

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025

HOME SWEET HOME



Driver Marcus Miller has left the hustle and bustle of competing on the East Coast for Hoosier Park and a better family life

Harrah's
HOOSIER PARK
RACING & CASINO

DERICK GIWNER PHOTO

By Derick Giwner

Life inevitably involves choices. Driver Marcus Miller made one decision back in 2013 to pursue his career on the East Coast and a decade later, now with family in tow, the Illinois native has changed course again and landed in Indiana.

"I've always known I was going to move back to the Midwest eventually. Last year when my brother-in-law Atlee got injured in that wreck at Oak Grove it kind of shifted my schedule and I ended up spending a lot of time out here last year anyway and it just seemed like I had my foot in the door. We were kind of looking for a change, my boys are the right age where a move would be easy for them, so we decided to head back that way," said the 35-year-old driver.

The original plan called for Miller, his wife Sara and their two boys to move around this time in 2025. That all changed when they found the perfect house a bit quicker than expected. The Miller's bought the home around Christmas time and everyone has settled in nicely.

With his new abode about 30 minutes away, Miller plans to call Harrah's Hoosier Park his work-life home. He'll have to start fresh in some respects but also has an "Ace" in his hand with

his father Erv Miller conditioning a large stable in the region.

"I've been here before even though it was a long time ago, so I know people here," said Miller about picking up drives at Hoosier. "My dad has a large stable here and that will help. Me and [brother-in-law] Atlee [Bender] will probably split those drives up. There are definitely some unknowns and I'm going to have to look at it from the perspective of being the new guy, but I'm up for a new challenge."

Even though Miller was an established driver before he left the Illinois circuit, about 3,000 of his 4,740 career wins have come on the East Coast at tracks like The Downs at Pocono, Yonkers Raceway, The Meadowlands and Harrah's Philadelphia. He drove horses to approximately \$50 million in earnings from 2013 to 2024 during that time and while he's now some 650 miles away from those tracks now, he appreciates the time he spent there.

"I'm really happy with the way it went and I learned a lot," said Miller about his time on the East coast. "Obviously it could always have been better, but I'm happy with it and it was good for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

DRF Bets

MEADOWLANDS RACING & ENTERTAINMENT

MEADOWLANDS MADNESS

5% REBATE ON MEADOWLANDS RACING



[Learn More](#)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Jay Bergman: Hambletonian family feud could develop in August**
- Keith Gisser: Speeding to a new promotional solution for harness racing**
- Heard it through the Grapevine**
- Lachance eyes weekend success; looks ahead to Matchmaker, Borgata**
- Woodbine Mohawk Park, Meadowlands to host International Women's Day races**
- On The Backstretch: Profile of driver Jeremy Smith**
- Derick Giwner: An evening at The Big M**
- Best Bets & Analysis**
- USTA Board of Directors meeting this weekend; Pick 5 carryover at Yonkers**
- Comments? Questions? Email the Editor DGiwner@DRF.com**

STANDARD BRED

THURSDAYS FREE DIGITAL DRF PPS

PICK 6

4 NIGHTS A WEEK

WOODBINE STANDARD BRED RACING

\$75,000 GUARANTEED EARLY PICK 5

Trademark of Woodbine Entertainment Group. Know When to Take the Reins. ResponsibleGambling.org

Father Patrick

I am their
Father

SEARCHING
FOR VALUE
THIS
BREEDING
SEASON?
LOOK NO FURTHER

STANDING IN
PENNSYLVANIA

New Fee: **\$7,500**
By Cantab Hall - Gala Dream

Multiple mare discounts



DIAMOND
CREEK

717-638-7100
office@diamondcreekfarm.com

2024 WINNERS INCLUDE:

ONCE IN A LIFETIME,
at 4, winner of the
\$150,000 KY Sire Stakes.

HIGHLAND KISMET,
at 3, winner of the
\$225,000 Goodtimes Stakes,
the **\$121,000 Simcoe Stakes**,
the **\$85,300 Bluegrass**,
and second in
the **Hambletonian**.

R DUTCHESS,
at 2, winner of the
**\$68,000 International
Stallion Stakes**,
the **Peaceful Series**;
second in the **KY Sire Stakes**
and the **Kindergarten**.

Also, **MARYLAND**,
the **2YO Dan Patch Trotter of the Year**,
is out of a **FATHER PATRICK** mare!



my driving career racing between Yonkers, Pocono, The Meadowlands and all those other tracks. I don't feel like I'm running away and I'm happy with the way it went.

"I grew up in the Midwest and I wanted my boys to grow up in the Midwest too. Nothing against Pennsylvania but it never really felt like home to me the same way that the Midwest does."

With opening night at Hoosier still a week away on March 14, Miller had plenty of downtime on his hands and made the decision to compete at Hawthorne Racecourse. It was a bit of a full circle experience for the former leading driver at the now defunct Maywood and Balmoral Parks in the Chicago area.

"We had a few Illinois-breds that were pretty good through the stakes races. We ended up finding a house a little earlier; I thought I'd move now but we found a house that we loved. We were already there and no place else was really racing yet so I just kind of kept going," said Miller about his Hawthorne appearances. "Surreal is probably the right word. It was fun though to see a lot of the people I grew up with. I wasn't racing for a lot of money



Driver Marcus Miller won his 4,000th career race at The Downs at Pocono with Dylan The Great. -Curtis Salonick photo

but I enjoyed it. It is sad to see what has happened to the Illinois product and I hope it can make a turnaround at some point."

Miller is excited about his prospects at Hoosier Park, not just in overnights but also with Sire Stakes. He also isn't ruling out the possibility of travel should the right horses come his way.

"The Indiana Sire Stakes are as good as anywhere it seems. There are so many of them who now hold their own against anyone, so I think it is probably easier to stick with an Indiana-bred from a catch-driver perspective than a PA or New Jersey horse," said Miller. "Hopefully I'll latch on to something that is good enough to travel a little bit."

Ultimately Miller's move is about family. There will be no more doubleheaders in his future with travelling from track to track on a daily basis. He'll get to be at home more and feel that way as well.

"I've never actually lived in the state of Indiana before now but it feels like I'm coming home. My sister [Hannah] has a little baby now, Linden, she's turning 1 in a week or so. For all the kids to grow up together, that seems like the most important thing to me right now," concluded Miller.



Congratulations to **BETTING LINE'S** **ABUCKABETT HANOVER**

2024 USHWA DAN PATCH AWARD WINNER FOR OLDER PACING HORSE OF THE YEAR

Betting Line-All Tucked Up-Western Ideal
p, 2, 1:50.3s; 3, 1:49.1s; 1:47.2s -'23 (\$2,447,194) CAD

Trainer: Andrew Harris / **Driver:** Dexter Dunn

Owners: William Pollock, Bruce Areman & Andrew Harris

Breeder(s): Hanover Shoe Farms Inc.



[Click here for more information on Betting Line!](#)

Joe & JoAnn Thomson, Winbak Farm Owners / Jack Burke, General Manager

Pat Woods, Winbak Farm of Canada Manager / 905.838.2145 / www.winbakfarm.com / f / X / @

PAYMENTS DUE MARCH 15

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



2-year-olds

(In SOME instances Feb. payments must have been made to be eligible)

Delvin Miller Adios
Arden Downs
Breeders Crown®
Cane Pace
Currier & Ives
Dexter Cup
Jim Doherty Memorial
The Elevation
Fox Stake
Hambletonian®
Peter Haughton
Hoosier Stake
The Horseman
Kentuckiana Stallion Mgmt.
*Fillies ONLY - Pace & Trot
Keystone Classics
Landmark Stake
Liberty Bell
Madison County
Matron Series
MGM Grand Messenger
PA All-Stars
Progress Pace
W.N. Reynolds Memorial
John Simpson Sr. Memorial
Tompkins-Geers
Ralph Wilfong
MGM Yonkers Trot

3-year-olds

For these 2025 Events:

(Previous payment must have been made to be eligible)

Bally's Randy
Battle of Bunker Hill Trot
Earl Beal Jr. Memorial
Breeders Crown®
Catholic Cowboy Series (New)
Circle City
Colonial Trot
Crossroads of America
Delmonica Hanover
Carl Erskine
Max Hempt Memorial
Jenna's Beach Boy Keystone
Classics Landmark Stake
Phil Langley Memorial
Liberty Bell
James Lynch Mem.
Matron Series
Monument Circle
PA All-Stars
Pegasus Series
Paul Revere Pace
W.N. Reynolds Memorial
John Simpson Sr. Memorial
Star Destroyer Series
Thanksgiving Classic Series
Tompkins-Geers
USS Indianapolis Mem.

Open Events

For these 2025 Events:

(Previous payment must have been made to be eligible)

Clara Barton Distaff Pace
Breeders Crown®
Caesars Trotting Classic
Dan Patch
Dayton Trotting & Pacing Derbies
Dayton Distaff & Oaks Derbies
Hoosier Park Pacing Derby
Spirit of Massachusetts Trot

Visit Hambletonian.com for complete conditions, race dates and payment forms!



The Hambletonian Society and Breeders Crown

109 South Main St, Ste 18, Cranbury, NJ 08512

609-371-2211, Fax 609-371-8890 • Hambletonian.com

Melissa Simser photo



Hambletonian family feud could be brewing for this August



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman BergmanJay

The 100th Hambletonian is less than five months away and there is a strong possibility that a pair of brother-in-laws which have been favored to win harness racing's most cherished prize in the recent past could hold the keys to deciding this year's classic.

At the top of the list of course is the 2024 2-year-old champion Maryland, trained by Marcus Melander. His brother-in-law Lucas Wallin's Maximus Mearas S opened eyes at the close of the 2-year-old campaign with wins in the Breeders Crown elimination and then almost tracking down Maryland in the Crown final, falling just a neck shy in the 1:51 4/5 mile last October.

"We train over the same track," said Wallin about the connection. "I see Maryland training, but I'm focused on my horses."

As for Maximus Mearas S, Wallin is extremely focused and though serious training has not yet begun for the sophomore campaign, the trainer does have a game plan that he's going to follow.

"We're likely to qualify him a couple of times and then go in the Reynolds, the Stanley Dancer and then the Hambletonian," Wallin said. "We won't go to the New York Sire Stakes."

Three years ago, Wallin was in a similar position with Rebuff, the 2021 Breeders Crown champion who would be favored in the Hambletonian final the next season.

"There's just something different about this horse," Wallin said of Maximus Mearas S. "He's got the same gait, no wasted motion whether he's trotting in 2:30 or 1:51. You can do whatever you want with him."

While it's way too early to predict how the races will unfold in 2025, Wallin is more than delighted with the look and feel of the royally-bred son of Chapter Seven. "He's gotten bigger and filled out nicely," said Wallin.

Maryland earned nearly \$1 million more than Maximus Mearas S last year and did a lot more traveling along the way. There was a much different arc for Wallin's colt as he started later in the season, prepped in overnight races and then had a brief stint on the Grand Circuit at The Red Mile before closing out his season with the Breeders Crown. For the trainer who had previously pushed his freshman earlier in the year, the results speak for themselves with four wins and two seconds in the half-dozen starts and a final performance of the year that was his best of the six.

Maryland and Maximus Mearas S are both sons of Chapter Seven and will be looking to give the great sire his second Hambletonian title, with Cool Papa Bell upsetting Wallin's Rebuff in the 2022 edition.

"Up until now we've just been training distances for conditioning," said Wallin. "We'll pick up the speed as we get closer to the races."

While everything appears to be in place for Wallin's top Hambletonian prospect, the same cannot be said for a stablemate that showed enormous talent when Wallin unveiled him late last August. The Rogue Prince, a full brother to King Of The North, made an awesome debut trotting home in 27 1/5 to complete a 1:54 3/5 mile at Harrah's Philadelphia on August 30 last year. He rolled into Lexington's Red Mile and captured another overnight by 10 lengths, setting him up for a Grand Circuit appearance.

Sent off as the 1-2 favorite in a division of the Bluegrass at The Red Mile on September 26, The Rogue Prince appeared ready to meet and beat the best. "I thought he was going to beat Burke's good horse," said Wallin. "But he got a bit too racy and lost it."

The break in stride was an indicator of the difficulty trotting trainers battle with daily. Despite all the work to develop these horses in training, sometimes they lose their composure in a race and it's back to the drawing board.

"I probably should have stopped with him at that point and not come back for the second week," said Wallin, who witnessed The Rogue Prince set blistering fractions the following week only to fade in the stretch.



Brother-in-laws Marcus Melander (left) and Lucas Wallin (below) have made it to the Hambletonian with favorites in the past and they could be on a collision course again on the first Saturday in August.

DERICK GIWNER PHOTOS

"He's got a tremendous amount of speed," said Wallin of The Rogue Prince. "We're going to educate him and teach him to come from off the pace."

The trainer is confident that with a year under his belt The Rogue Prince will not only be more physically mature but mentally capable of learning what it takes to be not just a fast horse but a successful one.

On the filly front, Wallin is prepping Delaney Hanover for a return with an eye on the top prize of the Hambletonian Oaks. The well-bred daughter of Muscle Hill had championship potential when she first set foot on the track at The Meadowlands winning a Kindergarten division on August 2. Delaney Hanover would win an elimination for the New Jersey Classic in late August and then finish a solid second in the final.

"I probably shouldn't have sent her to Indiana [for the Doherty Memorial]," Wallin said. "The long ship took something out of her and we could never find the problem."

Delaney Hanover raced well enough to qualify for the Breeders Crown finale but finished the year on a low note.

Now 3, Delaney Hanover has returned to training and Wallin is quite high on her potential this year.

There is clearly an enormous amount of trotting power in the sophomore ranks and Wallin is hard at work preparing for the coming stakes campaign. That said, much of his stable is younger stock, with 15 freshmen moving along at the proper pace. "I've been in 2:35 and they are all coming along nicely," said Wallin of the collective group that has some incredibly well-bred colts and fillies.

Just two horses over the age of 3 are currently in training for Wallin, with the well-bred For July, a 4-year-old, one that he hopes finally comes of age. "I'm hoping with him the extra year will make the difference," Wallin said of the Greenhoe-sired half-brother to Cuatro De Julio, the colt he drove in the 2021 Hambletonian. For July did win in 1:52 as a sophomore but that came in a Kentucky Commonwealth division at The Red Mile.

Knickers Sisu is the lone 5-year-old in the group and the Swedish-bred daughter of Southwind Frank could be up to competing in the Miss Versatility this year. "She's a solid mare that can go on any sized track," Wallin said.

With a pair of serious contenders, will 2025 be the year that Lucas Wallin or his brother-in-law Marcus Melander win their first Hambletonian? We'll know for sure in just five short months.





MAKE WAVES IN OHIO

DOWNBYTHESEASIDE - SANTA ROSA
(1:48.1, \$1,720,875)

2025 stud fee:
\$7,500

**Multiple mare
discounts**

Best son of **DOWNBYTHESEASIDE**
and the first to stand stud

A BRILLIANT 2YO, setting a mark of **1:48.4**.

Breeders Crown and
NA Cup Champion

3YO Dan Patch Winner

Hails from a productive
Brittany family that includes
**HIGH-CLASS
PERFORMERS
and MULTIPLE
MILLIONAIRES.**

FIRST YEARLINGS THIS YEAR!



DIAMOND
CREEK

office@diamondcreekfarm.com
DiamondCreekFarm.com

BOOKINGS: 717-638-7100

Speeding to a new promotional solution for harness racing



CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

Harness racing is often questioned by its stalwart fans for using stale promotions that don't attract new people. While the sport is doing much better – witness the match race between Tim Tetrick and UFC champ Charles Oliveira a few years ago, the publicity that NBA star Nikola Jokic has generated, and the innovative billboards and trailer wraps promoted by the Ohio Harness Horseman's Association – we can always do more.

That's why a recent Facebook post intrigued me. Although I can no longer find the post (with apologies for not giving the poster credit), the suggestion was that the USTA, or some harness racing entity would be well served by sponsoring a NASCAR car or team. It seemed like an intriguing idea, and although I am not a fan (having at one time derisively referred to it as NeckCar (as in redneck), I figured it was still worth looking in to. After all, both sports consist of competitors circling oval tracks in a counter-clockwise direction.

The top races can draw over 100,000 people on-track and in the case of the Daytona 500, also pull in TV audiences of nearly 8,000,000 people. For comparison, the Hambletonian struggles to reach 1,000,000 via broadcast and far less than stock cars in person. Each of those NASCAR fans would see a logo – maybe of a harness horse and driver, or (ideally) something more creative, painted on the hood and other parts of the car. It would indeed be great exposure.

And it would be expensive. It costs between \$15,000 and \$400,000 per race to sponsor a NASCAR car. There are typically three levels of sponsorship. The primary sponsor covers the bulk of the costs while secondary and associate sponsors provide less funding. Primary sponsors often spend between \$5 million and \$35 million to sponsor a car and its team for a full season. I think that is out of our league.

Teams like Hendrick Motorsports and Joe Gibbs Racing, among others, get the biggest sponsors. This is because these teams have a proven track record of winning races, good public relations, and better cars. Sponsors know teams like Hendrick and Gibbs will give them more exposure and thus a better return on investment (ROI).

Often a car will have multiple primary sponsors, meaning new paint jobs periodically for the car. A sponsor might be primary for 25 of the 38 races (assuming the car qualifies for "the playoffs" which are the last 10 races of the year) and then be an associate sponsor, with less visibility for the other 13.

Although the audiences are smaller, sponsorships are also available for the NASCAR Xfinity Series and the truck series.

The biggest problem I see with a harness racing NASCAR sponsorship is our lack of a unifying logo. I mentioned above maybe a horse with a sulky. We could use the USTA logo. It is a stylized horse, sulky and driver over the words USTrotting. When you watch NASCAR, you immediately recognize the Amazon Prime logo, the Red Bull logo and the



Take Five oil change logo. I am not sure folks would recognize the USTrotting logo. But, after doing a bit of research, I found a lot of sponsors I had never heard of. Bank OZK, Grizzly Nicotine Patches or Titan Risk Solutions are just a few making a big splash. I had no idea about The Veteran's Ranch (I was not sure if this a salad dressing or a home for retired military men). Turns out the organization sponsored a car for The Clash, an annual pre-season exhibition race. Ironically, it turns out **The Veterans Ranch** supplies equine therapy for active duty military, first responders, Gold Star families, and veterans dealing with PTSD.

Some smaller teams take on sponsorship for just a few races. And different parts of the car carry different costs. The most expensive parts of a NASCAR car to sponsor are places like the hood, the trunk, and the doors, since they have high visibility and usually are reserved for the primary sponsor.

Here in Northeast Ohio, Matt Kaulig's Kaulig Racing partnered with SeaBest Seafoods for 20 of the 36 Cup races last year, after racing primarily in the Xfinity Series in the past. The Xfinity is equivalent to a Triple A baseball team. He also signed on the aforementioned Grizzly Nicotine patches for a nine-race sponsorship of the number 10 Chevrolet of driver Ty Dillon.

And that's another angle. You can sponsor a driver. It can still cost tens of thousands of dollars per race, but if he wins, your logo will be all over his uniform. We have this on a far smaller scale in harness racing, but NASCAR drivers are literally walking billboards. And just as the most successful cars command the most money, Bubba Wallace and Kyle Busch are going to cost more to sponsor than Kaulig's drivers, Ty Dillon and AJ Allmendinger.

Ultimately, this was a fun exercise for me. I learned a great deal about NASCAR racing and what is involved in a winning season. But in the end I don't see a lot of practicality for our sport due to the cost. That's all for now. Now go cash. Maybe on a Matt Kaulig Racing Car at Phoenix Raceway's Shriners Children's 500 this Sunday.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Some of the information above was gathered with Google searches which led the author to the [RTR Sports](#), [NASCAR website](#), [statista.com](#) and [Forbes](#).]



We've seen and heard a number of things over the last week and it seemed best to accumulate them all in one location...

A Facebook post by owner Howard Taylor which seems to have disappeared pointed to a favorable ruling in his ongoing case against Jeff Gural. The judge denied a number of motions and granted a couple. We found the ruling. Feel free to read through it [here](#).

Commenting on an X post by Adam Hamilton on fixed odds for horses that are leading the Miracle Mile past the finish line the first time, driver Yannick Gingras was all for the innovation: "I absolutely love this and well done on the people involved in adding this for this race. This is what horse racing is about and we need this in USA too. I'm not saying just a bet early in races but the adaptability to adjust to what the bettors are asking for at a certain time."

New VP and GM of Harrah's Hoosier Park Gabe Prewitt stirred things up on X with a post about takeout at the upcoming meet: "I really hope the #SendItIn Army is ready to roll at Hoosier Park, I can't imagine the fun we are going to have this meet...I just had a meeting today on the betting menu & what was probably already the lowest takeout menu in horse racing...I had only one response...LOWER!" Many comments applauded the post while a few argued that even lowering the takeout a little wouldn't be enough. Currently WPS is 18% and all exotics except the Hi-5 (12%) sit at 21.5%. It will be interesting to see what changes are in store.

Also of note, sources tell us that The Meadowlands is planning some changes for the wagering public in the future. Kudos to management for always listening and making changes in an attempt to improve the product and experience.

Another quick Meadowlands note, the track moved up post time last weekend from 6:33 and 6:34 to 6:23 and 6:25 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, respectively. The last race finished 20 minutes earlier on Friday at 11:24 p.m. and seven minutes sooner on Saturday at 11:36 p.m. Perhaps coincidentally, handle was about \$600K higher with the faster post times. Read post time commentary in Editor's Eye on [page 16](#).



DEO VOLENTE
FARMS

2025 STALLIONS
Quality Over Quantity!

TRIXTON

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



*Hambo Champ & Sire of Multiple
OSS Winner from 1st Ontario Crop!*

- A \$360,000 yearling from two of trotting's greatest families.
- Sire of multiple 2024 OSS winning two-year-old **COUSIN HALIFAX** (2,1:56s -'24; \$46,750).
- Sire of O'Brien Award winner **EVIDENT BEAUTY** 3,1:52.2 (\$890,866).
- Sire of 77, \$100,000+ earners and 79 in 1:55.

Standing in Ontario at Winbak Farm.
2025 FEE: \$7,500 (U.S.)



SIX PACK

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



*Sire of the Two-Year-Old
NJSS Champion in 2024!*

- The **ONLY** trotting stallion to win sub-1:50 twice!
- The sire of 2024 two-year-old NJSS Champion **NORDIC CATCHER S** 2,1:53.3 -'24 (\$329,227).
- The sire of 2024 three-year-old Bluegrass Stakes winner **MR BLUEBIRD** 3,1:53.1 -'24 (\$282,796).
- Already the sire of 10, \$100,000+ winners!

Standing in New York at Winbak Farm.
2025 FEE: \$7,500 (U.S.)



PERFECT STING

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



*First Crop of Yearlings Were
'Buzzing' in Lexington!*

- By a World Champion and out of a World Champion!
- Breeders Crown champ at both two & three (undefeated at two).
- His 1st crop colt, **BAALBEK**, brought \$460,000 in the 2024 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale.
- His 46 Lexington Yearlings averaged \$68,674.

Standing in New Jersey at Deo Volente Farms.
2025 FEE: \$10,000 (U.S.)



DEO VOLENTE
FARMS

908-782-4848

*Call and inquire about our
multiple mare discounts and our
loyalty discounts!*

deovolentefarms.com

Lachance eyes weekend success; waiting on Matchmaker, Borgata

By Jay Bergman

Trainer Patrick Lachance is gearing up on both sides of the Hudson River this weekend with three entered at The Meadowlands and a pair of top-quality older pacers in action at Yonkers.

On Friday night Lachance is hoping that he can start to see some promise from the recently imported Howlingathemoon DK, a 6-year-old gelding by Cantab Hall that has been racing at Yonkers with limited success.

"We're still trying to get him figured out," said Lachance who, raced him on the front end and from off the pace in his Yonkers starts without much luck. The shift to The Meadowlands could make a difference since Howlingathemoon DK is entered at the non-winners of \$5,000 category in Friday's \$10,500 sixth race of 14 on the program.

"He was running in on the turns at Yonkers," said Lachance, addressing his reasoning for trying the mile oval in East Rutherford. "He had some health issues that we're working through." Lachance was noting that many foreign horses need to deal with different kind of viruses and that could be keeping them from performing at optimal levels.

Howlingathemoon DK did win 11 times in 27 starts in Europe and Lachance is hoping that he can become a productive "mid-level" conditioned horse once on the right path.

Lachance has Santafe's Appetite entered in Friday's \$15,000 fillies and mares event for non-winners of \$5,000 in last four starts (race 10) and despite the 5-year-old mare entering off a two-race win streak, was cautiously optimistic of her chances on Friday.

"She's a one-run type of mare that has absolutely no gate speed," said Lachance. "She'll give you a solid closing kick, but everything will depend on the speed up front in the mile."

Santafe's Appetite (post 6) defeated a group that looks similar on paper last Saturday (March 1) at The Meadowlands, but Lachance thinks this week's race looks a bit different.

"A lot of times you get horses dropping into this class and the race is tougher than the same class a week before," Lachance said. Madrid A (post 7) is one such mare, having raced in non-winners of \$12,500 company on February 22, as is Taking The Miki A (post 8), a mare from the Jeff Cullipher stable coming off a solid first-time Lasix qualifier on March 1.

On Saturday night Lachance has what he believes is his best chance of success from the weekend Meadowlands trio, with Viva Las Vegas N in the non-winners of \$3,000 conditioned event carded as race 13.

"He should do well against that company," said Lachance of the 9-year-

old veteran son of Sweet Lou that has been racing against a better class of horse at Yonkers over the last month.

On the Yonkers front, Lachance said that last year's Blue Chip Matchmaker champion Lit De Rose is about ready to see the racetrack once again after a winter break. "I'm going to qualify her on Friday (March 7) and we're going to try her again in the Matchmaker," Lachance said of the stakes series that begins on March 28.

"She's a 10-year-old now, so I really don't how much to expect," said Lachance, who has done a masterful job over the last two years with the Quebec-bred mare. She accumulated 19 victories in 2023-24 and banked more than \$700K, likely the reason ownership elected to bring her back to race in 2025 as opposed to the free breeding earned in last year's Blue Chip Matchmaker final.

On Monday another stable star – Verdun – will be in action at Yonkers in the \$35,000 Invitational and Lachance is quite optimistic how his horse will compete in the coming Borgata Series with the opening leg scheduled for March 31.

Lachance claimed Verdun for \$60,000 last July for owner Tom Ceraso Jr. and has seen the son of Bettor's Delight return more than double that in earnings since.

"I've had a lot of success with Bettor's Delights," said Lachance of the initial draw to the horse. "He was pacing in 1:51 and change at Yonkers and looked like a good buy."

Verdun would be a dominant force at Yonkers during the fall season while capturing the Open events for 3-5 year-olds with regularity and then found his way into the MGM Grand Prix series at year's end.

"He finished third in the opening leg and then he got sick," said Lachance. "We decided to race him in the Open instead and then when it didn't fill the following week we entered him in the Grand Prix." Verdun was a solid

second behind Coaches Corner in the final preliminary leg, bolstering Lachance's belief in success in the coming Borgata.

"He's had two seconds since coming back," said Lachance. "He was very strong last week at the end." Verdun made up a ton of ground coming from seventh to finish second in the Invitational on March 3.

Lachance is old enough to recall the quality of horses produced by Bettor's Delight's grand-sire Most Happy Fella. "The Most Happy Fella's were a tough breed but they would interfere," said Lachance. "The Bettor's Delights have that same toughness but with a much smoother gait." The trainer suggested that Verdun's strength is in his will to win as well as a flawless gait, a perfect combination for high-level racing at Yonkers.



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

Lit De Rose won the Blue Chip Matchmaker final in 2024; will qualify on Friday at Yonkers.





MEADOWLANDS MADNESS

5% REBATE ON MEADOWLANDS RACING

[Learn More](#)

ALLIANCE BLOODSTOCK **AB**



Sell Under a New Banner in 2025!

Powered by Partnership

- ◆ Physical Inspections
- ◆ Sale Selection Advice
- ◆ Individualized Marketing Plans

Now accepting 2025 yearling sale entries for:

Ohio Jug Sale September 12 (entries due March 15th)

Lexington Selected Sale September 29- October 3 (entries due April 1st)

Midwest Standardbred Horse Sale October 16 -18 (entries due May 2nd)

Standardbred Horse Sale November 3-5 (entries due May 1st)

Contact Us

Shaun Laungani: 859.797.3430

Bob Boni: 201.863.2082

office@alliancebloodstock.com

www.alliancebloodstock.com

LEADING WOMEN DRIVERS/TRAINERS

DRIVER NAME	WINS	EARNINGS	TRAINER NAME	WINS	EARNINGS
Beatrice Farber-Erdman	1,801	\$9,094,683	Linda Toscano	2,637	\$71,484,105
Mary Macdonald	1,539	\$4,499,492	Melissa Beckwith	2,450	\$17,573,940
Jacqueline Ingrassia	1,193	\$7,099,762	Julie Miller	2,386	\$55,588,237
Anne Wheeler	828	\$1,948,802	Casie Coleman	2,379	\$59,741,475
Kelly Case	783	\$1,070,727	Valerie Grondin	2,272	\$11,448,387
Linda Mac Donald	646	\$1,672,914	Kimberly Asher	2,016	\$15,961,156
Marie Auger	646	\$2,824,422	Jodi Schillaci	1,889	\$10,050,992
Darla Martin Lohman	643	\$1,558,259	Anette Lorentzon	1,694	\$30,399,859
Betsy Phillips	550	\$1,208,085	Jackie Greene	1,618	\$13,943,041
Barbara Benton	519	\$561,781	Jodie Cullen	1,545	\$9,236,981
Betsy Brown	513	\$1,209,439	Heidi Rohr	1,504	\$12,181,619
Valerie Grondin	502	\$676,650	Tracy Brainard	1,437	\$19,578,951
Karen Hudon	501	\$2,727,552	Jennifer Bongiorno	1,419	\$25,024,928
Laurie Stark	487	\$992,920	Denise Maier	1,246	\$6,006,704
Linda Duncan	456	\$1,306,106	Karen Garland	1,199	\$16,385,729
Natasha Day	442	\$2,249,607	Margaret Rousseau	1,136	\$1,629,710
Carole Dumont	362	\$901,914	Christine Crissman-Bier	1,066	\$10,834,898
Barbara Lewis	360	\$800,386	Sherri Holliday	1,029	\$5,546,004
Lynn Fry	339	\$859,587	Jessica Roegner	997	\$7,697,005
Betty Gill	338	\$292,088	Monica Krist	970	\$5,117,883

*Provided by USTA and ranked by wins, statistics are through March 4, 2025 and only include trainer data from 1991 to present.

A WALKER REPEAT IN MOHAWK'S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY RACE?

Woodbine Mohawk Park will host an all-women drivers race in celebration of International Women's Day on Saturday, March 8.

In last year's International Women's Day race, Julie Walker guided Prince Of Sussex up the inside and pulled away late to win by 3-3/4 lengths in 1:55 4/5 as the 2-1 second choice. An accomplished trainer in Ontario since 2008, Walker has 368 lifetime wins and sent out starters earning over \$4.5 million.

"I got my [driving] license to help with the horses I train, not to be a driver," Walker shared. "I think if I started driving when I was 19 or 20 like most of the guys do, I would've driven more, but I was intimidated. Once I was in my thirties I didn't care, but it's harder to get started then."

This year's race is the fourth edition of the International Women's Day race. The tradition began in order to recognize the participation of Women in harness racing, something that was rare in the past.

"Growing up in Owen Sound I was kind of isolated," Walker recalled. "But I remember going on a trip with my dad to Hawkinsville, Georgia and seeing two women who could do it all; Rebecca Titus and Sally Foxworth. Their success, and the success of my mom, Lori Thomson, Vicki Gregg, and Susan Walker, to name a few, has been inspiring."

Alongside Walker driving Saturday's race will be Marie Claude Auger, Jesse Turnenne, Anita Ouellette, Anne Marie Turnenne, Maggie Jones, Marielle Enberg, and Natasha Day.

"Maybe some of us in this race don't want to be catch drivers, but any opportunities we have to drive, we should take, to increase opportunities for women in the future," Walker said.

The reigning Women's Day champ has no nerves, only excitement for Saturday's race.

"You only get nervous when you haven't done it in a while, and I've been training my own horses enough that I'm ready. I'm looking forward to it."

As for her bustling stable, Walker hinted that racing fans can be on the lookout for some strong Ontario Sired 3-year-olds coming from her barn this upcoming season.

Horse racing is unique in the way that men and women compete alongside one another at the highest level of the sport. Woodbine Mohawk Park is proud to celebrate the women of Standardbred racing with the upcoming International Women's Day Race, and in their vast accomplishments throughout the year.

Post time on Saturday is 6:30 p.m. The Women's Race is set as the third.
-edited release (Grace Martin for Woodbine Communications)

LAUREN HARMON, LADIES IN LIMELIGHT ON IWD AT THE MEADOWLANDS

The women are taking over The Meadowlands this Saturday (March 8) on International Women's Day, and Lauren Harmon is excited to be a part of things.

The 24-year-old horsewoman will participate Saturday in an all-female driver's race on a night that will showcase the ladies of the sport.

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating women's social, economic, cultural and political achievements. It also calls for action to accelerate women's equality.

"This is such a male-dominated sport," said Harmon. "It's a great thing that The Meadowlands is doing for us women, who aren't always recognized or seen as much as the male drivers, trainers and grooms."

"So, it's great for not only the people inside the business, but also those watching and looking from the outside in. It's a great spotlight for us women."

Some of harness racing's most visible ladies will be at the track that night covering the action from every angle and location as The Big M celebrates IWD with Jessica Otten of Meadowlands TV serving as the host of the live simulcast presentation.

Otten is the sport's leading national TV presence with her many appearances over the last several years on FOX Sports' broadcasts of some of the biggest events in the game, such as the Meadowlands Pace and Hambletonian.

Joining her on the Sam McKee Memorial Broadcast Set will be Emily Ratcliff, who is the director of sponsorships and marketing partnerships at The Red Mile. In addition, she is the co-host of the Hambletonian broadcast on the CBS Sports Network and is still part of the on-air talent team at Harrah's Hoosier Park.

Jenna Otten, the TV presence from Scioto Downs who has done several FOX broadcasts with her sister, Jessica, will conduct interviews from the back paddock.

The final member of the female broadcast team is Melissa Keith, the track announcer at Canada's Rideau-Carleton Raceway, who will be on the microphone calling some races during the course of the night. Keith is the only full-time female race caller in harness racing.

Finally, Jessica Hallett, an award-winning photographer who is also currently a columnist at DRF Harness, will be on-site capturing the night's event with her talented pictorial eye.

"We have stacked the deck with many of the major female players in our sport," said Meadowlands Chief Operating Officer and General Manager

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 17)

IT'S THE TACTICAL APPROACH

2023 Trotter of the Year

EARNINGS OF
\$1,544,489

Winner of the **\$1 million Hambletonian**,
Kentucky Futurity, Breeders Crown 3YO Trot,
Carl Erskine Trot, Kentucky Sire Stakes Championship Final, etc.

HISTORY MAKER

First colt since Muscle Hill to win the
Hambletonian, Breeders Crown,
and **Kentucky Futurity.**

The only son of
TACTICAL LANDING
at stud



Standing at
DIAMOND CREEK FARM
of Pennsylvania
2025 Fee: **\$12,000**
Multiple mare discounts available

TACTICAL APPROACH

Tactical Landing - Sarcy, by Donato Hanover



DIAMOND
CREEK

office@diamondcreekfarm.com
717.638.7100



BY DERICK GIWNER

Coming off the best earnings year of his career, driver Jeremy Smith is easily on pace to crush his career high for wins and earnings in 2025. The 45-year-old, who currently sits second in the Miami Valley driver standings behind Dan Noble, seems to have taken his career to the next level recently despite dealing with on-track accidents and other strange injuries.

A native of Ohio, Smith is in the top 10 in both earnings and wins nationally through two months and hopes to keep that pace up through the Miami Valley meet, into Scioto and back to Dayton on the Buckeye harness racing circuit. While driving to the track on a Monday, Smith took the time to discuss his path in the sport, his bad luck with injuries, the speed of racing, and much more. Enjoy!

DRIVER JEREMY SMITH

How did you get started in harness racing?

My grandparents owned a few horses when I was growing up – usually two a year – and that is how I got to going to the racetrack. I got in with a couple of guys who trained with them.

Was harness racing always going to be your path in life?

In high school I was really good at baseball and I pitched. I pretty much had several scholarships my senior year and I got into some trouble that made me ineligible. So that went out the window and pretty much my life did for a minute. I planned on playing baseball but I was going to back it up with veterinary school. I figured if I wasn't good enough to go pro in baseball I could fall back on being a vet. When that went out the window, I always loved horse racing my whole life growing up and wanted to do that but I didn't have an in. It does kind of seem like the majority of guys racing are ones whose dad drove or trained, so I had to work my ass off.

Your first drive came in 2002 but you kept a more limited schedule for the first 10 years or so. Was that just trying to break into the sport and earning your place?

Yeah, basically. I worked a job driving a box truck for Sears delivering lawn and garden equipment and would go wherever, even if I had one drive, to race. It was kind of tough. Sometimes you have to wait for other older guys to move on before you can get in. It was a great job but once I was able to start getting more drives, that was what I wanted to do.

At age 44 you set a career high for earnings despite missing 21 weeks of racing due to on-track accidents. What changed to get you to those heights?

I think some of the guys I've been driving for the last three to five years got better horses and they moved up a little themselves, and of course I got in with a couple of different guys. It just snowballed.

I just mentioned you've had some bad luck with accidents but you also had a setback in 2023 with a sports hernia. Have you just been snake-bitten lately?

The last several years it seems like if there was a wreck I have a magnet in my pocket and I find it. That ain't no joke. You can ask anyone. Knock on wood it hasn't been something I've done but I always seem to be right in the middle of it.

With the hernia, I had a 2-year-old filly trotter in a leg of the Buckeye series. She was going crazy in the post parade and I was damn near out of the bike



CONRAD PHOTO

Jeremy Smith has won over 80 races so far in 2025, good for seventh place on the North American leaderboard.

a couple of times. She just went berserk. What's crazy is after she did that in the post parade I made it to the gate thinking she'll race like a goat but she ended up circling the field and running off. Over the next couple of days I was wondering what was bothering me. I went to the doctor four or five days after that and found out it required a surgery. I missed the first five weeks of Dayton [late 2023] and Chris Page was in the lead with 40-something wins and Dan Noble was second a few shy of Chris. I ended up catching them to win the driver's title after that. That is when it seemed to really start rolling. I went into Miami Valley and won the title there [2024]. I was also in the lead at Scioto until I had two wrecks. One I missed about two weeks, maybe six race programs, and then the second one happened which put me out for most of the rest of the year.

How hard is it to come back from accidents and injuries?

It's tough. Maybe I'm wrong on this but I feel kind of like guys are a little skeptical on you at first; is he going to be the same Jeremy? Maybe it isn't like that because I've never really asked and I don't know if they would tell me the truth anyway, but I feel like it is. Then it takes you a minute to get back because other guys are driving your horses and it is tough for trainers to just toss the guys who have been driving for them. So you just have to work your way back.

What is your favorite track to race at? Why?

I like Dayton. I don't know what it is but it seems like there is a level playing field there for everybody; trainers, horses. In the standings you'll see trainers who do well there who are maybe towards the bottom at a place like Scioto. It is a great facility. Now if we were only talking racetrack alone it would be Scioto because we race there during the summer and get a chance to go some dirty miles. [My favorite] may end up being Scioto because they are finishing up a brand new paddock.

What is your favorite big event in racing? Why?

Probably the Sire Stakes final night, Super Night in Ohio. There is so much money on the line and there are a lot of good horses. Horses come from everywhere basically, even for the aged stakes races that are Grand Circuit races. It is sweet to have those stakes horses come.

What is your favorite thing to do outside of harness racing?

I like to build cars. I've had some badass ones and I'm into the muscle car stuff, but I've had a 1968 Camaro and a bunch of others. That's my addiction outside of racing horses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



Ohio Sired Standardbreds race
for nearly **23 million** in 2025



**BUCKEYE
STALLION SERIES**

\$250 nominating fee
\$75,000 Finals
\$25,000 Consolations
\$20,000 per Leg



OHIO SIRES STAKES

\$700 nominating fee
\$400,000 Championships
Up to \$100,000 per Leg*
*1 Division - \$100,000
2 Divisions - \$65,000 per division
3 or more divisions - \$50,000 per division



**OHIO FAIRS
CHAMPIONSHIP**

HTCS, OCRA, OFRC, SVCC*
\$100 nominating fee
\$50,000 Championships
*Average fair purse of \$5,867
Up to \$15,200 per race

**Single payment nominations for 2- and 3-year olds in all
stakes. No sustaining payments.**

Nominations Due March 15, 2025

Horse must be sired by an OSRC registered stallion during year of conception.

For forms, schedules and conditions go to OHHA.com

Breed, Buy, Race & Win in Ohio



What is one word that describes harness racing for you?

Great. It has done so much for me. I owe everything to these horses.

What is the best advice you've ever gotten or given about harness racing?

That it's tough. It is a whole different animal than any other job a guy could have.

What was your best moment in harness racing?

Probably when I won the Battle of Lake Erie with Little Rocket Man last year [at Northfield Park]. It was just nice to get a shot. Forever I was considered to be like a loose cannon because I always liked to try to leave with everything and put fifty-to-one's in the mix – not that I don't do that anymore because I always say horses can't read the toteboard. I drove a little loose for the first several years once I got going. I think maybe some of the bigger trainers shied away from me a little. Now it seems like everything has changed.

So that Battle of Lake Erie win really meant a lot to you?

It sure did. It was the biggest win of my career. I drove a lot for Ken Rucker and he's done me very well over the last several years, and it means a lot to him.

Is Little Rocket Man the best horse you've ever driven?

For sure. He's a really nice horse that made all his money the hard way. I think he's closing in on two million and it wasn't because he won the Indiana Sire Stakes championships or anything.

In 2025 you are sitting seventh in the nation in wins and fourth in earnings through two months of action. Is your current pace sustainable?

I think so. I hate to say this but I'm kind of disappointed after last year. I had just got back right at the end of the meet at Dayton, so the first month at Miami Valley I was just getting back in the groove and getting with some of the guys I had done well with previously. I mean I'm tickled as hell with where I am. Anytime you are throwing up numbers that put you in the top 10, I don't want to sound like I'm not grateful as hell, because I am, but I'm a guy that likes to win. I'm a sore loser. I may not show it to any of the guys coming off the track but I feel it myself.

You mentioned being the leading driver at Dayton in 2023 and at Miami Valley in 2024. How tough is the driving colony in Ohio?

I say it is as good as anywhere in the country and I truly believe that. Chris Page won the Jug a few years ago, Dan Noble has been the leading dash driver, Brett Miller, Sam Widger. We have guys here that have all won several thousand races. Also, we race here. If you compare our style of racing to anywhere else in the country, it's cut-throat. I don't know why but there is never an easy mile. Every race is on its toes.

How do you think the potential addition of David Miller next year could shake things up further?

I think it will. When you bring a guy in like him it definitely changes the overall perspective. Things will get a little tougher.



JJ ZAMAICO

Little Rocket Man gave Jeremy Smith his first Grand Circuit win in the 2024 Battle of Lake Erie at MGM Northfield Park.

Looking at your driving record, you have some whipping violations and a couple of fines for inappropriate behavior. Is that just the case of you being too wrapped up in the action?

Yeah, and it goes back to what I was telling you about being a sore loser. I'm one of those guys who if I get beat a couple of times by a nose, sometimes a get a bit of tunnel vision and I push too hard. Never am I ever out to hurt a horse. It isn't that. It is just the heat of the moment and trying to win. I'm all in when it gets near the wire.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

The time between races. Everything now is geared towards being fast. All

of the sports are doing it but harness racing just doesn't want to change from what worked 40 years ago. Normal people, even if you are sitting at home watching, you get two minutes of pumped up – especially if you are betting on them or something – action and then have to sit around and wait for 25 minutes until the next race goes. If feel like times have changed and the horses have. Back in the day guys would turn a horse and go a [training] trip to warm a horse up and it would take 10 minutes or so. Now most guys just go a couple of laps because the breed has gotten better and they don't need all that warming up. We could run races every 10 minutes and everything would be fine. I think the handle would go up, maybe I'm wrong, but I believe it would because people would be more interested.

How do you view the future of harness racing?

That's a tough one because it is difficult for someone who is outside this game to get into it. Also, I feel like most of the tracks, at least around us, they don't promote the racing. You don't watch the news at night and see a commercial for Scioto Downs. I feel like, again, there is too much of doing things the way it was done 30 or 40 years ago. With social media you would think tracks could really push the sport. At night when I leave Miami Valley and grab a pop or whatnot at the gas station a couple of miles up the road, I talk to them and they don't even know there is horse racing there. They think it is only a casino. That's how crazy it is that people a couple of miles from the track don't even know horses are racing there. I feel like we can overcome a lot of that by getting younger, tech savvy people into positions at the track so they can get the message out.

What does a day in the life of Jeremy Smith entail?

I get up and get everything ready for the track in the evening. Then I head out to the shop. I have an old truck that I'm working on right now and I usually tinker with that. I'm always doing something. My wife asks me all the time, 'do you ever sit down?' When the weather is nice I'll be working in the yard. When it is time to race, I grab a shower and my stuff and head to the track. A lot of times when I get home at night I'll run back out to the shop. I don't go straight to bed because the adrenaline is still rolling from racing 14. So I'll try to wind down.

Time for the stretch drive...

Best Horse you ever saw: Artsplace. I got to see him at Scioto one night with Gene Riegle when he was just starting his 3-year-old year. He was in the Open because he had so much money made. I was a little kid at the time, maybe 12 or 13. Me and my grandpa went in the paddock and I got to pet him. It was the greatest thing ever because that horse was like a killer.

Lasix – Yes or No: Yes.

Favorite TV Show: Iron Resurrection.

Trotters or Pacers: Pacers – I like the raw speed. A good trotter is something special but there is something about a wicked-fast pacer.



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner [X @harnesseveguy](#)

An evening at The Meadowlands

When Jessica Otten reached out to me about covering for her on the broadcast set at The Meadowlands last weekend, I was expecting to experience much of the usual stuff - lots of traffic on my way to the track, a somewhat sparse crowd and a near midnight exit of the building. I had set the bar rather low based on previous experiences and the reality easily vaulted over it.

Anytime I can get to The Meadowlands from my house in under 90 minutes it is a win and on March 1 I did it in a tidy 80. That result provided me plenty of time to settle in before the pre-game show with my buddy Dave Little. It's always a pleasure to work with Dave because he's a great host, keeps the show uptempo, and we generally have good banter during the night. I like to think we have different strengths and play off each other nicely.

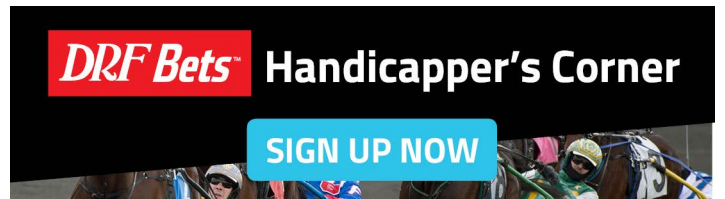
The initial surprise of the night came when a graphic popped up on the screen that the first race would be going off at 6:24 p.m. instead of the typical 6:30 or later. The Meadowlands has clearly listened to some of the social/industry media comments about the races taking too long and took action. I've never been one to mind the post time "drag" but I do appreciate moving things along at a quicker pace. Interestingly, one serious regular player told me that they weren't expecting the earlier start and missed the first race. If The Meadowlands sticks with the change (and I have reason to believe they will) people will catch on over time.

With a number of Kentucky Derby prep races taking place during the day and into the early evening hours, the simulcast crowd surrounding the Sam McKee Broadcast Set was quite loud. I've experienced it before but it does take some concentration to filter out the noise. What did distract me a once or twice was the number of people entering the building and heading up the escalator. I commented to Dave a couple of times on the sheer number of people that seemed to be coming into the building. People tell me all the time that racing is dead and people don't come to the track but there was a steady stream of them coming into the building last Saturday. For what it's worth, I even saw a guy who had to be Rene Allard's twin heading up the escalator with a couple of other people.

Back to the racing, there was an incident going into the first turn of the second race where Braxton Boyd's horse went down and he came very close to getting completely run over. Other than concern over the horse and Braxton, Dave and I didn't think much of the incident. We were relieved to hear announcer Ken Warkentin say that Braxton was up on his feet during his call of the race and assumed the final outcome was a winner for both of us, with Stellar Yankee crossing the wire first. Moments after it was announced that the race would be declared a "no contest" due to the potentially injured driver on the track. I have two issues with the decision by the Judges. First, the accident played no role in the final outcome of the race. Not one driver did anything differently and winning trainer Cory Stratton later posted on X that his brother Jordan "kept driving because he saw it was all cleared up". Trainer Andrew Harris pointed out that "we live in a different world now" and "horse safety is paramount". I get that even if the majority of bettors who commented or contacted me felt differently. My bigger issue comes with the decision to make the race a "no contest" rather than a non-betting race. The horses raced and should be rewarded the earned purse money and more importantly, they should have a proper racing line for people to use when handicapping. That none of the horses in the race show a past performance line is not in the best interest of the public, which is why we have Judges in the first place.

Moving on, during my "break" from the set I walked around the building and was surprised with the crowd in every portion of the building. Trotters was filled, the second floor bar area was crowded. One random guy who looked like a regular even said to me, "it's nice to see so many people here." I agree and hope those that showed up become repeat customers.

The rest of the evening was uneventful with the exception of the fact that I walked out of the building 11:31 p.m. instead of 12:01 a.m. during my last appearance in 2024. That was a welcome change I hope continues, because even when watching from home this harness racing fan's mind tends to wander as we pass hour five of the card. See you at The Big M soon!



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, MARCH 6

RACE 2

(7) SHOW STOP had a very good 2nd-place finish in the finale on Monday Night's program. He paced home off cover and just missed to the heavy choice in what was a much improved effort in his 3rd start for new trainer Jacob Roberts. He should be confident going in and gets the nod vs. this group.

-John Rallis



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

RACE 9

(4) GALLIE GETAWAY is down in class for a barn having a great meet. Gelding should be firing to the front and prove very tough to beat.

-Derick Giwner



RACE 5

(1) SEVENSHADESOFGREY goes from the worst post in two straight at the NW10000 to the rail in this lower class, and returns to Bartlett. It's safe to assume the Bucci trainee will awaken.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, MARCH 8

RACE 2

(1) FRANCO TOTEM N reaches a new low in terms of claiming price and I have to think this classy old guy will make his presence felt versus a blank field.

-Giwner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Meadowlands Analysis [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Yonkers Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#)

DHP PPS

HARNESSEYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNESSE

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

\$9,547 CARRYOVER, \$25K GTD POOL IN THURSDAY'S PICK 5 AT YONKERS

No tickets had five-of-five in the Pick 5 on a rainy Wednesday night (March 5) at MGM Yonkers Raceway, triggering a hefty \$9,547.58 carryover and a \$25,000 guaranteed pool in the sequence on Thursday night (March 6).

The guarantee in the Pick 5 is being offered as part of the United States Trotting Association's Strategic Wagering Program. Free Harness Eye past performances for the Pick 5 are available [here](#). The Pick 5, which begins in race five and has a \$1 minimum, has a takeout rate of 20 percent.

MGM Yonkers Raceway is operating on a Monday through Friday live racing schedule with post time each night at 6:45 p.m. (EST).

-edited release (Yonkers)

USTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 7-9

The U.S. Trotting Association's 2025 Board of Directors annual meeting is scheduled for Friday (March 7) through Sunday (March 9) at the Hilton Columbus at Easton Hotel.

Registration begins at 1 p.m. on Friday (March 7) with the Registration Committee meeting being first on the agenda beginning at 5 p.m. A welcome reception will follow at 6:30 p.m.

For the first time, the USTA communications staff will be hosting two live broadcasts of the HarnessRacing.com Annual Meeting Preview Show on Friday night at 7 p.m. and Saturday (March 8) at 4 p.m. The shows will feature interviews with USTA directors, staff and other industry leaders and can be seen on three of the U.S. Trotting social media platforms — [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [X](#) (formerly Twitter).

Saturday's meeting schedule leads off with the Communications/Marketing Committee at 8 a.m. followed by the General Opening Session starting at 10 a.m.

Once the meeting is called to order by Chairperson Joe Faraldo there will be the introduction of new directors Joe Morris (District 2) and Stacy Chiodo (District 12) followed by a presentation by USTA President Russell Williams, then reports from USTA Executive Vice President Mike Tanner and Financial Officer Dennis Fisher.

Next on the General Session agenda are industry updates on the Harness Racing Medication Collaborative by Chairperson Faraldo, the Standardbred Racing Investigative Fund by counsel Carson Morris, and the Standardbred Transition Alliance by President Don Marean.

The morning session will conclude with a discussion of any other business and a group photo of the Board.

At noon on Saturday, the annual Recognition Luncheon will feature the presentation of the President's Awards and a 20 Years of Service Award to District 12 Chairperson and Director Jeff Gregory.

On Saturday afternoon, the Racing Committee (includes Driver/Trainer, Fairs, Pari-Mutuel, Regulatory) meets at 1 p.m. and the final session of the day will be a full board, closed session of the USTA Investigative Subcommittee.

On Sunday (March 9), the Finance Committee will meet at 9 a.m. and the Rules Committee at 10:30 a.m. prior to the Closing General Session at 11:30 a.m.

In the Closing Session, committee reports from Registration, Racing, Finance and Rules will be presented followed by the approval of the 2025 budget and closing remarks from USTA President Russell Williams, who will announce the location and dates of the 2026 Board of Directors annual meeting.

The agenda for the Board of Directors meeting is subject to change.

For daily news updates starting Friday, please visit the [USTA website](#).

The hashtag #USTABOD25 will be used on social media throughout the meetings.

-edited release (USTA Communications)

ST. PATRICK'S DAY FAMILY FUN CRAFT EVENT AT HARNESS MUSEUM

Join us at The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame for Saint Patrick's Day family fun on Sunday, March 16, 2025 from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM. Children will create lucky horse hats to wear to the parade and shamrock noisemakers to shake. Participants play games, enjoy refreshments and ride on the Harness Racing Simulator. Cost is \$10 per child and adults are free. Each child receives a small gift. Supplies are limited. Parade begins at 2:00 PM and passes in front of the Museum. For more information, contact

Kristin Roberts at 845-294-6330 or education@harnessmuseum.com.

Programs are made possible by the Agriculture & New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. For information on all the Harness Horse Racing Museum & Hall of Fame events, please visit our website at www.harnessmuseum.com. The Museum is located at 240 Main Street, Goshen, NY and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

-release (Harness Museum & Hall of Fame)

HHYF 2025 TRAVEL SCHEDULE BEGINS IN APRIL

With spring right around the corner, the Harness Horse Youth Foundation (HHYF) has finalized its 2025 calendar of events which includes educational programs, field trips, guest appearances, as well as outreach activities.

Ellen Taylor, HHYF Executive Director said: "At HHYF, we are focused on our mission - 2025 is business as usual, although we are starting a bit earlier. The feeling of helping a young person experience harness racing for the first time is unmatched!"

To register and for further information, use this link: <https://hhyf.org/summer-programs/>

HHYF appreciates those who have already become 2025 Partners including Fair Winds Farm, US Trotting Association, Lindy Farms/AFF, PA Harness Horsemen's Association, Far Out Farm, VA Harness Horsemen's Association, Cameo Hills LTD and Chris McErlean. "Our efforts depend almost exclusively on industry support," Taylor added. "Anyone interested in assisting financially or as a volunteer is encouraged to contact the office in the next few weeks."

Additional questions may be answered by calling 317.908.0029 or emailing ellen@hhyf.org.

-edited release (HHYF)

MEADOWLANDS SEEKING DRIVERS FOR ST. PATRICK'S RACE

In honor of St. Patrick's Day, the Meadowlands Racetrack will host a drivers of Irish heritage race on Saturday, March 15th. The winner of the race, which will be sponsored by Mary and Peter Grandich of Freehold, New Jersey, will receive a special Irish Race blanket and trophy.

Drivers interested in participating should contact Race Secretary Scott Warren at swarren@playmeadowlands.com.

-release (Meadowlands)

WOMEN'S RACE SATURDAY AT THE BIG M

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Manager Jason Settlemoir. "We have a field of 10 for the all-female drivers' race, and have all broadcast bases covered as well. All of us at The Meadowlands are pleased to have a night like this, because we realize how major a role women play in our sport."

In addition to Harmon, the nine drivers who will be participating in the fifth race are Christina Grubich, Leslie Joyce, Marianna Monaco, Vicky Gill, Alexandra Sarkine, McKenzie Sowers, Vicki Stratton, Sarah Svanstedt and another Lauren, Tritton.

Harmon said it's a tough field.

"Someone like Lauren Tritton, she is a great driver, but she doesn't get as much recognition for what she does," said Harmon. "She was the first woman driver to be in the Battle of Lake Erie [at Northfield Park] and win it."

Harmon, who has 43 career driving wins, including one against the "regular drivers" last month at Northfield with 3-2 favorite Solidazabrickhouse, who is trained by her stepmom, will depart from the rail in Saturday's fifth race.

She will pilot the Ron Burke-trained Oakwoodjusiasnob IR, who will be making her second start on North American soil.

"I took a quick look," Harmon said. "I was a little nervous to look at the draw, but at The Meadowlands, even having the outside, you still have an opportunity [to win]. But it's always better to draw inside. I'm excited to drive for Ron. I haven't looked too much into the horse but I'm sure he'll be ready to go. Whatever Ronnie says, we'll do."

-edited release (Meadowlands)