

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025

# ENDURING SPEED



NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS

***While Bulldog Hanover is the fastest pacer in history, there is a long list of horses who have carried their speed for a much longer period of time***



## EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner

✕ @harnesseveguy

Sports and records go hand in hand. Each historic milestone is like a carrot on the stick being chased by the next generation. Despite comments by some to the contrary, this rings no less true in harness racing. As an industry – from fans to drivers to breeders – everyone loves speed. There is something about a Standardbred traveling at high speeds and reaching an achievement that none of its peers have previously accomplished.

Records come in all shapes and sizes, especially when it comes to harness racing. We categorize them by age, sex, track size and distance to the point where it seems the list is endless. But there is one time mark which everyone in the sport knows without having to dig too deep into their minds.

With all due respect to trotters, at the top of the heap in terms of speed is the all-age record for pacers of 1:45 4/5 set in 2022 at The Meadowlands by Bulldog Hanover. It is ironic because trotters are more desirable at the yearling sales and the most important race in North America is the Hambletonian for 3-year-old trotters. Yet rarely do you ever hear people discuss the 1:48 4/5 North American record set by the fastest trotter in history - Homicide Hunter in 2018 at The Red Mile.

There are some potential reasons why Bulldog Hanover's record perhaps stands a bit taller. Most importantly is that the pacing record is three seconds faster than the pacing record. By nature people are always going to be infatuated with the better number. Another possible factor is the horse that holds the mark. When Bulldog Hanover set the record he did so during a magical season where he was virtually unbeatable, setting three of the six fastest times in history. He

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Meadowlands to eliminate post time drag, potentially end card earlier**

**Jay Bergman: Mossdale Ben could end up a Borgata final favorite for Stratton**

**Matt Rose: The comp mentality**

**Bettor's Wish progeny look to keep making their mark in Weiss series**

**Darin Zoccali: JL Cruze still adding to his double millionaire status at age 14**

**Melander, trotting pair set to debut at The Meadowlands Friday**

**Best Bets & Analysis**

**First quarter U.S. economic indicators down; Gingras/Burke sweep Brennan 2nd round; Mandatory Hi-5 at Mohawk**

**Comments? Questions?**

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was one of the rare Standardbreds which lured people off their couches and onto the track apron. His name has gravitas.

When you think back to the time when Holborn Hanover (1:46 4/5, 2006) and Enough Talk (1:49 3/5, 2008) were the speed Kings of their gaits, were either of those horses thought of in the same light as Bulldog Hanover? It's ok to say no, because let's face it, while both were very nice horses neither captured the hearts of fans and the industry, though admittedly Enough Talk came closer because he was the first trotter to break 1:50, which at the time seemed like the more difficult barrier to eclipse, and he held the record solo for nearly six years until Sebastian K came along with a scintillating 1:49 mile at Pocono Downs in 2014.

In 2008 Somebeachsomewhere came along to equal the 1:46 4/5 mark and that certainly stamped the time as one that would be hard to surpass considering his talent level. The clocking lasted until the freaky-fast Always B Miki uncorked an astounding 1:46 clocking at The Red Mile in 2016. That mile truly opened the floodgates and made a sub 1:47 mile much more commonplace. Only four horses had stopped the clock faster than 1:47 before Always B Miki came along and since then we have seen 24 horses flash that type of speed.

Around the same time that the speed of the breed took off on the pacing side, the same thing occurred with the more naturally-gaited trotters. By the time Homicide Hunter posted the only sub 1:49 mile in history, the wheels were already in motion. Prior to 2018 there were only four miles faster than 1:50 on the trot in North America. Since then, 28 horses have trotted 1:49 4/5 or faster.

Hall of Famer Jimmy Takter, who trained Always B Miki, said the son of Always A Virgin was a "strong horse who could carry his speed forever." As to what has changed over the last decade to produce so much more speed from Standardbreds, Takter found a few key factors, including tactics and pure speed.

"I think a lot of it has to do with how the drivers drive in races today," said Takter. "They are more aggressive than I've ever seen, but if they aren't it is really hard to win races. Plus, horses just keep getting better. I was up in New Jersey for the first time all winter a couple of weeks ago and I sat behind Nancy's [Takter, daughter] 2-year-olds and I think these horses come to speed so much quicker than when I retired back in 2018. It is a combination of things. It is them being better gaited and more of them being able to go in faster bikes like UFOs, and the breed getting faster."

What I find extremely interesting is how compact the pack is at the top of the leaderboard for both trotters and pacers. Just a fifth-of-a-second separates the top four on each gait. In theory the gap could be even tighter when you consider Standardbred races are timed in fifths. There is at least the possibility that Bulldog Hanover paced in 1:45.99 and the three tied behind him – Allywag Hanover, Always B Miki and Lather Up – all crossed the wire in 1:46.00. Certainly a thought worth pondering but not one to lose any sleep over.

You'll recall at the beginning of this column a reference to records coming in all shapes and sizes. If you can believe it, there are even speed records that exist which we don't recognize. It is a shame too, because in some ways these are the most impressive of the collection.

Have you ever heard the phrase, "anyone can do something one time"? Some of the names, like Bulldog Hanover, appear on the all-time records list many times and that is certainly impressive, but in the end it was just one year of accomplishments. Shouldn't we have a special place for those horses which consistently prove their speed over long careers? I'm talking about the on-track warriors which are able to break the 1:50 barrier



Always B Miki was the first to prove pacers could travel in 1:46.

for at least half-a-decade and in some cases pace much faster than that in a true show of talent and longevity.

Ideas pop into my head from many avenues and in this case I have to credit the invaluable Greg Reinhart for outlining the astonishing accomplishment of American History. Unless one of his eight registered foals shine in the coming years, few people are going to remember the now 10-year-old in another decade despite his Breeders Crown victory in 2019 and his \$1.68 million in career earnings. But we should!

A son of American Ideal out of a Camluck mare named Perfect Tough, American History recently won a race at Woodbine Mohawk Park in 1:49 3/5. While that in of itself is far from noteworthy, it was the eighth consecutive year he has accomplished the feat. When I started writing this column I wasn't certain whether eight years is the consecutive years record, but I had to think it must be when you consider the streak began when he was just a 3-year-old. Along the way American History picked up a very credible 1:47 lifetime mark and seven straight years of pacing a sub 1:49 mile. Plus, let's consider that this year is far from over and he could certainly eclipse 1:49 in 2025.

"I still watch him race occasionally," said Myron Bell, who made the \$150,000 winning bid on him at the Lexington Selected Sale and co-owned the horse until late 2020. "I'm not really a stat guy but it is quite an accomplishment. [American History] and Mel Mara were the two fastest horses I ever owned just for pure speed."

Bell, who currently owns a promising 3-year-old by American History named Making History, recalled that the sire was one of the best 2-year-



## AMERICAN HISTORY

Eight straight years of winning in under 1:50

NIKKI SHERMAN/DRF HARNESS PHOTO



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olds training down but was sidetracked by an ankle injury that delayed his debut until October of his rookie year. As a 3-year-old he won the Kentucky Sire Stakes final and Tattersalls while finishing second in the Adios and Empire Breeders Classic to begin his eight year run of consistency.

"He was very fast; not great but very fast. Very few horses are great," said Bell, whose one regret was that American History couldn't breed a full book of mares.

Let the "eight consecutive years" record sink in a minute as you ponder other top horses from the last quarter century who may've been able to produce similar results. Go grab a cup of coffee and really consider it . . . then come back and continue reading the article.

Do you have your list ready? Did you do some research? It really isn't that simple because you can't just "Google" it or ask Chat GPT or Grok for the answer. As smart as they are, harness racing is a tough statistical nut to crack.

The first name that comes to mind has to be Foiled Again. He's arguably the most famous horse in the history of the sport and he raced an incredible 13 years while earning more money than any Standardbred in history. As incredible as he was, Foiled Again was only able to accomplish the consecutive sub 1:50 streak from 2008 to 2013 (six years); impressive but comes up short.

Six was actually a very common number when I started doing the unofficial research. Backstreet Shadow did it from 2018 to 2023. Dancin Yankee also owns the six pack, doing it from 2014 to 2019. Interestingly, in 2013 he just missed at 1:50 1/5 or he would've made it eight straight years as well. Little Rocket Man is another in the "six" club (I have to thank my right hand man Matt Rose for remembering that one) and he's still going strong at age 9 with his highest-earning season coming last year. Eight years could be within reach! Matt also came up with Workin Ona Mystery and he's the rarest of the rare when it comes to this fraternity because his streak began in 2018 when he was just a 2-year-old. Usually when a 2-year-old is that fast they retire to stud long before any chance



CONRAD PHOTO

**Little Rocket Man has the second-longest current streak of consecutive years with a final winning time under 1:50.**

of a longevity record. Sadly his streak ended in 2024 when he stopped the timer in just 1:50. So close!

Outside of American History, the only horse we could find that made it seven straight years under 1:50 is the winningest "modern day" Standardbred in history Southwind Amazon. The racing war horse made it happen from 2016 to 2022 and amazingly not one of his record miles during that period came on a track larger than five-eighths. The recently retired winner of 139 races accomplished it five times at Northfield, once at Scioto Downs and once at the now defunct Pompano Park.

While these horses didn't make the "consecutive" cut, there are a few others that certainly deserve a mention. Back before sub 1:50 miles were as common as high-priced eggs, Boulder Creek had a five year streak

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# 2025 LEADING

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from 2004 to 2008. Won The West did it from 2007 to 2011 and was also sub 1:48 three straight years during that span. Finally, now 8-year-old Ruthless Hanover owns a current five year streak of going under 1:49 and four straight under 1:48.

No list is complete without cold hard facts, so after doing our best on memory we called on U.S. Trotting Association's statistical guru Anne Chunko, and with the help of Gabby Fleming she provided the data we needed to be 100% accurate. American History is indeed at the top of the heap if you use sub 1:50 as the barometer. If you widen it to 1:50 or less, Bettor's Edge sits atop the list with nine straight years from 2012 to 2020. In 2019 and 2020 as a 10- and 11-year-old he stopped the clock at 1:50 flat, meaning he had seven straight sub 1:50 years. Dapper Dude deserves recognition for an eight year run from 2012 to 2019 at 1:50 or under. In 2017 at age 8 his best mark was 1:50 or he would've been tied with American History. The USTA research also uncovered Clear Vision (can't believe we forgot him) as a horse that went under 1:50 seven consecutive years from 2011 to 2017. Interestingly, he paced in 1:50 1/5 in 2010 or he would've held the record at nine years.

The USTA also ran a listing of horses that posted the most 1:50 or lower miles. Any guess which horse leads the pack by a fair margin with 46? The answer is Little Rocket Man, followed by Golden Receiver (36), American History (29), Mcwicked (27), and Allywag Hanover and Wiggle It Jiggle It (tied at 26). By the way, the leader among trotters is Manchego with seven, three ahead of Atlanta and Six Pack at four.

One more side note: of the 165 horses to record at least 10 miles of 1:50 or better during their career, seven share a mom. Artistic Vision, Great Memories, GT Miss Royal, Lady Ashlee Ann, Shot Togo Bluechip, Higher And Higher, and Sweet Future all accomplished the feat.

All of the above horses have gotten accolades over the years and they deserve continued attention for their amazing achievements. Hopefully a few of those on the list will extend their runs in 2025 and some newcomers will join the ranks in the future. After all, any horse can do something once. Show me the longevity!



DERICK GIVNER

**Bettor's Edge paced winning miles of 1:50 or less in a record nine straight years from 2012 to 2020.**

## Meadowlands to stop post time drag

The Meadowlands issued a release on April 8 stating that it would slowly eliminate post time drag over the course of the next three weekends with a goal of starting all races at zero minutes to post (mtp) by the start of its Championship Meet on May 2.

According to COO and GM Jason Settlemoir, the scheduling shift will also likely result in an earlier conclusion to the Friday and Saturday cards by as much as an hour.

"At this point my plan is to be done by 10:45 p.m./11 p.m. with a 14-race card once we eliminate the drag completely," said Settlemoir, who added that nothing is set in stone right now. "I am taking a wait and see approach. I want to see how handle is impacted with each minute we take away."

For comparison, the final race on April 4 went "off" at 11:32 p.m. and on April 5 that ballooned to 11:49 p.m. The final race on some cards in 2024 went off as late as midnight.

In the press release The Meadowlands outlined the gradual post time changes as follows:

- Friday, April 11 (7-minute drag)
- Saturday, April 12 (6-minute drag)
- Friday, April 18 (5-minute drag)
- Saturday, April 19 (4-minute drag)
- Friday, April 25 (3-minute drag)
- Saturday, April 26 (2-minute drag)
- Friday, May 2 (no drag - races will start at 0 mtp)

"Jeff Gural and I agree that the drag is terrible," said Settlemoir in the release. "We are giving bettors what they asked for during our Championship Meet, no drag and the best drivers and horses in our sport. We hope our customers will continue to support us strongly at the windows."

**-with files from The Meadowlands**

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# Mossdale Ben could end up a Borgata final favorite for Stratton



## JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [X BergmanJay](#)

It's been nine years since Bit Of A Legend swept through the eliminations and captured the final of the Borgata Series (nee George Morton Levy) at Yonkers Raceway. The horse put young driving star Jordan Stratton on the map. Following the first two legs of the 2025 Borgata Series similarities can be seen between the 2016 champion and the locally undefeated Mossdale Ben N.

Stratton has been in the bike behind Mossdale Ben N from the first time he qualified at Yonkers on February 7 through the April 7 second-leg victory. In six straight starts the Peter Tritton-trained 7-year-old by A Rocknroll Dance has raced from off the pace and in each start has found the winner's circle in rather easy fashion.

"He's won comfortably each time," said Stratton of the budding superstar that he has enjoyed sitting behind. "Peter (Tritton) thought highly of him when he came over."

Yet, despite the big miles Mossdale Ben N has put in to date, Stratton is a long way from putting him in the same sentence with Bit Of A Legend N.

"That horse holds a special place in my heart," said Stratton of the horse who was a big part of his life between 2016-19, with 32 victories during that four-year span and earnings over \$1.9 million.

While it is way too early to predict what Mossdale Ben N's career stats will look like once he's finished racing in North America, it would be fair to say his arrival stateside was not the same as Bit Of A Legend N's was in 2016. Bit Of A Legend N earned \$659K before arriving in North America with much of that coming during his first two years racing, with 17 wins and 11 seconds in his first 37 races. In contrast, Mossdale Ben N had just eight wins in 43 starts and just \$110K earned over that four-year stretch.

Putting the past aside for a bit, the comparisons start becoming more realistic when you look at the racing styles of the pair, and much of that has to do with Stratton more than the horse himself.

"I'm sure he can leave the gate," Stratton said when asked of the racing tactics he's employed in the six starts to date. "Right now, I'm just protecting him. I've seen a lot of horses come over here and get beaten on the front end and get their feelings hurt."

Stratton's contention is that during the acclimation process it is entirely possible for a horse to feel the sting of getting passed and lose the will in races that follow. "I just try to protect them as much as possible," Stratton said.

While the three wins by Mossdale Ben N came moving up the conditioned ladder at Yonkers, the last three have been against Invitational types and horses with the power not only to win preliminary legs in the Borgata but take down the final, just as Bit Of A Legend N did in 2016 and perhaps Mossdale Ben N will have an opportunity in the not too distant future.

What Mossdale Ben N has done thus far in the Borgata has been astounding to say the least. Stratton has willingly taken him off the gate and moved back to last. In both winning legs he drew post six and was well off the pace through the first quarter. While many drivers wait until

the third turn to activate horses coming from off the pace, Stratton had no issues moving Mossdale Ben N on the second turn in each Borgata leg and was able to fish out cover to follow by the half.

On March 31 Mossdale Ben N still seemed to be pace compromised as the half was rung up in just 56 1/5 and Stratton was more than five lengths behind the leader. The driver had more issues to deal with on that occasion as his cover stalled and he was pushed three wide on the backstretch and into the final turn. Steering behind cover into the final turn, Mossdale Ben N was full of pace when sent wide and enveloped Its A Me Mario as well as last year's multiple-leg winner Desperate Man.

If Mossdale Ben N needed to be tested for class any further, last Monday's (April 7) second leg saw him once again give up the advantage early in the mile and still be sitting fifth with cover at three quarters, four lengths off the pace and trying to reach the classy Charlie May.

Things didn't go as smoothly as Stratton had hoped on the final turn. "I got hit by a rock and was blinded briefly," said Stratton, blaming himself for the incident. "In the stretch he was lugging in a little."

Despite a course correction there was no denying Mossdale Ben N's power and willingness to go by the pacesetter as well as the impressive first-leg winner Verdun, who provided solid cover for the winner.

With 1:51 1/5 and 1:51 3/5 victories in the opening legs, both done from off

the pace and surprisingly not as the public choice, Mossdale Ben N looks to emulate the "Legend" with three consecutive leg wins this Monday (April 14) in one of four \$50,000 divisions, having drawn post two inside last year's final runner-up Coaches Corner.

For Stratton, the third round of the Borgata allows him a little bit of a breather before an inevitable decision is necessary. With five leg wins in the first two rounds of the series, Stratton has put himself in a good spot if you will. He drove For Once Inmy Life to his second consecutive Borgata win as well on April 7 and the driver knows at some point both horses are likely to be in the same division or



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

**Mossdale Ben is undefeated in all six U.S. starts with Jordan Stratton in the bike.**

perhaps the final.

"I'll cross that bridge when I get to it," said Stratton of the difficult question. Fortunately For Once Inmy Life is sitting the third leg out and perhaps with a win on Monday Mossdale Ben N would be in position to skip a leg as well, decreasing the odds that Stratton might have to make a choice before the May 9 final.

For Once Inmy Life has won both of his legs on the front end and is off to a great start in 2025 having won five of eight races and finished second in the others. "He's been great in every start," said Stratton of For Once Inmy Life.

Stratton has an interesting mare in the Blue Chip Matchmaker in Silk Cloud A, an upset winner in the series' first leg and third in the second leg.

"I really liked her a lot last year and was hoping they would put her in the Matchmaker," said Stratton of the daughter of Shadow Play who was not nominated to the 2024 edition of the series but appears to be making up for lost time this year.

"I think she's good enough to reach the final," said Stratton. "I'm not sure if she'll be able to go with Per's (Engblom) mare Aardie B Miki N or Pelling's pair."

Silk Cloud A drew post five in the Friday's April 11 third round of the Blue Chip Matchmaker where she hopes to turn the tables on Beautiful Seaside (post 7) who upset her and heavily favored Walkin On Sunshine in round two.

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## SMELLING THE ROSES

By Matt Rose X @DRFHarnessMatt

# THE COMP MENTALITY

I recently checked the USTA's "Economic Indicators on U.S. Races" which is readily available on its website. As of April 7 per race average handle on harness racing year-to-date is down 8.08% and this is on top of a handle decrease year over year in 2024. Is anyone really surprised? I for one expected this to happen the moment sports betting became legal in most jurisdictions, especially in the online world.

For seemingly more than a decade horse racing had a virtual monopoly on legal internet wagering. Sure, there were offshore books and poker sites, but for the regular guy or gal who wanted to sit at home anytime day or night and gamble online, horse racing was basically it. In that era, wouldn't logic dictate that the racing business would branch out and grow, even drawing in non-racing people who were just craving action and didn't want to worry about moving money in and out of unregulated rogue online sites?

I wasn't around for the "golden era" of harness racing when tracks averaged thousands of live patrons nightly and millions pushed through the windows. I promise they were not all racing fans - they mostly were gamblers, and if they were outside of Nevada (and later Atlantic City) and wanted to bet, their lone options were Jai Alai or Greyhounds, but mostly horse racing. I'm sure plenty of gamblers who were non-racing fans still bet the horses online, mostly out of necessity because they wanted some sort of action. Naturally as more gambling and entertainment options became available, horse racing (especially harness) lost market share.

Is sports betting one of the final nails in the racing coffin, especially for the online gamblers? Is it too late for racing to stop the downward slide?

One more question: Has racing done enough to avoid being swallowed up by casinos and sports betting? Probably not. I'm sure that no matter what there would be market share lost to new wagering avenues as that's just logical when given more options, but for me racing could've done more to prevent a decline and can still do plenty to turn things around.

First off, I don't think the tracks/ADW's provide customers enough of an incentive to bet. Gamblers love comps, they love earning points, they love tracking their play, they love the feeling of being rewarded for their efforts. I have to believe that some hardcore comp chasers put less emphasis on winning or losing and more on how many comps they earn and what tier level they reach. Even in the non-gambling world, look at credit cards with their "miles" and cashback earnings. Even places as basic as supermarkets have points earning for free gas and other goodies. But aside from a select few, the rewards and promos that racetracks and especially ADW's give out are almost non-existent. In this day and age it's inexcusable for a racetrack to not have a comp or reward program. Imagine two identical casinos side by side, one offers the usual players card to earn comps for slot play, tables and other activities while the other offers nothing. Which one will be empty and out of business? So how can a racetrack that offers nothing for on-track play compete with that?

I remember a long time ago when The Meadowlands started the "Big M Club", where you got a card that you swiped in the tote machine and it tracked your bets and gave you rewards based on play. If I remember correctly it gave the player back around one percent of handle in points which could be used for programs, food vouchers and betting vouchers among other prizes. I thought that was awesome and I'm sure it enticed

people to bet more. It's that "comp mentality" in play. Decades later, that same track just recently started a program to reward new players with a BOGO buffet offer and existing players with entry into a weekly and monthly raffle for dinner for four along with a \$500 betting voucher. These are greater incentives which make people feel wanted.

We now live in a different world where technology has been brought to places never seen before. Everybody - young and old - now has a powerful computer in their pocket in the form of a cell phone. Social media and online gaming dominate the landscape, and one of the biggest developments recently in the online world is the legality and accessibility of sports wagering. These big gaming companies with their non-stop advertising and flashy, enticing apps have made sports betting mainstream and almost "cool" in a way to our Millennials and Gen Z demographics. At the same time there doesn't seem to be anything cool about betting on horses. When I once asked my "Gen Z" nephew if he or anyone he knows bets on horse racing, well, you can guess the answer. When I asked about sports betting he basically said he knows a whole bunch of people who love playing parlays and prop bets.

Recently FanDuel had an NBA promo centered around three-point shooting. The concept was to bet on a player to go over a certain number of threes and if that player leads the entire NBA in threes for that given day everyone who correctly selected the player shared in \$1 million of "freeplay" (or bonus) bets. During the first few weeks of the promo the winners were rewarded with bonuses well north of four figures, and the minimum bet to get in on the action was just nine cents! There was plenty of activity on social media and it clearly built steam as the number of weekly participants was growing. A friend of mine asked how FanDuel could afford to be so generous with that promo. I made an educated guess that the contest would pay for itself with increased activity being drawn to their site and players are going to reinvest their winnings anyway, so basically they get to churn some handle for free before dipping back into their own pockets. By week four of the promo I had spread the word to a handful of people who then got in on the action, and a couple of them like to play but are non-racing people. So how can they be enticed to bet on racing? When was the last time people (especially the younger demographic) were talking about racing promos? I'm not sure the "get up to \$10 back if your horse finishes second or third" gets the blood pumping.

Maybe taking a shot and bumping up the maximum refund from \$10 to \$25 would entice the casual player to bet more. I'll admit that I'm not sure what kind of promos would connect with horseplayers, but more needs to be tried. Maybe the simplest idea of "betting this to earn that" would be eye-catching, but with simple rules, no hoops to jump through, and realistic goals/returns. I always thought that the technology used by casinos - which supplied simplified data to players on what they have earned so far and what they need to unlock for more valuable comp rewards - make it very enticing to keep playing longer and maybe even bet more. The horse industry should do the same at racetracks and with ADW's, and don't be cheap. Not even a \$2 player is going to get excited about a \$5 or \$10 reward, but dangle a \$50 or \$100 freeplay in front of them and actually make it attainable. That may inspire them to play at a higher limit. Once you have graduated to a higher limit it's hard to go back. After all, we all started as \$2 players, didn't we?

From a personal perspective I'll admit that my entire gambling world has shifted. I went from 100% racing to 90% sports and 10% racing. How did it happen? For starters I had never been a sports bettor until it became legal and so easily accessible, then I got lured in by very attractive promotions and the rest has been history. With all the money I wagered via ADW's, I haven't heard from any of them asking me to return. There have been no promotions or reload bonuses. Just silence. I almost feel guilty for contributing to the overall handle decline, and I wonder how many people out there are just like me - people who were devoted to racing but now find other gambling avenues more enticing.

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# Bettor's Wish looks to keep making his mark in Weiss series

By Jay Bergman

What a difference a year makes. That's the conclusion one can make from looking at the lack of form from a pair of sophomores that will see action in the Weiss Series on Saturday afternoon.

Both World Of Wishes and Bettor's Ticket were likely not developed enough to prosper as juveniles in 2024 but the former, already a back-to-back Weiss winner and the latter, a potential star judging from a pair of Pocono qualifiers, seem primed for success as sophomores.

"He had some colt soreness last year," said Chris Ryder when asked about World Of Wishes, the fastest leg winner to date in the Weiss Series for 3-year-old colt and gelding pacers.

Following a pair of qualifiers World Of Wishes made his debut on March 22 at The Meadowlands and faded after sitting a pocket trip.

"He choked down," said Ryder. "He got a bit aggressive. He wasn't like that in the qualifiers, but he got grabby in the race."

A few equipment changes were made but World Of Wishes was still a bit of a handful in his Weiss series opening round division and driver Patrick Ryder had to use him a few times to gain control, eventually powering off to a 1:51 mile, a solid effort in only his second career start.

"I guess I was a little surprised by the time of the race," the trainer said. "But he always showed speed training down."

World Of Wishes returned for round two on April 5 and this time was able to win on the front end while crawling around the track, scoring in a well-rated 1:56 mile in effortless fashion.

"I think the track was just way off after the rain," said Chris Ryder of the five second difference between leg victories.

A son of Ryder's own Bettor's Wish, World Of Wishes looks for his third straight preliminary victory on Saturday (race 7) and has the advantage of the pole position against six rivals in the \$20,000 event.

Trainer Cory Stratton will debut a daughter of Bettor's Wish that made six starts as a freshman and never hit the board but appears to have come around nicely in her second season at the track.

"She's a totally different horse," said Stratton of the filly that qualified in 1:53 4/5 with a final quarter in 27 2/5 on March 26 in preparation for the Weiss Series.

"Last year I thought a lot of her, and she raced well finishing fourth for Andy McCarthy in her first race at The Meadows. He liked her a lot," said Stratton. "But she didn't improve after that."

"This year she's bigger and stronger and definitely more mature," continued Stratton on Bettor's Ticket, who drew post three in the first leg of the Weiss for sophomore pacing fillies (race 11) on Saturday.

Stratton has Bettor's Ticket geared for the Weiss as well as the lucrative Pennsylvania Sire Stakes program. "We also put her in the Jugette," said the Ohio native.

Ryder is excited about Bettor's Wish's second crop. Not only is it significantly larger than his first in New Jersey but it appears to be more clearly reflecting the characteristics the multiple Dan Patch Award winner showed when racing in the Ryder stable.

"They are definitely improving with age," Ryder said. "And they want to do it."

Desire is always an important cog in winning horse races and thus far World Of Wishes has shown the speed and willingness to achieve.

"Hopefully he keeps getting better," said Ryder when asked if he thought World Of Wishes would go on to capture the Weiss final on April 19.

"There are a lot of good horses in there," said Ryder. "They are going to mix it up, so we'll see how it goes."



CURTIS SALONICK PHOTO

**World Of Wishes is currently the fastest 3-year-old pacer of 2025 with a 1:51 mark taken at The Downs at Pocono.**

Ryder has four Bettor's Wish-sired 2-year-olds in training and likes a pair. He also has another sophomore pacing colt that he believes has a chance to be a stakes winner in Twisted Destiny.

"He won the Stallion Series final last year in a faster time than the Sire Stakes went in," said Ryder of Twisted Destiny's 1:51 victory at Harrah's Philadelphia on September 8.

Twisted Destiny closed out his campaign with a 1:51 4/5 effort in the Reynolds at Tioga. The ninth foal from the \$1.8 million winning mare Tug River Princess, Twisted Destiny made his first qualifying start of the year at Harrah's Philadelphia on

Tuesday (April 8) and breezed a 1:55 1/5 mile effortlessly on a cold morning.

"We've got him staked to the Messenger," said Ryder of Twisted Destiny, one of three supplements and 37 eligible for the Triple Crown contest at Yonkers slated for June 27.

Pocono hosts 16 races on Saturday with five divisions of the opening round of the Weiss Series for sophomore pacing fillies and four divisions for the third leg of the Weiss for 3-year-old colt and gelding pacers. First post is 1:00 p.m.



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# JL Cruze still adding to his double millionaire status at age 14



## AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali [X AtTheTrack7](#)

It has been a decade since the winter late closer program was last seen at The Meadowlands. The age of the Super Bowl, White Ruffles, Clyde Hirt and other Meadowlands mainstays of the winter months came to an end following the 2015 racing season.

Peeling back the curtain, there were a few reasons for that change, as I was the Director of Racing Operations at that time.

First and foremost, participation in those events was on the decline. Just a few years prior a series like the Super Bowl would see five divisions contested each week, narrowing the field down to a lucky 10 horses who made the Final. The legs would each carry a \$12,500 purse and the final would get some added money that typically resulted in a purse between \$50,000 and \$70,000.

Slot-enhanced purses became the primary issue for The Meadowlands. Racetracks like Yonkers, Pocono Downs and Harrah's Philadelphia were offering the same condition as the Super Bowl series (amongst others) as overnight races for substantially more purse money. The result were often short-priced favorites dominating the winter series action and the number of horses competing was greatly reduced.

Lastly, The Meadowlands wanted to host the Breeders Crown in the fall of 2015 and part of the plan to fund the \$900,000 fee for the event was to eliminate the late closer program, thus saving the added money used for the Finals of all those winter series.

I am not about to go through all the late closer events from that final year and see how many of those horses are still competing, but one horse that we know is still on the racetrack is the seemingly immortal JL Cruze.

The night of the Super Bowl Final, JL Cruze had a strong field to contend with that included the talented Opulent Yankee and the future star Propulsion. The competition did not matter that night, as JL Cruze rolled to a 1:54 4/5 victory with John Campbell in the sulky.

JL Cruze was purchased at the Harrisburg Mixed Sale in the fall of 2014 for \$37,000. He has been racing for the same ownership of Ken Wood, Bill Dittmar Jr. and Stephen Iaquina for more than the last decade while racing out of trainer Eric Ell's barn for that same amount of time.

That 2015 campaign, which began with a win in the Super Bowl series, also included a win in the Charles Singer Memorial Final and

the Shiaway St. Pat series, winning seven straight races. He was a true rags to riches story as the bargain purchase would yield a \$627,000 return in 2015, a season that saw JL Cruze win 16 of 21 races, including a then world-record 1:49 4/5 performance in the Graduate final. He also earned victories over horses like Father Patrick and Sebastian K en route to a victory in the Hambletonian Maturity that year.

In 2017, JL Cruze pulled off one of the biggest upsets of the year in harness racing, winning the Spirit of Massachusetts Trot at Plainridge Park over the brilliant trotting mare Hannelore Hanover, Resolve, Crazy Wow and others.

He has won a race every year dating back to when he was a 2-year-old in 2013. The son of Crazyed also has earned \$100,000 in a season a spectacular nine times, and from our research that appears to be a trotting record co-held with Melady's Monet, who amazingly did it in nine straight years. A number of pacers have gotten to nine as well, including the great Foiled Again and Dancin Yankee.

JL Cruze has competed in over 250 races, winning 75 times and sports lifetime earnings of more than \$2 million. Incredibly, JL Cruze continues to compete at a high-level despite being 14 years old, which means this is his final season on the track. Last week, he finished a strong third in the Maryland Preferred Open Handicap, and he competed in that event again this week on Wednesday with a second-place finish as the lukewarm 6-5

favorite behind College Tuition, a horse half his age.

Horses who won the winter series at The Meadowlands sometimes turned into top-caliber horses, but JL Cruze gave that a whole new meaning back in 2015. It is fitting that the legacy of the Super Bowl series and really the entire winter late closer program lives on through JL Cruze, who is still not just racing but winning a decade after he captured those trotting series events at The Big M.

Given that The Meadowlands is where the remarkable part of JL Cruze's story began, I think it would be only

fitting that his career should conclude at the racetrack where he won 12 times in that tremendous 2015 campaign, including the fastest trotting mile in Meadowlands history up to that point. The Meadowlands calendar includes races through the final weekend of the year on December 26 and 27, and it is that period where I believe JL Cruze should take his final steps on a racetrack in competition. Whether it be an Open event for horses of a certain age, maybe 10 years old and up, or another condition, the Farewell JL Cruze Trot at The Meadowlands has a nice ring to it.

It will be fun to watch JL Cruze compete the rest of 2025, and we wish both JL Cruze and his connections nothing but the best in his final year on the racetrack.



ERIK JONES/ROOM 9 PHOTOGRAPHY

JL Cruze winning his 75th career race at Rosecroft Raceway.



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# Melander trotting pair kicks off his 2025 campaign on Friday

By Ken Weingartner

Marcus Melander will get his stable's 2025 season underway Friday (April 11) at The Meadowlands, and he will do it with two horses that were competing overseas in recent years.

Melander, who last year set career highs with 104 wins and \$6.59 million in purses, will send out Aetos Kronos S and S I P in Friday's featured \$17,500 conditioned trot at The Big M. The 9-year-old Aetos Kronos S has spent his entire career overseas, where he captured three Group 1 and four Group 2 races while banking the U.S. equivalent of \$1.37 million in purses. Six-year-old S I P was a multiple Grand Circuit winner and 2021 Pennsylvania Sire Stakes champion before spending the past two years in Sweden.

Aetos Kronos S, a son of Bold Eagle-Will Of A Woman owned by Jeff Snyder and Michael Snyder, was trained overseas by Jerry Riordan. Among his highlights was winning the Hakan Wallner Memorial with a world-record performance at the distance of 1-5/16 miles at age 3. Two years later, he was an Elitloppet finalist, and later that season upset Elitloppet winner Don Fanucci Zet in the Jubileumspokalen (The Jubilee Prize) at Solvalla Racetrack.

The stallion, who missed time in ensuing years because of a health issue, most recently raced in the Prix d'Amerique and Prix de France in early 2024 before heading to the U.S. and Melander's stable. Aetos Kronos S prepped for his North American debut with two qualifiers at The Meadowlands, winning the second on March 29 by a half-length over S I P in 1:56, covering the last quarter-mile in 26 4/5 with Dexter Dunn in the sulky.

"I think he might need a start or two to get his legs under him, but we were very happy with the way he qualified the other day," Jeff Snyder said. "After a start or two, hopefully he'll come into himself. He needs a little racing.

"He's an exciting horse for us. If he comes back the way he was, it will be a very interesting season to watch him."

Melander is looking forward to seeing Aetos Kronos S in action. The stallion will leave from post two in Friday's seven-horse field with Dunn back in the bike. He is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line.

"He's been a great horse his entire career," Melander said. "We were happy with his qualifiers. He needed two qualifiers to get a little tighter, and he looked a little sharper in the second one. We'll see how he races, but he feels good and seems happy. It will be exciting to see him race. He always tries his best."

Aetos Kronos S is staked to many top events for older male trotters, including the Arthur J. Cutler Memorial, Crawford Farms Trot, John Cashman Memorial, and Maple Leaf Trot.

"We have him staked to all the open events that we could put him in," Snyder said. "It was a bit of a gamble, but he looks great. He looks fabulous. Let's see what happens. He's been a special horse for us. We're hoping for the best."

Melander's other entrant, S I P, is making his seasonal debut and will have Mattias Melander in the sulky. S I P won eight of 32 races at ages 2 and 3 in North America, earning \$441,583, while

in the stable of trainer Ron Burke. In addition to his Pennsylvania Sire Stakes title, his victories included the 2022 Old Oaken Bucket in 1:51 2/5 at the Delaware County Fairgrounds in Ohio. The time remains the fastest ever by a 3-year-old trotter on a half-mile track.

"Obviously, he was a fast 3-year-old over here and raced good for Burke," said Melander, who trains the stallion for owners Brixton Medical Inc. and Hatfield Stables. "He had a couple decent years in Sweden, and we're excited to start racing him as well and see what he can do."

S I P, a son of Bar Hopping-Barbara Brooks, will leave from post four and is 4-1 on the morning line.

"He just qualified once, but he raced in October, so he hadn't been away for long," Melander said. "I think he will be OK with just one qualifier, but he might need a race or two. He's a nice horse, an honest horse, and he likes his work."

The 2-1 morning-line favorite in Friday's race is Chapercraz, who is making his seasonal debut for trainer Burke, leaving from post five with Joe Bongiorno in the bike.

Last season, the 5-year-old gelding won the Hambletonian Maturity, was second in the Spirit of Massachusetts, and third in the Cashman, Charlie Hill Memorial, and Graduate Series championship. He has earned \$1.01 million lifetime.

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



DERICK GIWNER PHOTO

**Aetos Kronos makes his U.S. debut Friday at The Meadowlands.**

## First quarter 2025 U.S. harness racing economic indicators down

All economic indicators for harness racing in the U.S. saw decreases during the first quarter of the year from Jan. 1 through March 31, 2025.

With 7.9% (444 vs. 482) less race days through the first three months of 2025, total wagering decreased by more than \$50 million and purses by over \$2.3 million.

The \$307,779,970 wagered through March 31 this year was \$51,814,372 (14.4%) less than the \$359,594,342 handled during the same period in 2024.

The overall wagering was reflective of the decrease in handle at the majority of U.S. pari-mutuel tracks across the U.S. Of the 15 pari-mutuel harness racetracks that have raced this year as well as last year, only six showed an increase in wagering compared to 2024.

Two tracks that raced in 2024, Freehold Raceway and Northville Downs, have closed and are not racing in 2025.

On the 444 race days during the first quarter of the year, \$61,615,050 in purses were distributed, which is \$2,316,925 (3.6%) less than the \$63,931,975 last year.

Also during the first quarter of 2025, per race average decreased to

\$55,019 (8.4%) from \$60,032 last year and per betting interest handle was down by \$626 (8.4%) from \$7,423 in 2024 to \$6,797 in 2025.

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS ON U.S. RACES JAN. 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2025

#### 2025 VS 2024 – 1ST QUARTER

	2025	2024	% Change
Total Wagered	\$307,779,970	\$359,594,342	-14.41%
Per Race avg.	\$55,019	\$60,032	-8.35%
Per Betting Interest	\$6,797	\$7,423	-8.43%
Purses	\$61,615,050	\$63,931,975	-3.62%
Race Days	444	482	-7.88%

Please note: The information above includes U.S. and Canadian common and separate pool wagers on races contested in the U.S.

-release (USTA Communications)

# RACE OF THE WEEK

## 6 YONKERS FRI

1 Mile Pace BLUE CHIP MATCHMAKER LEG #3. Purse \$50,000

\$1 PICK 3 (6-7-8) | \$2 EXACTA | \$2 TRIPLE | \$.10 SUPERFECTA

### 1 WALKIN ON SUNSHINE

4:14.91 (7/8) \$18,000

2-1 S. Zeron 141-18-15 (128)

4 Apr25	4YR	fst6 <sup>30</sup>	272	:56.4	1:24.1	1:53	BCMM #2	50000	1	3 <sup>11</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	2nk	JaBarritt	BrGPelling	273	291	28	281	1:53	99	-6.3w	*05 BtlSsdWlknOnShnSlkCld	BrshJd pst 1/4 hld 2nd-7	
28 Mar25	6YR	fst5 <sup>50</sup>	28	:57.4	1:25.1	1:52	BCMM #1	50000	5	12	12	12	12 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	14	JaBarritt	BrGPelling	28	294	272	27	1:52	103	+1.4w	*25 WlknOnShnTrtPgMlwdBls	2wJd btl 1/4 handy-7
22 Mar25	6M1	fst6 <sup>00</sup>	281	:56.4	1:25.4	1:52	Qua		5	5 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	4 <sup>0</sup> <sub>2</sub> <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	21	11	ToMcCrthy	BrGPelling	291	283	283	254	1:52			rb WlknOnShnGrHILLDRs	Trald 2nd ov ang handy-5
28 Feb25	6YR	fst44 <sup>0</sup>	274	:56.4	1:25.1	1:53	FM INV	35000	7	1 <sup>0</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	12	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	JaBarritt	BrGPelling	274	29	282	274	1:53	99	+0.6w	*60 WlknOnShnLydsLvsTrysMm	2wJd pst 1/4 handy-7
14 Feb25	8YR	fst30 <sup>0</sup>	273	:56.1	1:24.2	1:53	FM INV	35000	7	4 <sup>7</sup> <sub>8</sub>	41 <sup>0</sup>	4 <sup>0</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	JaBarritt	BrGPelling	291	29	264	282	1:53	96	-4.5w	*70 WlknOnShnSlkCldLydsLvs	Tuck 28.3wideJd handy-7
31 Jan25	6YR	gd42 <sup>0</sup>	271	:56	1:25	1:54	FM INV	35000	6	4 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	44 <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	JaBarritt	BrGPelling	281	284	282	284	1:54	94	-5.5w	*35 WlknOnShnLydsLvsGldnQst	1st upJd lstr hndy-7
18 Jan25	6M1	gd42 <sup>0</sup>	281	:57.3	1:26.2	1:52	Qua		1	3 <sup>2</sup> <sub>1</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	2hd	14	JaBarritt	BrGPelling	289	292	284	26	1:52			rb WlknOnShnElgntAOnThMryG	Stat 2w pst 3/4 handy-7
26 Oct24	10HoP	fst44 <sup>0</sup>	262	:56.4	1:24.4	1:52	FM-Open1-2	21000	7	3 <sup>0</sup> <sub>2</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	JaCross	JaCross	264	30	282	27	1:52	97		3.30 RolnRoe WlknOnShn AngelHill	-7
11 Oct24	7HoP	fst64 <sup>0</sup>	263	:55	1:23.2	1:50	D-HSS-Mares	70000	4	2 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	12	12	12	12	JaCross	JaCross	27	28	282	27	1:50	104		*80 WlknOnShn RolnRoe QueensRegn	-8
4 Oct24	2HoP	fst77 <sup>0</sup>	262	:56	1:24	1:50	ISS-Prep	20000	4	21	22	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	JaCross	JaCross	263	294	28	254	1:50	105		*60 WlknOnShn RolnRoe QueensRegn	-9
28 Sep24	9Dtn	wf67 <sup>0</sup>	263	:54.2	1:21	1:48	DTN DERBY	25000	2	41	5 <sup>0</sup> <sub>4</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	5 <sup>0</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	56 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	46 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	TITetrick	JaCross	272	274	262	282	1:50	111		21.00 TwnJFrsh SylvaHrv AlwaysBtng	-9
21 Sep24	8HoP	fst71 <sup>0</sup>	261	:54.4	1:22.3	1:49	Opn FM	21000	6	12 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	12 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	13	13 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	JaCross	JaCross	261	283	274	263	1:49	112		3.40 WlknOnShn RolnRoe WildRosa	-6

b m 5, by Always A Virgin, Hatsoff Hanover by Magical Mike  
Maynard Miller, Shipshewana, IN, Daniel L Lehman, Syracuse, IN, Michael E Yoder, Shipshewana, IN  
Br.: Victory Hill Farm Inc, IN

Last 5 Sts-\$90,000

\*1:52.1 YR

25

5 4 1 0

\$90,000 25

5 4 1 0

\*\$90,000

1:49.1 HoP 7/8

24 YR

0 0 0 0

- 24 Tot

20 8 4 2

23 YR

0 0 0 0

- Life

53 19 9 10

### 2 UPTOWN HANOVER(L)

6:15.01 (1) \$8,250

6-1 T. McCarthy 10-0-2-1 (100)

4 Apr25	9YR	fst6 <sup>30</sup>	282	:57.3	1:25.3	1:53	BCMM #2	50000	1	22	22	32	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	44 <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	ToMcCrthy	JeCulphr	284	291	28	281	1:54	91	-6.3w	L7.80 ArdBMNGrHillInthmscm	Pkt shfl, trc in no bid-7
28 Mar25	8YR	fst5 <sup>50</sup>	273	:56.3	1:24.3	1:53	BCMM #1	50000	3	4 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	4 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	3 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	2nk	ToMcCrthy	JeCulphr	284	284	272	28	1:53	99	+1.4w	L1.60 BtlSsdUpthnHvGrHill	1st upJd lane game 2nd-7
15 Mar25	4M1	fst5 <sup>00</sup>	291	:57.4	1:26	1:52	Qua		5	6 <sup>7</sup> <sub>4</sub>	6 <sup>7</sup> <sub>4</sub>	6 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	64 <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	57	JoStratt	JeCulphr	303	282	28	27	1:54			Ln GracHillCpdlTtKCrdyT	Stayed in ang in no bid-9
13 Dec24	8YR	fst64 <sup>0</sup>	263	:56	1:24.4	1:53	FMW31411L5	27000	5	6 <sup>8</sup> <sub>1</sub>	6 <sup>0</sup> <sub>7</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	5 <sup>0</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	41 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	YaGingras	JeCulphr	28	292	28	281	1:53	96	+0.4w	L5.00 UpthnHvHvEsrTPsDgrnLok	2nd ov 3w, In safely-7
6 Dec24	6M1	fst31 <sup>0</sup>	274	:56.1	1:24.2	1:51	FMW1M-86.5	18000	2	5 <sup>2</sup> <sub>3</sub>	4 <sup>0</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>0</sup> <sub>no</sub>	21	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	TyMiller	JeCulphr	282	282	273	273	1:52	94	+0.7w	L3.60 HgtFshnJmBtrnsUpthnHv	1st up, baid, game 3rd-8
22 Nov24	9YR	gd37 <sup>0</sup>	281	:57.1	1:25	1:53	FMW21011L5	22000	1	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	2 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	22 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	TyButer	JeCulphr	282	29	28	283	1:54	93	+1.6w	L1.25 LydsLvsUpthnHvTntTrsP	Pkt no bid, clear 2nd-7
15 Nov24	5YR	fst49 <sup>0</sup>	273	:57	1:25.1	1:53	FMW10000L5	19000	5	44 <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>5</sup> <sub>2</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> <sub>3</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	TyButer	JeCulphr	282	293	274	28	1:53	93	+0.2w	L2.80 UpthnHvHvTwSPtShChrngvxn	2nd ov 3w lane handy-8
8 Nov24	8HoP	fst67 <sup>0</sup>	271	:55.2	1:22.3	1:51	Mw10000L5	13000	1	3 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	12	12	12	12 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	TITetrick	JeCulphr	273	274	271	284	1:51	101	+6.4w	L1.10 UpthnHvHv Rec TimeSunskd	-7
1 Nov24	10M1	fst65 <sup>0</sup>	264	:54.2	1:22.4	1:51	FMW75000CD	13000	2	42 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	1 <sup>0</sup> <sub>no</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	11	ToMcCrthy	JeCulphr	272	27	282	281	1:51	98	+4.3w	L1.30 UpthnHvHvJmBtrnsDrm	BrshJd pst 1/2 handy-7
26 Oct24	1M1	fst54 <sup>0</sup>	272	:54.2	1:22.2	1:51	FMW12500	18000	6	1 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	3nk	ToMcCrthy	JeCulphr	272	271	28	282	1:51	97	+4.3w	L6.00 CngtptVbmcUpthnHv	2w pst 1/4 ledJd, stdy-6
18 Oct24	8YR	fst57 <sup>0</sup>	272	:56.2	1:24.3	1:53	FMW2000L5	22000	7	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	7 <sup>0</sup> <sub>7</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	67 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	65	AuSieglmn	JeCulphr	292	29	272	28	1:54	93	+3.4w	L3.50 UltrmSpdSkysStrCsrAlt	Dull crv ang pace lane-8
11 Oct24	2YR	fst61 <sup>0</sup>	273	:56	1:23.4	1:51	FMW20501L5	22000	5	5 <sup>8</sup> <sub>3</sub>	57 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	5 <sup>6</sup> <sub>3</sub>	57 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	46	TyButer	JeCulphr	292	28	274	273	1:52	98	+4.8w	L18.50 GracHillUlmsSpdVbmc	Sat 2w lstr tm no bid-7

b m 7, by Somebeachsomewhere, Upside Surprise by Art Major

Pollack Racing LLC, Venetia, PA

J. Cullipher 58-16-10-11 (276)

Br.: Hanover Shoe Farms Inc, PA

Last 5 Sts-\$37,660

1:51 M1

25 YR

2 0 1 0

\$16,500 25 Tot

2 0 1 0

\$16,500

24 YR

31 6 7 7

\$143,340 24 Tot

3 9 8 9

\$169,450

23

35 6 7 8

\$171,100 Life

133 32 23 30

\$621,588

### 3 DOUGS BABE A(L)

6:15.01 (5/8) \$1,595

12-1 Ti. Tetrick 20-0-3-1 (100)

4 Apr25	4YR	fst6 <sup>30</sup>	272	:56.4	1:24.1	1:53	BCMM #2	50000	3	5 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	54 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	65 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	65 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	282	293	273	282	1:54	92	-6.3w	L26.25 BtlSsdWlknOnShnSlkCld	Trk bck rail no bid-7
28 Mar25	7YR	fst5 <sup>50</sup>	282	:56.3	1:25.3	1:53	BCMM #1	50000	3	5 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	5 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	4 <sup>3</sup> <sub>4</sub>	43	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	291	294	271	272	1:53	94	+1.4w	L38.00 SlkCloud RckdLydsLvs	Inside ang in no bid-7
14 Mar25	1YR	fst5 <sup>20</sup>	282	:58.3	1:26.4	1:54	FMW15731L5	19000	8	81 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	81 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	77 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	77 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	64 <sup>1</sup> <sub>4</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	303	301	272	282	1:55	85	+4.5w	L61.50 TKNGTHMInthmscmAtchrs	Outkn land out, stdy-8
7 Mar25	2YR	fst4 <sup>20</sup>	283	:58.1	1:26.2	1:55	FMW10000L5	17000	4	33 <sup>3</sup> <sub>3</sub>	33 <sup>3</sup> <sub>3</sub>	3 <sup>0</sup> <sub>3</sub>	32 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	292	292	281	281	1:55	88	-3.4w	L1.70 LydsLvsDougsBabGldnQst	3hole, 1st up, stdy-8
1 Mar25	12M1	fst3 <sup>50</sup>	28	:57	1:24.1	1:52	FMW12500	22000	1	4 <sup>3</sup> <sub>1</sub>	44 <sup>1</sup> <sub>1</sub>	47 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	41 <sup>0</sup>	56 <sup>1</sup> <sub>4</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	283	291	28	28	1:53	81	-4.8w	L21.80 ElegantAMilwBls DragnsLok	Trk bck rail, stdy-6
22 Feb25	10M1	fst3 <sup>30</sup>	273	:56.2	1:24.4	1:51	FMW12500	22000	3	6 <sup>6</sup> <sub>1</sub>	6 <sup>6</sup> <sub>1</sub>	6 <sup>5</sup> <sub>1</sub>	74 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	86 <sup>1</sup> <sub>4</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	284	284	281	271	1:53	86	+4.5w	L10.80 TonsMmBldmAlmWdBls	2nd ov gapd no bid-8
15 Feb25	5M1	fst3 <sup>30</sup>	281	:57.1	1:26.1	1:52	Qua		2	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	21 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	41 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	43	43	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	283	284	29	264	1:53			Ln ZumaBeachInTrSpitRnHngry	Pkt, trc in no bid-5
8 Nov24	9YR	fst5 <sup>50</sup>	28	:57.4	1:26	1:54	FMW30000L5	27000	6	69 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	68 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	68 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	66 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	57 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	294	294	281	282	1:56	81	-5.4w	L7.00 EsrTPsGldnQstDgrnLok	1st upJd lstr tm no bid-7
1 Nov24	9YR	fst6 <sup>30</sup>	27	:56.1	1:24	1:53	FMW30000L5	27000	2	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	3 <sup>0</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	22 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	31 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	273	291	28	282	1:53	98	+0.7w	L1.05 SlkCloud EsrTPsDgsBb	3hole, 1st up, pace-8
25 Oct24	8YR	fst5 <sup>70</sup>	27	:55.1	1:22.3	1:51	FM INV	35000	x7	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	79 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	64 <sup>1</sup> <sub>4</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	292	281	27	274	1:52	99	+6.8w	L38.75 CoachlndSlkCloudTtKCrdyT	Bk, off pace, no bid-8
18 Oct24	7HoP	fst6 <sup>40</sup>	262	:55.3	1:23.2	1:51	FM W/OVER	15000	6	3 <sup>3</sup> <sub>3</sub>	3 <sup>3</sup> <sub>3</sub>	2 <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	32 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	32 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	TyButer	RNNorman	292	281	272	28	1:				
4 Oct24	8YR	fst6 <sup>60</sup>	273	:55.5	1:22.4	1:51	FM INV	35000	x7	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	71 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	79 <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>	64 <sup>1</sup> <sub>4</sub>	AuSieglmn	RNNorman	292	281	272	28	1:				

# Big M to go national again on FOX

For a fifth consecutive year, the TV teams at the New York Racing Association (NYRA) and The Meadowlands will combine forces to bring high-caliber harness racing stakes events to a national television audience over the networks of FOX Sports as part of NYRA's "America's Day at the Races" telecasts.

Currently, there are eight shows scheduled, which will feature virtually every major event at the mile oval during the track's Championship Meet, which kicks off Kentucky Derby Weekend (May 2-3).

"All of us at The Meadowlands are so pleased to once again be able to bring our biggest events to a national television audience," said Big M Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir. "The broadcast crew at NYRA has plenty of experience with shows like these, and that experience shows. The telecasts are always first-rate, and they have had a great effect on getting our races into the living rooms of people who might not otherwise watch them. They have created added interest, as well as added handle, on our races, which proves the shows give us precisely what we are looking for."

"America's Day at the Races is proud to be the broadcast home for harness racing's marquee events, including The Meadowlands' signature races, the Meadowlands Pace on July 12 and the historic 100th Hambletonian on August 2," said NYRA Vice-President of Communications Pat McKenna.

Here is the schedule for the FOX Sports shows, with the event(s) that will be featured and the time the show will be broadcast. Which FOX network the show can be found on – Fox 5 New York (locally), FS1 or FS2 – will be determined:

- May 17 – Cutler Memorial, 8-11 p.m., TBA
- June 28 – Perfect Sting, Brower Memorial, Crawford Farms, Six Pack, 8-11 p.m., TBA
- July 5 – Stan Bergstein Graduate finals; Meadowlands Pace eliminations, 8-11 p.m., TBA
- July 12 – Meadowlands Pace Night (multiple stakes), 8-11 p.m., TBA
- August 2 – Hambletonian Day (multiple stakes), 1-7 p.m., TBA
- September 5 – New Jersey Classic Series finals, 8-11 p.m., TBA
- November 1 – Kindergarten finals, 8-11 p.m., TBA
- November 15 – Fall Final Four, 8-11 p.m., TBA

**PICK 6 CARRYOVER:** A \$5,007.31 carryover awaits bettors in the Pick 6 on the Friday card. The Wager begins in race eight.

**17 QUALIFIERS ON SATURDAY:** For handicappers who love to watch qualifiers, Saturday is the day for them, as there will be 17 of the one-mile dashes contested at The Big M. Post time for the first qualifier is 9 a.m.

The qualifiers can be seen live on The Meadowlands website ([playmeadowlands.com](http://playmeadowlands.com)) or [rtm.tv](http://rtm.tv) (Racing Television Network).

There will be big names participating throughout the morning, but one horse certain to attract a lot of attention is Louprint, who leaves from post four in the ninth qualifier. The Ron Burke trainee, who is driven by Northfield Park standout Ronnie Wrenn Jr., was the top 2-year-old male pacer in training a year ago, taking home a Breeders Crown championship before being named his division's Dan Patch trophy winner.

Leaving from post six is his stablemate, Sippinonsearoc, who will be driven by Yannick Gingras. He was the 2024 Ohio Sire Stakes champion and took a mark during the season of 1:48 2/5 at The Red Mile, the fastest mile ever by a 2-year-old male pacer.

**RACE SECRETARY WANTED:** The Meadowlands Racetrack, North America's premiere harness track, is seeking a highly qualified individual for the position of race secretary.

Interested candidates are asked to contact Jason Settlemoir, COO & GM of the Meadowlands Racetrack, at [jsettlemoir@playmeadowlands.com](mailto:jsettlemoir@playmeadowlands.com).

-edited release (Meadowlands)

## CREEKSIDE CHAT REVAMPED HAS DROPPED A BRAND NEW EPISODE!

Creekside Chat focuses on going behind the barn doors, with on farm news, and segments on the harness racing industry at large.

The goal of Creekside Chat is to approach all industry topics, even the controversial ones, and to promote harness racing to the public. Creekside Chat is fully funded by Diamond Creek Farm and produced by an Emmy winning production company. In 2024 we had over 350,000 views on our YouTube channel, growing subscribers at a rate of 100 per month, making Creekside Chat currently one of the most successful harness racing media shows.

The show can be streamed on [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com), Apple Podcast and Spotify.

-release (Diamond Creek)

DRF Bets™

## Handicapper's Corner

SIGN UP NOW

At DRF Harness we strive to provide the best handicapping information in the sport. Each week we'll use this space to bring you some of our handicappers' best bets and value plays. Use this information as one of your tools when wagering or simply click on the link above and head to DRF Bets to wager now.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 10

#### RACE 10

(9) WIFEY SAID SO got picked off by a determined rival. She has been 2nd in three straight tries and should have every opportunity to find the winner's circle here.

-John Rallis



WOODBINE  
MOHAWK PARK

### FRIDAY, APRIL 11

#### RACE 10

(5) CHAPERCRAZ made over \$500k last year with just three wins by picking up checks in all the big races. He's 5 years old now and has every opportunity to step up his game. Return qualifier was sharp, Burke usually has them ready to roll, and Bongiorno is sticking around for this drive.

-Derick Gwerner



#### RACE 2

(2) MILLWOOD BLISS N has been a victim of the trip in seemingly every start since arriving in the U.S. but from a decent post in a short six-horse affair there shouldn't be any excuse for this Nifty Norman trainee.

-Matt Rose



### SATURDAY, APRIL 12

#### RACE 5

(9) WESTERN JOE has been climbing the ladder with complete ease. He has the class and form to handle another jump up.

-Giwner



### FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

#### Mohawk Park Analysis

[Thursday](#) [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

#### Meadowlands Analysis

[Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

#### Yonkers Analysis

[Thursday](#) [Friday](#)

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

# NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

## CLEAN SWEEP FOR GINGRAS, BURKE IN JOHN BRENNAN TROTTING SERIES

Antognoni S, Blockchain and Busy Making Moni gave driver Yannick Gingras and trainer Ron Burke the victories in the trio of \$30,000 divisions of the second leg of the John Brennan Trotting Series on Wednesday night (April 9) at MGM Yonkers Raceway.

[READ MORE](#)

## LIVE RACING RETURNS FRIDAY AT HARRAH'S PHILADELPHIA

The draw is complete for the first racing card of 2025 at Harrah's Philadelphia, which will take place on Friday with a special evening post time of 6:30 p.m.

The feature is the \$13,500 twelfth race trot. Furst Igor S, from the barn of hot trainer Per Engblom, has recently won at this "nw 5 races" level at Yonkers, but he also has been having recent problems with holding stride.

[READ MORE](#)

## MANDATORY PAYOUT HI-5 ON TAP FOR APRIL 12 AT MOHAWK PARK

Woodbine Entertainment has announced a mandatory payout for the Standardbred Hi-5 will take place this Saturday (April 12) at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

Poor weather conditions forced live racing on March 29 to be cancelled after six races. That evening's program was scheduled to include a Jackpot Hi-5 mandatory payout. Since the cancellation, the Jackpot Hi-5 carryover has grown to \$179,930.10.

[READ MORE](#)

## BRANDON BATES WINS 2,000TH RACE

A day after Brett MacDonald came to town and crossed the 2,000-win plateau, Brandon Bates entered the Tuesday (April 8) card at Oak Grove Racing, Gaming & Hotel a few wins shy of the milestone himself. But a driving hat trick coming down to the last race on the day lifted Bates into the 2,000-win club.

Bates first etched a tally on the board with a surprise in the fifth race, rallying past tired rivals to score a 14-1 upset with Jill Brown trainee Mach Diesel in a 1:55 2/5 mile. A few races later, Bates went on a Tuesday afternoon jog behind near-millionaire mare Railee Something to win the feature on the day, the \$30,000 Open Trot, by open lengths in 1:55 3/5.

After those two wins, Bates sat just one away from 2,000. He and Marcus Miller engaged in a fierce stretch battle in the 10th race, where Bates implored even-money favorite Possum Holler to the line to just miss overhauling James Stiltner II pupil Fightforyourright by a scant nose in a 1:54 1/5 mile. And after breaking stride in the 11th, Bates emerged from a shuffle in the finale to reel in tiring runaway leader Crius N Rock and slide clear to a 1-3/4-length win in 1:55 2/5 for trainer Trey Brinson.

Bates, a 49-year-old native from Ohio, began his career modestly in 1993, but gathered steam starting in 2017. Through his career, Bates has been a driving force at harness tracks across the Midwest, frequenting Oak Grove from his homebase at Harrah's Hoosier Park in Indiana. Bates currently is a top-10 driver at Hoosier Park while a stellar beginning to the 2025 season here at Oak Grove currently sees him second on the leaderboard locally to, coincidentally, Hoosier's perennial driving leader Trace Tetrick. In his career, Bates has banked over \$20 million in purses.

[-edited release \(Oak Grove Racing Publicity\)](#)

## SIR PINOCCHIO IMPRESSIVE IN POCONO QUALIFIER

Sir Pinocchio, an altered son of Met's Hall who trotted to over \$600,000 in earnings last year at three while winning several major stakes, made his 2025 debut a successful one at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania Wednesday morning, winning in 1:55 2/5 despite the mercury being barely above the freezing mark.

Sir Pinocchio won the MGM Yonkers Trot, the New York Sire Stakes Final, the Matron Stake, and the Dexter Cup during a campaign which saw him win eleven times for driver Jason Bartlett, trainer Ed Hart, and owner Carolyn Atherton. His twelve length win here suggests he may be

immediately ready to take on a high caliber of trotting foe.

Team Warren drove four of the eight Pocono qualifying winners on Wednesday. Ridge Warren, who has won over 200 races in each of the last three years, many on the local scene, was home first three times, but his lifetime total of 1630 victories leaves him a bit behind his father Todd, a winner of 5490 races who has come east after spending the virtually of his career campaigning in the Midwest and who crossed the wire first in another qualifier.

[-edited release \(Pocono/PHHA\)](#)

## TIOGA DOWNS KICKS OFF THE 2025 RACING SEASON

Tioga Downs Casino opens for live racing this year on its customary date of Kentucky Derby Day, Saturday, May 3. This year's season provides a total of 61 live race dates and plenty of promotions, including bulldog, basset hound and wiener dog races, comedy night, giveaways, animal exhibits and contests.

Opening day features live harness races, with first post at 5:00 p.m. Racing starved patrons can enjoy the biggest day in Thoroughbred racing coupled with the return of the live horse races for the first time since last fall.

Eight New York Sire Stakes cards will take place this season, featuring the games top drivers and horses, with the \$500,000 Empire Breeders Classic Finals for three-year-old colt and filly pacers on Sunday, August 24.

Tioga Downs is set to host various reoccurring weekly promotional events. "Bingo and Beer Night" is every Friday featuring Harness Racing Bingo and \$2 draft beers. Sunday "Family Day" Specials feature food specials and free bounce houses, water slides, farm tours, face painting, starting gate rides and more.

Tioga Downs also offers fireworks nights, a Hambletonian Trip giveaway, "cornstastic weekend," and great food specials throughout the season. For more information about the 2025 racing season and promotions, visit [www.TiogaDowns.com](http://www.TiogaDowns.com).

[-edited release \(Tioga Downs\)](#)

## OHIO USHWA CHAPTER OFFERING HIRT JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIP

The Ohio Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA) is offering one Ohio based journalism student the opportunity to participate in the Clyde Hirt Journalism Workshop from July 30 - August 2, 2025 in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The college or grad student will learn through writing and editing sessions, tours and reporting drills. Students will be asked to file stories focusing on one of harness racing's biggest events, the \$1-million Hambletonian (August 2).

There is no cost to the student during the workshop - meals and lodging expense are covered by USHWA and travel expenses (up to \$500) will be covered by the Ohio Chapter.

Any Ohio college journalism student or resident interested is asked to submit an application and writing samples by May 15, 2025. For an application, please contact Jay Wolf at [jugpublicity@outlook.com](mailto:jugpublicity@outlook.com).

[-release \(Ohio USHWA\)](#)

## OHIO BREEDERS CHAMPIONSHIP - STALLION NOMINATIONS DUE APRIL 15

Ohio stallion owners are reminded that the deadline to register your stallion for future Ohio Breeders Championships is April 15.

Nominate your stallion by April 15, 2025 by paying the stallion subscription fee of one half of the stud fee charged for the year of conception (2023), minimum of \$300. Stallions must have registered with the Ohio State Racing Commission and must have stood in Ohio the entire breeding season of the year the colt or filly was conceived.

This year's payment will cover foals for 2024 to be raced as 2-year-olds in 2026 and 3-year-olds in 2027.

For additional information, please refer to the nomination form on [LittleBrownJug.com](http://LittleBrownJug.com). Conditions for nominating yearlings will be published in the USTA Stakes & Futurities Nomination Book, on [ustrotting.com](http://ustrotting.com) and [littlebrownjug.com](http://littlebrownjug.com).

Questions can be emailed to [MMiller@littlebrownjug.com](mailto:MMiller@littlebrownjug.com).

[-edited release \(Delaware County Fair\)](#)