

2024 HOLIDAY ISSUE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19



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JESSICA HALLETT PHOTO

Happy Holidays from

DRF Harness

Wishing the entire Harness Racing industry
a wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year.

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Looking back at the best races from 2024



By Greg Reinhart

[@gregreinhart](#)

Another season of stakes racing is in the books, and as it is my privilege to do each year, here is my list of some of the most memorable events of 2024. With so many stakes contested, I'm sure I

left some out, but hopefully you see one of your favorites or maybe one you've forgotten or missed out on and can go back and watch.

First up is the MGM Borgata Pacing Series final at MGM Yonkers Raceway on April 22 where favorites Linedrive Hanover and Desperate Man got hooked up in a duel past the quarter, and Hellabalou and driver Yannick Gingras took advantage, storming three-wide into the lead on the last turn and pulling away to a 1:50 2/5 victory. That was Hellabalou's second straight win in the final.

"I wasn't too, too pleased honestly when they were going at it. One part of me was like 'okay, that's our chance to win,' but the other part of me was like 'it's going way too fast and I'm too close to the fire.' Hellabalou, he's got all the ability, but sometimes when you've got to ask him, he doesn't really like to do a little extra work," Gingras said after the triumph. "That's the tricky part with him. When I had to chase him at the three-eighths just to keep up with those two, I'm like 'I don't know if that's going to work out.' At the half I still wasn't sure, but once we came out of the third turn he was kind of swelling up on me. He felt good, so I liked my chances then."

Moving on to May, the Kentucky Sires Stakes final for 4-year-old male pacers at Oak Grove on the 13th saw It's My Show, who usually comes from off-the-pace, on the front-end in a demanding clip. The closers took advantage, with Combustion and Todd McCarthy storming from seventh to beat Tip Top Cat by a head with Admiral Hill and Blue Lou close behind. The top four were separated by just a length-and-a-half.

On the 26th at Harrah's Philadelphia, the Maxie Lee Memorial for older trotters had a different leader at each call, and when the dust settled, Venerate and driver Scott Zeron came from off cover to prevail in 1:50 1/5 over a track that had been mostly speed-favoring up to that point. That time was the fastest in the track's history for a trotter.

June's action is led by the North America Cup for 3-year-old male pacers at Woodbine Mohawk Park, and this year's edition was a classic as there were several lead changes, and then Nijinsky and Louis-Philippe Roy came from off cover to tally in 1:48 1/5 over Captains Quarters and an unlucky Captain Albano, who was locked in the pocket with no racing room.

On the undercard of July 13th's Meadowlands Pace at The Big M there were three excellent contests. First up, Karl had to work hard to get to the front in his Stanley Dancer division as Security Protected and Dame Good Time traded the lead ahead of him. Karl finally cleared past the half, but the closers got by in the lane, with Sig Sauer and driver Andy McCarthy, who would go on to win quite a few stakes, rallying to better Tony Adams S by a head in 1:50 at 68-1.

In the very next race, the Dorothy Haughton Memorial for pacing mares, Twin B Joe Fresh and Sylvia Hanover got locked up in a duel on the front end in the middle half, but Twin B Joe Fresh was able to stave off her rival and also Silver Label in the stretch to get the job done by half a length in 1:47 3/5.

"She's racing against a great group of mares, so nothing comes easy," Dunn said after that victory. "She really had to dig deep late in the stretch there to hold them off. All credit to her, she did all the work and put an amazing mile in."

The Hambletonian Maturity also had multiple lead changes over the extended distance of a mile and an eighth, and then a close finish as well as Chapercraz knifed between foes in the stretch for Gingras to defeat



MIKE LIZZI

Hellabalou took advantage of a crazy speed duel to capture the Borgata final in April at Yonkers Raceway.

French Wine by a neck in 2:05 2/5. Oh Well was another neck back in third and a gaining Helpfirstedtion was a lapped-on fourth in the scramble to the wire.

Hambletonian Day on August 3 at the Meadowlands had a little bit of everything, from great racing to wild swings in the weather, from sun and a fast track to start to downpours during races. The Shady Daisy for 3-year-old pacing fillies went before the rain and Rocket Deo became the third leader prior to the half, then held on determinedly in a three-horse dash to the wire, defeating Canigetlaloup by a head in 1:49 with Andy McCarthy driving.

"I had pretty good faith in her," said McCarthy that day. "I thought I



NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

Chapercraz (10) split horses in a wild finish to win the 2024 Hambletonian Maturity at The Meadowlands.

was beat in mid-stretch. She's a gritty girl."

One of the races run during the height of a storm was the John Cashman Memorial, and Jiggy Jog powered to a 1:49 2/5 victory for Dexter Dunn after sitting second-over behind an extended battle on the front-end between her stablemate Southwind Tyrion and defending race winner It's Academic.

"I had such a good helmet to follow in Southwind Tyrion," said Dunn in the moment. "I knew it would have to be a big effort, but she just fills you with confidence when you sit behind her. She does her work so easy, and I was happy with the spot I was in."

And, of course, the Hambletonian itself also went off during a pounding deluge, and Karl was able to get around a game Highland Kismet, who had

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 5](#)



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taken the lead from first-over in the stretch, to prevail in 1:51 3/5. Amazing Catch and a traffic-troubled Sig Sauer were also close at the finish. It was a popular win as Gingras at last had his Hambletonian champion and trainer Nancy Takter won the event for the second straight year.

"It's been a long time coming, that's for sure. I said before I thought it was my best chance I've ever had and the horse came through," remarked Gingras after the race. "We were all in the same situation (with the rain) there, but through the race I was actually really happy the way it was setting up. I thought it set up perfectly for us. The horse is a great horse, I don't think it would've mattered, but he proved today what a champion he is.

"At the top of the stretch I was like 'God dang it that fricking race is getting away from me again.' Highland Kismet kicked clear for a little bit. I had to wait on mine for a couple of strides and it was tight quarters. I didn't want to do anything to jeopardize it. I figured an eighth of a mile was enough to show what a champion he was. I knew he would be a good helmet to follow, and for once I was right."

Two days later on the 5th, Grand River Raceway hosted its annual Industry Day program, and the Battle Of Waterloo for Ontario-sired 2-year-old male pacers saw a dazzling performance by Stonebridge Wizard. He went to the lead in 26 seconds, parked a rival through a 53 1/5 half and 1:22 1/5 three-quarters, and held off a charging Sterling Choice to deliver by a head in 1:51 2/5. This was the first Battle Of Waterloo run over the new five-eighths-mile configuration at Grand River.

Traveling over to Woodbine Mohawk Park on the 31st, It's My Show had more of his preferred trip in the Canadian Pacing Derby. He was able to tow along on the inside as El Rey, Voukefalas, and finally a first-over Abuckabett Hanover traded the lead. Zeron then got It's My Show off the cones in the lane and he moved past a game Abuckabett Hanover on the line for the victory by a nose in a 1:48 1/5 mile.

Back in September, rookie pacing males met at The Meadows on the 5th for the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes Championship, and Go Go Grasshopper and then TH Colby led early before Dreamboat Hanover took the lead from first-up. Dreamboat Hanover continued on the lead in the lane in game fashion, but he weakened late, paving the way for 7-1 shot Papi's



MIKE LIZZI/DRF HARNESS

Karl winning the Hambletonian in a downpour is a lasting memory that driver Yannick Gingras and no one else will forget.

Rocket to win in 1:51 1/5 for driver Ronnie Wrenn Jr.

At Harrah's Hoosier Park on the 20th, Coach Stefanos and Abuckabett Hanover were the leaders in the first-half of the Harrah's Hoosier Park Pacing Derby, but Little Rocket Man worked his way past Abuckabett Hanover past the half. From there, Little Rocket Man was able to repel a first-over Backstreet Shadow and did the same to Abuckabett Hanover and Bythemissal to the wire, winning by a quarter of a length in 1:48 1/5 for David Miller.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone in the harness racing community a safe holiday season, filled with laughter, love and joy!

2024 was another incredible season, filled with lots of amazing memories. Once again, none of it would be possible without the people who make it all possible. I have a great staff, tremendous owners and partners, talented drivers and unbelievable horses. Let's make 2025 even more memorable!

Nancy Takter AND FAMILY

WISHING EVERYONE
A HAPPY & JOYOUS

*Holiday
Season*



“Those horses were coming to him. I was probably getting a little more nervous than what he was,” Miller remarked after the victory. “He was like ‘we got this man, don’t worry.’”

One night later was a huge card at Woodbine Mohawk Park that included two million-dollar races. One of them, the Metro for 2-year-old male pacers, went to Fallout in rallying fashion in 1:49 1/5 for driver Tim Tetrick. Prince Hal Hanover, who was one of three pace-setters to go along with Blue Onyx and Captain Optimistic, came up a length short.

Both of the Kentucky Futurities for 3-year-old trotters on October 6 at The Red Mile were wild and woolly affairs. R Melina battled Warrawee Michelle on the front-end in the race for the fillies but just kept going in the lane to score in 1:50 1/5 with Todd McCarthy in the bike, and then his brother Andy took the clash for the colts and geldings with Sig Sauer in 1:49 3/5 after wild fractions of 26 3/5, 52 4/5 and 1:21 were set by Highland Kismet and Tony Adams S.

“He’s a great horse,” said Andy McCarthy following the win. “That trip was quite an effort.”



AMANDA STEPHENS

Sig Sauer clocked the fastest mile by a 3-year-old trotter in 2024 when he stopped the timer in 1:49 3/5 in the Kentucky Futurity.

MGM Northfield Park hosted the Ohio Sires Stakes Championships this year, and the race for 2-year-old pacing fillies saw a pair of Virgil Morgan Jr. trainees, Odds On Hialeah and Odds On Chesapeake, battle side-by-side in the second-half of the mile, with Odds On Hialeah winning by a neck in 1:53. Skywalker Sea was just half a length behind them in the third spot.

The Meadowlands rolled out the red carpet for the Breeders Crown on the 25th and 26th of October. In the 2-year-old male trot on opening night of the event, Maryland won in game fashion as he worked his way to the lead past the half and then held off a stern first-over challenge from Go Dog Go and then a closing attempt by Maximum Mearas S for a 1:51 4/5 triumph for Dunn.

Then on the 26th, the 3-year-old colt and gelding trot went to Sig Sauer by a nose in a race where the top four were separated by just a length in a 1:50 4/5, and in likely the most memorable race of the weekend, Coach Stefanos, piloted by James MacDonald, came from last off a quick tempo to capture the Open Pace by half a length in 1:48 3/5.

“I was having a little conversation with myself in my head there. I just said ‘don’t panic, I know you’re in a bad spot, but this horse gets home like a freight train and they’re going to come back to you,’” MacDonald remarked after the win. “I said to (winning trainer) Erv Miller when I came off the track, ‘I know you were looking for fifth-over and tenth on the outside on the last turn weren’t you?’ He kind of chuckled. That’s the kind of horse he is. Some days it’s going to work out for him. Luckily tonight was his night. On other days he might let some bettors down as the favorite, but tonight, just a big-time finishing kick. Nothing’s better than tenth to first in any race, let alone the Breeders Crown.

“When we came off the turn, I just kind of rode out with the flow. He just jumped forward, and then I said ‘oh, maybe.’ They started to kind of come back to him. Sometimes those closers, when they start to go by a couple of them, they get rolling and they get the wheels moving. Halfway

Thank You!

Today you are reading the final DRF Harness Digest Newsletter issue of 2024. We hope you enjoy this annual “Holiday” edition as we look back at the year that was, ahead to 2025, and bring you fresh features through the words of our writers.

I would personally like to thank our writing team for bringing interesting stories to you on a regular basis. Much appreciation goes out to the Standardbred community – drivers, trainers, owners, breeders, management, horsemen’s associations and fans – for their help and cooperation in bringing the content you see each week to these pages. Finally, a HUGE thank you to every advertiser in this issue and who has supported the newsletter throughout the year. Your support plays a huge part in being able to provide this content free to everyone.

We’ll be back with our next issue on January 9.

On behalf of the entire staff here at DRF Harness, we wish everyone a wonderful holiday and a very happy New Year filled with winners and good fortune.

Sincerely,

Derick Giumer

down the lane, I kicked the plugs and he gave me another little surge. Then it was pushing him to the wire and praying he got there.”

Dover Downs had their annual Matron Stakes for 2- and 3-year-olds in November, and on the 7th in the 3-year-old filly pace, My Girl EJ became the third leader of the event before the half, but was overtaken in a three-horse battle to the wire by Direction and Todd McCarthy, who got the nod by a neck in 1:50 2/5. Rocket Deo also got by My Girl EJ for second.

Back at the Meadowlands on the 9th for the Kindergarten Series finals, Maryland won the race for 2-year-old male trotters in much the same way he did his Breeders Crown as he brushed to the lead past the half and then withstood a ferocious first-over try by Monserrate, defeating him by half a length in 1:53 4/5.

“He’s a real racehorse,” said Dunn of the winner. “He knows how to win, and he wants to win.”

Finally, the Goldsmith Maid for 2-year-old filly trotters on the 30th at the Meadowlands had the top-four finishers separated by just three-quarters of a length and the top three by a trio of noses as What A Bid Hanover got by Voguish and Luna Lovegood at the wire in 1:53 3/5 for trainer/driver Ake Svanstedt. For the controversy lovers out there, this one also had an inquiry against the winner for contact in the stretch, but no change was made.



NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

Coach Stefanos (7) rallied from last to capture the Breeders Crown Open Pace.

Also, I’d like to mention from that same card with the Goldsmith Maid, The Meadowlands once again did a wonderful job recognizing many of the sport’s retiring stars. It’s nice that many of them get one final winner’s circle appearance and a fitting send-off.

That’s my list for this year. I’d like to thank all of the horses, horsepeople and our readers for another great year of stakes action and coverage, and I look forward to seeing you all again in 2025.

Happy Holidays



Perfect Sting

p,3, 1:48.1 (\$1,861,447) • Always B Miki - Shebestingin
Standing at Deo Volente Farms of NJ • Stud Fee: \$10,000 U.S.

Six Pack

Muscle Mass - Pleasing Lady • 3, 1:49.1 (\$1,973,661)
Standing at Winbak Farm of New York • Stud Fee: \$7,500 U.S.



Trixton

Muscle Hill - Emilie Cas El • 3, 1:50.3 (\$968,696)
Standing at Winbak Farm of Canada • Stud Fee: \$7,500 U.S.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and safe holiday season & a very prosperous New Year. Sending special thanks to the breeders who have supported our stallions in the past.



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Millionaires highlight 2024 retiring class of 14-year-olds



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner X @harnessveguy

Human athletes in major league sports typically experience decline in their mid to late 30s and only those in elite shape or possessing special talent make it into their fourth decade as full-time players. Going the distance in a career is difficult. It requires the right genetic makeup and most of all long-term health.

It also takes a special horse that can remain on the track into what is their human equivalent of being over 40. According to multiple sites (including horseyhooves.com) a 14-year-old horse is approximately 45.5 years old in human terms. You would be hard-pressed to find many people still competing regularly in professional sports at that age. There are exceptions, like former quarterback Tom Brady (retired at 45), and eight other National Football League players to compete at 45 or older. Among the big four sports in North America (NFL, NBA, NHL and MLB), 58 total players (sources: Wikipedia and oldest.org) have gotten on the field, rink or court at age 45, with the overwhelming majority (42) coming from baseball.

While human athletes technically do not have a mandatory retirement age, Standardbreds do. Rules mandate that Standardbreds can race until December 31 of their 14-year-old season with the exception of races with amateur drivers. In those events, the deadline is extended for a full year and the connections of 14 horses took advantage. They earned \$106,497 on the track in 2024 and won 14 races, 10 of which came from Marty Monkhouser and Mariner Seelster, who won five each. So Take That is the only one of the group to race past October as he went to the track for the 400th time in his career at Rosecroft Raceway on December 11.

Each year we honor the retiring 14-year-olds who have survived the wars of racing and made at least one start in what is expected to be their final year of racing. There were exactly 100 horses to qualify in 2024 and this year in particular includes standouts at the top of the heap, with five millionaires leading the way. Interestingly, four of the five sold at public auction and the highest price paid was \$55,000. That's some return on investment! In fact, not one of the entire list of 14-year-olds sold for over \$80,000 and four sold for under \$5,000 while winning north of \$475K.

We must commence the conversation about 14-year-olds in 2024 with Southwind Amazon. Anyone who follows harness racing should be aware by now that he set the modern era record for career wins earlier this year. On November 5, Southwind Amazon won for the 138th time and passed Niffit to stand alone atop the wins leaderboard. Putting the record in further perspective, only 21 horses in the last 50 years have eclipsed 100 career wins. Southwind Amazon's name is ahead of historic war horses like Rambling Willie and Foiled Again.

As with all of our potentially retiring 14-year-olds, Southwind Amazon began his journey in 2012. A son of Camluck out of an Artsplace mare

named Artoonist, he was bred by Southwind Farm and sold for \$35,000 at Harrisburg. The now gelding displayed some potential as a sophomore when he won a leg of the Ontario Sire Stakes, but he really began to prove his mettle a few years later when joining the barn of current trainer Paul Holzman in February of 2016. As the trainer recalls, he purchased the horse from a friend in Canada for about \$25,000 and never dreamed he had a potential millionaire on his hands.

"I was buying him to race as a conditioned horse down at Pompano and he turned into a pot of gold," said Holzman, who described the moment when he knew he had something special. "He won his second start for us in 1:50 and change with Ricky Macomber driving, but it was a few starts when later George Nap [olitano, Jr] drove him for the first time and he set a lifetime mark winning by five lengths under a choke hold in 1:49 2/5. After that he told me he could've gone 1:48 and he was right. Every start after that he just seemed to get better."

For seven consecutive years Southwind Amazon would eclipse the \$100,000 mark in earnings and paced in under 1:50 each year. That's

an accomplishment even the great all-time earnings leader Foiled Again doesn't have on his résumé. Over his career he has competed in the top overnight conditioned races at tracks like the now defunct Pompano Park to his current stomping grounds of Northfield Park in Ohio.

Southwind Amazon has also stepped up to compete in Invitationals at times. While he was never able to walk away victorious, he did pick up a second in the Kane Memorial at Batavia and third in the Battle of Lake Erie in 2019.

"He is the Northville Downs track record-holder and that will never be broken since the track is closed, which is pretty cool because I grew up there and that was my home base," said Holzman.

Southwind Amazon has started at least 32 times each year for the last nine years. While he has tailed off some as a 14-year-old, he has still posted a very credible nine wins in 34 starts while earning \$39,412 and remains sound.

"He only had one little thing just after COVID [October 2021] but he ending up coming back. We never really identified what it was. He made a very nasty break at Northfield, Billy Davis was driving him and pulled him up. He never really acted like he was 'broken bone lame' and the x-rays were all negative, but I treated him like he had a hairline fracture that we weren't seeing. When I brought him back he came back like he hadn't missed time. Except for that, since the time I purchased him he has raced year round every year - spring, summer, fall, winter," said Holzman.

Like all horses his age, Southwind Amazon is of course eligible to consider amateur racing, but Holzman says that is not in his future.

"No amateurs; I've been asked a thousand times. He deserves to ride off into the sunset. A buddy of mine that I grew up with has his own farm in Michigan close to where my family is and the owner's [Ameer Najor] family is, and he's got a spot waiting for him when he is done," said Holz-



DIANE WISE PHOTO

Southwind Amazon picked up career win 139 at Northfield Park on December 17 with Ronnie Wrenn, Jr. in the bike.

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Happy Holidays *from Caesars Racing*

We'd like to wish our racing fans, horsemen and horsewomen, race track teams, and racing community a warm, safe and happy holiday season.



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man. “He has no idea [retirement] is coming. He thinks he is 5 years old. He likes doing what he is doing and is the happiest horse you ever want to come across. He’s been in my stalls for eight years. It is going to be like losing a son.”

Almost in the same mold as Southwind Amazon is fellow 14-year-old The Real One. The son of Mach Three out of Elle Blue Chip has been with owner Helene Fillion almost since day one and been under the care of Patrick Lachance since 2014.

“I purchased The Real One on the Standardbred Canada website after he had made two starts in Toronto,” said Fillion, who sent The Real One to Lachance as a 4-year-old but housed the gelding from December to April each year except for the last two.

“I didn’t really know [Helene] but she is French Canadian and from the same town I was from in Montreal,” said Lachance about the connection.

Never dropped in for a claiming tag in his entire 349-start career, The Real One has basically been a regular in the Open ranks at tracks like Yonkers Raceway from 2014 to 2022. The gelding with 73 wins and \$1.66 million in earnings was a whiz over smaller tracks and at one time held the track record at Yonkers at 1:50. Also like Southwind Amazon, The Real One dipped his toes in stakes company at times, winning an Ontario Sire Stakes leg in 2013 and finishing second in the Levy (now Borgata) series back in 2016.

On the year The Real One has a pair of wins from 31 starts and \$62,690 in earnings. Lachance reports that the gelding remains in good shape and owes some of his longevity to his racing style.

“He’s still in good shape. He may’ve lost a step but he’s still sound and isn’t hurting,” said Lachance. “Once he gets to the lead and he’s passed horses he kind of gives up. With his closing style I was always one-running him and with that style it is much easier to last than being a frontrunner.”

Next on the agenda for The Real One once he’s done racing at the end of the year is a date back in Montreal with his owner.

“She is going to retire him in her backyard in Montreal and will take care of him until he dies,” said Lachance. “I’m sad to see him go but also I’m not. I think he deserves a good retirement and now he can go to a good home and I’ll never have to worry about that.”

The Real One sits just a few thousand dollars behind the earnings leader from the crop of 2010. Doctor Butch (\$1.67 million) only started



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

The Real One, pictured with Pat Lachance, has captured the Open at Yonkers Raceway an amazing 15 times during his long career.

twice in 2024 before returning to the breeding shed and hasn’t been a big earner since 2018, but at one time he was one of the better horses in the sport. From 2012 to 2016 he averaged \$242K earned per year and built up quite the résumé.

A son of Art Major out of a Jenna’s Beach Boy mare named Classical Yankee, Doctor Butch was a New York Sire Stakes champion at age 2. Under the care of Linda Toscano he also won the Art Rooney in his sophomore campaign and picked up checks in stakes with the Roll With Joe and Quillen Memorial in the following years. In 2017 Doctor Butch moved to the Richard Banca barn and stayed under his roof until moving to his current owner Ettore Annunziata Rev Trust.

Trainer Michael Annunziata raced Doctor Butch exclusively for a couple of years before having the big guy switch to double duty in 2023,

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SEASON’S GREETINGS

I’d like to congratulate everyone on a fantastic season, especially Captain Albano and Sig Sauer achieving great success this year. A heartfelt thank-you to all the owners, trainers, caretakers, fans, and the incredible horses who made 2024 an unforgettable year.

Wishing everyone in our industry a joyful holiday season and a New Year filled with happiness and continued success on and off the track!



Best of luck in 2025!

Happy Holidays,
Noel Daley



Happy Holidays
from
MIKI AND MINNIE
p,2,1:49.2-'24 (\$834,086)



and everyone at the Chris Ryder Stable

MIKI AND MINNIE dominated her 2-year-old pacing filly division with decisive victories in the Breeders Crown final, Kentucky Sire Stakes Championship Final, a division of the Bluegrass, and the Three Diamonds season finale, winning in a stakes record-equaling 1:49.2. With six wins and four seconds in 11 seasonal starts, the daughter of ALWAYS B MIKI danced every dance and skipped away with \$834,086 in earnings, making her the season's richest freshmen pacer, regardless of sex.

adding him to the stallion ranks in Virginia. For 2025 he has moved to New Jersey at Sunset Ridge.

"I love The Meadowlands, it's the mecca of harness racing and where Butch is most known," said Annunziata about Doctor Butch, who won 57 of 345 starts in his career. "People were saying they wanted to breed to him but didn't want to ship down to Virginia, so it made sense to switch to New Jersey. His first crop of foals are all huge so it looks like they'll be able to handle the big track."

The fastest retiree is also a millionaire and former stakes winner. Lucan Hanover competed in most of the big dances as a 3-year-old and was able to pick up a victory in the New Jersey Classic as well as third-place checks in the Little Brown Jug and Breeders Crown 3-year-old colt pace in 2013. He also set his 1:48 lifetime mark winning at elimination of the Crown at Pocono Downs. While more than a third of his career earnings came that year, he eclipsed six figures four more times.

Those very successful years came while Lucan Hanover was under the care of Casie Coleman and Andrew Harris. The gelding changed hands a couple of times and eventually landed with Aaron Hall in 2021 and has done good work on the New England circuit, winning 19 races since 2022 and increasing his career record to 75 victories from 339 starts.



JOE SHAW PHOTO

Lucan Hanover made his fifth visit to the winner's circle after a smiling Aaron Hall guided him to victory at Cumberland.

"Lucan is just a cool horse, everything he does is done with class. He carries himself with a well-earned chip on his shoulder," said Hall, who added that the 14-year-old loves bananas and powdered donuts. "On the track he's the ultimate pro; drives like a Cadillac. Over the past two seasons he's taken care of himself and been more selective on when he puts in big efforts. He'll be an impossible horse to replace."

Hall said he won't be selling Lucan Hanover to someone looking for an amateur horse and the only way the gelding will leave his barn is if he can locate a good permanent home.

"Life after racing is still up in the air. He'll stay here at the farm until a great opportunity presents itself for him. There will be no rush to have him leave but I'll also be happy to see him go onto his next chapter. It will just need to be a great situation to hand him over to," said Hall.

Closing out the retiring millionaires list is Windsong Jack at \$1,039,713. Unlike most of the aforementioned group, "Jack" called it a career back in April after making 12 starts, but he made his mark with multiple Ontario Sire Stakes victories at ages 2 and 3 as well as 47 career wins from 297 starts.

Our list of 100 includes so much more than just big on-track earners. There is Dusto, a son of Stand Forever with an amazing 466 career starts. That is an average of 35.8 starts per year for 13 years. Dusto is joined by six others who have eclipsed the 400 barrier and five more horses sit in the 390-399 range.

If there is a common theme for longevity and durability among the horses with the most appearances behind the starting gate it is sire Jereme's Jet. Three of the top eight on the "most starts" list are sired by the late stallion who won a Dan Patch Award in 2005 and did his breeding work in Ontario and Indiana.

Perhaps more impressive than 466 starts in a career is being able to

answer the call to the post more than 40 times at age 14. A quartet of horses have accomplished the feat this year led by New Zealand import Machtu, an 11-time winner in 45 starts for owner/trainer Tammy Sowers.

"Knock on wood Mach has remained sound," said Sowers, who saw Machtu finish second on Dec. 12 at Monticello. "He has a great personality! He is cranky at times but loves treats and being turned out. It's so much so that we only jog him three days a week and he gets pasture time for the rest. I think this helps with his longevity. He is very competitive and doesn't like to lose!"

Machtu, who has won 47 of 282 races in North America and 17 more before his arrival from Down Under in 2016, is one of the 14-year-olds that will continue his career at age 15 before settling down with the Sowers family.

"He will race in the amateurs in Maine at 15 if he continues to stay sound. After that he will retire with us," said Sowers.

Also on the 40+ starts list is another New Zealander who came stateside in 2016. Provocativeprince not only has made 43 starts on the year but he also leads all 14-year-olds in wins with 15 and sits second in earnings at \$69,108. Topping him in the money-earned category at an astonishing \$93,054 is an Australian named Major Crocker.

Brought here in 2019 after earnings well over \$500K in his homeland, Major Crocker finished off 2024 just shy of his fourth six-figure season in North America. The son of Art Major was also the fastest 14-year-old of the year with a 1:50 3/5 mark taken at Harrah's Hoosier Park.

"He's just a classy horse," said trainer Walter Haynes Jr., who claimed Major Crocker for \$15,000 in August for owners Matthew Miller and Darin Miller. "He hardly missed getting a check for us. We dropped him down to the 10 claimers knowing no one would take him and he was able to sit last and roll by them."

Major Crocker finished his year and career on November 15 with a second-place finish at Harrah's Hoosier Park and has moved on to his next journey.

"He's at New Vocations in Kentucky," said Haynes. "They are going to teach him how to be a riding horse and give him to some kid."

This was a rare year when pacers totally dominated the leaders from the 14-year-old class but we can't ignore the trotters completely. Penn, a son of Master Glide, is the fastest retiring trotter with a 1:52 3/5 mark. He won 64 of 195 races and \$492K during a career that ended in September.

Far and away the most accomplished trotter from the group is Crazy About Pat. The son of Crazyed made \$977K during his time on the track and did more than a third of that earning as a 3-year-old when he won the New York Sire Stakes final for colts.

It takes all kinds of horses to put together racing programs across the continent. For every stake-caliber or Open horse there are dozens of low-level conditioned types competing weekly and giving their all on the track. While they all deserve their due, below we highlight two.

Certainly almost no one has heard of Culpepper, a son of Camluck who made only \$25,539 in his life to finish as the lowest earner, but he did answer the call 173 times in 13 years of racing and made at least 20 starts each of the last four years. Gotfaithincowboys made slightly more at \$42,003 but was able to make her way to the track an impressive 280 times including 10 straight years over 22 starts and 19 as a 14-year-old.

Most of the 100 horses have already retired or plan to do so by December 31. Some will continue on to amateur races in 2025 and continue to do what they love. Regardless of their futures, we salute what they have accomplished in the past and thank them for their service to the daily racing wars for more than a decade. Enjoy retirement!



COURTESY TAMMY SOWERS

Machtu has won 47 times since coming over from New Zealand, including 11 wins this year.



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Hugh Heff stands tall as the winningest horse of 2024



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [✕ BergmanJay](#)

Anyone that has owned, trained or driven a horse is acutely aware of how difficult it is to win a race. Some horses just train against stablemates and never make it to the races. Others live in non-winners company most of their racing careers. Then there are those horses that have the magic combination of ability and desire and defy the odds. These horses find a way to win when others will lose. These horses find a way to show up on a weekly basis and perform with optimum ability while others either lack the desire or physical health to continue.

Races go on daily throughout North America with a limited number of horses ever registering 10 wins on a given season. In 2024, six pacers exceeded expectations and had the distinction of winning 18 races or more. The king of this year's court is a Maritime monster by the name of Hugh Heff with an incredible 24 victories to his credit during a 40-race campaign.

Trainer Dana Getto acquired the 4-year-old altered son of Betterhanceddar in August and Hugh Heff went on to win his next eight races at Northside Downs, a tight half-mile track in Nova Scotia, completing his season for Getto with an astounding 10 wins in 12 starts.

"He's a very intelligent horse," said Getto. "If you noticed a lot of his wins come by a very slim margin. He knows what he's out there to do and does just enough to get the job done."

Racing in the Martimes can be challenging on horsemen and horses, and Getto is most proud of what Hugh Heff has been able to accomplish under at times difficult conditions.



COURTESY DANA GETTO

Trainer Dana Getto with Hugh Heff, the winningest horse in North America with 24 victories.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 17](#)

Season's Greetings!

As 2024 comes to a close, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to everyone on an outstanding season!

A sincere thank-you to the owners, trainers, caretakers, fans, and, of course, the extraordinary horses who made this year truly unforgettable.

Wishing everyone in the industry a joyous holiday season and a New Year filled with happiness, health, and continued achievements.

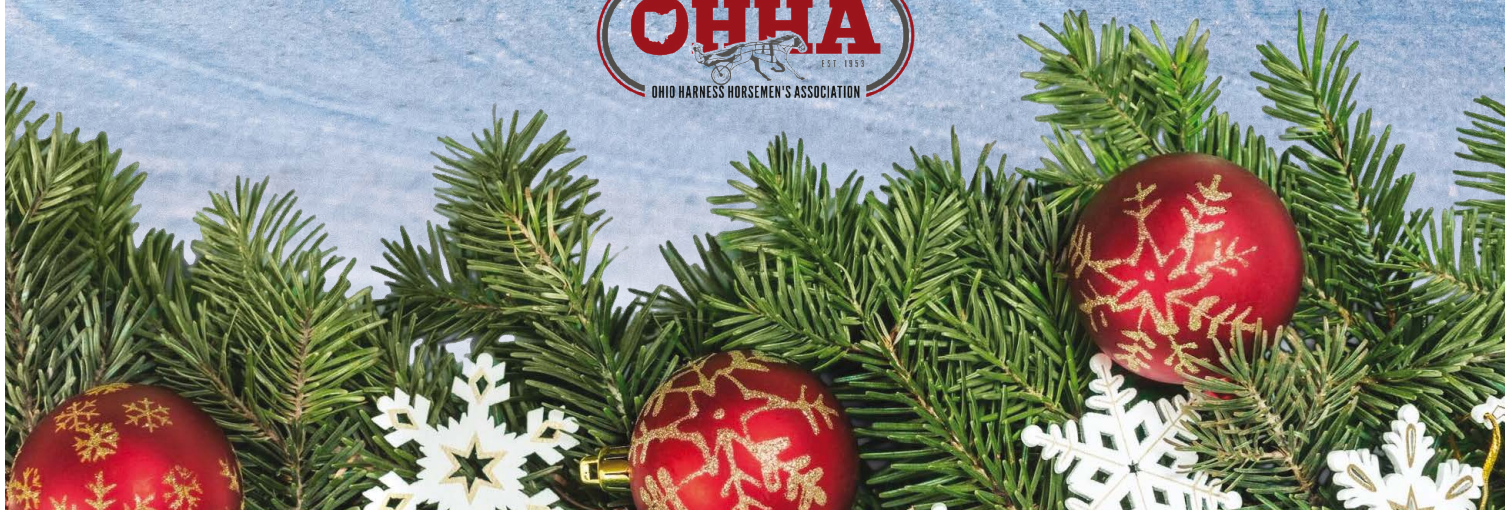
Happy Holidays,

Marcus Melander
Trainer
+1 (848) 482-9220
Marcus@teammelander.se
<https://www.melanderstable.com/>



Happy Holidays

*Wishing everyone a happy
and prosperous 2025!*



“He’s been handicapped with post six a lot,” said Getto about Hugh Heff, who typically starts from the outside of the starting gate while five go inside and one goes from the trailing position, making it even more challenging to find the inside. “I’ve been around here for a long time (40 years or more) and you just don’t see many horses winning from that spot very often.”

Hugh Heff won six straight times from post six at the end of the year for Getto.

Intelligent horses know what the goal is when they get to the racetrack and Getto says Hugh Heff understands what’s coming. “You can see it in his eyes and his ears. He’s got his game face on.” That face has seen more pictures with his nose in front in 2024 than another other horse in North America.

“It’s not the first time I’ve had a horse that won the most races in a year,” said Getto. “I had a horse named Surrealist a few years ago and he won the most races as well.”

Surrealist won 19 races in 2016 and 16 in 2017.

With racing concluded for the winter, Getto is looking forward to next year when the tracks re-open in May, but with a bit of caution. “You just don’t know how they will come back,” Getto said. “The routine is changed and we’re just jogging him now.”

Away from serious competition, Hugh Heff gets a well-deserved rest with the victory title secured by a comfortable margin.

Only two other horses – Outlaw Spiced Rum and Need Ur Opinion – in North America were able to win 20 races this year.

Outlaw Spiced Rum did her damage in the western part of Canada. The 6-year-old mare has won 20 of her 36 races to date with trainer-driver Rod Therres expecting two more starts and hopefully one additional win before the calendar turns.

Therres, like Getto, both had the distinction of purchasing their winningest horse late in the season with both privately purchasing horses that were in fact racing in claiming races.

“She wasn’t racing that well on the big track,” said Therres of his ability to secure Outlaw Spiced Rum. “She was running out in the stretch but that hasn’t been a problem on the five-eighths.”

Outlaw Spiced Rum has won six of her eight starts since moving into Therres’ stable.

“If I had to sum it up for her, she’s all heart.”

Outlaw Spiced Rum is currently racing at Fraser Downs in British Columbia in claiming races but due to her success is not likely to see enough horses entered against her. “She’ll most likely have to race with Open Mares,” said Therres.

As to what separates Outlaw Spiced Rum from the others when it comes to attitude, Therres said, “She can be quite spicy before the races when you take her onto the track. Once in the race she’s easy to control.”

It’s that kind of demeanor that has led the daughter of Blue Burner to an incredible campaign.

Need Ur Opinion has the distinction of changing hands more than any other in the group. The 7-year-old mare by Warrawee Needy was

claimed on a dozen occasions in 2024 and seemed to do well for all those that showed an interest. Need UR Opinion went on a seven-race winning streak between April 9 and June 4 at Harrington Raceway. During that impressive period, she was claimed on five separate occasions. Need UR Opinion would reach the 20-win plateau, capturing four races for trainer Dean Eckley in the final months of the year.

For Lloyd’s Loves, her path towards an 18-win season took a different course than the top three on this list. The 4-year-old mare by Rustys All In won her first race in February at the \$15,000 claiming level at Rosecroft and advanced incredibly from there, with her capturing an Open Handicap at the five-eighths oval in May before finding her way to Yonkers to compete in a \$30,000 claimer. She would inevitably be claimed by Gilbert Garcia-Herrera at that level and go on to win six consecutive races during the summer at Yonkers and move up the ladder to the \$75,000 price point.

Trainer Edwin Quevedo watched many of those Yonkers wins and offered to buy the mare in November.

“She’s a beautiful looking mare,” said Quevedo, hardly concerned about her valuation in the early part of the year. “She proved herself

on the half-mile track. I think she’s an Open mare or maybe a step below.”

With the lucrative purses at Yonkers, Lloyd’s Loves may not get the chance to win 18 races again but she made her mark in 2024 and could close out the year with earnings exceeding \$200K.

Trainer Paul Blumenfeld has been a staple around Yonkers Raceway for many years and he had no trouble reaching out on a limb to claim the 11-year-old Italian Delight N in early October for \$15,000. Italian Delight N was amid an 11-race

winning streak at the time and went on to win three more races in a row before finally meeting defeat.

“He’s a very classy horse,” said Blumenfeld of Italian Delight N. “I thought if others could win with him that I could too.”

Italian Delight N is unique in the company he’s keeping at the top of the wins list this year and Blumenfeld understands what he’s got.

“He’s got his issues, and we have to work to keep him healthy,” said Blumenfeld. “What I see him doing on the racetrack now would be similar to having Michael Jordan come back and compete in the G-League. He’s not the same Michael Jordan but he can still dominate.”

Blumenfeld went back on the career of a one-time elite horse in Australia that Italian Delight was before coming to North America. Those roots remain and Italian Delight’s competitiveness keeps him wanting to win every time he sets foot on the track.

“You never know when an injury will come and keep them from going on,” said Blumenfeld, balancing the risk-reward all trainers face in this business.

The latest addition to the 18-win club is Woodmere Heather M. The 4-year-old mare got there on December 7 at Charlottetown Driving Park while besting a group of \$7,000 claimers. The daughter of Malicious won eight straight races at one point and 16 of her 18 wins have come since moving north of the border in May to join the Jennifer Doyle barn. For the year, Woodmere Heather M’s wins have come in 39 starts and she has earned \$31,852 racing almost exclusively in low-level claiming races.



MIKE LIZZI

Italian Delight won 14 straight races at one point this year at Yonkers Raceway.

2025 Stallion Roster

Captaintreacherous \$30,000

Somebeachsomewhere - Worldly Treasure - Artsplace
p, 3, 1:47.1M (\$3,148,657)

Captain Corey \$8,500

Googoo Gaagaa - Luv U All - Angus Hall
3, 1:51.0F (\$1,090,333)

Greenshoe \$10,000

Father Patrick - Designed To Be - Donato Hanover
3, 1:49.4M (\$1,353,772)

International Moni \$6,000

Love You - Moni Maker - Speedy Crown
2, 1:53.1M, 3, 1:51.4M (\$775,463)

Nuncio \$7,500

Andover Hall - Nicole Isabelle - Lindy Lane
3, 1:50.4M (\$3,645,363)
(frozen semen only. foals not Pennsylvania eligible)

Papi Rob Hanover \$10,000

Somebeachsomewhere - Panera Hanover - Rocknroll Hanover
p, 3, 1:47.1F (\$927,979)

***Sig Sauer \$8,000 - NEW**

Muscle Hill - Sigilwig - Donato Hanover
2, 1:53.3, 3, 1:49.3 (\$1,151,312)

Stay Hungry \$6,000

Somebeachsomewhere - My Little Dragon - Dragon Again
p, 3, 1:47.3M (\$1,303,709)

Tall Dark Stranger \$8,000

Bettor's Delight - Precocious Beauty - Art Major
p, 3, 1:47.1M (\$1,741,645)

Volume Eight \$6,000

Chapter Seven - Lass A Rope - Encore Encore
2,1:52.0M (\$434,002)




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AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali [X AtTheTrack7](#)

Saying goodbye to Freehold Raceway

Freehold Raceway was not the racetrack I grew up at, but it is one where I spent many afternoons with my dad. When my father first began buying into partnerships for Standardbreds, those horses typically raced at Freehold and we would enjoy many afternoons in Billy's Room to go see the horses race.

I remember the first horse we owned, a mare named Michelene's Lair. She won a couple of times for us there with Ron Pierce driving and was the first horse that my dad got to take a winner's circle picture with. I was 13 years old at the time.

We'd have many horses compete there over the years. Trot Like Dad was one of my favorites and I can remember him winning in the rain from post 8, which was no small feat at the Afternoon Delight off Route 9. We had a horse named Manasquan that was driven regularly by Andy Miller on the half-mile oval. He was a small horse with a big heart that got to the winner's circle a few times with the Orange Crush. I remember our horses like Eastern Hanover, Splitting Hares and Badcreditnoproblem who all raced at Freehold. Anytime our horse won, it meant that my dad probably had a pretty good day and we were headed for a doubleheader, driving up to The Meadowlands at night.

I was at Freehold Raceway on Preakness Day 1998 because we had a horse racing. I remember the video feed from Pimlico going out and learning later that the racetrack had a partial blackout. Back then there was no social media or text messaging. It took a phone call to one person, who spoke to another person, etc. I remember sitting there for a good 15 to 20 minutes having no clue what was going on.

One day I filled in for the great Larry Lederman calling the races there. Larry's booming voice and unmatched humor and wit can never be replaced or forgotten and it will resonate in Freehold, New Jersey long after the last race is declared official.

While Freehold Raceway was not my "home racetrack," it's another part of my youth that is going away. As someone who is now 41 years old, despite the fact that I still feel like a kid, I have been through a lot of loss the last 10 years, worse than some, not as much as others, but it feels like I am too young to have seen so many people and places leave this world, and Freehold Raceway is another sad reminder of that. Sure, you can say "it's just a racetrack, Darin," but as anyone who has experienced a great deal of loss in their life, these things all add up and quite honestly it can become depressing.

My wife's parents are both gone. My parents are both gone. Of course, this is something everyone goes through, but when a husband and wife have both lost their parents before they are 40 years old, it's difficult and only brings about more of these feelings. Time doesn't heal all wounds, as time passes the wounds just feel different.

In the racing world I have lost dear friends like Sam McKee, Dave Brower and Larry Lederman, all taken from us way too soon and at young ages. The places that have gone away are on this list too for me. Garden State Park is gone. The original Meadowlands, the building that I grew up in, is no more. Atlantic City Race Course. Belmont Park was just demolished and is being rebuilt. Aqueduct is said to only be racing a couple more years. The list goes on and on.

The longer you live, the more you lose. That is just life. There is no way around it. There is no way to avoid it. But it takes its toll. You start to realize that despite how you feel, you're not that young anymore. With each thing that is taken away you feel more and more disconnected from your childhood and your youth. I've written many times about my father, how horse racing was our shared interest and the racetrack was where we bonded as father and son, but if I think about those times now, it brings on feelings of melancholy. My father is gone. The room in the racetrack we spent many nights in together is gone. Some of the people who were there with us are gone. The dining room at Philadelphia Park (now Parx) where we ate lunch and spent weekends together is gone. Garden State Park and



BARBARA LIVINGSTON PHOTO

the room with that incredible view of the paddock that we spent time in is gone. Now Freehold Raceway where we cheered our horses down the stretch and shared highs and lows together will soon be gone.

I am sure someone is reading this column and what I am saying is resonating with them. Maybe Freehold was to them what The Meadowlands was to me. While Freehold may not have been the place I "grew up" at like The Meadowlands, it is still full of memories. Sadly it will soon take its place on an ever-expanding list of people and places that are no longer around, bringing about more and more feelings of sadness. These feelings are of course subjective.

I remember walking around The Meadowlands in the late 1990's and early 2000's, seeing the place packed on a Saturday night and just thinking how awesome it was and people would tell me "you should have seen it at its peak." I never understood that, because to me there was a never a better time to be there and I am sure someone shares the same feeling for a period of time at Freehold. I never understood how someone could be around for something so great and exclaim that once it was even greater. Now, I understand.

This is yet another reminder of better days gone by, a reminder of a childhood disappearing in the rearview mirror and a reminder that it will never be as good as it once was. Farewell Freehold, and thanks for the memories.



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As a three-year-old, he won the \$400,000 Kentucky Sires Stakes Final and stakes placed in an elimination of the Breeders Crown, the Empire Breeder's Classic, and Stanley Dancer Memorial.

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Like the stock market, driver demand can rise and fall in a hurry

By Derick Givner

The life of a top harness driver can be a bit of a roller coaster ride. One year everything seems to be moving smoothly as you win race after race and then, perhaps through no fault of your own, you are sitting on the sidelines as another catch-driver jumps in the bike.

Hall of Famer Tim Tetrick began 2024 riding the high of being the regular driver behind 2023 Horse of the Year Confederate as well as divisional winners Soiree Hanover and Geocentric. The 43-year-old finished second in North America in earnings and posted his third best season in the previous 10 years.

There was every reason for Tetrick to be optimistic for similar success since both of his Dan Patch divisional winners were just 2-year-olds and he had been the regular driver on promising 3-year-old Oh Well among others. But as the dust settles on 2024, Tetrick's statistics are somewhat surprising:

- Lowest # of starts since 2003
- Lowest earnings since 2006 when he moved to the East Coast
- Fewest wins since 2015

"It is just the way things worked out. A lot of the races I didn't go to because I didn't have a drive. It wasn't because I wasn't saying no all the time. Chester also had less days and some of my main clients either didn't have horses or they got rid of them," said Tetrick, who expected to get more work for some of the top barns in the country which elected to go in another direction. "It is mainly about losing clientele. You start the year out thinking you are going to have certain horses and then that client



NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

Tim Tetrick, pictured with Soiree Hanover, will post his lowest earnings year since coming to the East Coast nearly 20 years ago.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 23](#)



*Wishing you a Merry Christmas
from everyone at Svanstedt Stable!*

Warmest wishes for the holidays, happiness and health for the coming year.

Good racing luck to all in 2025!

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Season's Greetings from Dr. J Stallion Management

CARBINE

p, 1:47.4 (\$553,594)

Somebeachsomewhere - Shot Togo Blue Chip
by Cam's Card Shark

STUD FEE \$2,500

Multiple Mare & Loyalty Discounts Apply
Breeder's Incentive Program in place

Collected at Midland Acres in Bloomingburg, Ohio

ITS ACADEMIC

1:50.1 (\$2,757,873)

Uncle Peter - Annapolis by Muscle Hill

STUD FEE: \$6,000 Cdn

Multiple Mare Discounts Apply

Standing at Tara Hills Stud in Port Perry, Ontario

ROCKYROAD HANOVER

p, 1:46.2 (\$1,020,612)

Captaintreacherous - Romantic Moment by American Ideal

STUD FEE \$5,500

Multiple Mare & Loyalty Discounts Apply

Standing at Winterwood Farm in Bellville, Ohio

SIG SAUER

1:49.3 (\$1,151,312)

Muscle Hill - Sigilwig by Donato Hanover

STUD FEE: \$8,000

Standing at Hanover Shoe Farms, Inc. in Hanover, PA



CARBINE · ITS ACADEMIC · ROCKYROAD HANOVER · SIG SAUER

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fires you. It is hard to get over that. It would be like Ronnie Burke telling Yannick [Gingras] that he isn't going to drive any of his horses. Or [Nancy] Takter saying that to Yannick."

Ironically Tetrick also benefitted from other drivers getting the ax during the year. He picked up Sylvia Hanover for a couple of starts and got a win in the \$100,000 Clara Barton and a fifth-place check in the Lady Liberty. Highland Kismet was another late addition to Tetrick's docket and he finished fourth with the driver in the bike in the Breeders Crown 3-year-old colt and gelding trot.

Clearly still in his prime, the only logic to Tetrick's sharp year-over-year decline is that it is more like an anomaly than a trend, but the size and stakes power from a few barns with regular drivers is certainly playing a role. When you are not the main driver for outfits with 100-plus horses in the barn it becomes more difficult to maintain a certain level of earnings.

A case can also be made that today's Grand Circuit driving colony is deeper than ever, but Tetrick didn't necessarily agree that was true.

"I can't say that Dexter [Dunn] isn't great but I can't say that Brian Sears wasn't great either," said Tetrick, who is perhaps hurt today by a more patient style of driving that puts an emphasis on making sure horses have something left for the entire season. "We can't think about that as drivers. We just have to go out and win every time. I was raised differently to make sure the right column is bigger than the left column. You may only have three wins but you made \$400,000 with the horse.

"I don't know when winning qualifiers became so important."

While at one time working out the right trip played a huge role in racing, Tetrick admits that it is very much about horsepower now.

"You are not beating the best horses today unless something is wrong. Second-over is a bad spot these days. You can't even trip-out. You are better off sitting fourth on the rail and saving ground," said Tetrick.

Tetrick currently sits ninth on the earnings list for 2024, six slots below a man who has climbed to the top of the rollercoaster. Jason Bartlett is having a career year having driven horses to well over \$12 million in earnings. The Yonkers Raceway regular who has been moonlighting at The Meadowlands is setting a new career best in earnings every time he goes out to the track through the end of the year.

"I was excited about a few horses that I had last year that were coming to be 3-year-olds, like Sir Pinocchio. I know he was off everyone else's radar but I knew if he came back as good as I thought we would have a really good year with him," said Bartlett about his 2024 success. "There were a lot of surprises. I hooked onto Tarrific and Coaches Corner just got better and better throughout the year."

Like Tetrick, Bartlett is not immune from a downturn in earnings. His numbers took a hit when one of his main accounts left the scene in 2020 and that downturn lasted into the following year before he caught fire again to reclaim his spot as the leading driver at Yonkers. Over the last three years, horses he's driven have eclipsed the \$10 million mark each time.

"When you lose a hundred horses that you normally drive at your track you are going to take a hit. But it has happened before," said Bartlett, remembering his bad fortune in 2020. "I'm a person that isn't scared to work; I was brought up that way. My work ethic has pushed me since I was a kid, in sports or driving horses. That is something that the trainers and owners see.

"I was also driving for [Ron] Burke and I lost all of those drives. I've come to learn that you have to have relationships with as many people as you possibly can because you never know what is going to happen. You might piss someone off someday by picking off a horse. That is why I try to not say no to anybody and race as many tracks as I possibly can during the summer."

The 43-year-old Bartlett might be on top of the world right now but he knows things can change in a hurry and is simply trying to stay in the moment.

"When you get high you start to think you are invincible and then you have a bad night and realize how fast it can go down," said Bartlett. "I've always thought that I can't celebrate too much when I'm on a high because it can come crashing down in a second, whether it is losing drives or getting hurt or whatever. So I try to stay as level-headed as I can, and that is saying something for me."

Meanwhile, for Tetrick, he still loves driving and wants to compete at the top levels of the Grand Circuit, but he also understands the reality of the sport. Should it all come to an end at some point, he isn't as close-minded about it as he was a decade ago.

"I've had a great career. If I don't race on the Grand Circuit anymore



MIKE LIZZI

Sir Pinocchio won \$640,902 in 2024 with Jason Bartlett as his regular driver.

it really doesn't bother me. My daughter is 13 now and I've worked my ass off for the last 15 to 18 years now, but I still love driving horses," said Tetrick. "I heard George Brennan say many years ago, 'I'm done travelling'. I said 'how can you be done travelling? That is where all of the good horses are.' He told me, 'You'll see one day.' He was right. The road war is hard on guys. You travel a lot. It is fun to travel when you get the good ones but nobody wants to do it and finish eighth all the time.

"It happens to everyone sooner or later; it is just a matter of time," said Tetrick about driving more locally rather than on the Grand Circuit. "Do I still think I can drive a horse as good as anybody, absolutely, but I always say you have to have something between the shafts."

For now Tetrick and Bartlett aren't going anywhere. Both expect to continue a similar schedule in 2025 with a mix of overnight and Grand Circuit drives.

Tetrick said he'll be at The Meadowlands again this Saturday but plans to stay local at Dover Downs during January and February unless a specific horse or opportunity warrants a trip north for the southern New Jersey resident. He specifically mentioned recent Preferred Handicap winner Spring Inhis Step as a potential lure to The Meadowlands. That Australian import bested the speedy Ruthless Hanover on December 14 with Tetrick driving for trainer Jeff Cullipher.

Bartlett will finish out the meet at Yonkers which ends December 20 and continue to show up at The Meadowlands on the weekends. Once Pocono Downs opens again he'll make cameos there as well.

Will 2025 bring another career year for Bartlett? Will Tetrick rebound and return to his regular spot in the top three in earnings? Both seem like possible scenarios, but of course there is the unknown in play.

"You're only as good as your last drive. People want results and always seem to go with the guy who is hot at the time. You have to have a little luck," concluded Bartlett.

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PLOT TWIST: Captain Albano to return to the races in 2025

By Jay Bergman

The recent rash of retirements from the Standardbred sport appeared to leave the cupboards bare for next year's Open class for both trotters and pacers as many of the top 3-year-olds and a host of veteran performers left the track in favor of the potential riches of full books and solid stallion fees. To find that future for any would-be stallion there are significant hurdles that must be crossed and deadlines that need to be met. Syndications demand that stallions can cover a significant number of mares. Stallion fertility is always a major question mark no matter how qualified a horse is for the assignment and despite brilliance on the race-track, it is never a guarantee of future fertility.

One of those horses that appeared destined for a solid second career was Captain Albano, the top sophomore pacer in North America that concluded a brilliant season on the track with victories in the Matron and then Progress at Dover before trainer Noel Daley ceded the lines.

"He was so brilliant in the Progress," Daley said. "I mean he's out there getting parked in 25 and change and just going on like it was nothing."

Following the Matron, Daley was caught up in the moment and in a post-race interview said it was too bad that the horse wouldn't race again. Well, that was November and we're in December now and Daley and ownership have had to reconsider the future for the soon-to-be 4-year-old son of Captaintreachorous.

"He had some blockages," said Daley about the initial fertility examinations. "He got tested a few days after the races and the numbers weren't good enough."

For Daley and Captain Albano's ownership there were a limited number of choices, but time was of the essence. Very often when stallions leave the track their initial tests aren't satisfactory but many over time show improvement in numbers that would qualify them to cover a full book of mares. The problem for stallion owners come when there can be no guarantee that the stallion can achieve those numbers. Those who take part in stallion syndicates do so with the expectation of using their breeding rights or selling them on the open market. If a stallion can't perform to high expectations that market collapses.

For Captain Albano and his connections, a low early count and the clock ticking pushed a decision to bring the horse back to race as a 4-year-old, and that is something Daley isn't that upset about.

"The way he finished the season I expect him to come back as good or better next year," Daley said on Tuesday (December 17) before preparing for a holiday back home. "He's back with me right now and he'll get tested again to see if the numbers improve. What we're hoping for is that they increase enough that worst case scenario we breed him to some mares in New Jersey in 2025 and race him as well."

Daley and company find themselves in an enviable position because not all horses that don't meet fertility standards have the same potential to come back to the races as a Captain Albano has. Some future stallions leave the track with infirmities as well that won't impact their breeding performance but more than likely would limit their capacity to endure a rigorous racing season. For Daley and his partners, luck was on their side at least when it came to fertility testing this year.

"I'm really glad that Sig Sauer's numbers came back great," Daley said with some relief about his top 3-year-old trotting colt that will stand his first season in 2025 at Hanover Shoe Farms. "I really wasn't sure about how his fertility would work out since a lot of the Muscle Hill's have had issues."

Captain Albano's return to the track is certainly welcomed by racing fans and Daley and ownership are among those who enjoy that aspect of the sport. Of course they are also hoping he can succeed in the breeding barn as well.



FOTOWON

Captain Albano closed out 2024 with a sparkling victory in the Progress Pace at Dover Downs.

"There's still the chance that he can become a full-time stallion down the road," said Daley.

Having the home-run horse as Captain Albano is usually ends with a horse retiring and going on to a lucrative stallion career with ownership getting additional income for years to come. To pull the plug on that endeavor can be a difficult pill to swallow, but Daley suggests that his group dealt with the decision quite well and are excited about the next chapter of Captain Albano's racing-breeding future.

"Right now, the stakes schedule hasn't even come out, so I have no idea what our plans are," said Daley, discussing the 2025 racing schedule for Captain Albano. As a coming 4-year-old there are enough races to build a resume before tackling more seasoned horses.

From a fan's perspective, Captain Albano brings with him some incredible ability that saw him win 19 of 27 starts over two years of stakes racing. Perhaps of equal importance was Captain Albano's ability over any sized surface, something that obviously caught the eyes of Blue Chip Farms that wanted to see him become a dominant stallion in New York's half-mile-track dominated landscape. Victories in the Hempt and Adios over the five-eighths mile tracks in Pennsylvania and a sweep of the Little Brown Jug over the swift half-miler in Delaware, Ohio showcased Captain Albano's speed and versatility. Those attributes are not likely to leave him on the racetrack in 2025 and that's exciting news to those that want to see great horses race.

With so many standardbreds potentially entering the stallion ranks in 2025, it would not be a surprise (and rumors are already swirling) if there were others that didn't meet the capacity required to be a full-time stallion and made their way back to the racetrack as well.



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CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

HELEN MIRREN & HOLIDAY WISHES

Christmas and Chanukah fall next week and Editor Derick asked for something festive. In the past I have covered Standardbreds in holiday movies (Holiday Inn), Standardbreds in holiday songs (Jingle Bells and Sleigh ride), and even a Standardbred who was named after a Canadian Tire hockey commercial (Albert Albert). Hockey is a winter sport at least.

This time, let's start with an unlikely topic – Helen Mirren.

I've always thought the 79-year-old Dame of the British Empire was a bad-ass. She has played a retired CIA agent, a Mossad agent and both Queens Elizabeth. But nothing prepared me to see her as Cara Dutton driving a Standardbred in the streaming show Yellowstone 1923.

Asked if she wanted to ride home by Jacob Dutton (Harrison Ford) she said, "It wouldn't be ladylike. I'll drive as usual." And off she went with her clearly Standardbred trotter. I don't know how many Standardbreds are located in Montana and the USTA has not gotten back to me at deadline, but when I posted on social media, equine photographer Raymond Lance pointed out that the first harness race in Montana was held at the Madam Coady's Two-Mile House, a 1 mile (1.6 km) track located a few miles from Helena. The first Montana Territorial Fair was held at the site in 1868 (some sources report that the track was constructed in 1870), and included Montana's first regionally-organized horse flat race. Harness racing was added at the second Territorial Fair in 1869. So there you have it.

And now, for my grown up Christmas list. This year, I wish:

For horseplayers, reduced takeout. Columnists here and elsewhere have been making the point for years, and economist (and horseplayer) Maury Wolff has been saying it for 40 years – lower takeout encourages handle. In a perfect world, takeout would be 0, but that is not realistic. Most analysis by Wolff and others say the sweet spot that maximizes handle while allowing tracks to make their profit is around 10-12%. With most tracks owned by gambling conglomerates, I don't think we will get it, except on the occasional special promo bet, but a guy can wish.

For new Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association Executive Director Frank Fraas, a smooth transition as he moves from Outreach and Public Relations into the boss's chair. Fraas is one of the good guys in the business and is a great ambassador for the sport. While he mentioned to me that at times he felt like he was "drinking through a fire hose," I think the OHHA made a good choice. Fraas has a number of initiatives he is working on and I am sure we will all be hearing about them in 2025 (Full disclosure: I am an OHHA Board Member but had nothing to do with the decision).

For driver Aaron Merriman, I wish a bit more national recognition than he has gotten. I admit to being a biased Midwesterner, but the guy just keeps winning National Driver Titles yet can't get on the final ballot for Driver of the Year. It's an embarrassment, even though Dexter Dunn did have a hell of a year and for him I wish a 2025 just as good.

For Canadian trainer Anthony Beaton, an O'Brien Award. Amazingly, he was not even included on the ballot this year after having, arguably, one of the best years of any horseman in the Great White North. Beaton was suspended in 2023 for animal cruelty and apparently in Canada you are guilty even when proved innocent. Beaton won his appeal in February. I understand the seriousness of the cruelty issue, but if you are exonerated, you are not guilty. That should be the end of it.

For Keith Gisser, in the coming year I wish myself (not gonna be real selfish, relax) continued improved heart health which will allow me the occasional cigar and bourbon. For my horses, I hope that my \$1,000 bargain mare who has now cost me over \$10,000, gets in foal; that the three babies stay healthy and make it to the races, that the three 2-year-olds come back strong, especially Our Honor Defend. I bought her outright out of the fractional group Cedar Point Beach Racing and put together my own fractional group. It has been an education, to say the least. And guess what the grandkids are getting for Chanukah this year? Yep, they each get a share, with Papa covering the bills, but the kids getting any profits. And speaking of Papa, I hope Papa Nordin gets some more headlines in his 4-year-old season. In case you missed it, he gave the talented Chris Page his 7,000th career win in the Buckeye Stallion Series Consolation Final. Ironically, Page got the drive when our three top choices were not available or chose off. Oh, to be "stuck" with Chris Page more often.

And for the rest of you, I wish a happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous 2025 where you "go cash" often. See you next time.

Happy Holidays

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“Yogi” Sheridan chosen USHWA Amateur Driver of the Year

Newton “Yogi” Sheridan has been chosen as the U.S. Harness Writers Association (USHWA) Amateur Driver of the Year for 2024 in a vote conducted by USHWA with the amateur driving clubs.

Sheridan, 46, was emotional when told he was chosen.

“It’s humbling for me to get the award and I’m honored,” said Sheridan, who thanked God for his blessings and thanked his wife, Nickeya, and four children, Naem, Mekhi, Khalani, and Khalia, for their constant support. “I do this for them.”

Unlike many other amateur drivers, harness racing is Sheridan’s only profession. He currently trains four, one of which he owns; he also owns a piece of two others with his partners, Team Tritton.

Sheridan is having a career year on all fronts, with career highs in wins (77), seconds (61), and thirds (51). In 2024, he hit the board on 189 occasions from 391 starts, an outstanding top-three percentage of 48.

Although he has recorded multiple wins at seven different tracks this season, he has recorded the most at the toughest place to get a victory, The Meadowlands.

Sheridan’s 25 wins at The Big M — 22 against amateur company and three against the pros — were most impressive. He is currently 14th in The Meadowlands’ driver standings, with every pilot in front of him having at least 100 more starts.

Of those with more dash wins, Sheridan’s 14.5-win percentage is on par with Todd McCarthy and higher than Jordan Stratton, Andy Miller, Tim Tetric, Jonathan Ahle, Brett Beckwith and Braxton Boyd.

Meadowlands Amateur Driving Club President Joe Lee said he’s proud of Sheridan and what he’s accomplished this year.

“He’s been working really hard and driving both the amateur races and overnight races and Yogi is very safe out there, which is first and foremost,” said Lee, who won the Amateur Award himself in 2017. “He makes our races a lot cleaner and a lot safer when he’s got a horse in the event.”

“And he’s done a really good job of keeping a horse going in the stretch and getting them to dig in when someone’s getting at him late in the mile.

“Certainly, there’s been a couple of times this year when coming off the turn I’m like, ‘Oh, I still have a lot of horse left and I can maybe run him down,’ but I couldn’t catch him.

“Obviously, he’s gotten some really good opportunities this year to drive a little power, but even when you have the power, you have to put the horses in a good spot.”

Sheridan is also tied for 14th in the driver standings at Harrah’s Philadelphia, where his win percentage of 32.8 is the best of the top 25.

Sheridan will be feted at the Dan Patch Awards banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, at Rosen Centre in Orlando, Fla., on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025.

Dinner tickets can be ordered here and room reservations at Rosen Centre here for the star-studded Dan Patch Awards weekend. Additional information is available at the USHWA website. Sponsorship opportunities for the event can be procured from sponsorship chairman Shawn Wiles at swiles@rwcatskills.com. Information regarding congratulatory advertisements in the souvenir journal will be available shortly.

In addition, USHWA is pleased to present the schedule for the announcing of the Dan Patch Award winners for 2024, which will take place in the days around Christmas.

On Tuesday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, the 12 divisional racehorse Dan Patch champions will be announced during the “pre-game” program for a noon card on the Harrah’s Philadelphia signal (Harrah’s Philly is one of the tracks operated by Dan Patch Awards Banquet presenters Caesars Entertainment).

Fans should be watching by 11 a.m. (EST) for the presentation, which will feature the champion racehorses of 2024 – with the note that Trotter of the Year, Pacer of the Year, and Horse of the Year will first be announced LIVE during the Dan Patch Awards Banquet on Sunday, Feb. 23. This presentation will also be shown live on the YouTube page of the United States Trotting Association (USTA).

The non-racehorse Dan Patch Awards – which will include the Stan



LISA PHOTO

Bergstein Proximity Award, the most prestigious award voted on solely by USHWA – will be announced on the Thursday (Dec. 26) and Friday (Dec. 27) following Christmas. There will be a morning and an afternoon press release each day to the media, to cover the 13 award winners to be honored. Plans are for the Proximity winner to be announced Thursday morning, with the others “grouped,” possibly based on a commonality of ownership, stable, breeding, or racing track or jurisdiction.

-release (U.S. Harness Writers Association)

SONJA BOOTH NAMED 2024 FAIR ISLAND FARM CARETAKER OF THE YEAR

The United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA) is proud to announce that Sonja Booth has been named the 2024 Fair Island Farm Caretaker of the Year. A native of Finland, Booth has shared her passion for harness racing in North America for more than two decades, spending many of those years working with veteran trainer Noel Daley, and her passion for her horses and the sport has been recognized by everyone who has known her over that time.

The award, which is annually sponsored by Art Zubrod and Leah Cheverie’s Fair Island Farm in conjunction with USHWA, will be presented to Booth at the Dan Patch Awards banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, which will be held at Rosen Centre on International Drive in Orlando, Fla., on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025. In addition to transportation costs to Orlando, Booth will also receive two complimentary dinner tickets, a two-night stay at Rosen Centre, as well as a cash prize of \$2,500.

Booth used to run a turnout operation for many years from her own farm. It mainly consisted of racehorses that needed time off or were sidelined due to injury, along with her own broodmares and a few for clients. She cared for as many as 50 horses at her farm at any given time.

Booth then started to work for Daley, where she groomed the Dan Patch 2-year-old trotting colt of the year Volume Eight. The following year she groomed Captain Albano, who was the Dan Patch 2-year-old male pacer of the year. In 2024, she continued to groom Captain Albano as well as 3-year-old trotter Sig Sauer, both of whom are leading contenders for divisional Dan Patch honors.

“I knew I was nominated but I had no idea I would have won,” said Booth. “I’m really, really excited about this. The last two years I cared for top 2-year-olds that won divisional awards and I didn’t make it to either of those banquets. Now, this year I will be there, and I just hope the two I looked after get some awards as well.”

One of the nomination letters sent in naming Booth came from trainer Daley and members of his stable and stated: “Sonja’s hard-working ethics and warm spirit could be seen at racetracks across the country in 2024 as she cared for two Grand Circuit level champions, 3-year-old pacing colt Captain Albano and 3-year-old trotting colt Sig Sauer. She rolled with the punches of a demanding schedule and delivered the best care and attention to two ‘sires on the rise’ as they each marched their way to bankroll more than a million dollars in purse earnings.”

An eight-member USHWA panel selected Booth the winner of the Fair Island Caretaker of the Year Award. A total of 19 caretakers were nominated for the award.

-edited release (Tim Bojarski for U.S. Harness Writers Association)

\$925K FOR ALLEGIAN AT NORTH AMERICAN STANDARDBRED MIXED SALE

Allegiant, the 2024 Breeders Crown 3-Year-Old Filly Trot champion, sold to Sweden’s Eagles Rising AB for \$925,000 to head the inaugural edition of the North American Standardbred Mixed Sale, which took place on Tuesday in Mt. Hope, Ohio.

The daughter of Tactical Landing, who sold as HIP 225 and was consigned by Crystal Springs Stables as agent, also posted stakes victories in the Currier & Ives, Moni Maker, Matron and her Hambletonian Oaks elimination and is a leading contender for the Dan Patch Award in her division. Bred by Atlantic Trot Inc. and Steve Stewart, Allegiant had been owned by Ryan Smith and trained by Vernon Beachy and Linda Toscano.

HIP 273 Vivacity, who was consigned by Dublin Valley Farms as agent, was the other big seller as she fetched \$200,000 from Joe Miller. A 3-year-old filly by Muscle Hill, Vivacity has two wins in 16 starts and a mark of 1:56 4/5. She’s also the first foal out of \$675,430 earner Quincy Blue Chip.

-By Greg Reinhart

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Typhoon Banner captures MGM Grand Prix; Napolitano gets win 4,000

New Zealand-bred Typhoon Banner backed up his victory in his division of the final preliminary round last week with a 1:58 3/5 win over the mile and a sixteenth distance of the inaugural \$250,000 MGM Grand Prix Pacing Series final on Monday night (December 16) at MGM Yonkers Raceway.

Racing over a surface left sloppy by persistent showers, Typhoon Banner and driver Matt Kakaley left out quickly from post five and would be challenged on the outside by favored Coaches Corner (Jason Bartlett), who blasted out from the seven-hole. Typhoon Banner would relent and sit in the pocket, but not until he made Coaches Corner work past a fast 26 2/5 opening quarter.

Coaches Corner backed down the tempo to just 56 seconds at the half and then picked it back up to 1:24 1/5 at three-quarters as Seven Colors (Scott Zeron), who went first-over from sixth before the half, stalled out in third. Coaches Corner maintained command on the final bend also, but Typhoon Banner was poised right on Bartlett's helmet and ready to strike.

Kakaley wheeled Typhoon Banner off the pylons before they turned into the stretch, and Typhoon Banner and Coaches Corner were side-by-side at the 1:51 4/5 mile marker. From there to the wire, Typhoon Banner proved better than Coaches Corner, as he went by him and on to the victory by three-quarters of a length. Coaches Corner and Adam Twelve, a pair of Per Engblom trainees, were second and third from the Andrew Harris-trained duo of El Rey (Brett Beckwith) and Seven Colors.

An 8-year-old Bettor's Delight gelding bred by Banner Bloodstock Ltd., Typhoon Banner is trained by Joe Bongiorno for owners Philip Steinberg, JB Racing and Barbara Bongiorno Stb LLC. This was his 25th career win, he has now earned \$466,735 and he paid \$12.00 to win as a 5-1 offering. He keyed a \$25.60 exacta and a \$121.00 trifecta.

Driver Anthony Napolitano was the other star on Monday night at Yonkers as he won the first race with Caviart Sargent and then the seventh with Blue Hunt, and the victory with Blue Hunt was the 4,000th of his career.

Napolitano, who joined the Yonkers colony as a regular in September, is closing in on a lifetime-best season in terms of both victories and earnings. He had 295 trips to the winner's circle in 2009 and has 271 thus far in 2024 and has banked \$3,440,237 this year, just shy of his 2018 sum of \$3,463,634.

This is closing week of the meet at MGM Yonkers Raceway. Racing will be conducted Tuesday through Friday to wrap up the calendar, with post time each night at 7 p.m. (EST).

-release (Yonkers Raceway Media)

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

RACE 2

(9) VENDETTA BLUE CHIP keeps winning at this level, yet no one claims her. She is the one to dethrone and her win streak will likely reach five tonight.

-Garnet Barnsdale



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

RACE 9

(2) WHITECOOKIE came up short in the stretch last time after missing two months of action. He is without a doubt the best horse in this race and I expect we'll see him on the engine or in the pocket over a track where he has won many times in the past.

-Derick Giwner



****\$15,667 Pick 6 Carryover****
(Race 8)

RACE 10

(4) DONTBOTHERMENONE N beat a field of NW7500's upon arrival and actually gets to drop while looking for three straight because he was eligible at time of entry; short price looming again.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

RACE 7

(10) J M MANDAMIN remains in for a \$30,000 tag and I'm not sure they can beat him even from the outside draw.

-Giwner



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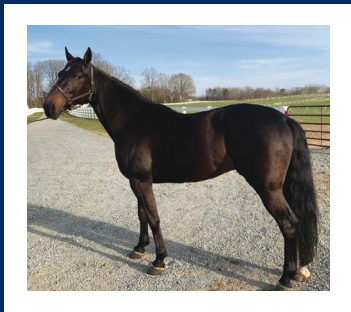
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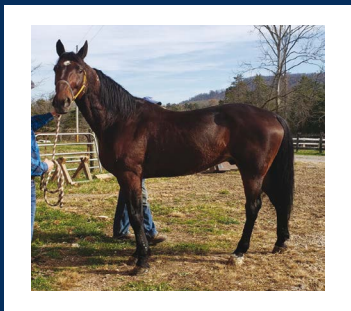
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NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

HUGE PICK 6 CARRYOVER AT MEADOWLANDS ON FRIDAY

If carryovers are great, then double carryovers are twice as nice, and a double carryover is exactly what Meadowlands players will be shooting for when racing resumes Friday (Dec. 20) at 6:20 p.m.

There were no winning tickets sold last weekend (Dec. 13-14) on the 20-cent Pick-6, meaning that a double carryover of \$15,667 will be up for grabs Friday night when the wager takes place on races eight through 13.

A carryover of this size can make some serious noise.

For example, here are the numbers should the total pool be \$60,000:

- Carryover: \$15,667
- New money: \$44,333
- Final pool: \$60,000
- Takeout on new money: \$6,650
- Net pool: \$53,350
- Surplus: \$9,017

Return: If the wager is hit, the return to players with winning tickets will be 120 percent, a remarkably high “negative takeout”

If the response is overwhelming and new money were to total \$100,000, there is still a big enough carryover to cover the low 15 percent rake, leaving bettors swimming in a negative pool.

“These are the types of opportunities our players live for,” said track Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir. “When you combine a low takeout with a big carryover, you get a scenario which brings the players out to play in a big way. In addition, we have been able to maintain carding our programs with full 10-horse fields, something else our customers really appreciate.”

Remarkably, there are 14 races scheduled for both Friday and Saturday, and all 28 dashes will have 10 horses in behind the gate, removing the need to figure out what the average field size will be (in the event there are no scratches).

“Our race office does a great job of interacting with our horsemen to provide the type of betting opportunities that exist here at The Big M,” said Settlemoir. “Every winter, we try to deliver big fields for the player, and, for a vast majority of the races, we have been able to do just that.”

JUST FOUR TO GO: There are just four programs remaining on The Meadowlands’ 2024 calendar. Live racing will take place this week and next on the usual Friday and Saturday evenings at the usual post time of 6:20 p.m.

WILL ‘RUTHLESS’ GET REVENGE? Last week, Ruthless Hanover, the standout speedball from the Tom Cancelliere barn, got nailed in deep stretch as the 2-5 favorite by the Jeff Cullipher-trained Spring Inhis Step A.

‘Ruthless’ will look to get back on the winning track in the Saturday night feature, the \$40,000 Preferred Handicap for pacers, which is the 10th race on the card.

In addition to the top two finishers in the race from last week, the field also includes third-place finisher Maximus Miki (another Cancelliere student), as well as South Beach Star (who scratched last week) and Humble A, an Australian invader who has won all seven of his North American starts this year. Humble A will be making his first start of 2024 at a track other than Yonkers Raceway.

MUCH APPRECIATED: On Saturday, Dec. 28, head to The Meadowlands for Fan Appreciation Night.

“We’d like to thank our fans for a fantastic year,” said Settlemoir. “And while we are extremely appreciative of our players who bet us on the various simulcast networks, we like letting our on-track faithful know that we love it when they are inside the building.”

There will be discounted concessions offered from 6-11 p.m. that night. For just \$1 in the Cafe, one can purchase hot dogs, pretzels, popcorn and soda.

Bud and Bud Light draft, also available at the Café, will be just \$2.

-edited release (Meadowlands)

DSBF FINALS IN THE BOOKS

Brett MacDonald’s Worklikeacharm braved a first-over journey en route to a lifetime-best 1:56 3/5 win in Tuesday’s (Dec. 17) \$110,000 Delaware Standardbred Breeders’ Fund (DSBF) series championship for 3-year-old male trotters at Bally’s Dover.

[READ MORE](#)

Platinum Proposal recovered from a mid-move break in stride to reel in 3-5 favorite and fellow dual preliminary winner Going Platinum for a 1:57 3/5 win in Monday’s (Dec. 16) \$110,000 Delaware Standardbred Breeders’ Fund (DSBF) series championship for 3-year-old trotting fillies at Bally’s Dover.

[READ MORE](#)

On the strength of open length wins in both preliminary rounds of the Delaware Standardbred Breeders’ Fund (DSBF) series for 3-year-old pacing fillies at Bally’s Dover, Jett Propelled soared to a lifetime-best 1:53 3/5 win in the \$110,000 series championship on Wednesday (Dec. 18).

[READ MORE](#)

MGM NORTHFIELD PARK ADJUSTS POST TIME THROUGH END OF 2024

MGM Northfield Park will adjust its first race post time to 5:40 p.m. beginning Saturday, December 21.

The post time change will affect the final seven cards of the year, December 21, December 22, December 23, December 26, December 28, December 29, and December 30.

Horsemen are reminded that Lasix times will be moved up 20 minutes to account for the post time change.

-release (Northfield)

INDUSTRY NEWS AND NOTES FROM OTHER SOURCES

Tom LaMarra reported on ustrotting.com that the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes finals will go for \$300,000 in 2025, up from \$250,000.

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Standardbred Canada posted a release from AGCO with the racing dates for Ontario-based tracks. Woodbine Mohawk Park will race 220 dates while Flamboro Downs has the second highest at 130.

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\$10,950 CARRYOVER HIGHLIGHTS CAL EXPO FRIDAY ACTION

Three carryovers and a trio of reduced takeout wagers will greet players when racing resumes at Cal Expo on Friday night.

There will be a \$10,950 carryover in the 20-cent early Pick 5; a \$2,628 carryover in the 20-cent Hi Five on the final race and a \$570 carryover on the 20-cent Pick 7.

The 20-cent early and late Pick 5 and the 20-cent Pick 4 are the bets with the 16 percent takeout rate and there will be a \$40,000-guaranteed gross pool on the early Pick 5.

-edited release (Mark Ratzky for Cal Expo)

WOODBINE MOHAWK PARK TO ADD PICK 6 STARTING DEC. 26

Woodbine Entertainment today announced the addition of a Pick-6 wager to Woodbine Mohawk Park’s wagering menu.

The new Pick-6 at Woodbine Mohawk Park will be introduced on Thursday, December 26 (Boxing Day) and will be offered on each card of live racing.

The Pick-6 will start in Race 4 with a \$0.20 minimum and 15 per cent takeout.

The Woodbine Standardbred Pick-6 will have a 100 per cent carryover should there be no winning six of six tickets. The carryover will move to the next scheduled card of live racing. The new Pick-6 is not a jackpot wager.

With the Pick-6 beginning in Race 4, the Early Pick-4 wager will now start in Race 3.

The first chance to play a Pick-6 at Woodbine Mohawk Park is on Boxing Day (Thursday, December 26). The annual Boxing Day program has a special matinee post time of 1 p.m.

-release (Woodbine Communications)

TURNING TRAGEDY INTO HOPE

The value of a horse cannot be measured in starts or stats, in purses or wins, but in the impact they have on a person. For Jim Wilson and his son, Alan, their stable of horses meant the world to them. On Wednesday, Dec. 4, a fire of unknown cause devastated that stable, claiming the lives of 10 standardbred racehorses as well as a large brood of hens and 13 cows.

[READ MORE](#)