

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2024

Will stakes get a passing grade?

GI
GII
GIII

The USTA will add Graded Stakes designations to yearling pedigrees in 2025 and Keith Gisser ponders the validity of the practice



CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

In case you missed the bulletin, the United States Trotting Association has decided to post itself by announcing graded stakes for 2025 yearling pedigrees. To be clear, the USTA's 11-member Graded Stakes Committee will evaluate races from 2023 and 2024 (Grade 1 races back to 2021) with the benefit of hindsight and provide grades for each to be used in future yearling sales.

Our sport has enough issues with stake racing right now (read on) to not come up with some convoluted proposal that benefits breeders and buyers, but not racing fans (the grades won't immediately be available on past performances). While I am in favor of Graded Stakes (an almost impossible task to accomplish, but worth the effort), this one leaves me thoroughly confused.

Let's face it. Realistically, other than the Breeders Crown Finals, there are six Grade 1 Stakes in our sport – the Hambletonian and the Kentucky Futurity for trotters and the Meadowlands Pace, the North America Cup and the Little Brown Jug for pacers. For older trotters, we can add in The International Trot. If you want to throw in the Hambletonian Oaks, the Kentucky Filly Futurity and the Jugette, I am fine with that. Otherwise there are just too many variables.

Frankly, the other Triple Crown races are Grade 2 events (although I am sure they will be

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)

RICHEST STAKES IN NORTH AMERICA

- \$1,000,000 Hambletonian
- \$1,000,000 MGM Yonkers International
- \$740,000 Mohawk Million
- \$740,000 Metro Pace
- \$730,000 North America Cup
- \$700,000 Breeders Crown (2YO's)
- \$650,000 Meadowlands Pace
- \$600,000 Breeders Crown (3YO + Older)
- \$527,620 Canadian Trotting Classic
- \$525,000 Little Brown Jug
- \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks
- \$500,000 Kentucky Futurity
- \$457,000 MGM Borgata
- \$444,000 Maple Leaf Trot
- \$428,000 William Haughton Memorial
- \$425,000 Hambletonian Maturity

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granted Grade 1 status). It's impossible to accurately grade any stake that is raced in divisions, although according to the release the USTA is going to do it: "Races with conditions allowing for divisions cannot be graded on total purse, and regardless of purse, drop one grade."

So, if I meet the arbitrary purse requirements in each division – For male horses: \$75,000 to \$174,999 for Grade 3, \$175,000 to \$349,999 for Grade 2, and \$350,000 and up for Grade 1. For female horses: \$75,000 to \$124,999 for Grade 3, \$125,000 to \$249,999 for Grade 2, and \$250,000 and up for Grade 1 – I get penalized for giving away more, not less, money.

But Grade 1 is not just about money, it is about prestige. That's why it's hard to find a race for veteran pacers that fits the bill.

Sires Stakes Finals (not preliminary legs) get their own set of grades – R1, R2, R3 (Restricted). But that's a real apples-to-oranges comparison. How do you compare Kentucky (which might as well be an Open Stake state with its generous mare foaling rules) to states like Ohio, with similar purses, but far more protected horses. What about Minnesota, where the horse needs just to be sired by a state registered stallion. Of course that state would have to bump its final purses by \$10,000 just to get Grade R3 consideration.

Let me be clear, I like the idea, but the way that the USTA is going about it makes little sense. I know Steve Stewart of Hunterton Farm, a committee member, said: "You're never going to make everybody happy, but we're trying to do what is best for the sport. I feel like at the end of the day we're going to accomplish our goal." But a program that does not include all aspects of the sport is begging to fail. I hope I am wrong.

Meanwhile, state programs have surpassed the Grand Circuit in many aspects and locations. In Indiana, nobody is paying attention to the Fox Stake. They are watching the Indiana Sires Stakes. In Illinois, The Review? Is it even still raced? Ohio has not hosted the traditional Tompkins Geers Stakes for years (hosted by Scioto Downs in the day), adding a plethora of new "Grand Circuit" races.

Meanwhile the restricted stakes programs in some of the most successful states have issues. Kentucky has had problems filling some of its top races. Ohio had to cancel a leg of the Ohio Sires Stakes for lack of entries, with one owner actually looking for a 3-year-old trotter to buy and enter, just so the \$100,000 race would fill. Why?

The issue is the success of the second (and in Kentucky, third) level stakes. These mid-level stakes were initially designed to support the small guy who did not have the funds or backing to compete with the major stables. What has developed is that those major stables, instead of racing their top six or seven in the top program, against each other, race the top two or three in the top level, the next few at the next level and numbers seven through 10 (or whatever) at the third level (which would be county fairs in Ohio).

Those Ohio 3-year-old colt trotters I mentioned above . . . 14 horses TOTAL raced in any one of the five legs of the Ohio Sires Stakes. 72 colts raced in the Buckeye Stallion Series, 14 of them just once. Fortunately, the OHHA is looking at making some changes.

At an informal meeting earlier this month (this article will be published while the OHHA Board is voting on the proposals), suggestions included requiring a horse to race twice in the Sires Stakes to qualify for either the \$300K Scarlet Final or the \$100,000 Gray (Consolation) Final. That is already a requirement in the Buckeye Stallion Series, which may represent some of the disparity.

Another proposal was to eliminate trailers in any leg of these stakes, although there was strong pushback on this from permit holders, particularly Northfield Park. Ohio currently requires all horses to be on the gate in its stake finals, but in the preliminary legs there can be two trailers. Ohio is one of only two states that permit this. Two trailers, especially in early 2-year-old races is unsafe and unfair to investors who have tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars invested. Even at the 3-year-old level, at Delaware, we saw a colt trot with 10 horses. The one horse was 10 lengths off the gate at the start, but the nine could not slide out because the 10 was there. The obvious compromise is to limit these races to one trailer.

Editor speaks out on Graded Stakes

By Derick Gwerner

Since you have made it to page three I'm going to assume you have read (or are still reading) Keith Gisser's piece on the addition of Graded Stakes for yearling sale pedigrees. He makes some fair points that I agree with and some that I don't.

I've been arguing to include Graded Stakes for at least a decade and even felt one track executive's ire for publishing my set of grades with their event listed as a Grade 3 when they felt it should be a Grade 1. It is a tricky endeavor that perhaps – despite Keith's feelings – should be done slowly and in waves to ensure things are done right before they become a tool for handicappers.

Keith is however 100% correct in that some of the bigger purse races do not deserve Grade 1 status and anything that races in divisions needs to be excluded from consideration. It's simply impossible to know which horses will compete in which divisions and thus two races with the same name – Bluegrass for instance – could deserve two different grades. The multi-tiered Sun Stakes races at Pocono Downs are also interesting. Certainly the top-level \$300,000 races deserve Grade 1 or 2 consideration, but where do we place the \$200,000 or \$100,000 levels of the same stakes? They can't be lofted up to the same grade just because they have the same name.

One area where Keith completely missed the ball in my opinion is on the ranking of the races. Each age/gait division should be considered in its own environment. With that, there are a number of legitimate older stakes which deserve Grade 1 status, like the William Haughton Memorial or John Cashman Memorial. Additionally, let's not forget that these will be North American grades and thus races like the Maple Leaf Trot, Metro Pace and others deserve Grade 1 positioning. I'll leave the Mohawk Million up for debate since it is a race restricted to owner shares rather than open for any horse, though it was certainly Grade 1 worthy in 2024.

Any graded system needs to be fluid and changing with the times. Purse plays a role because higher dollar amounts lure better horses, but more zeroes don't always equate to better quality. If we give in and allocate a better grade just because the track offers a large purse, who are we really helping by creating grades?

All of the above said, the USTA Graded Stakes Committee has a strong group of members from different aspects of the sport and I have faith they will do their best to make this new endeavor succeed long-term and hopefully benefit the sport.

According to Jason Bluhm, who directs racing at several tracks, both in Ohio and Kentucky, horsemen in the Bluegrass State are having some of the same discussions. Finally, Ohio horsemen informally proposed either increasing starter points (currently one) to five or paying purse money to 6th through 10th place finishers. The former means a horse who races in all five legs would earn 25 points and be rewarded for loyalty to the program, while a horse who races twice, finishing fourth and fifth would only get 23 points. The latter offsets the shipping cost and entry fee for those also-rans. While in the past I have been against this idea, I have come around to believe that in stakes races, it makes sense.

Once the OHHA Board votes on these proposals they will be taken to the Ohio Standardbred Development Fund, which administers these races. They meet in November and will have the final say.

That's all for this time. Now go cash. Just don't bet the nine-horse in a 10-horse field on a half-mile track. See you in a few weeks.

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Schnittker pair seek spots in \$700K Breeders Crown finals



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [✕ BergmanJay](#)

It's no small accomplishment to start a 2-year-old trotter's career in June and see them still fit and able come mid-October. That trainer Ray Schnittker had a filly and colt race against each other in a two-horse match race to start their career at The Meadowlands and find them entered on Friday afternoon's (Oct. 18) Breeders Crown elimination program is quite extraordinary.

Shes A Shoe In may not be a lock on Friday but the freshman trotting filly comes in with solid credentials, having captured the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes championship on September 5 at The Meadows and then following that up with a victory in a Reynolds division at Tioga two weeks later.

"She's been good from the start," said Schnittker about the filly by Greenshoe that cost just \$55,000 at last year's Lexington Selected auction and has already earned \$191k in her first year on the track. "The division of the Reynolds she won was like three seconds faster than the other one."

Shes A Shoe In qualified last Thursday (October 10) with a solid second-place finish at The Meadowlands and her trainer is hopeful for big things on Friday where she landed post four (Race 4) in one of three \$25,000 Breeders Crown eliminations for juvenile trotting fillies.

"I'm really looking forward to racing her on the mile track," said Schnittker. "It's really tough when you put them on small tracks and there's so much stopping and starting, and they get jammed up."

She's A Shoe In has won three of her seven career starts but the losses to some degree can be attributed to the learning curve all young horses need.

"It's really hard to race them and send them to the front every week," said Schnittker. "You have to teach them to race from behind and that has consequences."

Fortunately for Schnittker and driver Mark MacDonald, the lessons learned through the preliminary legs of the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes have paid off well for the filly in the last month with a pair of stakes victories where she showed versatility, winning from both off and on the pace in style.

From the second crop of Greenshoe, Schnittker was undeterred at the sale in the fall of 2023 when he purchased the filly.

"You know, I don't pay much attention to how sires do with their first crop," Schnittker said. "Bettor's Delight's first crop wasn't special and look at him now."

As for the attraction to the filly, Schnittker campaigned her older sister on the New York Sire Stakes circuit. "I had her sister, and I just bought her full brother in Lexington," said the trainer.

Needing a top-three finish to reach the final, Shes A Shoe In faces a solid field with many shipping back to New Jersey from races in Kentucky over the last few weeks. New York Sire Stakes Champion Royal Mission (post 1), Kentuckiana winner Kendra (post 2) and Sound Judgement (post 8) –

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6](#)

Breeders Crown
POST POSITION DRAWS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18:
Draw for 2YO Races
HOSTED BY
Meadowlands Racetrack
2nd Floor Gallery
following the end of live racing
approximately 6:15 p.m.
with Champagne Toast

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22:
Draw for 3YO and Open Races
HOSTED BY
HOGAN EQUINE
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Draw at 3:00 p.m.
Refreshments to be served

a recent International Stallion Stakes winner in 1:52 – enter the race in great form.

“I think the Pennsylvania circuit is as good as there is,” said Schnittker when asked to compare his filly with those returning from the Bluegrass State. “I expect her to race well.”

The first Breeders Crown elimination may be the softest of the three, with the other two \$25,000 eliminations slated for races six and nine looking quite deep. Aperfect Annie (post 1) enters the sixth race following a pair of major stakes wins at The Red Mile. Deja Blu, the first foal from champion mare Atlanta, drew post four entering the Crown with four wins in her last five starts. R Dutchess (post 7) showed speed and determination in her 1:52 victory on October 5 in an International Stallion Stakes at The Red Mile.

The third Crown elimination (race 9) figures to be quite contentious, with Mohawk Million runner-up Lasting Dream making her U.S. debut for trainer Luc Blais. The daughter of Cantab Hall has been consistent while mired with bad post positions much of the season, something she’ll have to deal with again on Friday from post seven. The field includes stakes winners Spicy Nice (post 3), Luna Lovegood (post 5), R Charm (post 6) and Voguish (post 8). Trainer Ake Svanstedt could have a sleeper as well with What A Bid Hanover (post 4), a filly that opened eyes with her third-place finish in Red Mile Grand Circuit action recently.

There are just two \$25,000 Breeders Crown eliminations for juvenile colts and gelding trotters and Schnittker believes that Karinchak (post 3) is on course to reach the final.

“He’s another example of a horse that has had to deal with getting jammed up on the half and five-eighths mile track all year,” said Schnittker in defending the Chapter Seven-sired colt’s one win in nine starts this season. “I thought the big track would help him a lot.”

In fact, Schnittker put Karinchak to the test over the mile track in a qualifier on October 10 at The Meadowlands and was quite impressed with the outcome.

“I thought he was impressive that morning. It was cold and the wind was whipping, and he trotted one of the faster miles of the day,” said Schnittker, reflecting on the 1:55 2/5 career-best effort that saw Karinchak march down the road and Mohawk Million winner Maryland follow him home at a distance in second through a solid back-half mile.

While Maryland gets a free pass into next week’s final courtesy of his Peter Haughton victory in September, Karinchak will need a top-three finish to advance and that may not be that easy given the seven he will face in Friday’s fifth race. Trainer Ron Burke has a pair with stakes winners Tactical Dynasty and Hidalgo drawing post two and five, respectively. Memento Mori was a 1:51 4/5 winner in Grand Circuit action at The Red Mile and landed post four in this division. The well-bred Emoticon Legacy (post 7) arrives for the usually prepared Luc Blais stable. Trainer Marcus Melander has a pair with Go Boom (post 6) and Meshuggah (post 8). The latter was a winner of the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes Championship and then third after cutting the mile in the Mohawk Million.

The second \$25,000 Breeders Crown elimination for juvenile colt and gelding trotters is carded as race 11, with the Marcus Melander-trained Super Chapter (post 1) leading a field of eight with just the top four assured a place in the final, along with the fifth place finisher with the highest career earnings. Super Chapter has won five of his eight starts this year and was dominant at The Red Mile recently winning both the Kentucky Sires Championship and a division of the International Stallion Stakes.

Trainer Ake Svanstedt also has a son of Chapter Seven in the field with immense talent in Happy Jack B (post 8), a Grand Circuit winner at The Red Mile that enters the contest following a strong second-place finish at The Red Mile. Go Dog Go, a son of Greenshoe that appeared on his way to consecutive Grand Circuit wins at The Red Mile only to break on the lead in the stretch in both, arrives at The Meadowlands with trotting hoppers added for trainer



CHRIS GOODEN

Shes A Shoe In will start from post four in the fourth race Breeders Crown elimination on Friday.

Carter Pinske. Go Dog Go drew post five. Maximus Mearas S (post 4) has won three of his first four starts for trainer Lucas Wallin this year. Wallin hopes to return to the Meadowlands winner’s circle as he did back in 2021 when Rebuff captured the Breeders Crown in this division.

The Friday Breeders Crown Eliminations card kicks off with an afternoon post time at 12:30 PM (EDT).

Jiggy Jog retired from racing due to injury

By Greg Reinhart

The Ake Svanstedt Stable account on X announced on Monday afternoon (Oct. 14) that star trotting mare Jiggy Jog has been retired from racing and will transition to her broodmare career.

“Today we made a hard decision to stop racing Jiggy Jog,” the post on X said. “After her last start in the Dayton Derby, we noticed something wasn’t right. We had her examined by two veterinarians, and it was found she has a small tear on her sesamoid ligament, which is very uncommon in Standardbreds. The good news is we caught it early and she is not lame or in any pain.

A 5-year-old daughter of Walner bred in Sweden by Vestmarka AB, Jiggy Jog S raced in North America for owner Jorgen Sparredal and was trained by Svanstedt from ages 2 to 4, and then was sold to Svanstedt along with partners Steve Stewart, John Lengacher and Hickory Hollow Stables prior to her 2024 campaign. She was a perfect six-for-six this year, including a career-best 1:49 2/5 mile in a downpour in the John Cashman Memorial on Hambletonian Day at the Meadowlands.

“She has given us so much joy and excitement for the past four years. Every time she went behind the gate, it was a pleasure to watch her amazing technique and fighting instinct to win,” continued the announcement on X. “She gave 110% percent every time. Now we look forward to her next chapter in life as a broodmare. We want to wish her and all her owners a successful breeding career.”

Jiggy Jog would have been trying to join elite company by winning three straight Breeders Crowns, as she captured the 2022 3-Year-Old Filly Trot and the 2023 Mares Open Trot. Earlier this year, she defeated several of the best horses from both Europe and North America in the \$1 million MGM Yonkers International Trot.

“A big thank you to her best friend and caretaker Rene Lopez for his professional support and care for her throughout these years. Thank you to her driver Dexter Dunn. Thank you Jiggy Jog, you are one of a kind,” the post concluded.



2024 BREEDERS CROWN SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
New Meadowlands Racetrack, East Rutherford, New Jersey
[all times EDT]

**PLEASE CHECK THE MEADOWLANDS CONDITION SHEET FOR
ALL ENTRY TIMES & DATES FOR THE BREEDERS CROWN
ELIMINATIONS AND FINALS.**

- Monday, October 14 – Breeders Crown Supplemental Entries for 3-year-old & up declare by **12 P.M.**
 - Tuesday, October 15 – Meadowlands DOUBLE DRAW FOR ALL BREEDERS CROWN RACES (elims Oct. 18 – 19)
 - Friday, October 18 – Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Elimination Races - post time **12:30 p.m. DAY CARD**
 - Fox Sports coverage 12:30pm – 5pm *FS2*
 - Post Position Champagne Draw for 2YO Finals - Gallery 6:15pm after the day card races
 - Thoroughbred night card has a post time of 7pm.
 - Saturday, October 19 – Breeders Crown 3-Year-Old, Open & Mare Elimination Races - post time **6:20 p.m.**
 - Fox Sports coverage 7pm - 11pm *FS1*
 - Standardbred Retirement Foundation Diamond & Boots Gala – trackside 6pm-10pm
 - Tuesday, October 22 – Post Position Draw & Luncheon at Hogan Equine for 3-Year-Old & Open Races.
 - 2pm-5pm
 - Draw at 3pm streamed live on Meadowlands Facebook & YouTube
 - Thursday, October 24 – Advance wagering available at 11 am for Friday, Oct. 25 Breeders Crown card.
 - Friday, October 25 – \$2.8 million 2-Year-Old Breeders Crown Finals - post time **6:20 P.M.**
 - Advance wagering available at 11 am for Saturday, Oct. 25 Breeders Crown card.
 - Cocktail Reception 6pm – 8pm in the Gallery
 - Diamond Creek Winner Lounge for Breeders Crown Winners
 - Breeders Crown Charity Check Presentations after Race 2
 - Fox Sports coverage 8pm – 11pm *FS1*
 - Saturday, October 26 – \$4.4 Million 3-year-old and up Breeders Crown Finals - post time **6:20 p.m.**
 - Diamond Creek Winner Lounge for Breeders Crown Winners
 - Hat contest winners announced after Race 3
 - Fox Sports Coverage 8pm – 11pm *FS2*
- The Meadowlands starting gate scores 10 horses across; if 11 horses enter the race goes straight to a final.
 - Jim Doherty winner Champagne Problems (2FT) and Peter Haughton winner Maryland (2CT) are the “Win and You’re In” entrants in their respective divisions.
 - The breeder of the Open Mare Trot winner receives the \$10,000 Charlie Keller III Breeders Bonus.

Breeders Crown

In Harness Racing,
It All Comes Down To The Breeders Crown

Can recent Crown elimination history lead us to winning bets?



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner X @harnessveguy

While there are a number of ways to prepare before wagering on a Standardbred race, most people use past performances at some point in the process. History is our guide as we try to predict the future result of races, so ignoring what has happened in previous years no matter how detached it seems is unwise.

Some of the most unpredictable racing results seem to occur in elimination races and The Meadowlands will host 20 such contests this weekend as the fields are narrowed down for the Breeders Crown. The question is: Do the statistics prove true that elimination races tend to produce strange results? The results are somewhat mixed.

There have been 61 Breeders Crown elimination races contested over the last three years. Of those, 34 have been won by favorites (55%), a chalk success rate that far exceeds the norm at any track in North America. What's interesting is that if you break it down by age, the success rate of 2-year-old favorites checks in at 65%, versus 50% for older performers and only 30% with 3-year-olds during that period.

Can we glean from the above numbers that you are safer wagering on the best 2-year-olds than their 3-year-old counterparts? Maybe . . . but maybe not. Consider that 3-year-old favorites won nine of 13 elimination races at The Meadowlands and Woodbine Mohawk Park in 2021 and 2022, respectively, but only two of 10 contests at Harrah's Hoosier Park last year. Meanwhile, 2-year-olds won eight of 10 races at Hoosier but just nine of 16 at the other two tracks.

It is difficult to uncover any trend from the numbers other than that favorites have an above average chance of success in elimination races despite the preconceived notion that they are vulnerable.

With that we dug deeper into trainer statistics to see what can be learned and found some interesting results.

Not surprisingly, Ron Burke leads all trainers with 62 Breeders Crown elimination starters from 2021 to 2023 (he has 23 entered this weekend). He owns a reasonable 13% win rate and comes in just under 39% in terms of being in the top three. So in general his horses race well but they really deliver when going off as the favorite. The five chalks he has sent to post have produced four winners.

Some of the Burke barn favorites to watch include Looksgoodinloulou (Friday, Race 3), Rose (Friday, Race 7), Louprint and Sippinonsearoc (Friday, Race 8) and Bythemissal (Saturday, Race 8). With a bit of racing luck the trainer is certainly poised to double the number of finals (two) he has won over the last three years.

A distant but clear second in terms of total starters is Tony Alagna. He has sent 39 horses behind the gate and won a paltry 5% of the time while finishing in-the-money a very solid 41%. It is worth noting that he has only sent out one horse as the favorite in the 39 races, so it is not surprising that he doesn't have a ton of victories. Using his horses at prices to hit the exotics seems like a viable strategy.

Alagna sends out 10 starters in the Crown eliminations and one sure-fire favorite in Metro winner Fallout (Friday, Race 10). His other serious contender is in race six Saturday with Better Is Nice, a sharp 3-year-old colt pacer that went over one million in earnings in his last start.

By far the most prolific trainer in the Breeders Crown eliminations and finals is Ake Svanstedt. His stable is hitting at a powerful 26.6% (8 for 30) on the win end in eliminations and an eye-popping 63% for top-three. Svanstedt has also won NINE Crown finals, basically triple that of any other trainer. It is made even more interesting when you realize that he didn't win any Crown races during his first half-dozen years in the United States. It clearly took him some time to find the right training pattern to make sure his horses peak at the Breeders Crown but now you can clearly bet his barn with confidence during the series, though three of his eight favorites during the last three years did come up short.

Those looking to jump on the Svanstedt bandwagon will find 12 opportunities throughout the Friday and Saturday cards at The Meadowlands.

Interestingly, it is questionable that he'll have any favorites from that group and with Jiggy Jog retired he's lost his one Crown lock, so maybe his incredible run is in jeopardy.

Two trainers to consider avoiding on the win end in the eliminations are Nancy Takter and Marcus Melander. The former has won just two of 27 races over the last three years (26% ITM) and the latter is even worse at one for 26 (46% ITM). The in-the-money numbers tell you that Melander's horses are at least getting pieces of the exotics but he's only won with one of four favorites. At least Takter is two-for-four with favorites winning.

Takter has 12 horses in-to-go during the weekend with a few of them likely to be favorites or at least low on the tote board, so it will be interesting to see if her stats turn around. Some of her trainees to watch are Captain Optimistic (Friday, Race 8), McCrunch (Saturday, Race 3) and Hambletonian winner Karl (Saturday, Race 9).

Melander checks in one behind Takter with 11 horses slated for the Crown elimination round and he too has some potentially short-priced horses to watch. Recent stakes winners Super Chapter (Friday, Race 11), Kentucky Sire Stakes winner Date Night Hanover (Saturday, Race 4) and the late-blooming Vic Zelenskyy (Saturday, Race 9) are all horses to keep an eye on.

Now if you are looking for favorites to trust, Nifty Norman and Noel Daley are your guys.

Norman has watched all three of his favorites win and Daley has seen all of his four chalks score. Interestingly his other four starters haven't hit the board.

Norman only has two starters in the Crown elims and both drew outside as longshots, so there really isn't opportunity to take advantage, but Daley has eight starters including likely favorites Sig Sauer (Race 2) and Captain Albano (Race 3) on Saturday.

The absolute best news I can offer is that the weather Friday afternoon calls for 67 degrees and sunny while Saturday night should offer temps in the low 50's with clear skies. Actually I lied because the early forecast for the Breeders Crown finals on October 25 and 26 is also for clear skies and low 50's on the thermometer. Could we get a rare weekend of Crown finals without rain, snow or freezing temperatures? Fingers crossed!



DERICK GIWNER PHOTOS

Ake Svanstedt (above) has by far the most Breeders Crown wins (9) since 2021 while Ron Burke (below) has the most elimination starters at 62.



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CLEVER CODY
3-Year-Old Colt Pacing Champion



HUNG OVER
3-Year-Old Colt Trotting Champion



SEASIDE DIVA
3-Year-Old Filly Pacing Champion



SUGAR INSTEAD
3-Year-Old Filly Trotting Champion

Photos: Jeff Zamaiko

Alexander hopes to break through in 2024 Breeders Crown

By Jay Bergman

Trainer Travis Alexander is amid a career year and on Saturday hopes to continue his luck as he pursues a first-ever Breeders Crown title. Alexander will send out an arsenal of his own, with three entered in the sophomore pacing colt and gelding division and another three vying for spots in the final of the Breeders Crown Open division.

With sophomores first on Saturday's Meadowlands program, Alexander didn't get the benefit of the draw but still likes his chances with Howlenthewhills (post 8) and Huntingforchrome (post 7) in the first of two \$25,000 eliminations for sophomores.

Howlenthewhills has been dominant on the New York Sire Stakes scene this year and enters the Crown trials with 13 wins in 15 starts in 2024. It's been an amazing turnaround for a horse that was winless as a freshman in eight starts.

"He showed speed last year," said Alexander. "He just couldn't put all the pieces together. His gait wasn't great and he would crossfire."

With a year to mature the American Ideal-sired gelding has impressed on all sized tracks and Alexander is hoping the experience will work to his advantage in a field that includes division leader Captain Albano.

"He's coming into the race in great shape," said Alexander. "He cut a bell boot in his last start (Reynolds at Plainridge) and that's why he won in a dead heat and not by open lengths. Moving to the big track we'll take off the bell boots here."

Alexander has seen Howlenthewhills put up impressive numbers with \$550K banked this year.

"It's not easy to race in the New York Sire Stakes program and put up a record like he has," Alexander said, referencing the number of tracks of varied sizes a horse must compete and succeed on.

Huntingforchrome is another New York-bred that may be sharper than his past performances indicate.



MIKE LIZZI

Howlenthewhills has won 13 of 15 races this year and starts in a Breeders Crown elimination on Saturday at The Meadowlands.

"I'm happy to get him on Lasix finally. He bled in the Jug and then we couldn't put him on Lasix for the Kentucky races," said Alexander, explaining Huntingforchrome's recent seventh-place finish in the Tattersalls at The Red Mile.

Given the outside draw for Alexander's pair in the third race, the fact

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 11](#)



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that all horses in the field only need a top-five finish to make the final, and the presence of Captain Albano making his first competitive start following a victory in the Little Brown Jug a month ago, it is difficult to predict how this elimination will play out.

“He’s definitely the horse to beat,” said Alexander of Captain Albano, who drew post three.

In the second \$25,000 Crown elimination carded as race six, Alexander sends out Sweet Beach Life, an altered son of Sweet Lou that has really turned the corner following a dramatic last-to-first victory in the \$252,000 Pennsylvania Sire Stakes championship on September 9 at Pocono.

“We needed to give him a lot of time to mature,” said Alexander in explaining the late-season momentum after a slow start. “He needed to learn how to be a racehorse and most of the early part of the year we were focused on that.”

Alexander is hoping that a move to the big track will bring out the best in Sweet Beach Life, who is coming off a huge effort on October 7 in a Reynolds division at Plainridge where he coasted to a 1:49 3/5 career-best victory.

Sweet Beach Life will have company in this division in the form of Nijinsky (post 1), the North America Cup champion that regained winning form capturing the Ontario Sire Stakes Super Final on October 12 following a long overland trip. Nijinsky has won 10 of his 12 starts this year and returns to the scene of one of his defeats, a second-place finish behind stablemate Legendary Hanover in the Meadowlands Pace.

While Nijinsky’s record is imposing, Alexander was concerned about another in the field of eight.

“I think Mirage Hanover’s probably the sharpest 3-year-old out there right now,” said Alexander, referring to the son of Bettor’s Delight that captured a Tattersalls division at The Red Mile in a 1:46 3/5 clocking on October 6.

Mirage Hanover drew post four in a division that also includes last year’s Breeders Crown champion Gem Quality (post 5).

Alexander is hopeful that he has a sleeper that could upset in the Crown Open pace with Pleaseletmeknow drawing well in the first of two \$25,000 eliminations programmed as race eight.

“He’s coming into the race very sharp,” said Alexander of the 5-year-old son of American Ideal that drew post three. “I’m looking forward to his return to The Meadowlands. He’s paced in (1:47) and a piece here before.”

Pleaseletmeknow faces a strong group with last year’s Breeders Crown champion Bythemissal looking for his second straight title.

Bythemissal drew post eight for this week’s trial coming off a game victory in the Allerage final at The Red Mile on October 6.

Also in this field are Canadian Pacing Derby champion It’s My Show (post 4) and this year’s Graduate Series champion Voukefalas (post 5).

Alexander has two in the second Crown elimination carded as race 10 and their road to the final could be challenging. Why Not Now (post 2) won his first start for Alexander at Yonkers on Tuesday (October 15) and returns in short order.

“He’ll be tight,” Alexander said succinctly about Why Not Now.

Backstreet Shadow (post 4) is the senior statesman of the field at age 9 and Alexander’s second starter. “He’s pure class,” said the trainer.

With Abuckabett Hanover (post 8), Oakwood Ardan IR (post 1), Ruthless Hanover (post 5) and Sam McKee Memorial upsetter Rocknroll Runa A (post 3) in the field the cards seem stacked against Alexander.

Alexander’s stable is currently the third-leading barn in North America with over \$6.3 million banked this season. That said, the trainer is in search of his first Breeders Crown title with this Saturday just the first of two necessary steps to reach the coveted winner’s circle.

“I finished second with Western Cyclone behind Jereme’s Jet,” said Alexander. “We beat him in the elimination.”

That was 19 years ago at The Meadowlands in the Crown 2-year-old colt and gelding pace. Alexander hopes his entrants in 2024 will help break the ice.



DERICK GIWNER

Trainer Travis Alexander sits third on the earnings leaderboard in 2024.

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(this program is separate from Virginia Breeders Fund program).

Princess Jackie prepared for her Breeders Crown moment

By Ken Weingartner

Princess Jackie will look to be queen for a day when she meets six rivals in the second of three \$25,000 Breeders Crown eliminations for 2-year-old female trotters Friday afternoon at The Meadowlands. First-race post time Friday is 12:30 p.m. (EDT).

Owned and trained by Doug "D.R." Ackerman, who won a Breeders Crown in 2005 with 2-year-old male trotter Chocolatier, the filly will have Jim Marohn Jr. in the sulky in his Breeders Crown debut. The daughter of Greenshoe-Frisky Magic has five wins and three thirds in eight starts this season, good for \$180,214 in purses.

The top-three finishers from each elimination will join Champagne Problems in the \$700,000 final Oct. 25 at The Meadowlands. Cham-

pagne Problems advanced directly to the final thanks to her victory in the Jim Doherty Memorial last month at Harrah's Hoosier Park.

Elimination winners as well as Champagne Problems will draw for post positions one through six in the final. The other finalists will be placed in an open draw for the remaining post positions.

All Breeders Crown eliminations for 2-year-olds will be contested Friday afternoon.

"She's been excellent," Ackerman said about Princess Jackie, who was purchased for \$30,000 at the Standardbred Horse Sale. "She trained down beautifully. Everything was easy for her. Very, very good. She likes to trot, she likes to race, she likes to go."

Princess Jackie is a half-sister to Grand Circuit winner and 2018 Pennsylvania Sire Stakes championship runner-up Magical Beliefs. She was the final yearling sold during last year's second session of the Standardbred Horse Sale.

"She looked nice and was athletic," Ackerman said. "So, we just hung around and bought her."

And that patience paid off.

"Absolutely," Ackerman said with a laugh.

Princess Jackie won four of her first five races, including three in the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes. She then was a dead-heat third in the PASS championship at Hollywood Casino at The Meadows and third in a division of the Reynolds Memorial at Tioga Downs.

The filly got back to her winning ways Oct. 2 at The Meadows, capturing a division of the Keystone Classic in 1:55 2/5.

"She raced really good at The Meadows," Marohn said. "We didn't go a whole lot, but we didn't have to. When I called on her on the last turn, she took off just like it was her first start of the year. Doug has done a great job with managing her and keeping her on her toes."

Ackerman was equally pleased with Princess Jackie's performance.

"That was a good win, a good race for her," he said. "The race before at Tioga, she kind of got all sideways there and we had to make a couple adjustments. She came through the next race really good, so that's when we decided to give the Breeders Crown a shot."

Princess Jackie has a best win time of 1:55, which came at Mohegan Pennsylvania's Pocono Downs in August. That time is only two-fifths of a second off the season's fastest by a 2-year-old female trotter on a five-eighths-mile track.

Her trip to The Meadowlands will be her first time on any oval other than five-eighths.

"She'll be good wherever," Ackerman said. "Good is good. Nothing stops them."

Marohn is looking forward to his first Breeders Crown experience. He will leave from post two with Princess Jackie on Friday. The filly is 12-1 on the morning line.

"I've never been in the Breeders Crown and I'm looking forward to going with Princess Jackie," said Marohn, who has won nearly 5,900 races in his career. "Her best quality is probably her attitude. She wants to be a racehorse and she's got the ability to go with them. She's pretty versatile."

Grand Circuit winner R Dutchess is the 2-1 morning-line favorite in the second Breeders



CURTIS SALONICK

Princess Jackie will give driver Jimmy Marohn Jr his first Breeders Crown start.

Crown elim for 2-year-old filly trotters. The daughter of Father Patrick-The Ice Dutchess is trained by John Butenschoen and will have Jody Jamieson in the bike.

She won her most recent start, a division of the International Stallion Stakes at Lexington's Red Mile in a career-best 1:52 1/5, making her the season's third-fastest female trotter. She also won an elimination for the Peaceful Way Stakes and finished third in the final.

The elim also includes Grand Circuit and Kentucky Sire Stakes Championship Series winner Aperfect Annie and Kentucky Commonwealth Series winner Deja Blu.

"This is the Breeders Crown," Ackerman said as he assessed the elimination. "There ain't nothing easy about this."

The favorite in the first elimination for 2-year-old female trotters is Miss Belmar, who is 5-2 for trainer Noel Daley and driver Andy McCarthy. The daughter of Muscle Hill-Chapter Too is coming off a third-place finish in a division of the International Stallion Stakes (won by R Dutchess) and will leave from post five.

Stakes-winner Luna Lovegood is the 3-1 favorite in the third elim. Dexter Dunn will drive the daughter of Gimpanzee-Southwind Venus for trainer Marcus Melander. She will start from post five. She is the season's fastest freshman filly trotter, with a mark of 1:51 4/5

Breeders Crown eliminations and finals to be televised nationally

You'd think after a five-week slumber, during which harness racing at The Meadowlands was in hibernation mode, the mile oval would come back and ease their way towards the final portion of the 2024 major-stakes calendar.

Think again.

The Big M returns with live harness action Friday (Oct. 18), with a special early post time of 12:30 p.m., and Saturday (Oct. 19), at the usual 6:20 p.m., with eliminations for the 12-race, year-end extravaganza known as the Breeders Crown. It's the first time the Crown has been at The Meadowlands since 2021. Friday's races will determine who will advance to the finals in the 2-year-old events while Saturday's dashes will decide who will go for the big green in the 3-year-old and older races.

For those who can't make it to the track, they can catch all of the action on Fox Sports as part of the network's "America's Day at the Races" show.

Friday's telecast, which will be hosted by Acacia Clement and Greg Wolf and co-hosted by Paul Verderosa, can be seen on Fox Sports 2 (FS2) from 12:30-5:30 p.m. On Saturday, FS2's coverage will go from 7:30-11 p.m. with Chris Griffin and Verderosa on set from Aqueduct Racetrack.



The first of two Breeders Crown finals shows will be telecast on Friday, Oct. 25 on FS1 from 8-11 p.m., while the Saturday, Oct. 26 broadcast can be seen on FS2 from 7:30-11 p.m. Clement and Verderosa will anchor both shows from The Meadowlands.

All four presentations will feature selections, analysis and interviews from Meadowlands' TV talent Jessica Otten and Gabe Prewitt.

"Fox Sports and NYRA (New York Racing Association) are very excited to partner with The Meadowlands and the Hambletonian Society to present 15 hours of Breeders Crown coverage between FS1 and FS2," said NYRA's Sr. Director of TV Broadcast Operations Eric Donovan. "We look forward to showcasing all the top horses, drivers, owners, trainers and breeders in Standardbred racing at this championship event."

Friday will provide something special for on-track Big M regulars, as after the completion of the harness races, a card of Thoroughbred turf racing will take place with a first-race post time of 7 p.m.

Only two of the 12 Crown divisions require no eliminations, as the Breeders Crown Open Trot (11 entrants) and Breeders Crown Mare Trot (nine) will have one dash for the cash.

The Crown finals for 2-year-olds take place on Friday, Oct. 25, with the 3-year-olds and older horses to battle in their respective finals on Saturday, Oct. 26. Post time for both race cards is 6:20 p.m.

"We are looking forward to welcoming back our faithful fans and our horsemen," said track Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir. "And what better way to do it than with a rare Friday Breeders Crown afternoon program to kick off The Meadowlands' Championship Fall Meeting broadcast live on FOX."

"Having these races shown to a national television audience is remarkably important to us at The Meadowlands as well as everybody at the Hambletonian Society. With a continuing presence coast-to-coast, we are raising our visibility to new heights while getting an audience that has been mainly focused on Thoroughbred racing interested in our game as well."

"The Meadowlands has been home to the ultimate in championship racing since the doors opened in 1976," said Hambletonian Society President and Chief Executive Officer John Campbell. The Society owns and administers the Breeders Crown.

"We are delighted to continue the Society's long-term relationship with Meadowlands management by partnering in hosting the top-class events in the sport."

The Breeders Crown will feature the four \$700,000 finals for 2-year-olds, the richest events offered in the division, while the eight 3-year-old and open races will have purses ranging from \$400,000-\$700,000. Total purses are estimated at \$7 million.

"The next seven weeks at The Big M will undoubtedly go a long way toward determining who will be harness racing's Horse of The Year, along, of course, with divisional honors," said Settlemoir. "Beginning with the Breeders Crown and culminating with the FanDuel Championships and Fall Final Four on Nov. 30, you will see the greatest stars in the world right here."

TREMENDOUS TOP 10: Here is the current Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown weekly Top 10 Poll. As you can see, many of the sport's top starts will be craving a crown.

1. Twin B Joe Fresh (race 11 Saturday)
2. Jiggy Jog S (retired)
3. Chantilly (ineligible)
4. Captain Albano (race three Saturday)
5. Karl (race nine Saturday)
6. Nijinsky (race six Saturday)
7. Maryland (Peter Haughton winner earned a Breeders Crown final bye)
8. Sig Sauer (race two Saturday)
9. Legendary Hanover (eligible, did not enter)
10. Fallout (race 10 Friday)

THAT'S A GUARANTEE: The wagering menu for the Breeders Crown at The Meadowlands will undoubtedly fire up the mile oval's loyal fan betting base, as there will be \$400,000 in guaranteed pools up for grabs.

On Saturday (Oct. 19), there will be a guaranteed pool of \$50,000 on both the Early 50-cent Pick-4 (races six through nine) and Late 50-cent Pick-4 (10 through 13).

Then, on both Friday, Oct. 25, and Saturday, Oct. 26, the Early Pick-4 is guaranteed at \$100,000 while the Late P4 will be at least \$50,000.

Here is a look at what bettors can expect night in and night out when playing Meadowlands' races for the foreseeable future:

- 20-cent Pick-5: Race 1-5 · 20-cent Survivor Pick-7: Races 3-9
- 50-cent Pick-4: Races 6-9 · 50-cent Pick 4: Races 10-13
- 20-cent Pick-6: Races 8-13 · 10-cent Hi-5: Race 14 (or final race)

The Meadowlands has added two superfectas to each card. There will now be 10 superfecta opportunities on 14-race programs. The minimum wager is a dime.

-edited release (Meadowlands)

ENTRIES OPEN FOR BLOODED HORSE SALE UNTIL OCT. 23

Entries for the main catalog for the Blooded Horse Fall Sale will be taken through Wed, Oct 23.

The sale takes place Wednesday, Nov. 20, at the Champions Center in Springfield, Ohio and will open with black-type yearlings, many with dual eligibility, followed by nice consignments of 2- and 3-year-olds stakes performers and green prospects, raceway horses, in-foal broodmares and weanlings.

Join horsemen from across the United States and Canada as they converge at this 77th annual event to replenish their stables and upgrade their breeding stock. Visit www.bloodedhorse.com to enter or to order a catalogue.

-edited release (Blooded Horse Sale)

RACE OF THE WEEK

8 MEADOWLANDS FRI

1 Mile Pace. BREEDERS CROWN ELIMINATION - 2 YEAR OLD COLTS & GELDINGS (DECLARATION FEE - \$5,000 PAYABLE TO MEADOWLANDS)
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1 Papis Pistol		b c 2, by Papi Rob Hanover, Bang Bang by Sweet Lou		Last 4 Sts-\$21,552		1:50.4 M1		24 M1 5 2 1 1 \$43,849 24 Tot 9 2 2 2 \$67,033				
10 Oct24	7M1	fst530	291	572	1:244	1:521	2yr C&G	24 M1	5 2 1 1	24 Tot	9 2 2 2	\$67,033
21 Sep24	7Wbs	fst689	262	544	1:221	1:491	Metro	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
14 Sep24	5Wbs	fst644	27	56	1:24	1:502	Metro	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
6 Sep24	6M1	fst729	263	551	1:241	1:501	NClassiC					
30 Aug24	3M1	fst779	27	554	1:234	1:504	2yoc nw2cd					
16 Aug24	6MwA	fst800	264	562	1:234	1:512	PASS-2YOCG					
2 Aug24	8M1	gd780	281	56	1:242	1:512	KNDRGARTEN					
20 Jul24	3MwA	fst	262	562	1:243	1:53	PASS-2YOCG					

2 Louprint		b c 2, by Sweet Lou, Rockin Racer by Rockin Image		Last 4 Sts-\$305,075		1:48.4 Lx1		24 M1 0 0 0 0 -24 * 8 6 2 0 \$384,939				
10 Oct24	1Lx1	fst789	272	541	1:22	1:484	INSTALION	24 M1	0 0 0 0	24 Tot	8 6 2 0	\$384,939
15 Sep24	3Lx1	fst866	274	541	1:22	1:484	KEYSS	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
3 Sep24	6Lx1	fst759	28	55	1:22	1:49	KEYSS	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
25 Aug24	1Lx1	fst909	28	544	1:23	1:491	KEYSS					
16 Aug24	6Mw	fst800	264	562	1:234	1:512	PASS-2YOCG					
4 Aug24	12Lx1	fst866	28	554	1:241	1:501	KEYSS					
2 Aug24	12Mw	fst844	282	563	1:25	1:521	PASS-2YOCG					
13 Jul24	3Mw	fst909	282	574	1:262	1:534	2YOCNWIEXT					

3 Sippinsearoc		b c 2, by Downbytheseaside, Queen Ann M by Big Bad John		Last 4 Sts-\$292,100		*1:48.2 Lx1		24 M1 0 0 0 0 -24 Tot 9 6 1 1 \$408,500				
5 Oct24	5Mfd	fst630	274	56	1:24	1:512	D-OHSS 2C FN	24 M1	0 0 0 0	24 Tot	9 6 1 1	\$408,500
28 Sep24	13Dtn	wf666	27	544	1:231	1:512	OHSS 2C	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
15 Sep24	3Lx1	fst866	274	541	1:22	1:484	KEYSS	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
3 Sep24	6Lx1	fst759	28	55	1:22	1:49	KEYSS					
25 Aug24	1Lx1	fst909	28	544	1:23	1:491	KEYSS					
13 Aug24	1Lx1	fst866	271	544	1:212	1:482	KEYSS					
4 Aug24	12Lx1	fst866	28	554	1:241	1:501	KEYSS					
29 Jul24	3Lx1	fst744	312	1:012	1:31	1:573	Qua 2YO					

4 Railroad Station (L)		b c 2, by Sweet Lou, Rodeo Rosie by Well Said		Last 4 Sts-\$75,490		1:51.1 PcD 5/8		24 M1 0 0 1 0 \$5,000 24 Tot 9 3 3 2 \$140,882				
10 Oct24	6Mw	fst759	272	56	1:232	1:504	KEYSTONE	24 M1	0 0 1 0	24 Tot	9 3 3 2	\$140,882
19 Sep24	8Del	fst786	26	533	1:22	1:512	2YR C STBD	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
5 Sep24	9Mw	fst799	26	543	1:214	1:511	PASS-FINAL	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
25 Aug24	3Phl	fst844	264	554	1:24	1:512	PASS 2CG					
16 Aug24	8Mw	fst800	274	551	1:23	1:501	PASS-2YOCG					
4 Aug24	10PcD	fst844	277	561	1:25	1:52	PaSS 2yrCG					
20 Jul24	6Mw	fst894	27	563	1:232	1:511	PASS-2YOCG					
8 Jul24	5PcD	fst899	261	541	1:23	1:511	All-Stars					

5 World Beater		b c 2, by Captainteacherous, World Apart by Art Major		Last 4 Sts-\$11,159		1:53 Mw 5/8		24 M1 1 0 1 0 \$2,400 24 Tot 7 2 0 1 \$43,197				
5 Oct24	4Lx1	fst789	274	543	1:223	1:494	INSTALION	24 M1	1 0 1 0	24 Tot	7 2 0 1	\$43,197
17 Sep24	3Lx1	fst699	292	582	1:261	1:533	QUAL	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
10 Sep24	2Lx1	fst719	30	591	1:281	1:544	Qua	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
25 Aug24	5Phl	fst844	27	56	1:231	1:503	PASS 2CG					
16 Aug24	8Mw	fst800	274	551	1:23	1:501	PASS-2YOCG					
4 Aug24	12PcD	fst769	264	563	1:241	1:513	PaSS 2yrCG					
20 Jul24	3Mw	fst844	262	562	1:243	1:53	PASS-2YOCG					
12 Jul24	1Phl	slv799	284	582	1:211	1:543	2yocGnw2cd					

6 Ridin The Waves		b c 2, by Downbytheseaside, Takeallridewithme by Jereme's Jet		Last 4 Sts-\$16,000		1:50.4 Lx1		24 M1 0 0 0 0 -24 Tot 8 1 1 1 \$30,500				
5 Oct24	7M1	fst530	291	572	1:244	1:521	2yr C&G	24 M1	0 0 0 0	24 Tot	8 1 1 1	\$30,500
28 Sep24	13Dtn	wf666	27	544	1:231	1:512	OHSS 2C	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
7 Sep24	10ScD	fst579	271	554	1:233	1:514	OHSS 2C	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
26 Aug24	14Lx1	fst909	273	552	1:232	1:504	NW1 2YO					
16 Aug24	7ScD	fst799	284	571	1:252	1:533	POPUP 2C					
2 Aug24	10ScD	fst709	27	562	1:241	1:521	OSR 2C					
21 Jul24	13Nfd	fst744	274	57	1:26	1:541	OSR 2CP					
13 Jul24	5ScD	fst899	28	572	1:253	1:52	2yoc nw2cd					

7 Strangerinth Night		b c 2, by Tall Dark Stranger, Tall Drink Hanover by Captainteacherous		Last 4 Sts-\$13,392		1:51.1 Lx1		24 M1 1 0 1 0 \$2,100 24 Tot 8 1 0 1 \$39,517				
5 Oct24	1Lx1	fst789	274	541	1:22	1:484	INSTALION	24 M1	1 0 1 0	24 Tot	8 1 0 1	\$39,517
21 Sep24	7Wbs	fst689	262	544	1:221	1:491	Metro	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
14 Sep24	5Wbs	fst644	27	56	1:24	1:502	Metro	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
2 Sep24	2Lx1A	fst769	272	55	1:231	1:511	NW1 2YO					
25 Aug24	1Lx1	fst909	28	544	1:23	1:491	KEYSS					
13 Aug24	1Lx1A	fst929	271	544	1:212	1:482	KEYSS					
4 Aug24	12Lx1	fst866	28	554	1:241	1:501	KEYSS					
20 Jul24	5M1	fst800	28	572	1:253	1:52	2yoc nw2cd					

8 Captain Optimistic		b c 2, by Captainteacherous, Cinamony by Art Official		Last 4 Sts-\$178,600		1:50.1 M1		24 M1 5 4 1 0 \$14,684 24 Tot 7 5 1 1 \$198,385				
5 Oct24	1Lx1	fst789	274	541	1:22	1:484	INSTALION	24 M1	5 4 1 0	24 Tot	7 5 1 1	\$198,385
21 Sep24	7Wbs	fst689	262	544	1:221	1:491	Metro	23 M1	0 0 0 0	23 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
14 Sep24	5Wbs	fst644	27	56	1:24	1:502	Metro	22 M1	0 0 0 0	22 Tot	0 0 0 0	-
6 Sep24	6M1	fst729	263	551	1:241	1:501	NClassiC					
30 Aug24	3M1	fst779	27	554	1:234	1:504	2yoc nw2cd					
22 Aug24	10M1	fst699	31	1:00	1:273	1:544	2Yr C					
2 Aug24	8M1	gd780	281	56	1:242	1:512	KNDRGARTEN					
20 Jul24	5M1	fst	282	572	1:253	1:52	2yoc nw2cd					

All horses in this race have participated in a pre-race stakes barn since 8 AM Friday. No coupled entries per NJRC. Elimination winners draw 1-6. The first 5 in the official order of finish advance to the final.

Bettor's Wish to stand in NJ in 2025

The Bettor's Wish Syndicate and Southwind Farms are pleased to announce that Bettor's Wish 1:47 3/5, \$2,601,233 will relocate to Southwind Farms in Pennington, NJ – commencing with the 2025 season – standing for a stud fee of \$7500.

Bettor's Wish has proven himself as the heir apparent to the great Bettor's Delight, already producing millionaire Better Is Nice p, 3, 1:48, \$1,026,183, Adios Elim winner Wish You Well p, 3, 1:49 1/5, \$470,440, and NJSS champions from his first small crop of 39 foals. 2024 has seen a string of stakes winners in multiple states and champions in the NJ, PA & KY Sires Stakes. His foals have earned \$3,752,674 to date.

Bettor's Wish NJ eligible foals will benefit from the strong NJ program including the NJ Sires Stakes and NJ Classic Series with \$240,000 and \$150,000 finals respectively, NJSS Maturity, Renaissance Pace, Development Fund races and Home Grown Pace. The NJ Racing Commission has allocated \$1.2 million in 2025 for NJ Sired Awards and NJ Breeders Awards. NJ currently offers 12% Breeders Awards and 25% NJ Sired Bonus awards in selected NJ sponsored stake races.

Impeccably bred, Bettor's Wish hails from the immediate family of American Ideal and Life Sign and the highly sought after and prolific Three Diamonds, which has also produced Twin B Joe Fresh and Seven Colors. Bettor's Wish earned \$2.6 million on the track and was named Dan Patch 3YO Pacer Of The Year and Aged Pacer Of The Year at 4. His first two crops have put Bettor's Wish at the top of the sire ranks. Bettor's Wish was the leading first-crop pacing sire in 2023 and is the leading pacing sire of 3YOs by average earnings in 2024.

For a breeding application please contact Southwind Farms at 609-737-9067 or www.southwindfarms.net/bettors-wish

For share information please contact the Bettor's Wish Syndicate at 908-451-4135.

-edited release (Bettor's Wish Syndicate)

LONDON CLASSIC SALE AVERAGE UP 6.8% YOY

Saulsbrook Big Dog, a colt from the first crop of Bulldog Hanover, harness racing's all-time fastest horse, wound up at the top of the board at the 2024 London Classic Yearling Sale, which ended on Wednesday afternoon at The Agriplex at the Western Fair District in London, Ontario.

Selling as HIP 156 and consigned by Princeton Farms Inc., Saulsbrook Big Dog fetched a winning bid of C\$150,000 from Jack Darling, who trained and owned Bulldog Hanover during his fantastic career. Saulsbrook Big Dog is a half-brother to several six-figure earners, led by 6-year-old Source Of Pride gelding Saulsbrook Victor (1:48 1/5, C\$437,575).

The gross of C\$7,015,000 finished down from last year's C\$7,759,000, but that can be attributed to the fact that there were 38 more horses sold in 2023. The average of C\$28,516 was up 6.8% from a year ago.

-By Greg Reinhart

RECORD NUMBER OF ENTRIES FOR BREEDERS CROWN AT THE BIG M

A record 194 horses were entered Tuesday for the \$7 million Breeders Crown at The Meadowlands, topping the previous high of 185 set last year at Harrah's Hoosier Park. Eliminations will be required for all but two events, the Open Trot and Mare Trot. Post-position draws will be available later this afternoon.

Eliminations for all 2-year-old events will be held Friday afternoon at The Meadowlands. First-race post time Friday is 12:30 p.m. (EDT). Eliminations for the remaining events, for horses ages 3 and up, will be held Saturday night at The Big M. First-race post time Saturday is 6:20 p.m. (EDT).

Eleven horses were entered in the Breeders Crown Open Trot and will advance directly to the Oct. 26 final: Ari Ferrari J, Asteroid, Bestfriend Volo, Hasty Bid, Hillextotic, It's Academic, Logan Park, Oh Well, Periculum, Up Your Deo, and Winner's Bet.

Nine horses were entered in the Breeders Crown Mare Trot and will advance directly to the final, also on Oct. 26: Baroness Hill, Call Me Goo, M-M's Dream, Nelsonbriteagle NO, Pioneer As, Refined, Swans Eye, Tactical Mounds, and Warrawee Xenia. Call Me Goo and Nelsonbriteagle NO were supplemental entries.

-release (By Ken Weingartner for Breeders Crown)

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, OCTOBER 17

RACE 2

(4) CODYS MOMENT fired home like a rocket in both starts since being claimed by Budd. She will likely roar past these if she is close enough at the 3/4 pole.

-Garnet Barnsdale



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18

RACE 6

(4) DEJA BLU did plenty of work and came up just a head shy in her last start. Daughter of the great Atlanta hasn't really "broken out" yet but it could be coming soon.

-Derick Gwerner



RACE 5

(2) STORMONT DIVIDE was a touch short from the pocket last out facing some classy foes and he faces a seemingly much softer group here. Burke trainee looks primed to roll.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

RACE 7

(3) WARRAWEE MICHELLE had just about everything go against her in the Filly Futurity. From this post she can clear to the front and either set a soft pace or sit a reasonable trip in second.

-Gwerner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Freehold Analysis

[Friday](#)

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

2024 BREEDERS CROWN CHARITY CHALLENGE UPDATE

The 2024 Breeders Crown Charity Challenge continues this weekend, October 18-19th, with the Challenge Influencer Handicapping Contest.

Jessica Otten, Dawnelle Mock, Jenna Otten, and Mary McDermott will battle it out in this mythical contest to earn needed points for their respective teams.

- **SBH Health System, Bronx, NY**
 - Team Gingras: Jenna Otten, Tony Alagna, Burke Racing/Weaver Brussemi
 - **Friends of Union County**
 - Team Dunn: Jessica Otten, Nancy Takter, Courant
 - **enCourage Kids, NY**
 - Team Tetrick: Mary McDermott, Ake Svanstedt, Bill Pollock
 - **New Jersey YMCA State Alliance**
 - Team David Miller: Dawnelle Mock, Marcus Melander, Brad Grant
- Handicapping Contest Format
- Each race night, the influencers will be given \$100 in “mythical battle money.”
 - Their mythical wagers can be on any race/wager offered on the race card.
 - The \$100 must be wagered each night.
 - The combined earnings from each night will determine the order of finish, with 1st receiving 50 points, 2nd 25 points, 3rd 15 points, and 4th 10 points.

Remaining Ways Teams Earn Points:

- o Through October 19, Driver and Trainer team performance on the Grand Circuit. Every time they are in a primary stakes race, they earn points that are calculated.
- o Through October 24, Fan Voting: fans, charity participants, and everyone in between can vote on each day of the challenge for their favorite team. Voting is live at <https://playmeadowlands.com/breeders-crown-charity-challenge/>

The teams have already earned points in the August double-seater jog cart race. SBH Health System from the Bronx, with CFO Mary Grochowiski, took home first place and 50 points. Julie Gallanty, CEO of the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance, grabbed 25 points by finishing second. Emma Wolk, the Director of Development at Kids' Direct, scored 15 points with her third-place finish. John Roman, representing Friends of Union County, received 10 points.

Additional points were earned at the Charity Challenge Open House, where SBH took home 50 points, enCourage Kids and the NJ YMCA State Alliance earned 17 points, and Friends of Union County earned 16 points.

The check presentations will take place on Friday, October 25, following Race 2 on the night's card, which features the Breeders Crown two-year-old Finals.

The Breeders Crown Charity Challenge was conceived to create positive relationships with the local community, raise awareness, and fund local charities. From 2019-2023 the Challenge raised over \$1.5 Million for charity. This year's Challenge has raised over \$345,000.

Thank you to the 2024 Charity Challenge Sponsors:

- Diamond Sponsors: Meadowlands Racetrack & FanDuel
- Platinum Sponsors
 - o Marvin & Lynn Katz / Diamond Creek / Brad Grant
 - o Burke Racing & Weaver Brussemi / Bill Pollock
 - o Anders Strom – Courant, Inc. / Takter Stable
 - o Melander Stable / Svanstedt Stable / Alagna Racing
 - o Brittany Farms / Kentuckiana Farms / Hunterton Sales Agency
 - o Cameo Hills Farm / Armitage Farm / M&L of Delaware
- Gold Sponsors
 - o Dexter Dunn / Yannick Gingras / Dave Miller
 - o Tim Tetrick / Julie Miller / Carter Pinske / Southwind Farms
 - o Walnridge Farm / Lucas Wallin / Todd McCarthy / Scott Zeron

Breeders Crown dining reminder

Reminder to get dining reservations in for Breeders Crown Eliminations weekend, October 18-19, and Breeders Crown Finals weekend, October 25-26.

Friday, October 18, has a special post time of 12:30 p.m., while Saturday, October 19, Friday, October 25, and Saturday, October 26, have a post time of 6:20 p.m.

This Friday's \$49.95 (plus tax and gratuity) lunch buffet includes pulled pork sandwiches, sausage and peppers, cheesesteak eggrolls and chili with sweet jalapeno-honey butter cornbread.

Saturday's \$49.95 (+tax/gratuity) dinner buffet features Swedish meatballs, hand-carved roast beef, lemon-herb Salmon and ginger soy chicken.

Pink Restaurant's buffet on Finals night, Friday, October 25, features shrimp cocktail, Gouda-stuffed arancini, and grilled Caesar salad. Guests can also dine on chili-rubbed NY strip, baked Mahi Mahi with a lemon dill sauce, and moist carrot cake. Friday's menu is \$74.95 per person, plus tax and gratuity.

Saturday's buffet is \$79.95 plus tax and gratuity and is highlighted by a seafood tower filled with shrimp, clams, oysters, and crab legs. Other menu features include lobster bisque, roasted ribeye, and sweet and sour chicken.

Reservations can be made by calling 201-The-BIGM (201-843-2446). All reservations must be prepaid.

Guests looking for ala carte dining can enjoy our 2nd floor Lounge, which is the place to be to watch and wager all the racing and the day's sports action. Guests can dine on delicious Victory Sports Bar fare, including wings, burgers, lobster mac and cheese, salads, wraps, and more. The purchase price is a food credit that will be applied to the food and beverage bill. Tax and gratuity are not included in this credit and are additional.

Available Seating/Dining Options for purchase include: Grandstand Bar Seat: \$50 per seat / Grandstand Lounge Table: \$100 per two-person table/\$200 for a four-person table / Grandstand Lounge Couch: \$200 per two-person section, complete with couch

Tables are now available for purchase [here](#).

-release (Meadowlands)

NEW WEBSITE FOR PERRETTI FARM

Anthony Perretti Farm has a new website and can be found at anthonyperrettifarm.com

The Farm itself is just down road 526 from the former Perretti Farms, now Hogan Equine in Allentown, adjacent to Cream Ridge.

Anthony Perretti Farm has raised and sold such stake stars as Geocentric, My Sweet Lilly and Papi's Pistol and this year sends a boutique offering to Harrisburg to be sold by Diamond Creek, Agent.

Yearling videos can be seen on this website along with pertinent information about Anthony Perretti and his longtime associate Bob Marks.

-edited release (Perretti Farm)

OLD-FASHIONED HALLOWEEN OPEN HOUSE & SPOOKY STABLE ADVENTURE

Bring the kids to the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame, 240 Main Street, Goshen, New York on Saturday, October 26th from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. for a fun-filled Halloween celebration and a walk through our spooky stable. Participate in creepy crafts - making ghostly wind socks and cat, bat or spider masks. Play hauntingly fun games like pumpkin bowling and bat toss. Pick a pumpkin from our patch and add creepy decorations to frighten off those scary Halloween spirits. There will be skeleton toy horses and treats while supplies last. The Halloween adventure will be topped off with a heart-pounding ride on our Harness Racing Simulator.

Children are encouraged to come in costumes of all kinds. Pumpkins are limited and are first come, first served, so don't be late! The first 50 children pay \$10 and receive a pumpkin to decorate. Bring your own pumpkin and we will provide the decorations. Parents are free. Reservations are not accepted. All supplies are limited.

Programs are made possible with support from the United States Trotting Association and the Agriculture & New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. For further information on the Museum's educational workshops or children's birthday parties, please contact the Education Department (845) 294-6330 or email education@harness-museum.com. For information on Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame events, please visit our website www.harnessmuseum.com. The Museum is located at 240 Main Street, Goshen, New York and is currently open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday.

-release (Harness Museum & Hall of Fame)

BLACK BOOK #2 MIXED SALE INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Black Book #2 Mixed Sale Catalog has gone to the printer and is now available online at theblackbook.com and equineline.com. A Sortable roster will be available soon.