Tik Tok sometimes don't get full play, but for the sake of this column we'll assume most people are willing to accept their leisurely activities in two-minute spurts.

The problem with racing is that our two minutes of entertainment is surrounded by 18-30 minutes of inactivity. Yes, many tracks put on in-house shows to occupy some of the time or play music to keep the mood lively, and watching horses score-down prior to the race can be vital for the experienced player, but none of that is really something that will interest the novice or casual player. Even though I enjoy a lively discussion about who will win a race or ticket construction, 99% of the general public doesn't. We could argue whether it is important to cater to an audience that probably isn't watching, but if we are to get new people interested we need them to see something appealing if they actually do view the product.

Even as I'm writing this column right now there is bowling playing on one of my computer screens and The View is on my TV. I'm also monitoring my email and taking breaks to handle daily production. Yeah, I'm taking in a lot of stimuli at the same time but it works for me, and although I'm no longer considered part of it, for the younger generation as well. We want more action and we want it now!

How do we get to a place where there is a more constant stream of entertainment during the racing card rather than less than 10-20 minutes per hour?

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Returning stars set to qualify at The Meadowlands

Jay Bergman: New faces and stallions shining bright in Borgata

Bob Marks: The breed, it is a changin'

Team Miller takes aim at Weiss series on Saturday at Pocono

Best Bets & Analysis

Historical racing coming to Running Aces; Prix d'Ete lures top 4-year-olds; Bojarski reappointed to HOF Screening Committee; Live racing starts Saturday at Shenandoah

**Comments? Questions?
Email the Editor
DGiwner@DRF.com**



\$250 + **\$10**
DEPOSIT MATCH **FREE BET**

& FREE DRF PAST PERFORMANCES

[JOIN NOW](#)

PAYMENTS DUE APRIL 15



The Hambletonian Society, Inc.
Supporting and encouraging the breeding of Standardbred horses for more than 99 years

One list and one check keeps your horses eligible to these top events.



2-year-old Events

Breeders Crown®
The Elevation
Kentuckiana St. Mgmt. Pace
Kentuckiana St. Mgmt. Trot
Madison County
Matron Series
Peter Haughton
Jim Doherty (Filly)

3-year-olds and Up

Breeders Crown®
**incl. MARES payment*
Caesars Trotting Classic
Dan Patch
Dayton Pacing Derby
Dayton Trotting Derby
Dayton Distaff & Oaks Derbies

3-year-old Events

Breeders Crown®
Earl Beal Memorial
Delmonica Hanover (Filly)
Carl Erskine
Max Hempt Memorial
Jenna's Beach Boy
James Lynch Memorial (Filly)
Matron Series
Monument Circle

The Hambletonian Society and Breeders Crown

109 South Main St, Ste 18, Cranbury, NJ 08512
609-371-2211, Fax 609-371-8890 • Hambletonian.com

Visit our website for
complete conditions,
race dates and payment forms!



I'd like to take a page (or maybe more appropriately a clip) from apps like TikTok, which for those that don't know has over one billion active users. The thought is to showcase short pre-packaged videos between races on the simulcast feed to engage the viewers. Die-hard bettors that don't find it interesting can focus on their past performances or another signal that is about to go to post while newbies watching the races for the first time or casual players can have some added entertainment.

Ideally these videos would come from multiple sources, including individual tracks, drivers, trainers, caretakers, and of course the USTA as they are often on-hand for major events and produce high-quality video content. Nowadays everyone is a videographer and has the opportunity to capture genuine everyday moments from the people and horses involved in the sport. Whether it is some drivers getting a tour of the jockey room at Gulfstream Park, a light moment at the barn in the morning, a horse making funny faces in the paddock or a kid meeting a horse at an open house, these are things that could be embraced by a more general audience. Think of it like being at a baseball game and having interactive activities occurring on the giant outfield monitor to entertain fans between innings. For that matter, and I get away from the initial idea for a minute, but maybe tracks should have a marketing person in the crowd asking questions to fans between races (and broadcast on the simulcast feed) for a chance to win merchandise like they do at MLB games.

It doesn't take a master's degree in marketing to know that the most popular posts on Facebook and X include pictures and videos, which is probably why TikTok is so popular. I'll admit to not being one of the one billion users, but I've watched tons of videos via my daughters, who probably spend more time on the app than I spend handicapping races – and that is saying something!

When it comes to sports of any type, beyond the diehard fan base, people are what lure the general public to the table. I didn't know who on earth DJ Burns Jr. was a few weeks ago but I'm invested in watching him play now. He's fun to watch and has a great smile that makes you want to root for him. While I was aware of Caitlin Clark, I've never watched her play and my lifetime viewing hours for NCAA women's basketball

is certainly in the single digits. That will change this weekend as I 100% plan to watch some of that Final Four competition.

To showcase our sport we must focus on the people and the horses whenever the opportunity presents itself and there is certainly plenty of dead airtime available to fill on track simulcast feeds. Let's infuse that space with something that could spark some interest or at least make someone smile.

I always try to capture interesting moments and post it to social media when I'm at the track. There is plenty of good content out there from different participants and everyone is invested in seeing the sport prosper, so why not put everyone to work. It really is similar to what Harness Racing Fan Zone tried to do years ago with its ambassador program looking to engage the fans, but here it would be utilizing those within the industry with a vested interest putting forth content that people will want to consume.

It is in everyone's best interest to help promote racing – top to bottom. We can do it!

Returning stars set to qualify at Big M

While stakes season won't truly kick into gear for another month, a number of top horses from 2023 will be on hand Saturday morning at The Meadowlands to get their first preparatory miles in before they hit the pari-mutuel scene. Here are some of the highlights along with races they won in 2023:

Race 1: Celebrity Bambino (Canadian Trotting Classic), Instagram Model (NYSS 3YO Filly Champion), Mambacita (Bluegrass)

Race 4: Ari Ferrari J (Zweig), Hillextotic (Dayton Trotting Derby)

Race 8: Voukefalas (NJ Classic), El Rey (Breeders Crown Elim), Huntinthelastdolar (Empire Breeders Classic)

A lightly raced 3-year-old of note making just his second career start is Ready To Shine in race 10. The son of Huntsville won his debut at The Red Mile in 1:52 1/5 on July 31 last year. Andy Miller drives for his trainer wife Julie Miller.

One race later the team of Joe and Jenn Bongiorno send out an unraced Captaintreacheros-sired sophomore filly that sold for \$200,000 at Lexington in 2022.



Visit Us!

EQUINE AFFAIRE

"The Nation's Premier Equine Exposition"

April 11th - 14th, 2024

Ohio Expo Center
Columbus, OH

Join the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association in the Breed Pavilion at the Voinovich Center.



HarnessRacingOhio.com



TATTOO ARTIST

(Hes Watching - Stylish Artist - Artsplace)
p,2,1:52s; 1:47.1s (\$3,245,658)



NJ

*Triple Millionaire with 19
Sub-1:50 Wins!*

- OSS Super Final winner at age two.
- Second to Tall Dark Stranger in the North America Cup at age three.
- Canadian Pacing Derby Champion at age six.
- Out of Breeders Crown Champion Stylish Artist (\$940,022).

NEW to New Jersey in 2024!
Standing at Deo Volente Farms.
2024 FEE: \$10,000 (U.S.)

TRIXTON

(Muscle Hill - Emilie Cas El - Garland Lobell)
2,1:54.4s; 3,1:50.3 (\$968,696)



ON

Hambletonian Champion!

- By a Horse of the Year and out of a Horse of the Year!
- First crop of ON-eligibles averaged \$74,000 in Lexington.
- Sire of Evident Beauty (\$890,866) & Cuatro De Jullo (\$879,061).
- First crop of ON-eligibles race in 2024!

Standing in Ontario at Winbak Farm in 2024.
FEE: \$7,500 (U.S.)



winbakfarm.com • 905-838-2145

SIX PACK

(Muscle Mass - Pleasing Lady - Cantab Hall)
3,1:49.1 (\$1,973,661)



NY

*The Only Trotting Stallion to Win
Sub-1:50 Twice!*

- Won the Ky Futurity (1:49.1) and Yonkers Trot (1:54) at age three.
- Won the Allerage Open Trot (1:49.2) and TVG (1:50) at age four.
- Sire of 21 2YO winners from his first crop.
- Sire of stakes winning 2YOs Sunkist Beauty (\$97,750), Blazing Deo (\$91,150) & Mr Bluebird (\$69,694).



NEW to Winbak New York!
NEW FEE: 7,500 (U.S.)

LAZARUS N

(Bettors Delight - Bethany - Christian Cullen)
p,1:48.4, BT 1:46.3 (\$3,103,100)



NJ

*The Heir Apparent to
Bettors Delight!*

- The richest son of Bettors Delight standing in the U.S.
- Over \$4.5 million in progeny earnings from just two crops.
- The sire of Voukefalas p,3,1:49.2 (\$591,655).
- Nine \$100,000+ earners and 22 in 1:53 already!

Standing at Deo Volente Farms.
NEW FEE: \$5,000 (U.S.)



deovolentefarms.com
908-782-4848

*Call and inquire
about our
multiple mare
discounts!*

PERFECT STING

(Always B Milki - Shebestingin - Bettors Delight)
p,2,1:49.2; 3,1:48.1 (\$1,861,447)



NJ

*Undefeated Breeders Crown
Champ at Two!*

- Breeders Crown Champion at both two and three.
- Led all N.A. horses in 2021 earnings with \$1,327,147.
- Never missed the board in 26 career starts (26-17-8-1).
- Bred a full book of mares in his first two years at stud.

Standing at Deo Volente Farms.
2024 FEE: \$10,000 (U.S.)

New faces and stallions shining bright in 2024 Borgata



MIKE LIZZI PHOTOS

Desperate Man (above) and Linedrive Hanover (below) are the likely favorites for the April 22 Borgata final at MGM Yonkers Raceway.



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman ✕ [BergmanJay](#)

Following three preliminary legs of the MGM Borgata Series at Yonkers this year, one must wonder whether the dominance we've seen in the series by the Burke stable is no longer in play.

Burke's crew has enjoyed an impressive run since the stable captured three of the first four finals at Yonkers when Maltese Artist (2007) and then Foiled Again scored in successive years (2009-10). The team has been strong in the most recent years as well, with This Is The Plan taking the 2021 edition and then Hellabalou upsetting at big odds in last year's final.

Burke returned Hellabalou this year as well as former champion This Is The Plan but neither has captured a leg thus far and each risks not qualifying for the final. That's almost impossible to believe considering the Borgata has been well-supported by the Burke team over the years and generally following eliminations they qualify two candidates for the title in the final.

Monday's (April 1) third leg gave indication that even if Burke were to qualify horses for the final, they will more likely be longshots as opposed to favorites. This year's version of the series has a new flavor with fewer horses nominating in the first place. Then there appears to be an imbalance between the haves and the have nots, as Monday's leg proved with a pair of horses with strong Canadian roots rising to the top and appearing destined for a duel in the final, unless they meet up again in a future preliminary. We're talking quite obviously about Desperate Man and Linedrive Hanover, as the pair flaunted their speed and class



in separate divisions of the third leg of the series and won as easy as would be expected. Desperate Man did defeat Linedrive Hanover when the two met up in the second leg of the series, but it's hard to make too much of that decision given that just \$50,000 was on the line and more than likely 10 times that amount will be up for grabs when Matt Kakaley (Desperate Man) and Scott Zeron (Linedrive Hanover) make key decisions in the April 22 final.

There is the presence of many horses in the Borgata that have a history racing in this class, but in 2024 many of those past stars have shown the wear and tear that comes with age and a number of starts. Despite some

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 7](#)



**WATCH &
WAGER**
RACING ACTION YEAR-ROUND

MONDAY - THURSDAY
12:10 PM

VISIT

www.monticellocasinoandraceway.com

heroic efforts, it's hard to imagine that Covered Bridge or Funatthebeach N, two of last year's prime players that had career years in 2023, will regain that vintage form to meet the challenge of a pair of newcomers that may lack the experience but most definitely have the class.

This year's Borgata series not only has shown that more than one trainer has a chance, but it has also exhibited that sires can come from anywhere and compete on this stage. That Dunkin', a son of Pet Rock, and Rocknroll Runa A, an imported son of Rock N Roll Heaven, have each captured two legs of the series suggests there is not the dominance of one or two regional stallions. The biggest statement likely to be made here is that sons of Shadow Play, the sire of the 2022 Horse of the Year Bulldog Hanover, could be major players in the final as well as the rest of the season. Not only does Desperate Man appear in line to favoritism in the final and a presence at the top level the remainder of the season, but his stablemate Backstreet Shadow (two third-place finishes) has a few legs ahead to win a race or two and reach the final. Trainer Travis Alexander has been entrusted to guide the fortunes of these sons of Shadow Play and in early April they appear to be in the kind of form that wins major races.

Alexander suggested that Desperate Man would be a better horse returning this year following a disappointing finish in 2023. That has been abundantly clear with his Borgata victories. Backstreet Shadow had a later start than his stablemate but gave indication in the stretch this past Monday that he's starting to get back into form. A \$330K winner in his first full year primarily for Alexander,

Backstreet Shadow is one of two key examples of horses that have had a positive return for owners and trainers after leaving the Burke stable. One would think that having better results than Burke with any horse is improbable but not impossible. Backstreet Shadow's story is impressive but Covered Bridge's earnings defy the odds. Covered Bridge was purchased from the Burke stable in September of 2022 and since has gone on to earn nearly \$700,000 for owner Mark Ford and trainer Jeff Gillis. With \$528K last year, Covered Bridge had an incredibly good season at the age of 7. Surprisingly he's been an iron-horse and raced through the winter in advance of the Borgata Series and has still managed to win a leg and finished third and fourth on two other occasions, likely providing the points necessary to make his second straight Borgata final.

It's hard to believe that it's been 16 years since Larry Stalbaum captured the then-labeled Levy Series final with Special Report, a son of Keystone Raider that raced hard, often and well for Stalbaum. In 2008 alone, the year of his Levy title, Special Report won two legs of the Presidential Series in January at The Meadowlands, then went to Pompano for three solid second-place finishes in the Isle Of Capri series in March before returning to Yonkers to win two preliminary legs and the final, racing six consecutive weeks and leaving the gate in five of those races.

It's way too early to put Rocknroll Runa A in Special Report's class but he was a good closing third following two victories in the series with Stalbaum training (he drove Special Report) and Mark MacDonald in the bike.

While the Borgata hasn't had any tweaks over the years, with the format of five consecutive weeks followed by a final pretty much cemented, it's nice to see a change in the players with diversity to this point finishing ahead of prior dominance.



Mike Lizzi Photo
Larry Stalbaum trains
Borgata leg winner
Rocknroll Runa A.



MARYLAND JOCKEY CLUB @

ROSECROFT JACKPOT SUPER-HIGH 5

RACE 10

CARRYOVER

\$35,834.91

THU/APR 4





ON THE MARK

By Bob Marks

The breed, it is a changin'

After decades of dominance by the Most Happy Fella line – via No Nukes through his Western Hanover extension and Cam Fella through Cam's Card Shark and his Bettor's Delight extensions – the pacing breed does appear to be undergoing significant modifications. Some of them might be considered from unlikely sources, but according to today's statistics seem firmly entrenched in their current capacities.

Most would likely consider Sweet Lou to be the current optimum sire based on last year's performances, especially given his Horse of the Year and stud companion son Confederate. Sweet Lou himself could be considered to be from an unlikely source as his sire Yankee Cruiser was only a moderately successful son of Artscape, he in turn not considered the best siring son of Artsplace. That honor would go to Art Major, who was probably a tad more successful Down Under than up here.

Sweet Lou meanwhile was the leading money-winning sire of 2- and 3-year-old pacers in 2023 and ranked second in the all-age capacity behind Bettor's Delight.

Sweet Lou is coming off a super year as in addition to Confederate, Cannibal, It's My Show and Geocentric were divisional stalwarts at one time or another. Of those, Confederate and Cannibal will get the opportunity to be line extenders in 2024.

Actually, the Adios line from Hal Dale had been hanging on by the proverbial thread as none of his major siring sons – Bret Hanover, Adios Butler, Adios Harry, Adios Vic, and Bullet Hanover – made lasting impressions. His otherwise unsuccessful siring son Henry T Adios did sire marginally unsuccessful Silent Majority, who sired Abercrombie, that one in turn responsible for Artsplace, great grandfather of Sweet Lou's sire Yankee Cruiser.

Then there's the ill-fated Somebeachsomewhere, who might turn out to be the best all-time sire of sires despite being from an unlikely source in the Matt's Scooter son Mach Three. The "Beach" accounted for four of the top five sires in terms of 2- and 3 year-old money winners. They being sons Captaintreacherous, Huntsville, Downbytheseaside, and Stay Hungry. In addition, Captaintreacherous ranked third behind Bettor's Delight and Sweet Lou in the all-age money earning category.

Waiting in the wings is another "Beach" son in Papi Rob Hanover, whose first crop will race this year. Unfortunately "Papi Rob's" career could be short lived given his recently announced heart problems, but that won't impact his first couple of crops. Moreover, he's settling his mares this year.

Somebeachsomewhere is essentially a male-line Volomite, as his sire Mach Three was by Matt's Scooter, that one by Direct Scooter, he in turn by Sampson Direct a son of trotting bred Sampson Hanover (Volomite-

Irene Hanover). "The Beach" is thus seven generations removed from Volomite, and he is still considered one of the great progenitors of all time.

Actually "The Beach" is unique in another aspect as he's perhaps the first of the so called "super horses" to truly emerge as a super sire, something the likes of Adios Butler, Bret Hanover, Speedy Scot, Nevele Pride, Niatross and Nihilator were unable to accomplish.

The Most Happy Fella line from Meadow Skipper is still represented by the ageless Bettor's Delight, who will stand his final season in this hemisphere in 2024. Thereafter, Bettor's Delight, now 26, will live out his days in New Zealand.

Bettor's Delight himself will remain represented in the current spectrum for the foreseeable future in that perhaps his all-time best son Tall Dark Stranger will send his first crop to the races in 2024. He'll have other sons in Bettor's Wish, Betting Line, Lazarus N, and All Bets Off, each of which will, or have received their opportunities, though his ultimate line extender, if any, will likely be Tall Dark Stranger.

As for "Down Under" breeding, King Of Swing, the last championship son of Rocknroll Hanover (Western Ideal) will get his opportunity in the Southern Hemisphere. However, there are no plans to bring him up here at least at this point.

Thus unless things change dramatically it would appear Sweet Lou and the Somebeachsomewhere sons will dominate the pacing breed at least for the next few years. Of course there could be a Most Happy Fella line renaissance if Bulldog Hanover emerges as a great sire in that the current world's fastest harness horse is a son of the reasonably successful Shadow Play, he in turn by The Panderosa, one of the early top sons of Western Hanover.

The Panderosa himself is still standing in Ohio at the ripe old age of 28. Shadow Play, now 19, is at Blue Chip Farms.

Bulldog Hanover bred 79 mares while in training prior to his record-setting year in 2022, so we'll be seeing them at the yearling sales this year and at the races in 2025.

Yes, Bob Dylan, the times and breed are a changin'!

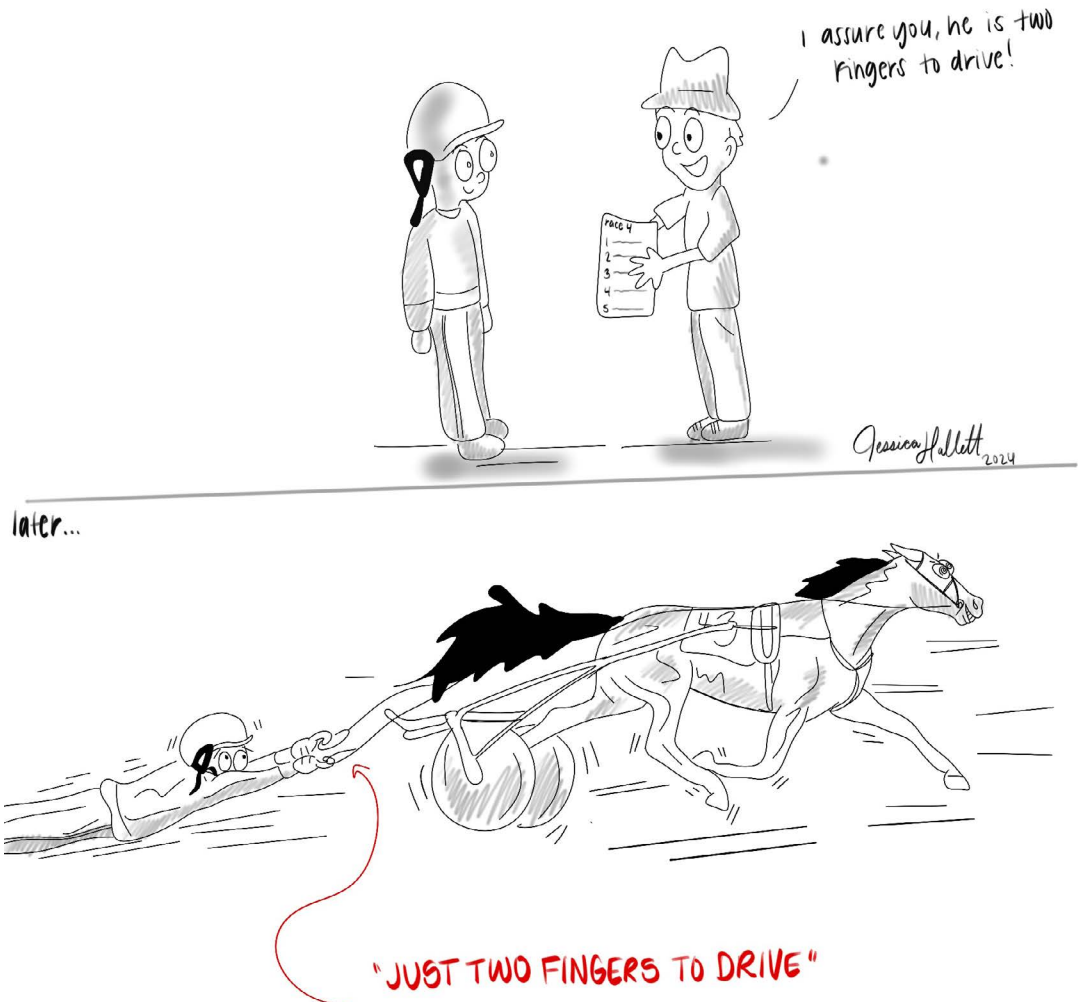
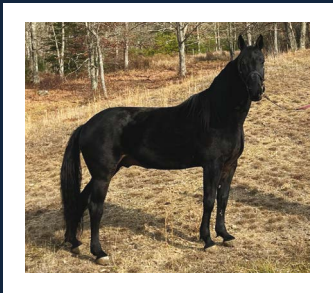


ILLUSTRATION BY JESSICA HALLETT



Winning Fireworks



Reverse Smith



Crime Fighter



Dr Butch

Book Your Mare's 2024 Breeding to One of Virginia's 19 Stallions!

Introducing VIRGINIA'S Lucrative Sired Stakes Program!

- For program details, visit vhha.net or call 443-463-0917
- Bonus payments as follows for foals that meet qualifying times and dates as outlined on the Sire Stake Rules:
 - \$1,500 for stallion owner; \$1,500 for breeder
 - If mare & foal remain in VA for entire foaling year, mare owner gets an additional \$1500 bonus!
- Sired Stake Races will be run based on age, sex and gait as 2 & 3-Year Olds: \$6,000 eliminations; \$60,000 finals
- Sired foals are also eligible to the Breeders Fund races as 2 & 3-Year-Olds: \$8,000 eliminations; \$80,000 finals

SHENANDOAH DOWNS SPRING MEET IN WOODSTOCK, VA

April 6 - May 19 • Saturdays and Sundays at 1:05 PM
HOME OF FOILED AGAIN'S 20TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION ON SAT. MAY 11

Team Miller takes aim at Weiss series on Saturday at Pocono

By Jay Bergman

The Bobby Weiss series for 3-year-old pacers kicks off on Saturday afternoon at Pocono Downs Mohegan Pennsylvania with three \$20,000 divisions for sophomore fillies and six divisions slated for their male counterparts interspersed among 15 races on the program that begins at 1:00 p.m. (EDT). Driver Marcus Miller's season gets into gear this weekend as he readies to drive a few sophomores from his dad Ervin's collection of stakes contenders.

Mystic Bell will be the first starter for Miller on the program (Race 2) and the New York-sired filly by American Ideal makes her second career start following a third-place finish in her career debut at Pocono on March 25.

"She did everything I asked her to," said Miller of the filly that drew post seven in her debut then paced home in 26 3/5 to finish third behind a filly she'll face again on Saturday by the name of Beautiful Roz.

Mystic Bell was a \$87,000 purchase at the Lexington Selected sale in 2022 and was unraced as a 2-year-old. Miller suggested that many of the sophomores he'll be driving for his dad showed talent training down as 2-year-olds but were immature, with the conditioner giving them time to develop before sending them to the racetrack. Mystic Bell is the ninth foal from the \$374K winner and 100 percent producer Hypnotize. She's a half-sister to the \$614K winner Blank Stare.

Mystic Bell will have competition outside of her pole position with Beautiful Roz, a \$260,000 yearling daughter of Always B Miki (post 4), and Paper Heart (post 6), a daughter of Heston Blue Chip with five wins to her credit this year. Top trainer Per Engblom sends out the New Jersey-bred Pull Through (post 8) for her soph debut following a pair of winning qualifiers at Pocono.

Miller sits behind Lazaruls (post 4) in race six, the second Weiss division for colts and geldings.

"He was a little grabby in the first qualifier," said Miller of the Jacob Hartline trainee. "Jacob made some changes and he was better in the second."

Miller sounded excited to be sitting behind a pair of colts going in the fourth Weiss division (Lounar Eclipse, race 11) and the sixth (Port Royal Hanover, race 13).

Lounar Eclipse will make his pari-mutuel debut two days before the Solar Eclipse on Monday and Miller is hoping to get him some experience while getting a good share of the purse.

"He's got wicked quick speed," said Miller, who drove Lounar Eclipse in a qualifier at Pocono on March 27. "I took it easy with him through the final turn and then he just took off like he was shot out of a cannon."

Lounar Eclipse, a \$180,000 Harrisburg yearling purchase in 2022, is a Sweet Lou-sired half-brother to the \$2.1 million winner Bythemissal and just the third foal from the dam.

"Drawing outside is tough but I'm going to try to give him a trip where he finishes strong," said Miller.

Lounar Eclipse faces six rivals, with Ante Up Hanover (post 4) the 5-2 morning-line choice. Despite nine wins as a 2-year-old, Ante Up Hanover remained eligible to the Weiss (NW2 pari-mutuel races) due to his wins coming on the Pennsylvania Fair circuit with no wagering permitted. Swifty Lazar (post 1) was one that the Burke stable had high hopes for as a freshman but went winless in seven tries while racing at the top level of the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes program.

Port Royal Hanover (post 6) will be making his career debut in the final Weiss division for colts and geldings and Miller liked what he saw and felt driving the Captaintreacherous-sired colt in his qualifier on March 27.

"He feels like a big brute," Miller said of the \$170,000 yearling purchase that paced a final half of 55 seconds while winning his qualifier in 1:55 here at Pocono. Port Royal Hanover previously qualified in Florida in 1:59 with a back half of 56 before shipping north.

Port Royal Hanover is a Captaintreacherous-sired half-brother to first-crop stallion Papi Rob Hanover and just the sixth foal from the mare Panera Hanover. The Erv Miller trainee faces six rivals in his division, with Ain't Nostopn Time (post 7), a Lazurus N-sired half-brother to Always B Miki, making his third start for trainer Per Engblom after a purchase in early March. Ain't Nostopn Time has been an impressive winner at Yonkers winning in 1:54 3/5 in his most recent start on March 26.

Perhaps one of the better contests on the Saturday program comes in



ERV MILLER STABLE FACEBOOK

Lounar Eclipse training down at Southern Oaks Training Center in preparation for his career debut on Saturday at Pocono Downs.

race 10, the third Weiss division for colts and geldings, with Sweet Beach Life (post 5), a 1:51 4/5 winner in his sophomore debut at Pocono on March 26, facing a solid group. Bonaparte (post 1) won his first lifetime start at Pocono back on March 5 in 1:52 4/5 before taking on tougher competition at The Meadowlands. The Bettors Wish-sired gelding gets his first good draw of the year.

The Bobby Weiss series will be contested with three preliminary legs (April 6, 13, 20) and the top point earners returning for the \$50,000 guaranteed finals on April 27.



Harness Racing is Back!

Create Your Own Stable

FREE to enter

Cash prizes - **TOP PRIZE \$2,000**

Entries are due April 20, 2024

One entry per person



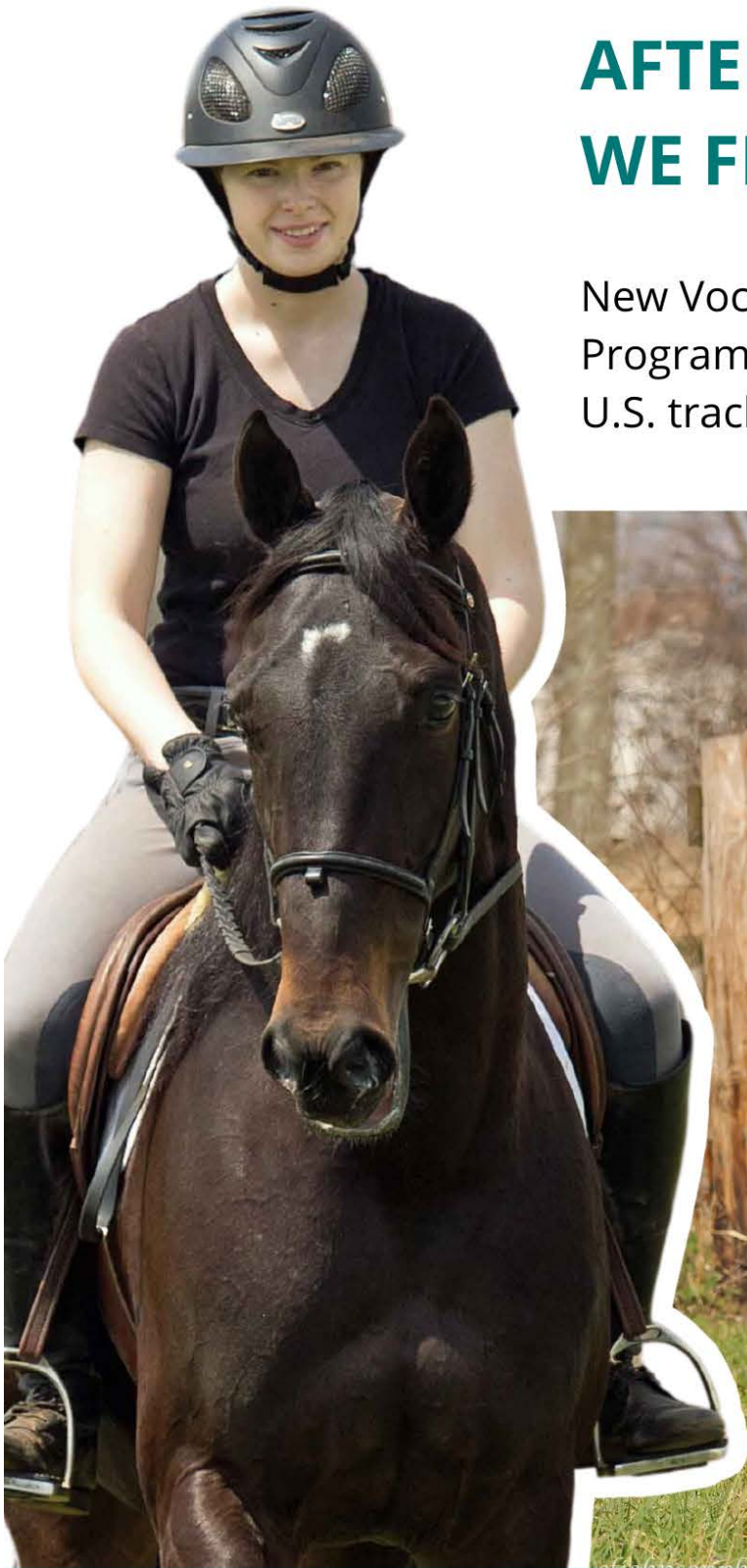
Scan with your phone camera or go to
www.ohha.com/fantasystable.html
for details and registration



Owners of a standardbred that raced in the past two years are not eligible.
Fractional ownership of less than 5% does not preclude participation.

AFTER THEY RACE, WE FIND THEM A PLACE

New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program accepts horses from all major U.S. tracks.



For more information, visit newvocations.org
or contact winnie@horseadoption.com /
(734) 320-7918



Historical racing comes to Running Aces, Canterbury

By Matt Hegarty

The Minnesota Racing Commission on Tuesday (4/2) voted 5-1 to approve the operation of historical horse racing machines at Canterbury Park and a Minnesota harness track, in a decision that is wrapped up in a longstanding dispute between the tracks and the state's Indian tribes and a current legislative effort to authorize sports gambling.

The vote, which was not on the commission agenda, would allow Canterbury and Running Aces, the harness track, to install and operate up to 500 historical horse racing machines each as of May 21, the date after the state legislature is set to adjourn. The commission took the vote after representatives of the Indian tribe argued against the decision.

A spokesman for Canterbury, Jeff Maday, said that the track would not comment on any plans to install the machines. However, he said that "we're pleased that the racing commission sees the importance of a healthy racing industry."

Canterbury, which has struggled financially for the past several years, had presented plans to the commission stating that the machines would raise \$5.5 million in purse subsidies at the track.

The Minnesota legislature is currently considering legislation that would grant the state's Indian tribes sports-betting licenses. The tribes are already allowed to operate casinos in the state.

The legislation, which would send a total of \$625,000 to Canterbury and Running Aces from the sports-betting proceeds, also includes provisions that explicitly prohibit the racing commission from authorizing historical horse racing machines. According to officials, the decision to include the language upset members of the racing commission, leading to the Tuesday vote.

Historical horseracing machines, which have generated hundreds of millions of dollars in revenues to Kentucky racetracks over the past 10 years and provided subsidies that have doubled purses on the Kentucky circuit, use the results of previously run races to generate random numbers determining payouts on devices that are nearly identical to slot machines.

The classification of the devices as "pari-mutuel" has been problematic in many states, including Kentucky, where the state legislature in 2021 passed a bill explicitly authorizing the machines after a state court ruled that they were not pari-mutuel in nature. Earlier this year in Minnesota, the state's Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement division issued a brief decision stating that it believed the devices were not pari-mutuel in nature, an opinion disputed by racing supporters.

In its Tuesday vote, the Minnesota Racing Commission authorized the machines as a form of advanced deposit wagering, which it currently has the power to regulate. That would mean that players of the devices would need to sign up for accounts to bet.

At the end of 2022, a 10-year agreement between the owners of Canterbury and the Indian tribe that operates the nearby Mystic Lake Casino and Hotel that provided the track with a total of \$84 million in payments expired. Efforts by Canterbury to renew a similar agreement have been unsuccessful, and relations between the track and casino interests in the state have been strained ever since.

Canterbury had used the money to subsidize its purses, and since the expiration, field sizes and purses have dropped considerably at the track.

STABLE NAMED FINGER LAKES ANNOUNCER

Anthony Stabile, a former co-host of NYRA's Talking Horses handicapping show, has been hired to be the track announcer at Finger Lakes racetrack in upstate New York, the track announced on Monday.

Stabile will take over a job vacated by Tony Calo, who was hired last week to be the track announcer at Ellis Park in Kentucky. Calo had also been hired to call the races at Turfway Park in the winter.

While at NYRA, Stabile was the back-up announcer during the Aqueduct meet and was part of a rotating team of co-hosts for weekend broadcasts for "America's Day at the Races," which was broadcast on FS1 and FS2. He resigned from his positions at NYRA in June of last year.

"Since I was a young kid, I've wanted to be a racetrack announcer and am proud to say my first full-time position will be at Finger Lakes," Stabile said.

Finger Lakes begins its meet on April 29.

After his resignation at NYRA, Stabile called races part-time at Yonkers Raceway and also called races at The Meadowlands and Freehold Raceway.

DRF Bets Handicapper's Corner

SIGN UP NOW

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, APRIL 4

RACE 4

(8) CONVOY HALL has been outstanding so far winning all three of his starts and he should keep his record perfect here at another very short price.

-Garnet Barnsdale



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

RACE 3

(7) MR MATT MAJOR N seems to have turned the corner and raced very well last time. With Dunn over on the other side of the river that could get us a better than deserved price.

-Derick Givner



RACE 8

(4) LAURIE LEE returns to Yonkers and she's had plenty of success here in the past. Dunn picks up the drive from a midpack post where she can utilize some of her early speed.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, APRIL 6

RACE 6

(4) CHAPERCRAZ comes off a 2024 mile which looks ok at best on paper until you dig deeper at see that he dropped a second-and-a-half off his qualifier and was caught in a 1:50 mile. Stakes-caliber 4-year-old should give these all they can handle.

-Givner



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

TOP 4-YEAR-OLDS NOMINATED TO \$200,000 PRIX D'ETE

After the March 15th deadline (plus a week for the mail), a total of 21 4-year-old harness racing pacers have been nominated to compete in the \$200,000 Prix d'Ete Grand Circuit event at the Hippodrome 3R in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, Canada.

Featured among the 21 nominees include many of the top horses from last year's stakes season including Little Brown Jug, North America Cup and \$1 million winner It's My Show (Sweet Lou), Ontario Sire Stakes champion Stockade Seelster (State Treasurer), New Jersey Sire Stakes champion Voukefalas (Lazarus N), Bluegrass Stakes winner Command (Captaintreachorous), Breeders Crown elimination winner El Rey (Captaintreachorous), and local favorite Light The Torch (Always B Miki).

The Prix d'Ete will be held at H3R on Sunday, August 18 and will feature the eight highest money earners in 2024. The Prix d'Ete is the richest horse race of the year in Quebec. There are still two more nominating payments due (April 15 and May 15) to remain eligible for the final.

[READ MORE](#)

MEADOWLANDS ANNOUNCES TENTATIVE FOX SPORTS SCHEDULE

The Meadowlands' biggest stakes races of 2024 will again be televised live on the networks of FOX Sports thanks to a partnership with the television department at The New York Racing Association (NYRA) as part of its "America's Day at the Races" broadcasts.

"Working with a first-class TV team like the one at the NYRA has been something beneficial to The Meadowlands and all of harness racing," said Meadowlands' Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir. "We feel that showing our biggest races to a national audience is something we are convinced is making Thoroughbred fans into harness fans, and that's something that's good for both industries."

[READ MORE](#)

DESPERATE MAN AIMS FOR BORGATA GRAND SLAM IN ROUND FOUR

Desperate Man will look to stay undefeated in this year's MGM Borgata Pacing Series as he races in the first of a trio of \$50,000 splits of the fourth leg on Monday night (April 8) at MGM Yonkers Raceway.

Five foes will line up against Desperate Man, who drew post five in the event (race three on the 12-race program). Dunkin' (post one) has two straight victories in the series himself and Covered Bridge (post four) took a division back in the first round.

[READ MORE](#)

BOJARSKI REAPPOINTED TO HALL OF FAME SCREENING COMMITTEE

Tim Bojarski, a past National President of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA) and current President of USHWA's Upstate New York chapter, has been named to his second six-year term on USHWA's Hall Of Fame Screening Committee, it has been announced by Michael Carter, current National President of USHWA, the largest organization devoted to Standardbred communicators.

The Screening Committee takes the Hall Of Fame nominations from USHWA Chapters, discusses them with a panel of representatives from the Hall Of Fame, and then decides who will go on the summer ballot for Hall of Fame election. They also select a Veteran to go into the Hall of Fame. (The Hall Of Fame discussions will take place this year at Goshen on Sunday, July 7, the day when Tim himself will be inducted into the Communicators Hall Of Fame.)

Bojarski has served on the Screening Committee for the last eight years: he served two years as President of USHWA (2016-2017), and then after leaving office, a six year term (through 2023) during his first appointment as a regular member of that Committee.

National President Carter noted that "Tim has been an asset, not only to USHWA, but harness racing as a whole for many years. His experience in USHWA, including being a past President, makes him the prime candidate for being renamed to the Hall of Fame Screening Committee. I personally have learned a lot from Tim, and look forward to working with him and the entire committee throughout my presidency."

Bojarski's resume includes extensive work in the media as a columnist for Hoof Beats magazine, the acclaimed publication of the United States Trotting Association (USTA), and as a publicist for Plainridge Park, the Standardbred Owners of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Sire Stakes and Batavia Downs. The Akron, New York resident has a 45-year background in harness horse ownership and training, has driven in qualifying races and currently owns six horses racing in New York and Massachusetts. He has been a member of USHWA for 23 years, 17 of them as a Director of the Association.

Bojarski joins returning Screening Committee members Steve Wolf, Gordon Waterstone, Leon Zimmerman, and Thomas Hicks, and new appointee Callie Davies-Gooch.

-release (USHWA)

SHENANDOAH DOWNS 2024 SPRING HARNESS MEET BEGINS SATURDAY

Shenandoah Downs raises the curtain on its ninth season of pari-mutuel harness racing this weekend in Woodstock. Nestled in the heart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, the track will host a pair of seven-week meets this year – a spring session that runs from April 6 - May 19 and a fall session that runs from September 14 - October 27. Racing takes place every Saturday and Sunday at 1:05 PM with two exceptions --- on Kentucky Derby Day (May 4) and Preakness Day (May 18), when first post is 2:05 PM.

[READ MORE](#)

CUMBERLAND MAINE QUALIFIERS MOVED TO SUNDAY

First Tracks Cumberland has announced that the initial qualifying races will be moved to Sunday (April 7) due to the impending snow storm.

The races will be broadcast live on the Racetrack Television Network (RTN), with first post at 11:30 a.m. (EDT).

The box will remain open until 9 am on Saturday (April 6). Horses that have a clean line from December 1, 2023, or after, are NOT required to qualify through the first two weekends of racing (until April 20). Beginning with the draw for the April 26th program, the 45-day rule goes back into effect.

Condition sheets for the upcoming meet will be available after the qualifiers, and additional information is always available on our website: <https://firsttrackscumberland.com/>

Opening day for First Tracks Cumberland Spring-Summer meet is April 12, with regular racing on Friday and Saturday each weekend. First post is slated for 3:15 pm (EDT) throughout the extended pari-mutuel meeting, which runs for 17 weeks (34 race dates) through August 3.

-release (First Tracks Cumberland)

COME OUT TO PEBBLE BEACH DAY!

Meet Pebble Beach and the other Sugar Valley stallions on April 17th! The Diamond Creek crew will be on hand for the meet & greet to answer any questions you may have about Pebble Beach and our other Ohio stallions...Downbytheseaside, Creatine and Marseille!

See you there!

April 17, 2024 1-3pm

Sugar Valley Farm

2648 Troy Rd, Delaware, OH 43015

Enter to win a free breeding to Pebble Beach!! Must be there to enter!

Lunch and refreshments will be provided!

-edited release (Diamond Creek Farm)

THE RACEWAY AT WESTERN FAIR ATTAINS RECORD HANDLE

The Raceway at Western Fair District will enter its busiest stretch of the racing season on the heels of another record-setting wagering year at the London, Ontario half-mile oval.

The Friday, March 29th program capped off the 2023/24 Ontario Racing fiscal year with a total of \$58,468,000 wagered over 121 race dates, surpassing last year's record number of \$56,709,000. The 3% increase in total handle matched a 3% increase in per race handle over the same period.

The high-water benchmark for the meet came on the Tuesday, January 30th program when \$852,000 was wagered on the 12-race program.

[READ MORE](#)