

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024

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



JESSICA HALLETT PHOTO



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner
[@harnesseveguy](https://twitter.com/harnesseveguy)

Whether it is equipment, medication, driver or trainer: When is the right time to make a change in harness racing? Do you wait until something is obviously not working or should you be proactive and pull the trigger quickly?

When I first started owning horses over 20 years ago it was always ingrained in me that you should list the driver who handled your horse last time. The incumbent always had right of refusal. To some extent I understood because having someone who knows the horse and you've built a relationship with can be vital to success. On the other hand, sometimes horses get stale with the same set of hands behind the lines regardless of whether they are part of a Hall of Fame résumé or any catch driver.

When Tim Tetrick appeared on the entry sheet as the driver for Sylvia Hanover in the Clara Barton at Plainridge Park on July 21, it marked

"In this business and sports in general there is a 'what have you done for me lately' attitude. Just look at NFL quarterbacks."

-Driver Corey Callahan

the first time in her 28-race pari-mutuel career that someone other than Bob McClure was listed to drive. Was a change necessary? Was it the right moment?

Statistically speaking, McClure had won 18 of 22 starts with Sylvia Hanover as a 2- and 3-year-old. Going into the Clara Barton, the now 4-year-old mare was winless in six starts (four seconds and one third) with three of her defeats coming at the hands of the top-ranked horse in the country Twin B Joe Fresh.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



HAMBLETONIAN
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The facts are that Sylvia Hanover's raw ability and stamina simply overpowered the competition at 2 and 3, making it very feasible for her to race from behind and win with regularity. Clearly the competition has improved some and has been more versatile, which that has resulted in her inability to win. McClure didn't forget how to drive and he's most definitely a very capable and accomplished driver.

Perhaps Sylvia Hanover got "used to" McClure and needed someone new at the controls?

"I feel bad for Bob [McClure] if he does lose the drive," said driver Corey Callahan, who added he 100% agreed that sometimes a change needs to be made, while admitting he wasn't sure this situation called for it. "Sometimes horses get stale. They get stale to training regimen, to whoever has been driving them and the way they've been driving them. Sometimes change is good."

Hall of Fame trainer Jimmy Takter was never shy when it came to making driver or equipment changes in order to get just a little bit more out of his horses. He recalled one situation with double millionaire Pure Country, who was recently on the ballot for Hall of Fame induction herself.

"I had Brett Miller driving Pure Country in her first season, and at the beginning of her second I started to see that she had no respect for him," said Takter, who described Pure Country as perhaps the laziest horse he ever trained. "So then I switched to Mark MacDonald. The horse got new life and ended up winning the Breeders Crown. As a 4-year-old I switched to Yannick [Gingras]. Sometimes horses, especially lazy ones, they get used to the driver."

"When you put a new driver on a good horse, that guy is going to be excited about it where the old driver might accept that a horse isn't racing as well. It is a little bit like a trainer. If you have a horse for two seasons and it hasn't worked out, I believe you have to change them."

Getting back to Sylvia Hanover, on paper the driver change to Tetrick worked out perfectly as he moved the mare to the front after the opening quarter and cruised to just shy of a two-length win in 1:48 2/5. Of course, that victory comes with the caveat that Twin B Joe Fresh decided not

to compete in the Clara Barton.

"Tetrick may've woken that horse up a bit more than Bob would've done, but next time she may get a tougher trip," said Takter, who added that Beach Cowgirl tiring badly in the pocket helped Sylvia Hanover's chances of winning. "Sylvia raced great for Bob in her last start [Dorothy Haughton] but she just had a tough trip."

The fourth meeting of 2024 between Sylvia Hanover and Twin B Joe Fresh seems likely to come at The Meadowlands on August 3 (Hambletonian Day) in the Lady Liberty. That is the next target for Sylvia Hanover according to the connections, who would not commit on whether Tetrick would be in the bike that afternoon.

"In this business and sports in general there is a 'what have you done for me lately' attitude. Just look at NFL quarterbacks," said Callahan, who recalled a couple of instances where he lost drives for no particular reason. "You have to take things in stride because it happens to everyone, and trainers too. There is no sense dwelling on it. Life's too short and another good horse will come up before you know it."

Wise words from Callahan, who is certainly one of the more laid-back drivers in the sport. Staying on top as a Grand Circuit driver in harness racing is no easy task. It requires a great time commitment, from showing



DERICK GIWNER

Hall of Fame trainer Jimmy Takter made many driver changes during his career.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Congratulations to **WISH YOU WELL** on winning the first Elimination of the Adios! Flew home to post a huge upset, making up **8 3/4 lengths** in the stretch with a last quarter in **:25.2**.

Also to Bettor's Wish 2YO fillies **BET ON STATION** and **WISE PROFESSOR**, both winners in their divisions of the PA Stallion Series at Poconos this past weekend, and 2YO **WEDLOCK BLUE CHIP** winning at Harrah's Philadelphia in 1:52.

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up at morning training sessions and baby races to travelling from state to state on any given day, or even intra-day to get to the next event. In a perfect world all that hard work equates to a permanent assignment on a star horse. In reality, most drivers are only guaranteed to be in the bike when listed and then they must perform up to standards or sit on the sidelines next time.

News and Notes

It is very early in the year but the top four stallions in terms of 2-year-old pacer earnings in 2024 are all sons of Somebeachsomewhere. Of course the current fastest rookie pacer is a daughter of Big Jim called Chantilly (1:50 4/5) and tied for second at 1:51 1/5 are Papi Grad (Papi Rob Hanover) and Railroad Station (Sweet Lou). Obviously everything is subject to change.

On the trotting landscape, while Chapter Seven sits atop the heap, how about the comeback year from Greenshoe in the second position? Last year he was ninth, and one of that group – Supernova Hanover – was good enough to enter the Hambletonian, so things are looking up.

Speaking of the Hambletonian, Jimmy Takter mentioned that early favorite Karl, who is owned in part by his wife Christina and daughter/trainer Nancy, came out of his first defeat of the year in the Stanley Dancer in good shape. He added that given the right weather conditions and pace scenario he expects this could be the year we see a sub 1:50 Hambletonian final.

When you see It's My Show, Ruthless Hanover, Oakwood Ardan IR, Seven Colors and Allywag Hanover all qualifying this week it makes you wonder if some track should have a race for older horses on the last Saturday in July.



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10-time Canadian Trainer of the Year Moreau suspended by AGCO

Richard Moreau, who saw his 10-year reign as O'Brien-winning Trainer of the Year in Canada end in 2023, was "fully suspended" as of July 23 by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO).



NEW IMAGE MEDIA

According to the report, Moreau was suspended due to the presence of "darbepoietin alfa" (DPO) in the system of Funtime Bayama from an out of competition test completed on June 10, just five days prior to the horse finishing third in the \$730,000 North America Cup. The horse was privately sold a few days after the race to U.S.-based connections and finished second in an elimination and last in the \$650,000 final of the Meadowlands Pace.

A report from the Association of Racing Commissioners International rates DPO as a class 1 drug and according to an equine veterinarian we contacted, it is a blood builder which allows horses to maintain high speed longer. "Aranesp is the brand name. It is the ultimate no-no for performance in animals, or people for that matter," said the vet.

The AGCO release states that Moreau's suspension will remain in effect until the completion of an inspection into the positive test. All horses owned or under his care must be transferred to another trainer approved by AGCO in order to continue to race.

On his Facebook page, Moreau wrote in part: "For all of you who know me, obviously I didn't do it, but life goes on. Thanks for your support."

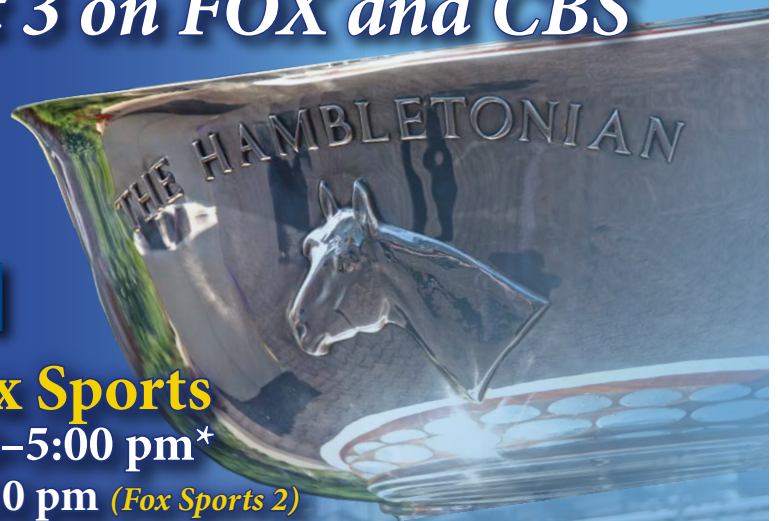
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*EDT (all subject to change)



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Hambletonian Information and History

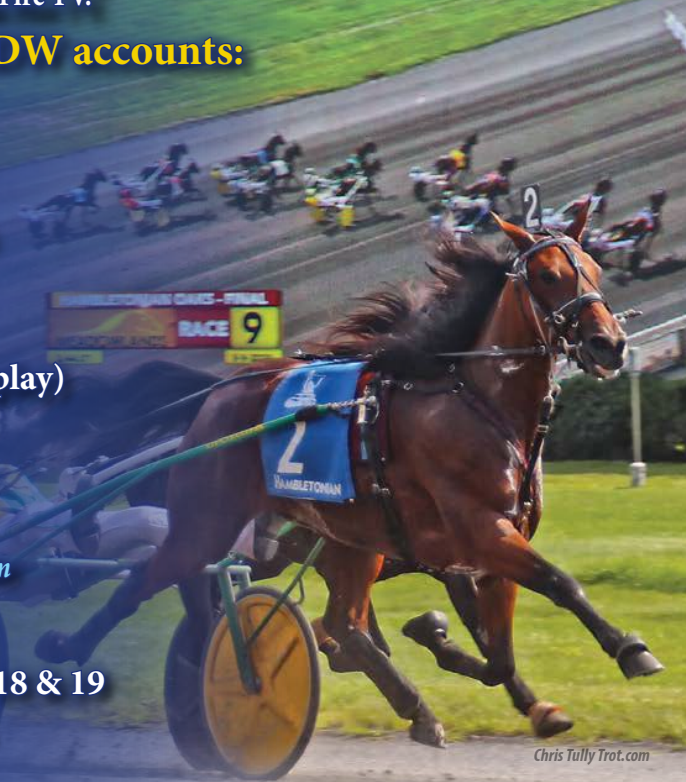
Hambletonian Website: hambletonian.com

Meadowlands Website: playmeadowlands.com

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Chris Tully Trot.com



Norman in with a chance in Adios, Hambletonian & Oaks



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [✕ BergmanJay](#)

What's predictable can prove boring over time. We've seen far too many races line up by the first turn and finish in the exact order over the years, and while cashing a ticket may be the ultimate prize, excitement and enthusiasm tend to be lost in the process. Yet for any racing fan there are always those moments where you can see glimpses of a time when races weren't set in stone and outcomes weren't accepted at the outset.

Such was the case on Saturday (July 20) when Wish You Well made a sharp right hand turn at the head of the stretch and paced over a solid field in the first of two Adios eliminations at The Meadows. The Nifty Norman-trained New Jersey-bred son of Bettor's Wish had gone silent on the local and national scene for about a year but woke up in a big way on a major stage with an epic closing performance that somehow earned a charted line with an impossible 25 2/5 final quarter.

"I'm not sure it was quite that fast," said Norman when asked about his horse on Tuesday. "You could see heading into the turn that David (Miller) had a lot of horse but even when he tipped him out, I was just hoping he'd hit the board and make it into the final. I didn't expect him to pass everyone."

For it to truly be a 25 2/5 final quarter, Wish You Well would have needed to be more than eight lengths off the leader at the three quarter pole. My guess is had the chart-caller had the benefit of replay there may have been a revision putting Wish You Well far closer to five lengths off the leader with a quarter-mile to go. Nevertheless, whether it be 26 seconds or a few ticks faster, Wish You Well made his mark with an epic close for just his second win as a sophomore in nine starts and a 1:49 1/5 mark that wasn't in need of confirmation.

"I was as surprised as everyone," said Norman of the drastic change in Wish You Well's outcome on Saturday, if not his effort. "He was a little better in his last start (a 1:50 4/5 win in an overnight race six days earlier at Harrah's Philadelphia) but I didn't see this coming. He's a small horse and likes to close. The only thing that I can look to is that he got really good around this time last year."

Given Wish You Well was a New Jersey-bred and didn't gain much traction in the New Jersey Sire Stakes this year, it was somewhat puzzling to see him actually entered in The Adios, especially given his previous miles included a fifth-place finish in The Messenger in late June at Yonkers against what would have to be considered "B-Level" talent in a race fitted between the North America Cup and Meadowlands Pace on the schedule.

Norman got some inspiration from ownership before the entry was due for the Adios.

"His two races after The Messenger were an improvement and the owner called me up and said: 'We made him eligible for the Adios. Are we going to enter him?' I thought we had to give him the chance," said Norman.

The decision may have been questionable if looking at the tote-board prior to the race as well, as Wish You Well was 29-1 and the second-largest price in the race. That said, the competition was clearly softer than what he would face if entered in the Meadowlands Pace.

"That was part of the calculation," said Norman. "I didn't think a lot of the Meadowlands Pace horses would enter and that's the way it worked out."

Still, Norman, as happy as he was for the owners and those that backed Wish You Well in the eliminations, had not gained enough confidence from Wish You Well's performance to predict that the homebred gelding of the Kovach Stables could duplicate that race and win Saturday's (July 27) finale.

"I think Noel (Daley) has the best horse," said Norman, referring to the other elimination winner Captain Albano, a 1:49 2/5 winner in his elimination captured in the front-end style referred to earlier in this column.

"Given that he's going to have a good spot in the final I'm hoping that he can get away close to the pace and I'm hoping that they cut some fast fractions up front. That's what he needs to happen," said Norman. "He's a small horse and he's at his best when he's chasing down horses."

It will be a tall order indeed and one can expect significantly lower odds in the Adios final for Wish You Well than the payout provided in the elimination.

For Norman, Saturday will be a doubleheader for his stable with the afternoon at The



CHRIS GOODEN

Wish You Well was a 28-1 upsetter in the Adios eliminations and is 3-1 ML in the \$350K final.

Meadows and evening at The Meadowlands for the Hambletonian and Hambletonian Oaks elimination races. In the big dance, Bella's Muscleshill (post 1) will line up against Karl (post 6) and eight others in the first \$100,000 elimination heat, scheduled as race nine on the program, for the \$1 million final on August 3.

"We were on the fence with him after last week," said Norman, referring to the break in stride by Bella's Muscleshill in the Tompkins Geers at The Meadowlands. "He shouldn't have been on the front end, that's not where he's at his best."

Unraced as a freshman, Bella's Muscleshill had been developing his résumé over the East Rutherford mile with a series of efforts that showed improvement and gave indication he could race with the best if given the opportunity.

Saturday will provide Bella's Muscleshill a chance to prove himself, as not only will he meet Karl but Goodtimes winner Highland Kismet (post 3), along with the 1:50 performer Sig Sauer (post 8).

Norman was encouraged enough by Sambuca Hanover's second-place finish in the Tompkins Geers (July 20) to give the Bar Hopping-sired filly a shot in the Hambletonian Oaks for sophomore filly trotters.

"The division is wide open and I think she deserved a chance," said Norman, who three years ago captured the Hambletonian Oaks with another daughter by Bar Hopping, the brilliant Bella Bellini.

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CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

Will youth be served?

Whitney Houston sang: “I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way.” She probably wasn’t speaking about harness racing, but she could have been.

Reading the profiles of Communicator Corner Hall of Famer inductees Tim Bojarski and Dave Brower (of blessed memory) earlier this month, I was impressed by the fact that although neither came from harness racing families, both got their starts visiting the race-track at a very young age. This is an area where racing has a huge advantage over other gambling venues – at casinos, racinos and sportsbooks where kids are not permitted.

I still remember being at Vernon Downs with the Harness Horse Youth Foundation. As we went to lunch at the casino buffet with our campers, we had to be escorted through the casino by two security guards, one at the front and one at the back of the line. It was reminiscent of the theater scene from *O Brother Where Art Thou?*

While we will not reap immediate benefit from promoting our sport to children, we will get a benefit down the road and as our fan base ages. That is critical!

The Harness Horse Youth Foundation (HHYF) is at the forefront of this movement, exposing kids to racing while in their pre-teen and early teen years, through its various camps and workshops. Executive Director Ellen Taylor does an amazing job with this organization, which has seen numerous graduates move into the industry, not just as new horsemen (Brady Galliers, Sophie Norton and Besim Odza, to name a few) or horsemen born into the business (Justin Irvine, Montrell Teague, Trent Stohler and Tony Alagna), but also in administrative and management roles. Some of those include Chris McErlean, Brower, Joanna Ricci (who serves with the Kentucky Racing Commission), Hoosier Park Race Secretary Scott Peine and Katie Eick (an official and social media manager at Freehold Raceway). HHYF gets it!

HHYF is a great organization and does a wonderful job, but many racetracks and horsemen reach out directly to youth as well. Just last week we read about the Chris Ryder stable hosting preschoolers at their barn at Winners Training Center. Besides their first exposure to harness horses, the children all left with a USTA Standardbred coloring book, Hambletonian stuffed pony and other swag. So horsemen get it.

My old boss at Northfield Park, Dave Bianconi, back when I first started there, was a young guy with a two-income family and young kids. That should be the ideal racetrack patron to target. But he said he and his peers could not go to the races because arranging babysitters was too expensive and too time consuming. There was no simple answer. Northfield had a Kids Korner for many years, but it was just a drop-off point where kids were set up away from their parents and the races.

However, many tracks like Hoosier Park, Tioga Downs and Running Aces get it too, holding regularly scheduled Family Days. This year the Red Mile is joining the trend. Kids can’t go to the card room or the casino, but they CAN be at the track, watching the excitement of racing.

Why do tracks offer these family events, which include face painters, balloon twisters, reduced price concessions and even live reptile displays (Full Disclosure: I am the presenter of The Handicapping Herpetologist Reptile Display)? We asked the people responsible for some of the events and their answers were educational.

“We’ve offered Family Days since we opened in 2008,” explained Aaron Bedessem, Vice President of Marketing and Operations at Running Aces in Minnesota. “Our goal has always been to be a family fun entertainment option. We also focus on families all week – Tuesdays with one-dollar hot dogs, sodas and chips. We also partner with many local non-profits, many



Patrick Ryder (above) addresses a group of preschoolers at Winners Training Center. (below) Shades Demsky hosts “Are you smarter than a harness driver?” with Tom Merton at Tioga Downs in New York.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

of which focus on youth. These partnerships have proven to drive more families with children and help attendance overall.”

Andrew Demsky, Regional Director of Racing for Vernon Downs and Tioga Downs, said that Tioga’s best day for attendance and wagering is Sunday, their Family Day.

“We have been doing Family Day Sundays since before I joined the team,” said Demsky. “We feature five \$1 food specials at the concessions stands, a free trackside waterslide, free bounce houses and free programs. We also offer free monthly farm tours and typically the farm manager from Allorage Farms brings a mare and baby to the trackside run-in shed.”

Both tracks aggressively promote their Family days on-site and online, through social media and their websites, although Bedessem says the events do not necessarily drive wagering increases.

Bedessem stressed that at Running Aces the overall attitude is to be kid-friendly. “We have a trout stream where you can catch your own dinner and pole rental is free for kids on Sundays. We partner with local Boy Scout troops to run that (so they are also being exposed to racing). You will see kids lined up at the fence along the track to watch the races and between races we see kids running on our grassy areas,” said Bedessem.

Demsky added that offering a variety of events is important, saying: “We play games with kids between races and offer prizes. It’s one of the most unique racetrack experiences. Also, we typically hold unique promotions on Sundays, including: Dog races (Bulldogs, Basset Hounds, Wiener Dogs), Herps Alive (Interactive lizard

exhibit), Mascot Days, Free Carnival Rides, and hired entertainment acts. All events are scripted for our television staff who gets better every year covering these events between races on our simulcast signal. It takes a team effort.”

While it will take a few years for these new racing fans to become new bettors, the early exposure to the races educates and removes some of the mystique of handicapping and can only help our sport. We can only hope more tracks start doing the same.

That’s it for this month. Now cash, even if it’s just on a simulcast Family Day from Tioga Downs or Running Aces.



Camels were a huge draw for fans of all ages at The Red Mile on Sunday, July 21.

AMANDA STEPHENS

Brittany trophies to Stable Of Memories

Although Brittany Farms will close at the end of the year, the bloodlines of horses it has bred will live on for generations. And now, the farm’s significant trophy collection will live on as well.

The trophies awarded to George Segal’s Brittany Farms will be on permanent display in the Stable of Memories in the iconic Round Barn, located at the gateway to the Red Mile in Lexington, Ky. It will be set up in ample time to be viewed by visitors to the racetrack’s fall meet.

“The Round Barn is a very, very special place, and personally, I’m thrilled that our trophies will be moved there,” said Brittany Manager Art Zubrod. “George, my wife Leah, and I have always been supporters of the historic, unique facility, and we’re extremely proud to be part of its future.”

The trophies that will be on display reflect the farm’s 38-year journey toward becoming one of the most influential Standardbred breeders and owners in history.

Brittany has bred and/or owned the winners of virtually every major stakes race. Those are highlighted by three Hambletonian winners and five winners of the Hambletonian Oaks, along with winners of the Meadowlands Pace, North America Cup and Little Brown Jug.

The farm has produced 30 Breeders Crown champions and those trophies, along with prizes awarded to the farm’s 17 Hall of Fame horses, will be visible throughout the collection.

Kathy Parker, Stable of Memories board member, said the board is honored to showcase Brittany’s collection.

“Our museum recognizes the great breeding farms, horses, and racing in the Bluegrass, and the collection of trophies and memorabilia representing the achievements of Brittany Farms is a beautiful and significant addition,” Parker said.

“We invite everyone to visit the Stable of Memories during The Red Mile’s major stakes meet this fall.”

-release (Brittany Farms)



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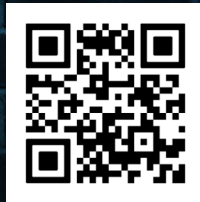
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3rd place \$100 / 4th place \$50
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PLAYMEADOWLANDS.COM

Melander looks to go back-to-back in Oaks; eyes Hambo upset

By Jay Bergman

Trainer Marcus Melander entered three sophomores on Tuesday for the sport's biggest trotting stakes events at The Meadowlands. Melander will send out a pair in two \$100,000 Hambletonian eliminations on Saturday at The Meadowlands and a single filly in the \$50,000 Hambletonian Oaks trial with an eye on the biggest prize seven days following.

"I just want to get them into the final," Melander said. "Anything can happen next week."

Melander's sentiment sums up the aspirations of most trainers, with 20 horses going in two Hambletonian divisions and 23 fillies divided into three divisions to determine the 10 finalists for the \$1 million Hambletonian and \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks on August 3.

Melander knows firsthand that getting into the final is the most important goal, because sometimes luck and how the race is contested have a huge impact on the final result. Last year many fans thought post 10 was a curse after the draw, but it turned into a blessing after the results when Melander sent out Heaven Hanover to a 28-1 triumph in the Hambletonian Oaks and trainer Nancy Takter had Tactical Approach ready and driver Scott Zeron delivered at 12-1 from the identical post position.

Of Melander's horses it appears that Date Night Hanover, the \$600,000 Harrisburg yearling purchase from 2022, likely has his best chance for reaching the Oaks final and perhaps giving the trainer his second straight title in the process.



NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

Date Night Hanover is the 5-2 morning line favorite in the third Hambletonian Oaks elimination.

"I couldn't be happier with the way she's coming into the race," said Melander of Date Night Hanover. "She was far back in the Del Miller and trotted strong to the wire."

Perhaps driver Dexter Dunn was looking to give the Chapter Seven-sired filly an easier trip following her overland first-over performance in the Zweig filly division at Vernon on July 4. Date Night Hanover took the air and kept coming in the stretch to a 1:51 4/5 career-best against Grand Circuit competition. With post five in the tenth race and third of three eliminations, Date Night Hanover needs a top-three finish to be guaranteed to advance to the final.

R Melina (post 8) was a 1:51 1/5 winner regaining her edge in her Del Miller Memorial victory. Also by Chapter Seven, R Melina has won 11 of 19 career starts for trainer John Butenschoen and has the driving services of Todd McCarthy, who captured the Hambletonian in 2022 with Cool Papa Bell.

OAKS ELIMINATION ONE, RACE 6

- 1 - French Champagne - Dexter Dunn - Ake Svanstedt - 2-1
- 2 - Chaparbro - James MacDonald - Trond Smedshammer - 10-1
- 3 - Sadbirdstillsing - Jason Bartlett - Tony Alagna - 15-1
- 4 - Paulina Hanover - David Miller - Noel Daley - 6-1
- 5 - Soiree Hanover - Tim Tetrick - Lucas Wallin - 3-1
- 6 - Allegiant - Scott Zeron - Vernon Beachy - 8-1
- 7 - Spy Coast - Yannick Gingras - Ron Burke - 4-1

OAKS ELIMINATION TWO, RACE 8

- 1 - Warrawee Michelle - Ake Svanstedt - Ake Svanstedt - 10-1
- 2 - Tandem Hanover - Todd McCarthy - Andrew Harris - 15-1
- 3 - Buy A Round - Andrew McCarthy - Noel Daley - 5-2
- 4 - Elista Hanover - David Miller - Annie Stoebe - 6-5
- 5 - Draw The Line - Yannick Gingras - Ron Burke - 15-1
- 6 - Cool Ma Belle - Bob McClure - Mark Steacy - 10-1
- 7 - Drawn Impression - James MacDonald - Luc Blais - 4-1
- 8 - Honey's Sweet - Dexter Dunn - Tony Alagna - 8-1

OAKS ELIMINATION THREE, RACE 10

- 1 - Emoji Hanover - Bob McClure - Luc Blais - 7-2
- 2 - Kinesiology - Yannick Gingras - Ron Burke - 12-1
- 3 - Chapalonia - Andrew McCarthy - Annie Stoebe - 8-1
- 4 - Sambuca Hanover - David Miller - Nifty Norman - 6-1
- 5 - Date Night Hanover - Dexter Dunn - Marcus Melander - 5-2
- 6 - Senorita Palema - Ake Svanstedt - Ake Svanstedt - 12-1
- 7 - Miss I La - Joe Bongiorno - Noel Daley - 10-1
- 8 - R Melina - Todd McCarthy - John Butenschoen - 3-1

HAMBLETONIAN ELIMINATION ONE, RACE 9

- 1 - Bella's Musclehill - David Miller - Nifty Norman - 6-1
- 2 - Waterfall - Todd McCarthy - Tony Alagna - 20-1
- 3 - Highland Kismet - Bob McClure - Mark Etsell - 3-1
- 4 - Benny J - James MacDonald - Tony Alagna - 10-1
- 5 - Supernova Hanover - Dexter Dunn - Per Engblom - 15-1
- 6 - Karl - Yannick Gingras - Nancy Takter - 4-5
- 7 - Security Protected - Tim Tetrick - Marcus Melander - 12-1
- 8 - Sig Sauer - Andrew McCarthy - Noel Daley - 8-1
- 9 - Caballero - Scott Zeron - Trond Smedshammer - 20-1
- 10 - Situationship - Ake Svanstedt - Ake Svanstedt - 9-2

HAMBLETONIAN ELIMINATION TWO, RACE 11

- 1 - T C I - David Miller - Ron Burke - 2-1
- 2 - Amazing Catch - Dexter Dunn - Ake Svanstedt - 10-1
- 3 - Secret Agent Man - Andy Miller - Julie Miller - 4-1
- 4 - Mars Hill - Todd McCarthy - Tony Alagna - 15-1
- 5 - Private Access - James MacDonald - Luc Blais - 5-1
- 6 - Life on the Bluf - Yannick Gingras - Lucas Wallin - 20-1
- 7 - Dame Good Time - Scott Zeron - Travis Alexander - 3-1
- 8 - Bright Star - Andrew McCarthy - Tony Alagna - 8-1
- 9 - Wild Ticket - Tim Tetrick - Marcus Melander - 15-1
- 10 - Daiquiri Hanover - Ake Svanstedt - Ake Svanstedt - 10-1

French Champagne (post 1) looks to continue her winning form in the first \$50,000 Oaks elimination (race 6) for driver Dunn and trainer Ake Svanstedt. She'll meet six rivals including Soiree Hanover (post 5), one of last year's more talented fillies.

The streaking Elista Hanover (post 4) enters her Hambletonian Oaks elimination (race 8) on a nine-race winning streak for trainer Annie Stoebe. The filly by International Moni could be in the toughest of the three divisions, with last year's Breeders Crown winner Warrawee Michelle (post 1) and multiple stakes winner Buy A Round (post 3) to her inside. Adding depth to this group is the Luc Blais-trained Drawn Impression (post 7) and

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 12](#)

Empire Breeders Classic winner Honey's Sweet (post 8).

The Hambletonian of course is the biggest dance set for August 3 and Melander hopes that his two colts will find a way through the eliminations and into the final. Neither Security Protected or Wild Ticket drew particularly well in their trials, but Melander is happy with their form and hopes that they reach the final.

"I thought Security Protected raced very well in the Dancer," said Melander. "He got locked in behind Karl and that cost him."

Security Protected drew post seven in the 10-horse first Hambletonian elimination carded as race nine. The Father Patrick-sired colt was among the best in the division last year and has had a bit of a bumpy road heading into the Hambletonian, suffering troubled trips in his last three stakes engagements.

Security Protected finished fifth in the Dancer behind upset winner Sig Sauer and will once again be up against him and Karl in Saturday's trial.

He'll need at least a fifth-place finish to reach the final.

"I expect Karl to be better," said Melander of the likely heavy favorite in this division. Karl drew post six while Sig Sauer drew post eight in what appears to be the stronger of the two elimination heats. Adding even more depth to this group is Highland Kismet (post 3), the Goodtimes winner making his second start at The Meadowlands, and Situationship (post 10), a Stanley Dancer division winner.

Melander hopes that Wild Ticket can overcome post nine in the second Hambletonian elimination heat carded as race 11. Wild Ticket was an Empire Breeders Classic division winner on June 14 at Vernon but failed to get into the hunt in the Zweig, and on July 13 finished fifth in a division of the Stanley Dancer behind Situationship at The Meadowlands.

"He had no room in the stretch," said Melander of Wild Ticket in the Dancer.

That said Saturday's contest will be an even tougher test for Wild Ticket given the unlucky draw.

T C I was last year's richest juvenile trotter and though he won three of his first five starts he came up short in the Dancer, finishing third following a close-up trip. T C I did land the pole position in this division



CURTIS SALONICK

Security Protected looks to get on track in the Hambletonian elims.

for perennial leading trainer Ron Burke who is still search of his first Hambletonian title.

Dame Good Time was aggressively handled in the Dancer by driver Scott Zeron and finished fourth, but the altered son of Chapter Seven showed that he can trot with pretty much any of the top sophomores in training when he captured the Zweig on July 4 at Vernon. Dame Good Time drew post seven.

Trainer Julie Miller also sends out a gelded son of Chapter Seven in Secret Agent Man (post 3) in this division. With but nine career starts, Secret Agent Man may lack the experience of the more seasoned competition in this class but clearly has the speed. He was a 1:50 3/5 winner in an overnight at The Meadowlands on July 6 and followed that performance with a stakes win in the Tompkins-Geers on July 20.

Only the top five horses in each Hambletonian elimination will reach the seven-figure final.

Post time for Saturday's elimination card is 6:20 PM (EDT) and 14 races are on tap.

Does the Adios need a facelift?



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner

✉ @harnesseveguy

On Thursday as I was putting the finishing touches on this newsletter I stumbled across an [article](#) pondering whether the format for the Delvin Miller Adios Pace (slated for this Saturday) needs to be changed to increase participation by more elite 3-year-olds.

The author, John Sacco of the Observer-Reporter, spoke with three men who have spent a large part of their careers at The Meadows: trainer Ron Burke, driver Dave Palone and announcer Roger Huston. They were all in favor of heat racing, and I think any fan of the sport likes the *thought* of horses competing multiple times in a day. It is a unique aspect of Standardbreds that they can race much more often than their Thoroughbred counterparts and there is something special about horses that can bring their best twice in a day.

I love the concept of heat racing in theory and have even written in the past that we should do it more, but it is simply not in the best interest of the sport for a couple of reasons. Handle always suffers when there are multiple heats in a single day. Yes, technology has advanced, but we as an industry still struggle to get people to bet something that isn't in their program or initially downloaded past performances. The other wagering issue is the inability of including multi-race wagers with these races because you can't link a race that doesn't have entries yet. Additionally, horse racing in general is under the microscope and while I do believe Standardbreds can handle racing twice in a day, there are those that could see that as a poor decision for the horses.

While I don't view returning the Adios to a same-day multiple heat event, I do have a solution which will lure more horses to the race. The problem is the schedule. The North America Cup, Messenger and Meadowlands Pace race on consecutive weeks leading up to the Adios elimination on what is typically the third Saturday of July. Rather than condensing the schedule by making the eliminations and final of the Adios on the same day, I propose that we have a tiered system for entry. Here is how it will work:

The top five Adios-eligible money-winners of the current year are automatically in the final without competing in the elimination. The remaining interested horses on the eligibles list compete in eliminations the week prior for the chance to earn one of the four remaining spots in the final.

This system guarantees that the top horses won't have to race in consecutive weeks and will certainly increase their interest. It also makes it easier to get into the final for those who didn't perform well up to this point because the competition in the eliminations will be easier. We could even offer a "pick your post" bonus to those in the elimination since they are being forced to race in consecutive weeks.

Sure, some people will complain that it isn't fair that the best horses get an automatic pass into the final, but we already do this with a number of races. Horses get byes into the final all the time. Plus, the rules would be right there in black and white well before nominating, so everyone is on an equal playing field.

The more I think about this concept, the more I like it for all stakes that occur from mid-July on (not including 2YO races). It eases a sometimes congested stakes schedule and also should provide for more exciting elimination races. If 10 to 15 horses are battling for just four or five spots on the gate in a final, doesn't that provide for more competition and less complacency in elimination races?

The goal should always be to have the best stakes races possible and perhaps the above idea pushes us closer to that possibility.

What do you think? I welcome your thoughts. Email me at dgiwner@drf.com.

Noel Daley eyes Adios, Meadowlands successes on Saturday

By Ken Weingartner

Noel Daley saw Captain Albano be something of a victim of circumstances in prior races, and the trainer much preferred the way things looked last week in the colt's Delvin Miller Adios elimination. He wouldn't mind a repeat viewing in Saturday's \$350,000 final.

Captain Albano captured his Delvin Miller Adios Pace for the Orchids elim by 3-1/4 lengths over Timeisonmyside in 1:49 2/5 on July 20 at Hollywood Casino at The Meadows. He is the 2-1 morning-line favorite in the final, starting from post four with driver Todd McCarthy in the 58th edition of the event for 3-year-old pacers.

Wish You Well, who won the other Adios elim by 1-3/4 lengths in 1:49 1/5, is the 3-1 second choice. He will leave from post two with David Miller driving for Nifty Norman. His mile, which included a blistering 25 2/5 last quarter, is the season's second-fastest by a 3-year-old pacer on a five-eighths-mile track. Captain Albano's 1:49 2/5 score is tied for third.

In his Adios elim, Captain Albano got away third, but moved to the front after leader Noblesville reached the opening quarter in 26 3/5. Captain Albano and McCarthy controlled the action from there, reaching the half in 55 and three-quarters in 1:22 4/5 on their way to the win.

It was Captain Albano's third victory in seven races this season. Last year, Captain Albano was no worse than second in nine starts, winning seven and being named the Dan Patch Award recipient for best 2-year-old male pacer.

"We've been trying to get to the front for a month, and if we got there, we haven't been able to keep it," Daley said. "The horse has been fine every start. He really has. He just hasn't had any luck. I'm still happy with him. He seems good, he still seems bright."

Captain Albano encountered traffic or trip trouble in his prior three races — the North America Cup final, Meadowlands Pace elimination, and Meadowlands Pace final on July 13, when he got parked three-wide near the rear of the field from post seven in the opening quarter-mile.

"That race was over at the quarter pole for us; he got three deep and that was the end of it," Daley said, adding about Pace champ Legendary Hanover and his stakes-record 1:46 3/5 victory, "I don't know if anyone was beating him anyway, he was awesome."

"In the North America Cup, he got shut off halfway down the lane. You can't stop and get started up again. In the elimination of the Meadowlands Pace, he was doubled up with too much pace. That's when he threw in all those bad steps. It wasn't for any other reason than he had too much horse. He had to grab him and settle him just to get into the final."

For his career, Captain Albano has won 10 of 16 races and earned \$577,915. The son of Captaintreacherous-Angelou is owned by Patricia Stable, L.A. Express Stable, Sjoblom Racing, and Michael Dolan.

Daley and McCarthy are both seeking their first Adios trophy. They finished third together with Pebble Beach in 2022.

"Hopefully, (Captain Albano) can make it to the top again once things settle down," Daley said. "We'll just see."

Racing begins at 11:45 a.m. (EDT) Saturday at Hollywood Casino at The Meadows.

Captain Albano will be among eight stakes starters for Daley on Saturday. Four of the others will be among a group competing at The Meadowlands and include Sig Sauer in the first of the night's two \$100,000 Hambletonian eliminations for 3-year-old trotters as well as Buy A Round, Miss I La, and Paulina Hanover in the Hambletonian Oaks eliminations for 3-year-old female trotters.

Sig Sauer and driver Andy McCarthy will leave from post eight in their Hambletonian elim and are 8-1 on the morning line. Sig Sauer, a son of Muscle Hill-Sigilwig who will be making only his third start of the year, is coming off a 1:50 win in a division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial on July 13 at The Meadowlands. It is the fastest mile of the season by a 3-year-old trotter.

"He seems real good," Daley said. "He was even a little more forward than I thought he would be (in the Dancer) but Andy gave him a great trip, and everything worked out. But you have to remember, that was his second start for the year and his seventh start lifetime, so you'd like to think he's still on the upward trend. I think that's our biggest advantage."

The first elimination field includes 4-5 favorite Karl, trained by Nancy Takter and No. 1 in the Road to the Hambletonian rankings, as well as Goodtimes Stakes champion Highland Kismet and the other Stanley Dancer Memorial division winner Situationship.

"We got a bad post and the tougher of the two divisions, it's just up to (Sig Sauer) to have a good day," Daley said. "As long as he has a good day, he's going to make it in there."

"He's a handful to deal with on a daily basis, but he's been very professional every time we've taken him to the races. I told people early in the piece that if he's half as good as he thinks he is, I'm in good shape. It just turned out that he is."

The top-five finishers from each elim will advance to the \$1.05 million Hambletonian final, the sport's premier race for 3-year-old trotters, Aug. 3 at The Big M. Elimination winners draw for post positions one through five followed by the remaining finalists receiving their posts in an open draw. The draw will be conducted July 30 at Hogan Equine Clinic in Cream Ridge, N.J.

In the Hambletonian Oaks, Paulina Hanover is 6-1 in the first of three \$50,000 eliminations. Buy A Round is 5-2 in the second elim and Miss I La is 10-1 in the third. The top-three finishers from each elim plus the fourth-place finisher with the highest lifetime earnings will advance to the \$525,000 Oaks final, also Aug. 3 at The Meadowlands.

"My best chance is Buy A Round," Daley said about the daughter of Walner-On Your Tab, who has hit the board in all 13 career races, winning eight. "She came up with a little bit of a high white count again (last start when she finished second in a division of the Del Miller Memorial). I know she was second, but she was disappointing there. Everything seems good again. Hopefully, she will be back to herself. As long as she's up close, she can sprint."

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

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Burke looks for a better T C I in Hambletonian elimination

By Ken Weingartner

After watching T C I lose back-to-back starts for the first time in his career, trainer Ron Burke hopes to have his 3-year-old trotter heading back in the right direction.

T C I, who last season earned \$1.23 million to become the richest 2-year-old male trotter in history, was third in a division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial on July 13 at The Meadowlands, the colt's final prep ahead of his Hambletonian Stakes elimination Saturday at The Big M. T C I finished three-quarters of a length behind winner Situationship, who stopped the timer in a career-best 1:51 1/5.

In his previous race, the Dr. Harry M. Zweig Memorial on July 4 at Vernon Downs, T C I made an early break and finished fourth. His two setbacks occurred after beginning 2024 with three straight wins.

"The year started out good and then the last couple I was like, 'eh,' 'eh,' and I couldn't really put a finger on it," Burke said. "So, we kind of did a complete physical on him last week and found a couple things that we didn't know were going on with him that are very correctable.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that he will be significantly better. The time off was good for him. He trained really good (Wednesday); I was really happy with him."

Prior to the Dancer, Burke got the sense T C I might not be on top of his game.

"When I warmed him up, he was just as blah as blah could be," Burke said. "He was just not himself. Now, I would say he was 90 percent back to himself training. I have two more days (to prepare for the Hambletonian elim) and hopefully we'll make the final. I think in the two weeks, I'll have this horse perfectly ironed out.

"Losing, in a way, was a help because it was a wake-up call that we needed to start being a little more diligent on making sure he was all right."

T C I, who received the 2023 O'Brien Award for best 2-year-old male trotter to race in Canada, has won 13 of 17 career starts. Last year, his victories included the Mohawk Million, William Wellwood Memorial and Peter Haughton Memorial.

A son of Cantab Hall-Nicole's Promise, T C I was named for vacation destination Turks and Caicos Islands. He is owned by Burke Racing Stable, Hatfield Stables, Knox Services Inc., and Weaver Brussemi.

The colt, ranked No. 2 in Meadowlands announcer/analyst Ken Warkentin's Road to the Hambletonian Top 10, will head to Saturday's second of two \$100,000 Hambletonian eliminations as the 2-1 morning-line favorite in a field of 10. The top-five finishers from each elim will advance to the \$1.05 million Hambletonian final, the sport's premier race for 3-year-old trotters, Aug. 3 at The Big M.

T C I's elim also includes Zweig Memorial champ Dame Good Time, who is 3-1 on the morning line and will leave from post seven with Scott Zeron driving for trainer Travis Alexander, and last week's Tompkins-Geers Stakes winner Secret Agent Man, who is 4-1 and will start from post three with Andy Miller driving for Julie Miller.

"I don't really worry about who I'm in with; I worry about mine and having them ready," Burke said. "I do think, looking at it at a glance, I'd rather be in my elimination than the other elimination. Mine is pretty solid all the way throughout, but I don't think it's got the stars in it that the other one does."

In the first elimination, Karl, trained by Nancy Takter and No. 1 in the Road to the Hambletonian rankings, is the 4-5 morning-line favorite. He will start from post six with driver Yannick Gingras. Joining Karl in the field are Goodtimes Stakes champion Highland Kismet and Stanley Dancer Memorial division winners Sig Sauer and Situationship.

Sig Sauer, Situationship, and Highland Kismet occupy spots three



NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

T C I had a record season in terms of earnings as a 2-year-old and looks to get back on track Saturday at The Meadowlands.

through five, respectively, in the Road to the Hambletonian rankings.

Elimination winners draw for post positions one through five followed by the remaining finalists receiving their posts in an open draw. The draw will be conducted July 30 at Hogan Equine Clinic in Cream Ridge, N.J.

In addition to sending out T C I in a Hambletonian elim, Burke has one horse in each of Saturday's three \$50,000 eliminations of the \$675,000 Hambletonian Oaks for 3-year-old female trotters at The Meadowlands. Spy Coast is 4-1 on the morning line in the first, Draw The Line is 15-1 in the second, and Kinesiology is 12-1 in the third.

The top-three finishers from each elim plus the fourth-place finisher with the highest lifetime earnings will advance to the \$525,000 Oaks final, also Aug. 3 at The Meadowlands.

Spy Coast won two preliminary legs of the New Jersey Sire Stakes and finished fourth in the final. The daughter of Walner-Zeppole heads to her Oaks elim off second-place finishes in divisions of the W.N. Reynolds Memorial and Tompkins-Geers Stakes, both at The Big M.

Draw The Line was a Grand Circuit winner last year at Lexington's Red Mile and has a Pennsylvania Sire Stakes division victory to her credit this season. The daughter of Cantab Hall-Ridge Speed goes to her Oaks elimination off a fourth-place finish in a division of the Del Miller Memorial.

Kinesiology, a daughter of Walner-Muscle Test, was third last week in a division of the Tompkins-Geers and won the consolation division of the Zweig Memorial for fillies on July 4 at Vernon Downs.

"Spy Coast is my best chance," Burke said. "On her best day, she's right there with the best fillies. Draw The Line is getting better. She wasn't good her last start, but we found something with her and worked on her. Kinesiology is getting better every start. She was locked and loaded last week and just got out late.

"I think have a good chance of making the final, and then being competitive in the final."

French Champagne, who won a division of the Del Miller Memorial, is the 2-1 favorite in the first Oaks elimination. Elista Hanover, who has won nine consecutive races since opening her season with a third-place finish, is the 6-5 favorite in the second. Date Night Hanover, who won this year's Zweig Memorial for fillies, is the 5-2 favorite in the third.

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

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Adios Day \$15K Pick 8 Analysis

By Mike Pribozie

There are \$200,000 worth of guaranteed wagers on the Saturday, July 27 at The Meadows for Adios Day. Below we take a look at the \$15K GTD Pick 8, which also includes a \$12.5K Pick 4 in race 9, a \$12.5K Pick 5 in race 11 and part of a \$15K Pick 4 in race 13.

RACE 8: ARDEN DOWNS 2YO C&G PACE

(3) WEDLOCK BLUE CHIP comes off a blowout win at Philly in a fast time. If he stays flat here expect more speed. (6) LOU'S ALBANO has experience, connections and closing speed. (2) DAMN THE TORPE-DOES was solid 7/20 winning from a wide draw. He could improve and be dangerous here.

RACE 9: NW \$7000 L4 STS

(5) SANDBETWEENMYTOES wasn't winning last vs a well-meant winner but kicked home in 27 3/5 late. His class means a lot here. (8) SURREAL IDEAL has limited starts this year but last was decent off a six-month layoff. Will be flying late again.

RACE 10: QUINTON PATTERSON ADIOO VOLO 3 YO FILLY PACE

(7) MY GIRL EJ loves this racetrack, has been knocking heads with the best all year and will be tough to catch here. (3) SARASOTA HANOVER kicked home in 27 in latest vs Meadowlands lover. She's improving rapidly and is the most dangerous to the favorite.

RACE 11: CLAIM HANDICAP \$10,000-\$12,500

(2) LYONS COPPERTOP was favored at this level 7/20 but tired late. Needs the 28 2/5 kick from 7/13 line. (3) WOODMERE ANDROLLI steps up off a nice win in fast time. Has failed at this level in the past.

RACE 12: ARDEN DOWNS 3YO C&G TROT

(3) SPLENDID likes to win and has a 1:53 4/5 Line to go back to here. Looms a heavy favorite vs these.

RACE 13: CLAIM HANDICAP \$10,000-\$12,500

(6) FEARLESS FURY was wide in latest off the claim but passed horses late; best post now equals leave attempt. (8) ASTON HILL DAVE gets back in for a tag with his 474k in class. Needs to blast here.

RACE 14: ARDEN DOWNS 2YO FILLY PACE

(4) ALWAYS ANA HANOVER tried PASS in last and rallied for second. That was a quick race and anything close to that here wins. (7) DAILY DOUBLE DEO has been competitive vs PASS for Daley so far. No Papi Grad to chase here.

RACE 15: \$350,000 DELVIN MILLER ADIOS

(7) SWEET BEACH LIFE started a move in his elimination and lost momentum when Huntingforchrome pulled in front of him. He won the Messenger from off the pace with a sharp kick. Big chance here if pace gets hot again. (4) CAPTAIN ALBANO is obvious with his class and blow-out Elim win.

.20 TICKET: 2,3,6 / 5,8 / 3,7 / 2,3 / 3 / 6,8 / 4,7 / 4,7 = \$38.40

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THURSDAY, JULY 25

RACE 5



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

(6) YOU GOT IT KEMP would have caught the 4-5 favorite in his debut if he got clearance one or two seconds earlier. He was in high gear when the wire hit and that should be a perfect prep for this Gold debut.

-Garnet Barnsdale

FRIDAY, JULY 26

RACE 3



(1) FLIGHTLINE dealt with adversity early in his career debut as both horses to his inside broke. He ended up third-over and was likely a length-plus further back then charted at three-quarters and finished up willingly.

-Derick Givner

SATURDAY, JULY 27

RACE 5



(3) DIAMANTÉ HANOVER draws a short field here after two wins in last three at Pocono. Looks faster than this group.

-Mike Pribozie

RACE 6



(5) SOIREE HANOVER came first over and battled nicely last time, serving notice that she's ready to peak at the right time. The gloves come off here.

-Givner

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

HAMBLETONIAN DAY COUNTDOWN AT NINE

In nine days, a mere 216 hours from now, harness racing's greatest day – featuring harness racing's greatest event – will take place on Saturday, Aug. 3, as a 16-race blockbuster card takes center stage at The Meadowlands, with the 99th edition of “America's Trotting Classic”, the \$1-million Hambletonian, in the spotlight.

Also on the program is the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks, as well as a long list of other enticing stakes which would be the envy of any iron chef – or any handicapper – with estimated purses totaling just over \$3.2 million. The bill of fare:

- \$1-million Hambletonian (3-year-old open trot)
- \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks (3-year-old filly trot)
- \$300,000 John Cashman Memorial (open trot)
- \$275,000 Cane Pace (3-year-old colt and gelding pace)
- \$275,000 Sam McKee Memorial (older pace)
- \$175,000 Lady Liberty (older mare pace)
- \$150,000 Dr. John Steele Memorial (older mare trot)
- \$90,000 Shady Daisy (3-year-old filly pace)
- \$240,000 New Jersey Sire Stakes final (2-year-old colt and gelding trot)
- \$240,000 New Jersey Sire Stakes final (2-year-old filly trot)

But there's plenty of “Hambletonian Festival” activities going on leading up to the big day.

A TASTY MENU: The Hambletonian Day betting menu is sure to please, offering non-stop action from race one – which gets underway at noon – until the 16th and final dash – which goes at approximately 7 p.m.

Since it is the last day of the Championship Meet, all wagers will offer mandatory payouts, and, in addition, there will be \$350,000 in guaranteed pools.

Here's what will be offered:

- Races 1-6: 20-cent Pick-6 (\$50,000 guaranteed pool)
- Races 3-7: 20-cent Pick-5 (\$75,000 guaranteed pool)
- Race 7: 10-cent Hi-5 (Pentafecta)
- Races 5-8: 50-cent Pick-4
- Races 6-12: 20-cent Survivor Pick-7
- Races 9-12: 50-cent Pick-4 (\$100,000 guaranteed pool)
- Races 12-15: 50-cent Pick-4 (\$125,000 guaranteed pool)
- Race 16: 10-cent Hi-5 (Pentafecta)

-edited release (Meadowlands)

LIVE RACING RETURNS TO BATAVIA ON SATURDAY

Live harness racing returns to Batavia Downs on Saturday (July 27) as the 2024 summer/fall season gets underway with a full 15-race card that starts at 6 p.m. The season runs through Saturday (Dec. 7) and features a 56-day meet.

The opening night card includes the first visit of the year from the New York Sire Stakes as the 3-year-old pacing fillies will be on hand to compete in two \$58,100 divisions. There will also be three Excelsior races going for \$20,000 each, bringing the total stake purses available that night to \$176,200.

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CARTER DALGETY RIDING THE WAVE

Carter Dalgety has needed little time to make a big impression.

The 21-year-old Dalgety, who earlier this year became the quickest junior driver to reach 100 wins in New Zealand history, recently arrived in the U.S. to spend a couple months observing harness racing firsthand on this side of the world. Not even two weeks into his stay, he made an impact here as well.

On July 19, Dalgety made his Stateside debut and picked up his first North American win when he guided Chris Ryder-trained Handlelikeaporsche to victory at Harrah's Philadelphia. The next night, Dalgety got his first Meadowlands triumph with Stonebridge Reef, another horse from the Ryder Stable.

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HAMBLETONIAN PARTY, CHARITY CASINO NIGHT & POKER TOURNAMENT

The harness racing community is invited to the annual casino-themed fundraiser held on Hambletonian eve at the Meadowlands in East Rutherford. Proceeds benefit two of the sport's most important charities – The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame, focused on preserving the history of the sport and the Standardbred Retirement Foundation, assisting equine athletes after their racing days. The Hambletonian Society and the Meadowlands continue to be strong financial supporters of this event.

With an open bar and buffet dinner, the August 2nd event features blackjack, roulette, craps and a great night of racing. After playing casino games, players can exchange their chips for raffle tickets to win great prizes including a Ring doorbell, dash cam, electronics, jewelry, harness racing art, professional sports tickets and autographed baseballs, and themed gift baskets. The poker tournament grand prize is an all-expenses-paid trip to Las Vegas sponsored by Roberts Communications and the Meadowlands.

The important work of both institutions has traditionally enjoyed strong support. A charitable event has been part of the Hambletonian festivities since 1991, raising a total of \$1.4 million. Sponsors this year include the Meadowlands, Arden Homestead Stable, Odds On Racing, the Hambletonian Society, Scott Farber, UFO Bikes, and many drivers and trainers.

If you plan to be in town for the Hambletonian and are looking for some entertainment Friday night, please join us. It is a well-attended, fun affair. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Casino tickets are \$125 online, \$150 at the door. Poker tournament tickets are \$175 online, \$200 at the door. Both include open bar and dinner. Purchase online at adoptahorse.org or call the Harness Racing Museum 845-294-6330 or Standardbred Retirement Foundation 609-738-3255. Sponsorships are still available.

-edited release (Harness Racing Museum/Hall of Fame)

NYSS FRESHMEN TROTTERS INVADE VERNON ON FRIDAY

Vernon Downs play host to a \$108,200 leg of the New York Sire Stakes (NYSS) for 2-year-old trotting fillies on Friday (July 26).

Chapvious (Jason Bartlett) leads a strong field of eight as the 5-2 morning line favorite. The filly by Devious Man-Chaperess is trained by George Ducharme. She has two wins in three starts including NYSS wins at Yonkers and Buffalo.

The Ake Svanstedt trained Beautiful Sight (Tyler Buter) is coming off a NYSS win at Tioga Downs. The filly by Chapter Seven-Beautiful Sin is one for one in her career.

Pink Chou Chou (Todd McCarthy) is a filly by Chapter Seven-Secret Magic. She fell just short of a win in her last NYSS start at Tioga. She is trained by Nancy Takter and should be right in the thick of things as well.

The 15-race-card starts at 12:15 p.m. on Friday (7-26).

-release (Vernon)

SPIRIT DAY GENERATES RECORD HANDLE AT PLAINRIDGE PARK

The 2024 Spirit of Massachusetts Trot card at Plainridge Park that was held on Sunday (July 21) turned out to be the most successful at the windows in the seven year history of the event.

The \$334,389 overall handle was the highest total ever realized for a Spirit Day card and the \$48,137 on-track take was the second highest behind only the 2019 program.

Steve O'Toole, Director of Racing at Plainridge Park, was very happy with those numbers and was quick to credit those who made it happen.

“We have a very loyal customer base at Plainridge and they came out in force on a beautiful summer day to bet on a very competitive card of racing put together by race secretary, Paul Verrette. I want to thank my entire staff for their hard work in planning and logistics leading up to Sunday in order to put on this first class event. We are already looking forward to next year,” said O'Toole.

-release (Tim Bojarski for Plainridge Park)