

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024

SHOWDOWN in Yonkers

Millionaire 9YO Lit De Rose seeks her first career six-figure victory in the Blue Chip Matchmaker final while Linedrive Hanover and Desperate Man do battle in the \$457,000 MGM Borgata final at Yonkers Raceway on Monday

By Jay Bergman

Post-position draw is key to success, especially at MGM Yonkers Raceway, where two rich finals are set to go on Monday (April 22). The draw was kind to a pair of potential favorites: Lit De Rose, most recently a millionaire after capturing the fifth Blue Chip Matchmaker preliminary leg on April 12, landed the pole position for the \$276,200 final. On the male side, Linedrive Hanover hopes to even the score with rival Desperate Man in the \$457,000 MGM Borgata final having scored post four for his main rival.

Lit De Rose



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

The Blue Chip Matchmaker final will go first on the 11-race Monday Yonkers program and driver-trainer Pat Lachance loves his chances behind Lit De Rose.

"She's as good as she's ever been," Lachance said on Wednesday following the draw. "I'm going to have to push hard out of there and would like to be on the front but there's a few in the field that can probably leave a little faster than she can."

Fortunately for Lachance, his 9-year-old Quebec-bred mare is capable of racing in any fashion required and generally getting the best results. With 50 career wins to her credit, Lit De Rose appears equally adept whether on the point or off the pace.

"You can leave with her. You can come first-up with her. You can make one big run with her. It doesn't matter," said Lachance, who has had the opportunity to drive and train the gifted mare since late 2021.

In Monday's final Lit De Rose faces a field of eight, with half returning from last year's finale. Lit De Rose was second to the Linda Toscano-trained Amazing Dream N in that contest, with Lachance hopeful for a better result this time.

"I'm glad Mikala drew post seven," said Lachance of the mare he believes is the biggest threat. "She's competed on the Grand Circuit and done well in some big races."

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)

Visit us online for PPs, news, entries, results
DRF.com/Harness

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Derick Giwner: The unknown betting angle**
- It's My Show headlines Big M qualifiers**
- Jay Bergman: Baggitt's Blackhawk Zette making noise in Weiss at Pocono**
- Keith Gisser: Everyone sees everything**
- Thayer excited to see racing fund finalized in Kentucky**
- Kentucky Sire Stakes bring top 4YOs to Oak Grove on Monday**
- "King" JL Cruze looks for another Big M win; Gingras triples in Brennan series; Beckwith scores win 1,000**
- Comments? Questions? Email the Editor DGiwner@DRF.com**

\$250

DEPOSIT MATCH

\$10

FREE BET

& FREE DRF PAST PERFORMANCES

JOIN NOW



WE ARE RACING

2024 STAKES SCHEDULE

OHIO SIRES STAKES

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

1. Northfield Park Mon. July 15
2. Scioto Downs Thurs. July 25
3. Northfield Park Wed. Aug. 14
4. Scioto Downs Mon. Sept. 2
5. Dayton Raceway Sat. Sept. 28

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

1. Northfield Park Sun. July 14
2. Northfield Park Wed. July 24
3. Scioto Downs Thurs. Aug. 8
4. Scioto Downs Mon. Sept. 2
5. Dayton Raceway Sat. Sept. 28

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

1. Scioto Downs Sat. July 13
2. Northfield Park Sun. July 21
3. Northfield Park Sat. Aug. 10
4. Scioto Downs Sat. Sept. 7
5. Dayton Raceway Sat. Sept. 28

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

1. Scioto Downs Sat. July 13
2. Northfield Park Sun. July 21
3. Scioto Downs Fri. Aug. 16
4. Northfield Park Sun. Sept. 1
5. Dayton Raceway Sat. Sept. 28

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

1. Miami Valley Sat. May 4
2. Northfield Park Sat. June 8
3. Scioto Downs Sat. July 6
4. Northfield Park Sat. Aug. 10
5. Scioto Downs Sat. Sept. 7

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

1. Miami Valley Sat. May 4
2. Scioto Downs Fri. June 14
3. Northfield Park Wed. July 17
4. Northfield Park Wed. Aug. 21
5. Scioto Downs Sat. Sept. 7

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

1. Miami Valley Sat. May 4
2. Northfield Park Sat. June 1
3. Scioto Downs Sat. July 6
4. Northfield Park Sat. Aug. 24
5. Scioto Downs Sat. Sept. 7

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

1. Miami Valley Sat. May 4
2. Scioto Downs Sat. June 22
3. Northfield Park Sat. July 27
4. Northfield Park Sun. Aug. 18
5. Scioto Downs Sat. Sept. 7

BUCKEYE STALLION SERIES

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

1. Northfield Park Wed. July 17
2. Scioto Downs Thurs. July 25
3. Scioto Downs Thurs. Aug. 15
4. Northfield Park Sun. Sept. 8
5. Delaware Fair Wed. Sept. 18

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

1. Scioto Downs Tues. July 16
2. Scioto Downs Tues. July 23
3. Urbana Fair Tues. Aug. 6
4. Northfield Park Tues. Sept. 3
5. Delaware Fair Tues. Sept. 17

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

1. Scioto Downs Fri. July 12
2. Northfield Park Mon. July 22
3. Urbana Fair Tues. Aug. 6
4. Northfield Park Wed. Sept. 4
5. Delaware Fair Thurs. Sept. 19

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

1. Northfield Park Mon. July 15
2. Scioto Downs Fri. July 26
3. Northfield Park Wed. Aug. 14
4. Scioto Downs Fri. Sept. 6
5. Delaware Fair Mon. Sept. 16

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

1. Miami Valley Thurs. May 2
2. Scioto Downs Fri. June 14
3. Scioto Downs Thurs. July 4
4. Northfield Park Sun. Aug. 11
5. Delaware Fair Sun. Sept. 15

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

1. Miami Valley Wed. May 1
2. Northfield Park Wed. June 12
3. Scioto Downs Thurs. July 18
4. Northfield Park Sun. Aug. 25
5. Delaware Fair Sun. Sept. 15

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

1. Miami Valley Thurs. May 2
2. Northfield Park Sat. June 8
3. Scioto Downs Thurs. July 4
4. Scioto Downs Fri. Aug. 30
5. Delaware Fair Mon. Sept. 16

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

1. Miami Valley Wed. May 1
2. Scioto Downs Fri. June 21
3. Scioto Downs Fri. July 26
4. Northfield Park Mon. Aug. 19
5. Delaware Fair Wed. Sept. 18

Championships & Consolations



\$400,000 SCARLET & GRAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

2- & 3-Year-Olds
October 12-13, 2024
MGM Northfield Park

\$85,000 VETERANS CHAMPIONSHIPS

4-Year-Olds & Up
Friday, August 30, 2024
Eldorado Scioto Downs



\$75,000 CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

2- & 3-Year-Olds
Saturday, October 5, 2024
Dayton Raceway

\$25,000 CONSOLATIONS

2- & 3-Year-Olds
Sunday, October 6, 2024
MGM Northfield Park



2237 Sonora Drive | Grove City, OH 43123
P: 614-221-3650 | 800-353-6442
OHHA.COM

Mikala captured two of the four legs she appeared in during the preliminary rounds of the series and certainly has the speed and class to overcome the draw for trainer Nik Drennan and driver George Brennan.

Dougs Babe A, third in last year's final, drew post four this year looking for a better result. Dougs Babe A competed in all five preliminary legs and was on the board in each, winning just once for trainer Nifty Norman and driver Dexter Dunn.

Coachellabound N (post 2) has improved as the series has progressed, with a pair of seconds followed by a victory in leg five of the series. Ricky Bucci trains the imported daughter of Sweet Lou with Yannick Gingras set to drive.

Incaseyouididntknow (post 5) and Karma Seelster (post 6) were both unplaced in last year's final and were not aided by the draw this time around. Completing the eight mares that will contest the Blue Chip Matchmaker final are Tony's Mom (post 3) and Delitfulcatherin N (post 8).

Unlike some others, Lachance raced Lit De Rose in all five legs.

"She races best that way and I felt that there was going to be 10 days between the last leg and the final and that would be good for her," said Lachance.

It's been nearly two years since Linedrive Hanover and Desperate Man met with something major on the line. Back in 2022, the then 4-year-olds put it all out on the line in a memorable edition of the Charles Juravinski at Flamboro Downs, with Linedrive Hanover going wire-to-wire in a 1:49 mile and Desperate Man settling for second after starting his journey from post eight. The two will be closer at the start and maybe at the finish as well following a draw that puts Linedrive Hanover (post 2) a shade inside his rival Desperate Man from post four in the \$457,000 MGM Borgata final carded as race eight on Monday.

The two horses earned their reputations first in Ontario, with Desperate Man capturing the 2021 North America Cup in dramatic fashion. Linedrive Hanover's racing career took a bit more time to gain traction but in 2022 he quickly became part of the elite older pacers of his generation. The two collide on Monday with both appearing at the top of their games once again.

"He's been rock solid since we started bringing him back," said Linda Toscano of Linedrive Hanover.

Linedrive Hanover won three of four preliminary legs in the series and faced Desperate Man just once, finishing second to him in the second leg when the two drew the identical post positions they landed for the final.



Toscano hopes things might be a bit different four weeks later in Monday's final.

"Scottie [Zeron] was content to sit behind him and he got the jump on us," said Toscano of the only defeat Linedrive Hanover has suffered this year.

Toscano will be looking for her first MGM Borgata victory in her illustrious Hall of Fame career.

"This is a tough series, and I went into it hoping that we could get into the final and skip a leg along the way," said Toscano. "It worked out great and he was able to get a good mile in before the final."

The 1:51 2/5 effort with a 27-second final quarter gave all the impression that Linedrive Hanover would be razor sharp for the final.

Trainer Travis Alexander also rested his prized pupil, with Desperate Man skipping leg five following four consecutive victories. Driver Matt Kakaley has fit in seamlessly behind the son of Shadow Play and managed to find the front and stay there without appearing to work up a sweat.

"That was always the plan," said Alexander on missing the final leg of the Borgata. "He trained [Wednesday] morning at Pocono before the qualifiers and is ready for whatever they may bring."

There will be six others in the field hoping to unseat the favorites, with two returning from last year's MGM Borgata final.

Hellabalou (post 5) was an upset winner from post five a year ago, but his fortunes have not been the same thus far in 2024. The Ron Burke-trained son of Sweet Lou has gone winless in six starts this year and now lands outside the favorites. Covered Bridge (post 1) won just once in five preliminary legs but finds the best spot in the field while looking to improve upon his third-place finish last year.

Rounding out the field for the MGM Borgata final will be Whats Stanley Got A (post 3), Coaches Corner (post 6), Rocknroll Runa A (post 7) and Dunkin' (post 8).

Co-featured on the Monday program at Yonkers will be a pair of \$100,000 consolations for the Blue Chip Matchmaker (race 5) and the MGM Borgata Series (race 6). All four stakes races are part of a \$10,000 Guaranteed Pick 5 that begins in race five.

Post time for the Monday card is 7:00 PM (EDT).

\$276,200 BLUE CHIP MATCHMAKER FINAL (RACE 7)

PP	HORSE	DRIVER	TRAINER	MORNING LINE
1	Lit De Rose	Pat Lachance	Pat Lachance	2-1
2	Coachellabound N	Yannick Gingras	Ricky Bucci	3-1
3	Tony's Mom	Jason Bartlett	Per Engblom	6-1
4	Dougs Babe A	Dexter Dunn	Nifty Norman	7-2
5	Incaseyouididntknow	Tim Tetrick	Cory Stratton	8-1
6	Karma Seelster	Matt Kakaley	Andrew Adamczyk	6-1
7	Mikala	George Brennan	Nik Drennan	9-2
8	Delitfulcatherin N	Jordan Stratton	Jeff Gillis	20-1

\$457,000 MGM BORGATA FINAL (RACE 8)

PP	HORSE	DRIVER	TRAINER	MORNING LINE
1	Covered Bridge	Jordan Stratton	Jeff Gillis	20-1
2	Linedrive Hanover	Scott Zeron	Linda Toscano	8-5
3	Whats Stanley Got A	George Brennan	Cory Stratton	12-1
4	Desperate Man	Matt Kakaley	Travis Alexander	7-5
5	Hellabalou	Yannick Gingras	Ron Burke	12-1
6	Coaches Corner	Jason Bartlett	Per Engblom	5-1
7	Rocknroll Runa A	Mark MacDonald	Larry Stalbaum	20-1
8	Dunkin'	Tim Tetrick	Scott Di Domenico	30-1

*Borgata past performances on page 12

BORGATA HOTEL CASINO AND SPA
BORGATA
PACING SERIES FINAL

EMPIRE CITY | Borgata

MONDAY, APRIL 22
EMPIRE TERRACE DINING

A LA CARTE MENU AVAILABLE
CALL 914.457.2627 FOR DETAILS

RESERVE NOW | MGM REWARDS



DEO VOLENTE
FARMS

2024 STALLIONS
Quality Over Quantity!

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.)



DEO VOLENTE
FARMS

deovolentefarms.com
908-782-4848

*Call and inquire
about our
multiple mare
discounts!*

PERFECT STING

(Always B Miki - 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.)



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner [X @harnessveguy](#)

The Unknown Betting Angle

It is becoming increasingly harder to win betting on harness racing for a number of reasons. While the edges from 35 years ago when I started, or even 20 years ago, are basically gone. That doesn't mean there isn't another way.

Advances in technology have brought the races and qualifiers into your home, meaning everyone sees everything. If a horse was trapped along the pylons or got caught in traffic, you can expect to get a short price on that horse the following week. Long gone are the days when only a few handful of people had this information. Now these horses get over-bet and are hardly the must-bet plays they used to be.

Horseplayers must also deal with CAW (Computer Assisted Wagering) players that pour money into the pools at the last possible moment and make WIN betting complicated to say the least. When you make a bet as the gate is rolling at 3-1 and they go off at 6-5, it is difficult to have any faith in the sustainability of odds.

So, what is a handicapper to do? Should we pack it in and give up?

The last time I broached this subject my advice was to watch the back of the pack when evaluating replays. People tend to ignore the horses who finish outside the top four or five unless they are in clear trouble and many of these horses have more late energy than it will appear on paper. This angle still applies today but I also have one that is serving me even better in recent years – the unknown horse.

In general people believe what they can see or extrapolate from the past performances with their own two eyes. Often enough there are horses which don't show obvious form but there is at least some reason to believe that they might be able to compete. Some of these situations include the following:

- Shippers from other tracks
- Horses coming back from layoffs
- Horses changing trainers or maybe drivers
- Horses getting equipment changes

It's My Show headlines power-packed Meadowlands qualifying session

Fifteen qualifying races are scheduled for Saturday morning at 10 AM (EDT) over the surface at The Meadowlands and those wanting to view the 2023 Little Brown Jug winner It's My Show will have to wait until the finale. The now 4-year-old leaves from the outside post five against a strong field which includes Abuckabett Hanover.

The horse that finished just a neck behind It's My Show in the Jug will also be in action Saturday morning. Seven Colors has the pole position in the fourth race versus his peers, including early season standout Fulton. Another returner from that class is Odds On Hail Mary in race 14. The pacing mare was a Pennsylvania Sire Stakes winner in 2023 and set a 1:48 2/5 lifetime mark.

Race 10 marks the U.S. return for two-time Bluegrass winner Periculum. The son of Muscle Hill with a 1:50 3/5 mark raced in Sweden during his 4-year-old campaign and now returns to the Marcus Melander barn.

There are a number of promising 3-year-olds set to make their first charted appearances of the year including Reynolds winner Pressure Cooker (Race 2), Bluegrass winners Mars Hill and Smart Schooner (Race 5), Kindergarten champion Sambuca Hanover (Race 8), Kentucky Sire Stakes runner-up Gifted One (Race 11), and Breeders Crown runner-up Pass Line (Race 14). The featured race for the sophomore crew comes in the 13th when Governor's Cup winner Captain Luke, Kentucky Sire Stakes champion Better is Nice and Nassagawaya victor Mirage Hanover hook up.

All of the qualifiers can be viewed live on the [Meadowlands' website](#). Note that there will be breaks for horses to warm up after races five and nine.

Basically we are looking for any reason to believe a horse can improve or simply compete that is not backed by concrete evidence. For our purposes circumstantial evidence is all that is required as long as it is combined with a horse expected to offer at least fair odds. Price is very much key because we don't want to take speculative chances on horses that are not fair value. You must demand clear proof to bet on a favorite.

Just to throw an example out there, I'll refer to Woodbine Mohawk Park on Thursday, April 4. Race four featured a heavy 1-9 favorite that was highly unlikely to lose in Convoy Hall. Most people were leaning to a pair of 11-1 shots on the bottom of their exacta tickets. Of those, King Fury's claim to fame was being able to keep up in most of his miles and LMC Mr Squishy was coming off a very nice line in his 2024 debut but moving to an outside post. This is key because he showed a break when pushed away from the gate the previous year and everyone knew Convoy Hall was leaving to his inside. The horse was also getting a new driver, which is always a red flag with a horse that shows any breaks. Of course, LMC Mr Squishy left and rolled into a break entering the first turn (It is worth noting that he returned the following week as the 6-5 favorite and won handily).

The two key horses for me were The Canam Banker at 36-1 and Poof at 51-1. The former added hobbles in his previous start and went a clean mile without any breaks while interestingly trotting faster than King Fury did in his last try. There was at least reason to believe that if the hobbles solved the problem that he could produce at least a similar performance again. He finished second and completed a \$19.10 exacta.

The true value came with Poof finishing third to close out \$593.30 trifecta. This colt was coming off one of the best hidden-form lines in the business – a dull-looking qualifier. Even better, the qualifier was at Flamboro Downs and now this horse was stretching to the big track, so you had the logical possibility that he would be at least two seconds faster on the track/size change and another two seconds because most horses drop time off qualifying miles. But there was another key factor at play on the April 4 card in that the weather was far from ideal – “good” track, blowing snow and a temperature of one degree Celsius. These conditions were sure to make the time of the race slower and level the playing field for horses that were seemingly too slow.

The point of the above example is to show that there is value to be found in harness racing if you are willing to look beyond the obvious and lean on the plausibly possible. Sometimes the obvious horses are the best play but it always makes sense to look for an unknown quantity at a big price that could upset the appcart.



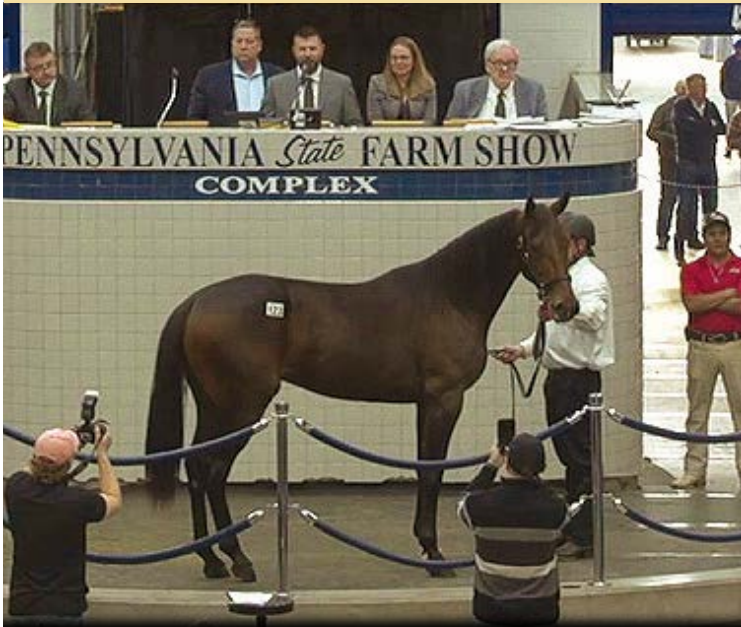
**WATCH &
WAGER
RACING ACTION YEAR-ROUND**

**MONDAY - THURSDAY
12:10 PM**

VISIT
www.monticellocasinoandraceway.com

LAST CALL FOR ENTRIES

86th Annual Standardbred Yearling Sale
November 4 - 6 In Harrisburg



Great Sale For **SELLERS!**

De Kooning topped the 2023 Harrisburg Yearling Sale at \$600,000, also the top price for any trotting colt sold in 2023.



Great Sale For **BUYERS!**

Canada's "Horse of the Year" Sylvia Hanover was among six 2023 Dan Patch and O'Brien Award winning Harrisburg Yearling Sale grads.

YEARLING ENTRIES CLOSE **MAY 1** – CALL TODAY! (717) 637-8931



Standardbred Horse
Sales Company

Plan to join us!

HARRISBURG

YEARLINGS NOV. 4-6 | MIXED NOV. 7-8 | (717) 637-8931 | theblackbook.com

Photos: Triscari Web/Video/Marketing, Amanda Stephens

Baggitt's Blackhawk Zette making noise in Pocono's Weiss Series



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [X BergmanJay](#)

The Bobby Weiss series at Pocono for sophomore male trotters heads into round three this Monday (April 22) and trainer Robert Baggitt Jr. has a promising son of Cantab Hall looking for his third straight leg victory following a pair of impressive scores. Baggitt has a keen eye for trotters and when he first saw Blackhawk Zette racing at Pocono last fall he took interest.

"I watched him win at Pocono and I liked the way he looked," said Baggitt of the race on October 30 of last year when Blackhawk Zette and driver Matt Kakaley was a four-length winner in 1:59 over a sloppy surface. "I talked to Matt after the race, and he really liked him too, so after that we started to negotiate and was able to purchase him."

Baggitt had an untested colt at the time of the purchase in November, with just one win in four starts for Blackhawk Zette's breeder and trainer Cozette McAvoy. "We gave him two months off and then started bringing him back," said Baggitt.

On March 13, Blackhawk Zette made his first appearance with Baggitt as the conditioner in a qualifier at Pocono and closed nicely to finish second timed in 1:59 3/5. His sophomore debut would come 12 days later, and the way catch-driver Marcus Miller drove him it appeared to be mostly an educational trip. Yet things changed dramatically in the homestretch of that non-winners of 2 event. Though shuffled to last on the final turn following a slow early pace, Blackhawk Zette hit another gear in mid-stretch and rallied gamely to win by a nose in a career-best 1:58 3/5 clocking.

"He's just a nice horse to be around," said Baggitt. "After the qualifier he's just been getting better and better with each week. He's got just a natural way of going and is easy to handle."

Matt Kakaley would guide him in the first round of the Weiss series and be just as patient as Marcus Miller had been in the prior start. Kakaley sat in third off some very soft fractions and then used an explosive burst in the stretch to score by a nose, this time in 1:55 4/5, nearly three seconds faster than his previous personal best.

This past Monday (April 15) Kakaley again showed no signs of fear that racing Blackhawk Zette from off the pace would be an issue and allowed him to race in fourth for much of the mile. Unlike his first two races though, Kakaley did leave the pylons to follow cover before three quarters. The difference in this \$20,000 Weiss leg was once shifting gears before the homestretch, Blackhawk Zette appeared to relish the opportunity to pass horses and exploded to an effortless 1:54 1/5 mile with a final quarter of 28 1/5. Even more impressive in this victory was there weren't any late-stretch heroics necessary. After a pair of nose decisions Blackhawk Zette was a decisive winner in the fastest of the four divisions on the Pocono program.

Baggitt has a stable filled with trotters, with just one of the 15 head he trains on the pacing side.

"The way our farm is set up it's ideal for trotters," said Baggitt of his training facility in Bangor, Pa. "We've got a straight strip."

Blackhawk Zette looks for a sweep of the preliminary legs on Monday (April 22) with a favorable draw in the first of four \$20,000 divisions carded as race three. The J L Sadowsky LLC-owned colt drew the rail and meets a pair of leg winners in Shermont (post 2) and Mighty Deo (post 4). Lammtarra, a \$500,000 yearling purchase from the first crop of Green-shoe, finished second behind Blackhawk Zette in his sophomore debut and gets another chance at him this week from post five.

Asked if the racing style that Blackhawk Zette has utilized in his first three starts is necessary for his success, Baggitt said, "I'm not sure how he'll be if he gets stung to a quick opening quarter."

With a wealth of training experience, Baggitt recognized the best way to preserve a horse for the long term is not to get him engaged often on the front end, though versatility is important when the competition gets stiffer. The short field on Monday could give Blackhawk Zette the opportunity to control the pace without too much early work.

The Weiss is a first step on the stakes road and Baggitt is hopeful following the series that his colt will meet the demands of Grand Circuit racing.



CURTIS SALONICK

Blackhawk Zette is undefeated in three starts this year for new trainer Robert Baggitt, Jr.

"He's eligible to the Dexter," said Baggitt, "And the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes, but not the Hambletonian."

The Dexter could pose a conflict for Baggitt and Blackhawk Zette should it require eliminations as the Dexter eliminations would be raced on April 27 at Freehold and the Weiss final is slated two days following on April 29.

Blackhawk Zette has an interesting pedigree and while Baggitt may have caught the visual while watching the colt as a 2-year-old in a race, he likely had an inkling about the specific bloodlines from the maternal line of this son of Cantab Hall. Most interesting in going back some five generations was the extraordinary number of fillies produced going back in time. Blackhawk Zette is just the second foal from the Credit Winner-sired Zette Starlet. The second dam Scottish Starlet (Angus Hall) produced six foals and all were fillies. Her third dam NY Starlet produced five fillies from her first eight foals, with her best credits a pair of male trotters that earned in excess of \$235K. My Starlet, her fourth dam, had nine foals with eight of them fillies.

Crown Starlet, a \$625K-winning mare is the fifth dam of Blackhawk Zette and 10 of her first 12 foals happened to be fillies, some of them with extreme talent. Yet what sticks out prominently when looking at Crown Starlet's broodmare career is that her 12th and 13th foals proved to be the most successful. Forever Starlet earned \$690K in 2003 as a 2-year-old, the only year she raced. The brilliant filly finished first or second in all 12 of her starts and captured the Breeders Crown. Crown Starlet's next foal was the \$705K winner Sir Perseverance, her richest and fastest foal with a 1:52 4/5 record. Both Forever Starlet and Sir Perseverance were the only two sons of Self Possessed.

Fast forward some 20 years and Blackhawk Zette enjoys the same maternal family as Forever Starlet and Sir Perseverance, and is crossed identically to that pair being sired by Cantab Hall, a son of Self Possessed.

Though Baggitt is focused on trotters now, the same was not true back in 2000 when he campaigned the best horse of his career.

"I would say Aces N Sevens was the best one I've ever had," Baggitt said, referring to the son of Cams Card Shark that pulled off a stunning upset in the \$500,000 Hoosier Cup in 2000 when he defeated future Horse of the Year Gallo Blue Chip.



VIRGINIA IS FOR BABIES

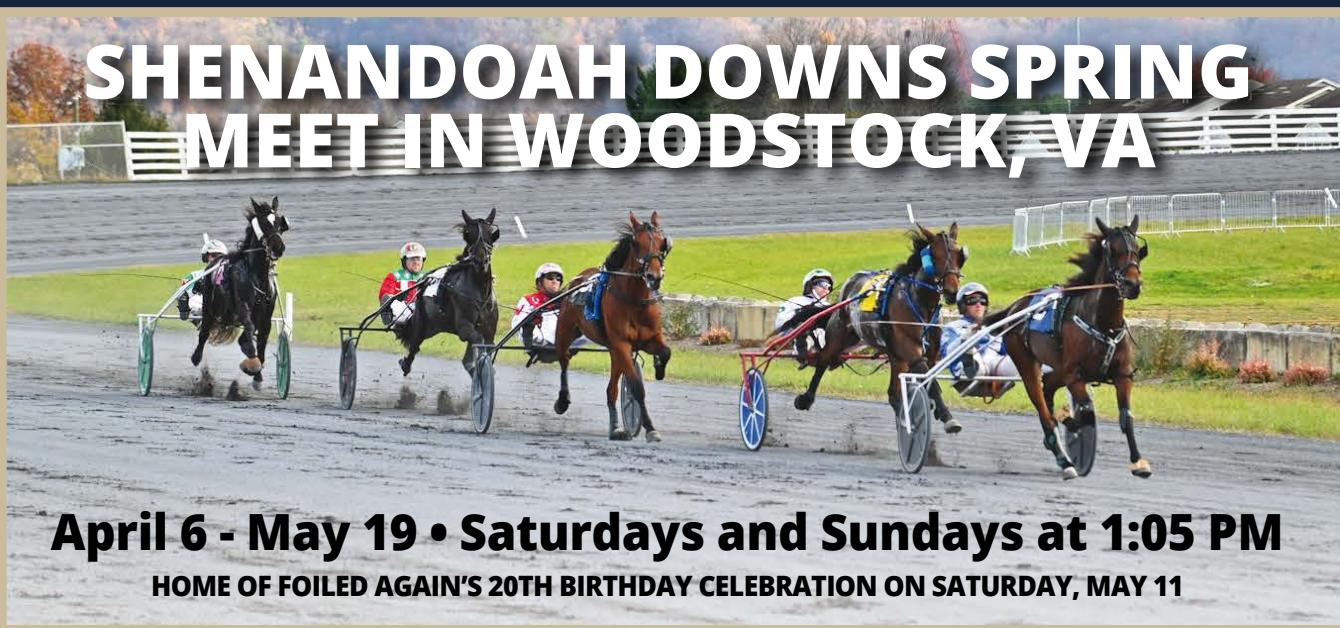


ATTENTION 2023 & 2024 FOAL OWNERS!

Get your share of bonus monies in Virginia's lucrative Certified Residency Program!

- 1 \$400,000 IN CERTIFIED BONUS MONIES...**
...available for the '23 & '24 foal crop in BOTH of their 2 and 3-year-old seasons. That same bonus level will extend to future foal crops.
- 2 HORSES ACCUMULATE POINTS...**
...in every money earning overnite race start as a 2 and 3-year-old. Awards are distributed based on cumulative end-of-year point totals.
- 3 PARTICIPATING FOALS...**
...become eligible if raised in Virginia for at least 6 consecutive months before they turn 2 years old.
- 4 VIRGINIA RACING BONUS!**
Earn double points from all starts at the Shenandoah Downs spring and fall meets.

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 SATURDAY, MAY 11

Program details are at vhha.net or by calling Debbie Warnick at 443-463-0917.
(this program is separate from Virginia Breeders Fund program).



CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

Everyone Sees Everything

I watched *The Sting* the other night. Off-track wagering sure has come a long way since it was portrayed in that great movie, although I am told in its humble New York OTB beginnings was only missing Ray Walston calling races off a Western Union ticker.

Today we can watch races live with an account and replays at will. We can see qualifiers at many tracks and even county fair races in many states. It certainly seems like a panacea for the horse player, but there is a negative effect that gets ignored.

To be clear, the problem doesn't get ignored. The reason does. We constantly hear complaints about short-priced winners and we blame everything from program wagering to past-posting to (when we are a sore loser) race-fixing. Have you ever complained about a fixed race that you cashed on?

Geoff Downes and Trevor Horn, aka The Buggles, said it best: "Video killed the radio star. Pictures came and broke your heart. Oh-a-a-a oh." Here's the problem with all that video. It evens the playing field and we all see the same thing . . . we all catch the same angles, the bits the charter missed, the late driver changes, the horses getting locked in or whatever. The chart shows the horse being parked, but it doesn't show him being parked behind dead cover.

"But, Keith," you say. "Isn't everyone entitled to that information?" Of course you are. But it wasn't always that way.

In one of my first columns for this publication, albeit in a different format, probably 20 years ago or more, I took a stand that went counter to the conventional wisdom. Shocking, I know. I said to bet every race. But make it a minimal bet. We all talk about how you can beat a race, but you can't beat the races, and there are all kinds of money management systems out there. But most of them agree with my high school buddy Jay. If he didn't like a race, he "doubled" his money. He folded it in two and put it back in his pocket. That is what the systems say.

My argument is that if I didn't bet the race, I might miss something while waiting in line for a beer and a hot dog. And I was rewarded for that. I saw the dead cover, the horse getting locked in or getting choked because there was nowhere for him to go. The people busy schmoozing missed it. And the simulcast players might see it or they might not. But the vast majority of horse players did not bet that race. So now, I, and a few smart on-track or simulcast players, had our little secret angle.

But now, if I miss the race for whatever reason, I can go back the next day and check out the replay and see the dead cover, the horse getting locked in, getting choked because there was nowhere for him to go. And so can everybody else. And I lose the advantage. Because now we are all seeing the same angle. Combine that with the chart available to everyone and the odds are that the majority of folks will see (and likely play) that angle. And that brings my price down. And it brings overall prices down, too.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating getting rid of video in any of the myriad forms it takes in the sport. There is even talk of putting together a wagering platform for those simulcast county fair races. That's a quagmire for a boatload of reasons that I won't go into here.

I will also concede that ubiquitous video is not the main reason for short-priced winners; only for (apparently) surprising short-priced winners. We can argue how big a factor, but not whether it is a factor.

On a totally different subject, the fine folks at the Atlantic Coast Conference's newest member, California's Stanford University (how's that for a geography lesson?), are conducting a study in which I am enrolled, investigating sports betting habits. I don't recall this ever being done with online horse wagering platforms. I am eager to see how it plays out and they have agreed to an interview once the three-month study is over. Here are a few things I can tell you.

When I was betting a lot on horses (for me \$20-25K annually), I kept meticulous records of how much I bet, what type of bet and, of course, Return On Investment (ROI). Now, although I probably bet a quarter of that, the habit persists. But I don't do it with my sports wagering, which, granted, is an even smaller amount.

Among the predictable questions asked: What sports do you wager on? What types of bets do you place? How often do you bet? Will you bet more or less over the next 90 days? There were a number of questions about how much you bet over the last 90 days. I underestimated the amount I bet by about 15% and also underestimated my ROI, which I placed at \$1.15. Turns out my ROI for the quarter was \$1.29. Had my estimated betting total been right, I would have been very close to predicting my ROI.

While the study folks won't release many details since it is still in progress, they did confirm that most sports bettors underestimate the amount they wager and overestimate their return on investment. Also, that most sports bettors believed they were making money, when in reality, most had a negative ROI. These preliminary findings leave me with the impression that horseplayers are more meticulous about record keeping, perhaps because there is (generally) more analysis going into horse handicapping than sports betting. I am really interested to see where the study ends up and look forward to speaking with its creators.

That's it for this month. The 2-year-olds are getting closer to racing and the Stakes season is starting for the 3-year-olds, so go cash. Hopefully not on a surprisingly short-priced favorite.

Advertise with



For more information or to place an ad, contact Derick Giwner at dgiwner@drf.com



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

Thayer excited to see racing fund finalized for Kentucky

By Ken Weingartner

The Kentucky budget bill containing funding to assist any of the state's harness racing tracks make a bid to host the Breeders Crown in the future became law last week.

State Sen. Damon Thayer, a Republican who serves as the Senate Majority Floor Leader, introduced the revenue bill amendment, which creates a reserve account of up to \$900,000 for a Kentucky track that hosts an international harness racing event that distributes at least \$5 million in purses and awards.

The account will receive \$300,000 annually until it reaches the \$900,000 threshold.

"It's something I've been thinking about for the last two or three years," Thayer said. "I was just looking for the right opportunity and timing to get it done. Nobody asked me to do it, I just believe that Kentucky should be in the Breeders Crown rotation."

"I had a couple of really good conversations with (Hambletonian Society President and CEO) John Campbell about what it would take to put us in the rotation, so I was able to work with the bill drafter to come up with what I think is a pretty good solution. It essentially sets up a perpetual funding source that renews every time the Breeders Crown comes to Kentucky, so the Hambletonian Society will know that the \$900,000 licensing fee is always here in Kentucky."

Lexington's Red Mile has hosted Breeders Crown races on two occasions, including the championship's inaugural event, the 2-year-old colt-and-gelding trot won by Workaholic, on Oct. 5, 1984. Three years later, the track was the location for the Breeders Crown Mare Pace, which was won by Follow My Star.

Since 2010, all 12 Breeders Crown races have been held at a single track.

"We're just excited about the possibility to get back on that scene," said Gabe Prewitt, the Red Mile's vice president of racing. "With everything going as well as they have in the state, with historical racing and the breeding industry and the number of mares skyrocketing, it's just exciting to direct a small portion of that to host the sport's premier event. I don't see how anyone in the state couldn't be anything but overly excited about the opportunity."

Kentucky has three pari-mutuel harness racing tracks, with the Red Mile joined by Oak Grove Racing, Gaming & Hotel and Cumberland Run.

"My colleagues received the idea well, there wasn't any opposition, and I've gotten great feedback from people in both the Standardbred and Thoroughbred business," Thayer said. "The Thoroughbred people here understand the Standardbred business; some of them are in both sides of the business. If and when we attract the Breeders Crown here, it's going to be extremely well received."

"I'm very excited. I look forward to the day that Kentucky is in the rotation to host the Breeders Crown on a regular basis."

Thayer, whose prior experience in horse racing included working for the Breeders' Cup, played an instrumental role in advancing the 2021 legislation that brought historical horse racing to Kentucky. The pari-mutuel gaming machines have generated billions of dollars in wagering and fueled the growth of the industry and purses in the state.

This was Thayer's final legislative session. The senator, who represents Kentucky's 17th Senate District, which includes southern Kenton County, and all of Grant and Scott counties, announced this past December that he would not seek re-election in 2024.

"Damon has been the staunchest ally for the entire sport of horse racing, particularly harness racing," Prewitt said. "His leadership has been instrumental in driving this industry to an entirely different level. We're going to miss him in that role. The (Breeders Crown funding) is sort of the cherry on top, in my opinion."

Thayer will complete his tenure in the legislature on Dec. 31.

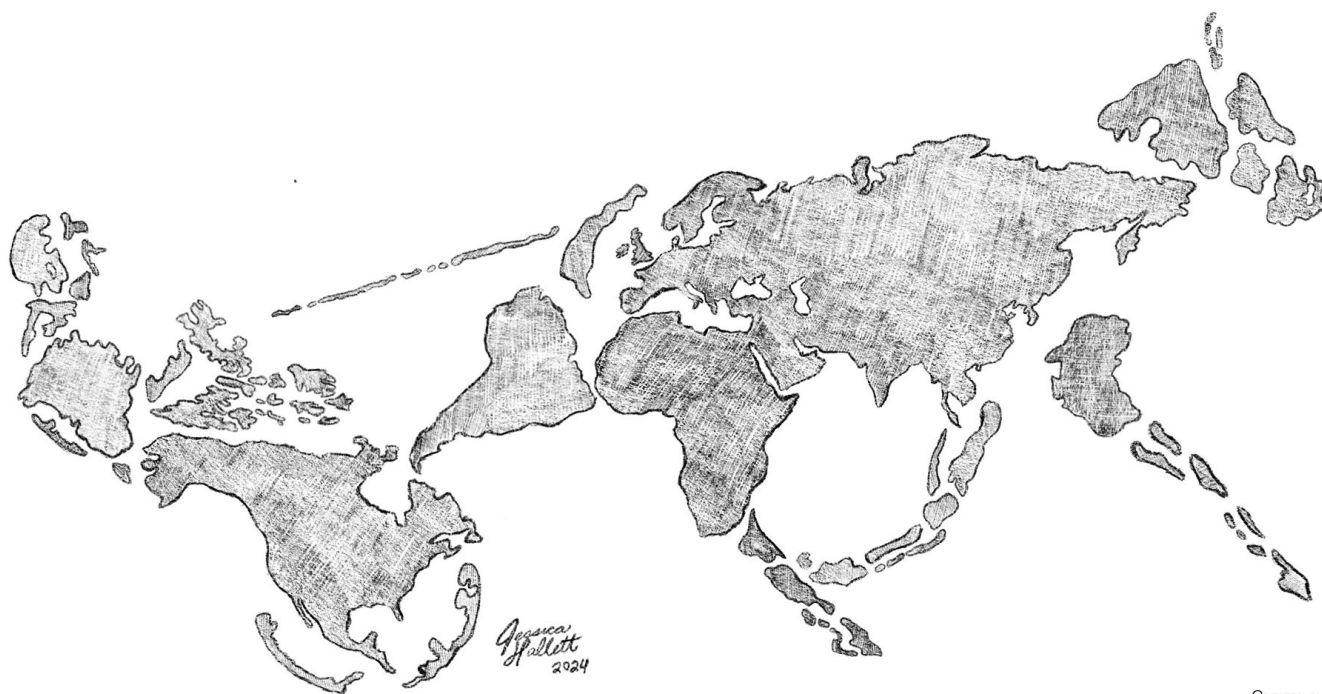
"It's been a great ride," Thayer said. "I never dreamt when I moved here 32 years ago and I knew five people that I would someday serve in the Senate for 22 years and be the longest-serving Republican floor leader. It's been an absolute privilege. Horse racing, next to my two children, is the greatest love of my life. Now let's see if we can get something worked out to make (the Breeders Crown) happen in a few years."



COURTESY SEN. THAYER

State Sen. Damon Thayer.

HARNESS RACING IS OUR WORLD



CREATED BY JESSICA HALLETT

Kentucky Sire Stakes bring out top 4YOs Monday at Oak Grove

By Derick Givner

The lucrative Kentucky Sire Stakes program launches for 2024 on Monday (April 22) at Oak Grove with six \$50,000 divisions for 4-year-olds of both sexes and gaits. On display will be a number of top-ranked sophomores from last year starting at 3:00 PM local time at the Kentucky-based oval.

Male pacers kick off the action when seven do battle in the opener on the 12-race card. Combustion, who made most of his \$408,815 as a 2-year-old, owns the biggest bankroll, and he'll try to get some return on investment for new trainer Doug Dilloian Jr. starting from post one with Todd McCarthy listed to drive.

Combustion has been raced a bit conservatively in his last couple of starts after a 1:51 2/5 win to start the year at The Meadowlands and Dilloian Jr. is looking for a more aggressive journey this time around.

"The last two trips haven't worked out as we hoped, but the horse has paced very strong last halves and he will be forwardly placed in Kentucky," said Dilloian Jr., who will train the horse before leaving for the Bluegrass State early Friday morning.

Like Combustion, who was a \$200,000 purchase in November at Harrisburg, Admiral Hill changed hands late in 2023 and now resides in the Per Engblom barn. The son of Sweet Lou posted the fastest mile of the field in 2024 with a 1:50 win in his April 6 debut at The Meadowlands and seems to be the main challenger starting from post two.

Both horses will shed Lasix since that is the rule of law in Kentucky stakes races but Dilloian Jr. isn't concerned.

"I actually think he's better without [Lasix]. I didn't take him off it only because he was put on it prior to us buying him," said Dilloian Jr.

Mare trotters take center stage in the third race and favoritism could swing to Mambacita as she makes her 4-year-old debut for trainer Tony Alagna from post two with Marvin Luna driving. The daughter of Tactical Landing has just shy of \$800,000 in her career, making her by far the richest in the field.

Railee Something, a \$428,085 winner in 2023, is to consider in the field despite outside post eight.

Mare pacers take to the track two races later with Always B Naughty the stand-out from last year in the field. The Nancy Takter trainee made just shy of \$420,000 in 2023 and was an impressive 1:50 1/5 winner in her first start of the year.

"She trained a fast mile 10 days ago at the farm as it's been difficult finding a



AMANDA STEPHENS

French Wine was a Sire Stakes leg winner at Red Mile in 2023.

spot to race her," said Takter. "She trained super and has always raced well on the five-eighths track"

Always B Naughty, who starts from post four with Andrew McCarthy expected to be in the bike, will be two spots to the outside of 2023 Jugette runner-up Zanatta. The speedy daughter of Stay Hungry comes in off a second and a third at The Meadowlands.

The second division for male pacers is race seven on the card and El Rey seems likely to take plenty of pari-mutuel action as he starts his season following a pair of Meadowlands qualifiers. Driven by Dexter Dunn in those morning works, David Miller is now listed to take the lines from post six for trainer Andrew Harris.

Nancy Takter also has Cant Stop Lou in this field from post five and is optimistic that he'll improve off a third-place finish at Harrah's Philadelphia in his second try of the year.

"He needed the start at Chester [Philly] and trained back sharp Wednesday [April 17]," said Takter. "He won the [Sire Stakes] final at 2 at Oak Grove, so I hope he still likes the track at 4."

A pair of male trotting divisions (races 8 and 10) close out the Sire Stakes, with French Wine, a career winner of just over \$1 million who won the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes championship and placed in a number of Grand Circuit stakes last year, the headliner in the second split.

"We were very happy with French Wine's qualifiers at The Meadowlands," said trainer Julie Miller. "He trained really well at Oak Grove this week in preparation for his first start and we are looking forward to a successful beginning to the season."

French Wine will start from post six with Andy Miller in the bike.



JESSICA HALLETT

Nancy Takter trains Always B Naughty and Cant Stop Lou on Monday at Oak Grove.

DRF Harness

Entries & Results

DRF Harness has entries and results for all U.S. tracks and live odds for all North American tracks



DRF.COM/HARNESS

RACE OF THE WEEK

8 YONKERS MON

1 Mile Pace. MGM BORGATA PACING SERIES FINAL Purse \$457,000

S1 PICK 4 (8-9-10-11) | S2 EXACTA | S2 TRIPLE | \$.10 SUPERFACTA

1 COVERED BRIDGE (L)

41:48.3 (1) \$10,949

b g 8, by American Ideal, Stonebridge Kisses by Artiscapae
Mark S Ford, Campbell Hall, NY

Last 5 Sts-\$50,000

1:51.3 Wbs 7/8
1:49.4 YR

24	YR	9	4	1	2	\$105,200	24	Tot	11	5	1	3	+\$120,440
23	YR	30	14	3	6	\$367,140	23	Tot	39	18	3	9	+\$528,925
22	YR	14	3	4	0	\$106,370	22	Life	46	48	20	24	+\$1,253,055

20-1 J. Stratton 501-57-73-63 (114)

J. Gillis 93-16-16-7 (172)

Br- Winbak Farm, MD

15 Apr24	9YR	fst ⁶⁵	27	:56	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L5	50000	2	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	3 ²	5 ³	JoStrattn	JeGillis	28	28	27	27	1:52	102	+4	6w	L2.75	CochsCmrBktsShwDrnk	3hole,stayd in,no bid-6
8 Apr24	3YR	fst ⁵⁴	27	:55	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L4	50000	4	3 ³	3 ³	4 ³	4 ⁴	2 ³	JoStrattn	JeGillis	27	28	27	28	1:53	105	+6	7w	L5.80	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Sat,bad cvr,even-6
1 Apr24	9YR	fst ⁵⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L3	50000	6	4 ³	4 ⁴	3 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	JoStrattn	JeGillis	27	29	27	28	1:52	103	+3	7w	L13.50	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Tuck,1st up,stadl,brd-7
25 Mar24	6YR	fst ⁴²	27	:56	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L2	50000	3	3 ²	3 ³	3 ²	3 ¹	3 ¹	JoStrattn	JeGillis	27	29	27	27	1:51	105	+4	11w	L8.60	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Spd,3hole,1st up,bst rsf-7
18 Mar24	6YR	fst ⁴³	27	:56	1:23	1:52	BORGATA L1	50000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	JeGillis	27	29	28	28	1:52	101	-3	4w	L*25	CvrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Led,well-rat,safely-6
4 Mar24	9YR	fst ⁴⁷	28	:56	1:24	1:52	Inv	35000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	JeGillis	28	28	27	27	1:52	104	+5	8w	L*1.20	CvrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Led,dug in,held sway-5
12 Feb24	10YR	fst ³⁹	27	:56	1:23	1:52	Inv	35000	5	5 ³	5 ³	5 ³	4 ³	3 ²	JoStrattn	JeGillis	28	28	27	28	1:52	101	+1	4w	L*1.25	SrmSthHnVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	2nd cvr,3w,rallied-5
5 Feb24	2YR	fst ³¹	27	:56	1:24	1:52	Inv	35000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	JeGillis	27	29	27	28	1:52	101	+1	5w	L*5.5	CvrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Led,dug in,held sway-5

2 LINEDRIVE HANOVER

51:47 (7/8) \$21,875

b g 6, by Betting Line, Lillian Hanover by Well Said

Last 5 Sts-\$87,500

1:50.4 YR
1:47 Wbs 7/8

24	YR	4	3	1	0	\$87,250	24	Tot	10	4	1	0	\$87,250
23	YR	1	0	0	0	\$2,000	23	Tot	17	3	2	5	\$194,170
22	YR	0	0	0	0	-	22	Life	39	17	6	7	\$384,777

8-5 S. Zeron 65-14-6 (215)

L. Toscano 28-6-1 (214)

Br- Daniel J Altmeyer, Washington, Pa-Richard B Ke

15 Apr24	10YR	fst ⁶⁵	27	:56	1:24	1:51	BORGATA L5	50000	2	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ²	1 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	27	29	28	27	1:51	107	+4	6w	*20	LndvHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	Brushd,led,handy-6
1 Apr24	5YR	fst ⁵⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:50	BORGATA L3	50000	6	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	27	28	28	27	1:50	110	+3	7w	*30	LndvHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	Brushd,led,non handly-8
25 Mar24	6YR	fst ⁴²	27	:56	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L2	50000	2	2 ²	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	27	28	28	27	1:51	106	+4	11w	*85	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Led,yd,pkt,pace-7
18 Mar24	8YR	fst ⁴³	26	:56	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L1	50000	2	2 ²	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	27	28	27	28	1:51	105	-3	4w	*75	LndvHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	Pkt,pulld 3/4,led,easy-6
9 Mar24	5M1	gd ²⁰	27	:55	1:24	1:50	Qua	3	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	27	28	28	26	1:50	104	+5	8w	nb	LndvHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	Pkt,led,lane,drew off-6	
2 Mar24	3M1	slv ⁵⁰	29	:56	1:23	1:51	Qua	4	5 ³	5 ³	5 ³	4 ²	3 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	30	29	29	25	1:55	99	+5	8w	nb	RdRgnHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	2nd cvr,fnish well-5	
25 Nov23	11M1	fst ³⁵	27	:55	1:23	1:49	D-FanDuel	350000	10	10 ¹¹	8 ⁹	8 ⁹	9 ⁵	7 ⁵	ScZeron	LiToscano	29	27	27	26	1:50	99	+4	3w	103.40	AlywHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	Sat back,no threat-10
17 Nov23	7PhI	fst ⁶⁷	26	:54	1:22	1:49	Opn	20000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	ScZeron	LiToscano	26	28	28	27	1:49	107	+5	5w	*20	LndvHnV Hlbalouu Strmgth	JacksShdw -6

3 WHATS STANLEY GOT A (L)

71:50.2 (1) \$7,225

b g 8, by Heston Blue Chip, Whats Nero Got by Art Major

Last 5 Sts-\$62,500

1:52 YR
1:50.2 M1

24	YR	9	1	4	0	\$72,250	24	Tot	10	1	4	0	\$72,250
23	YR	14	4	5	2	\$96,500	23	Tot	18	5	6	3	\$109,050
22	YR	0	0	0	0	-	22	Life	92	14	27	11	\$235,201

12-1 G. Brennan 510-72-62-68 (141)

C. Stratton 95-11-21-13 (116)

Br- S G Newman, AS

15 Apr24	2YR	fst ⁶⁵	27	:56	1:24	1:51	BORGATA L5	50000	2	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	2 ³	2 ²	GeBrennan	CoStrattn	27	29	27	27	1:51	106	+4	6w	L3.30	VntrmArWhtsStrnPlstrmkw	Puld,pkt,led,held 2nd-5
1 Apr24	9YR	fst ⁵⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L3	50000	4	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	2 ²	2 ²	GeBrennan	CoStrattn	27	29	27	28	1:52	102	+3	7w	L17.60	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Led,yd,pkt,even-7
25 Mar24	10YR	fst ⁴²	27	:56	1:24	1:52	BORGATA L2	50000	3	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	2 ¹	GeBrennan	CoStrattn	27	29	27	27	1:52	104	+4	11w	L7.70	WhtsStrnPlstrmkw	Pkt,2nd cvr,1st up,drng-6
18 Mar24	4YR	fst ⁴³	27	:56	1:24	1:52	BORGATA L1	50000	2	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	2 ¹	GeBrennan	CoStrattn	28	29	27	27	1:52	100	-3	4w	L35.75	RcknRfna WhtsStrn Plstrmkw	3hole,angld,pace-6
9 Mar24	6M1	slv ⁴⁵	27	:55	1:25	1:52	Qua	16000	2	3 ²	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	6 ⁴	JoStrattn	CoStrattn	27	28	27	28	1:53	86	-2	6w	L4.70	BzngBarldeafIngBdyHl	Brushd,led,gave way-8
26 Feb24	8YR	fst ⁴⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:53	Qua	22000	4	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	6 ²	CoStrattn	CoStrattn	27	29	28	29	1:54	91	+3	4w	L13.00	MachNChseFunahochBoingOr	Led,pkt,outlinsd-8
19 Feb24	3YR	fst ³⁹	27	:56	1:24	1:53	Qua	27000	6	6 ⁷	6 ⁶	6 ³	6 ³	7 ²	JoBongirn	CoStrattn	28	28	27	28	1:53	96	+0	4w	L45.75	SemToughPntymgrnGroovyJoc	3rd cvr,no threat-7
12 Feb24	1YR	fst ³⁹	27	:56	1:24	1:52	Qua	27000	8	8 ⁷	8 ¹¹	8 ¹²	8 ¹²	7 ⁸	MaKakaley	CoStrattn	29	28	28	28	1:54	92	+1	4w	L26.25	PntymgrnGroovyJoc	Trail,fnish well-8

4 DESPERATE MAN (L)

31:49.3 (7/8) \$25,000

b g 6, by Shadow Fly, Dreamlands Latte by Artsplace

Last 5 Sts-\$108,000

1:51 YR
1:50.1 GRV

24	YR	4	4	0	0	\$100,240	24	Tot	8	4	0	0	\$100,000
23	YR	5	1	1	1	\$76,020	23	Tot	18	8	1	1	\$89,723
22	YR	0	0	0	0	-	22	Life	59	20	9	7	\$1,089,439

7-5 Ma. Kakaley 481-76-62 (162)

T. Alexander 173-49-31-33 (283)

Br- Winbak Farm, Chesapeake City, Md,U.S.A.

8 Apr24	3YR	fst ⁵⁴	27	:55	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L4	50000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ²	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	27	28	27	28	1:51	109	+6	7w	L*20	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Led,opnd up,handy-6
1 Apr24	9YR	fst ⁵⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L3	50000	3	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ²	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	27	28	27	28	1:51	103	+3	7w	L*10	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Parkd 3/8,led,handy-7
25 Mar24	6YR	fst ⁴²	27	:56	1:23	1:51	BORGATA L2	50000	4	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	27	28	27	27	1:51	109	+4	11w	L*10	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Parkd pst 1/4,led,safely-7
18 Mar24	3YR	fst ⁴³	27	:56	1:24	1:51	BORGATA L1	50000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	27	29	28	27	1:51	105	-3	4w	L*50	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	Parkd 1/4,led,easy-6
13 Mar24	14PcD	fst ⁶⁰	28	:57	1:26	1:54	Qua	6	3 ³	3 ²	3 ¹	2 ¹	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	28	29	28	27	1:54	96	-6	6w	nb	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	6	
6 Mar24	7PcD	gd ⁵⁴	28	:57	1:24	1:52	Qua	6	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	28	28	27	27	1:52	92	-6	6w	nb	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	6	
26 Feb24	3PcD	slv ⁵⁵	29	:59	1:27	1:54	Qua	3	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ²	1 ¹	MaKakaley	TrAlexndr	29	30	27	27	1:54	91	-3	4w	nb	DrprMnCrVrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	3	
18 Dec23	4YR	fst ⁴⁴	27	:57	1:23	1:50	Opn HDP	32000	5	3 ³	2 ³	2 ³	2 ³	2 ¹	BrHolland	TrAlexndr	28	28	26	27	1:50	113	+3	7w	L*70	CvrdBrdgdelelsmrgc	1st up,batld,tuf beat-5

5 HELLABOU (L)

31:48.4 (5/8) \$6,792

b h 6, by Sweet Lou, Magestic Blue Chip by Rocknroll Hanover

Last 5 Sts-\$39,000

JL Cruze seeking to revisit Meadowlands winner's circle

By Ken Weingartner

JL Cruze might be 13 years old, but he still acts like a youngster on a daily basis.

"He goes in the field every day, and he loves that," said trainer Eric Ell, who saw JL Cruze enter his stable in November 2014. "And you can't hardly get him there without him wanting to go 100 mph when you turn him loose. He just busts across there like a 2-year-old. He's been doing that ever since I've had him. That's never changed.

"He's something. He's been incredible."

JL Cruze, the 2015 Dan Patch Award winner for best older male trotter, is still winning races nine years after receiving that honor. The son of Crazy-Topcat Hall has two victories this season, upping his career total to 65 in 223 starts. He has banked \$31,650 this year, pushing his lifetime earnings to \$1.92 million, and could become only the second trotter in history to make at least \$100,000 in a season on nine occasions.

Melady's Monet leads the list of trotters with six-figure seasons, followed by a quartet to have done it eight times: JL Cruze, Arch Madness, Goodtimes, and Grain Of Truth.

"He just likes doing what he does; he likes going to the track and competing," Ell said about JL Cruze. "I don't know of any horses that he was butting heads with early in his career that are out there still going. I think he's the last of the Mohicans. It's amazing when you think about it.

"Father Time will catch up to him at some point, but I'll just love watching him for as long as he can go."

JL Cruze is owned by Ken Wood, Bill Dittmar Jr., and Stephen Iaquina. The trio bought the gelding for \$37,000 at the 2014 Standardbred Horse Sale Mixed Sale. The following year, they watched as he won 16 of 21 races, earned \$627,456, and set numerous world records on his way to divisional honors. His victories included the Hambletonian Maturity and a 1:49 4/5 score in the Graduate Series final.

Last year, JL Cruze won 11 races – the second most of his career – in 33 starts. Only a dozen trotters older than 3 visited the winner's circle more times in 2023.

"He's had the same routine since I got him," Ell said. "I jog the same distance every day, I don't train him a lot. I guess he likes it because he keeps plugging away."

On Friday, JL Cruze will meet eight rivals in a \$12,500 conditioned trot at The Meadowlands. He will start from post nine with driver Todd McCarthy and is the 5-1 third choice on the morning line. Four-year-old mare Instagram Model is the 5-2 favorite, leaving from post six with David Miller in the sulky for trainer Annie Stoebe. Duly Resolved is 7-2, leaving from post five with Tim Tetrick driving for Jeff Cullipher.

"He still has good gate speed if you want to use it, and he's good from behind," Ell said. "He can do it either way."

JL Cruze heads to Friday's race off a second-place finish last week at the Big M. It was his second consecutive start at The Meadowlands (he was sixth on April 5) after spending most of the past year-and-a-half competing on the five-eighths-mile ovals at Harrah's Philadelphia and Bally's Dover.

"I had to get him off that five-eighths; it was starting to get to him a little bit," Ell said. "We wanted to take him back to the big track that he loves. He raced a lot better (last week). The first week up there, he thumped on me, which he'll do at times. We got that straightened out, I hope, and he'll be there tomorrow night trying again. He'll be knocking at the door, that's for sure."

Ell will look to keep JL Cruze racing at The Meadowlands, even though it's a trip that takes more than four hours from his Maryland base. The horse will be accompanied by his main caretaker, William Taylor, on the journeys.

"He's a big part of what (JL Cruze) does," Ell said about Taylor. "As long as (JL Cruze) is doing OK and competing at The Meadowlands, that's where he'll be."

Racing begins at 6:20 p.m. (EDT) at The Meadowlands.

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 18

RACE 7

(6) TACTICAL SEELSTER was used hard from a wide post racing in the slop last week and now he draws best. He should get a better trip here starting from the best post; top call.

-Garnet Barnsdale



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

RACE 14

(10) HOLY BEING raced pretty well from post 10 in his first start since December. None of these jump off the page and the fact that he gave it a go last time from the outside only inspires confidence that he'll do it again.

-Derick Giwner



RACE 7

(4) ON HIGHER GROUND has gotten progressively better through his three starts coming off the bench and it seems like the Bongiorno trainee is ready to break through in a big way.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, APRIL 20

RACE 7

(2) GOOD ROCKIN seemed to perk up with a better performance last week as he closed in 27 seconds on a track that was favoring early speed. Inside post tonight gives him options.

-Giwner



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

GINGRAS TRIPLES IN JOHN BRENNAN TROTTING SERIES

With the National Hockey League regular season wrapping up and the playoffs on the horizon, it's only fitting that driver Yannick Gingras netted a hat trick in round two of the John Brennan Trotting Series on Wednesday night (April 17) at MGM Yonkers Raceway.

[READ MORE](#)

BRETT BECKWITH POSTS 1,000TH CAREER VICTORY

When Brett Beckwith steered Side Piece (\$5.40) to victory in a new lifetime mark of 1:50 2/5 in the featured \$20,000 fillies and mares Winners-Over pace at Plainridge Park on Tuesday afternoon (April 16), he registered the 1,000th win of his young career in his typical front-end style.

[READ MORE](#)

TROTTERS SHINE IN SERIES FINALS AT HARRAH'S HOOSIER PARK

Trotters were in the spotlight Wednesday (April 17) at Harrah's Hoosier Park, with a trio \$20,000 series finals highlighting the 14-race card. In a week chock-full of series finale action, finals for the Mya Tri, Cardinal, and Chad E. Carlton Trotting Series kicked the festivities off.

The Mya Tri for filly and mare trotters that were non-winners of one or \$8,500 lifetime served as the evening's sixth race on the card, where Ponda Aesthetic pulled off the 25-1 shocker.

The counterpart for the males were next where A Blue Million delivered as the 3-5 favorite in The Cardinal final.

After tasting defeat for the first time this season last week at Miami Valley, Upnaway Blue Chip returned to the Winner's Circle with a win in the Chad E. Carlton Trotting Series final for non-winners of two trotters.

Racing continues at Hoosier Park on Thursday with a 14-race card highlighted by the \$20,000 Miss Windfall and Kenneth Stohler Memorial finals for pacing fillies and mares. Gamblers will also have a number of large pools to take aim at, with a \$11,127.33 carryover in the Jackpot Pick 6 (Races 8-13), to go along with \$10,000 guarantees on the Late Pick 4 (Races 11-14) and Hoosier High 5 (Race 14). First post for the Thursday card is 6:15 p.m.

[-edited release \(Hoosier\)](#)

FAMILIAR FACES SCORE AGAIN IN TUESDAY'S SERIES RACES AT POCONO

Four of the five winners in Tuesday afternoon's \$20,000 second prelim divisions of the Bobby Weiss Trotting Series for sophomore fillies at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania were repeat winners from last week. In five \$17,500 third and final prelim cuts of the Game Of Claims Trotting Series for \$30,000 base-tagged horses, driver Simon Allard and trainer Mark Akins teamed for three winners, including a pair of prelim sweepers.

[READ MORE](#)

OHIO HARNESS HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION FRESHMAN FOCUS RETURNS

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) will kick off its Freshman Focus series on Thursday, April 18 at 7 PM with trainer Virgil Morgan Jr. Roger Huston hosts Freshman Focus which looks at Ohio 2-year-olds in training.

Freshman Focus will air Thursday nights, featuring a different trainer. The show can be viewed on the OHHA Facebook page and the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association YouTube channel.

Freshman Focus is presented by Eldorado Scioto Downs, Sugar Valley Farms, and The Ohio State Veterinary Medical Center.

[-release \(OHHA\)](#)

NEW PAYMENT FORMAT FOR NEXT GENERATION RACES AT SCIOTO

Eldorado Scioto Downs has a new nomination structure for the Next Generation events that will be held on Saturday, July 6. The Next Generation is for Ohio sired 2-year-olds with all four divisions represented.

Horsemen can purchase a spot in the division of their choosing by April 15 for \$8,000. Or, if you need a little more time to decide before making the

payment, a \$10,000 nomination can be made by May 15. The last possible date to nominate is June 15 for \$12,000. Each division is limited to nine (9) entrants with (8) spots needing purchased in order for the event to fill.

If less than 10 spots are purchased within any of the individual deadlines, all purchasers from that nomination period are guaranteed a spot and not subject to a lottery drawing. Within any deadline period, if the total number of spots purchased exceeds nine, then only those spots purchased within that time period are subject to the lottery drawing. Once nine spots have been purchased by any of the given deadlines, the event will be closed.

Full conditions for the Next Generation are available on the USTA website at horsemen.ustrotting.com.

The 90-day 2024 Eldorado Scioto Downs race meet will open on Thursday, May 9 and conclude on Saturday, September 14. Races will be held Tuesday-Saturday with a special holiday cards on Memorial Day and Labor Day taking place instead of the Tuesday card that week. First post will be 5:45 p.m. each day except for Friday, September 13 which will have a 6:15 p.m. post to help accommodate horsemen attending the Ohio Selected Yearling Sale. More information about racing at Scioto can be found on the [Eldorado Scioto Downs website](#).

[-release \(Scioto\)](#)

FIRST TURN STABLE RETURNS FOR 2024 SEASON

Back on track for its ninth season in 2024, Harrah's Hoosier Park Racing & Casino is proud to announce the return of First Turn Stable, a fractional ownership opportunity, for the 2024 live harness racing season.

The first of its kind in the state of Indiana, First Turn Stable was designed to provide fans an easy and affordable way to experience the excitement of horse ownership and educate for future ownership endeavors. Harrah's Hoosier Park will begin taking new membership sign-ups throughout the early portion of the 2024 season which kicked off on March 22.

First Turn Stable gives racing fans a chance to learn about horse ownership first-hand. The fractional ownership program, established in 2016, gives harness racing fans hands-on ownership experience for a one-time \$250 buy-in.

First Turn Stable will welcome a new trainer for the 2024 racing season with Patrizio Ancora taking the reins. While Ancora maybe a relatively new name to the Indiana circuit, he has decades of racing experience to his credit. After getting his start as a trainer and driver in Italy, Ancora made the move to the United States where he worked for a number of years as a second trainer for one of the top racing operations in North America, Lindy Farms. Since starting his own stable in 2021, Ancora enters 2024 off of a personal best season in his young training career in 2023. Ancora batted at .205 on the year in 2023, notching 10 wins in 108 starts as a trainer, nearly doubled from the 57 starts made in 2022. Ancora is already well on pace towards another career year, batting at .493 in 2024, already visiting the Winner's Circle 12 times in 32 starts this season. The Ancora stable is headlined by Upnaway Blue Chip, a four-year-old gelded son of Chapter Seven-Noreaster Bluechip having won four of his first five starts since joining the Ancora stable, banking \$35,225 already for his four-year-old campaign. Ancora will look to make the first claim of the season for First Turn Stable in the coming weeks and get their 2024 campaign underway.

The program provides interactive social media pages, weekly e-mail updates and monthly financials that will be shared with members to provide a transparent and behind-the-scenes look into the real cost of owning a racehorse. Members can also enjoy scheduled group visits to the Patrizio Ancora stable located on property at Harrah's Hoosier Park to visit, receive updates and meet the stable's horses.

At the end of the racing season, the horse's winnings and costs will be calculated and any profit will be split amongst the group's owners. If the season results in a financial loss, Harrah's Hoosier Park will offset the figure to bring the season to a breakeven for the participants. Guests must be Indiana residents and at least 18 years of age to participate in First Turn Stable.

For more information on First Turn Stable membership, guests are encouraged to reach out to Taylor Owen at Towen@caesars.com or at 765-609-4620. Guests can also check out the First Turn Stable Facebook Page for updates as soon as they have their first horse for 2024. For more information on the 2024 live racing season, guests are encouraged to visit www.harrahshoosierpark.com.

[-release \(Hoosier\)](#)