

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025

Borgata Final likely to live up to the hype



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman ✕ [BergmanJay](#)

the former parked the latter through an incredibly fast 26 2/5 first fraction and then dealt with pressure the entire mile. Hellabalou has clearly not been the same horse this year, but Binge On Yankee has come to play each week and was in search of a second leg victory and a definite spot in the final.

The final preliminary rounds of the Blue Chip Matchmaker Series and the MGM Borgata Series are set to take place on Friday (April 25) and Monday (April 28) at Yonkers Raceway. The likelihood that the leg will materially change the shape of the fields for the final is slim, as most of the eight spots in each rich final set to take place on May 9 are well secured.

The fourth round of the Borgata completed on Monday (April 21) was interesting in the fact that you could tell things were a bit more serious, at least for a pair of horses that entered the round in precarious positions. With five preliminary legs, it's hard to say that there isn't a fairer series of races in North America where horses get the optimal number of chances to reach the final. At the same time, drawing outside or into a stacked division can at times compromise a horse's chances. Yet over a five week period of preliminaries the odds balance out and when they do, horses and horsemen must make the most of their opportunities.

That's why it hardly came as a surprise to see two veteran drivers caught in a bitter speed duel as this year's contender Binge On Yankee (Scott Zeron) was in a do-or-die battle with the 2023-24 champion Hellabalou (Yannick Gingras), as



MIKE LIZZI PHOTOS

Coaches Corner (above) and Mossdale Ben are the likely favorites for the May 9 Borgata final at Yonkers.



In the end, the early and consistent pressure inevitably was too much and Binge On Yankee was passed late by Chase H Hanover, a horse, having missed the third leg intentionally, was in need of a win to be sitting on the fence for a spot in the final.

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Binge On Yankee's second-place finish still put him eighth in points for the final. He is just 15 ahead of Chase H Hanover (second nets a horse 25 points in addition to 25 participation points), yet his chances could be on shaky ground as the fifth leg draw, where three \$50,000 divisions are in place, finds him with post two outside last year's final runner-up and this year's presumed favorite, Coaches Corner (post 1). The field also includes another guaranteed finalist in For Once Inmy Life (post 7), with the three-leg winner perhaps in a position to race from off the pace, if necessary, given the outside draw and the obvious high purse race in the immediate future.

The fourth leg did see For Once Inmy Life get the better of Coaches Corner, as driver Jason Bartlett elected to race from off the pace and could not make up enough ground in the final stages. To me the conservative drive was forced when another horse got in between Jordan Stratton and Jason Bartlett on the first turn and forced Bartlett's hand. Coaches Corner, among all likely horses to be in this year's MGM Borgata final, has the benefit of three key elements racing at Yonkers now or perhaps any time in the past. He's got the leading driver in Bartlett, the leading trainer by far in Per Engblom, and perhaps even more important, he has clearly shown that he can muster up enough quick early speed to secure early position or race on the outside with or without cover to a solid result. Those elements may prove most advantageous since some of the other leading contenders for a top spot in the final have elements in their arsenal that could compromise their chances with big money on the table.

Mossdale Ben N, the leading point-getter in the series, has left slowly for position at times but never shown high speed sprinting to the top in any of his now eight starts at Yonkers since coming to this country. Like his rival Coaches Corner, Mossdale Ben N suffered one lone defeat in the series, ceding the lead to Coaches Corner in a division of the third leg of the Borgata and losing the battle in the final-quarter sprint in a 1:50 4/5 mile, the fastest of any in the series. Despite seven wins in eight tries for trainer Peter Tritton, Mossdale Ben N has at times seemed challenged by the turns at Yonkers, though his overpowering late kick has managed to nullify any presumed handicap. It wouldn't at all be surprising to see driver Jordan Stratton trying something different this Monday with Mossdale Ben N given the 7-year-old by A Rocknroll Dance drew the rail against five rivals that may be more than willing to let him cut the

pace without incident. This is perhaps a key element not just for Mossdale Ben N's profile but for driver Stratton, who to date has not had to commit between Mossdale Ben N and For Once Inmy Life, two guaranteed finalists he's driven exclusively throughout the preliminaries.

While Coaches Corner has been as good throughout the preliminary legs in 2025 as he was last year in the MGM Borgata series, the same could not be said for Desperate Man. Totally dominant in 2024 until the final, Desperate Man struggled to gain any traction as the beaten favorite in all three of his initial efforts in the series this year. Questions of his demise were in fact premature as the powerful 7-year-old son of Shadow Play reintroduced himself to the series with a statement effort in a dominating fourth-leg win that all but secured him a spot in this year's final. Trainer Travis Alexander had contended that perhaps the big horse needed more time to shake off the rust, having spent extra time out of action between his 2024 and 2025 campaigns. Well, the rust came off in a major way as not only did Desperate Man survive getting parked into the second turn for command, but he also easily shed the solid Verdun in the two-hole on the backstretch and was still strong through a 28 1/5 final quarter and a solid 1:51 mile.

Desperate Man may earn a bit more respect this week in Monday's final leg, with post four in a field that includes guaranteed finalists Verdun (post 1) and Huntinthelastdolar (post 5), two horses he defeated in the fourth round.

Of course, no matter the results this week, one of the key elements to the rich MGM Borgata final on May 9 with a purse likely to be right around \$550,000, will be post draw. While some have the capacity to overcome a bad draw, at this point the serious question is what a bad draw might mean for either Desperate Man or Mossdale Ben N when the day comes. While Desperate Man has found the top in his preliminary legs, it has clearly come from a lot of extra work on the outside of the track. In his last two legs he was off the gate at the start and didn't get involved in the first-turn skirmish. If that pattern continues to the final, Desperate Man could be compromised in the exact fashion he was in the 2024 final when he was parked the mile yet bravely finished third.

The build-up of five preliminary legs gives rise to the anticipation that the final will prove compelling race to watch and wager on. The MGM Borgata final has provided thrills and upsets in the past few years, and with legitimate contenders once again, all the elements are in place to see the 2025 edition play out in unconventional ways. While we have seen a ton of fast miles to-date in the preliminary legs of the series, there has not been a point where two horses were entangled in the kind of speed duel witnessed when Linedrive Hanover and Desperate Man were responsible for fractions of 26 4/5, 53 1/5 and 1:21 1/5, setting up the 11-1 upset victory of Hellabalou.

The 2025 final is likely to produce the same kind of fireworks, making May 9 a date to circle on any harness racing fans' calendar.

2025 MGM BORGATA SERIES STANDINGS (THRU 4/21/2025)

Horse	Leg 1	Leg 2	Leg 3	Leg 4	Leg 5	Total
Mossdale Ben N	75	75	50	75		275
Coaches Corner	50	75	75	50		250
Huntinthelastdolar	50	75	75	37		237
Verdun	75	37	75	50		237
For Once Inmy Life	75	75	0	75		225
Desperate Man	37	50	37	75		199
Aardies Flash N	75	33	50	33		191
Binge On Yankee	75	37	25	50		187
Chase H Hanover	37	50	0	75		162
Himself N	0	33	75	50		158
Charlie May	33	50	37	37		157
Churchviewfrankl IR	33	37	50	37		157
Hemsworth N	33	50	37	30		150
Sherlock N	30	30	50	33		143
Why Not Now	37	37	37	30		141
It's a Me Mario	50	75	0	0		125
Camara Moment	30	30	33	30		123
Humble A	50	33	33	0		116
Hellabalou	25	33	33	25		116
Blazing Home N	33	25	30	25		113
Act Fast	25	33	30	25		113
Miki Shan N	0	50	30	33		113
Rocknroll Runa A	25	25	30	25		105
Typhoon Banner N	50	25	0	30		105

*Leg 5 to be contested on April 28

**Top 8 make the final; 9-16 make consolation

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Adversity aside, Hunting For Kisses is hungry to show her worth



HARNESS FOCUS

By Jessica Hallett X @JHallettPhoto

A lot of factors go into winning a race and sometimes it takes getting over hurdles to get there. A bad trip, parked the mile, traffic, thrown shoe or lost equipment, and whatever else can happen in a race. All of it happens on the big screen in front of the cameras and under the lights for everyone to see. But what about the hurdles that are overcome that no one sees?

For Hunting For Kisses, her path to the track, let alone to victory, was lined with obstacles.

Bred by Crawford Farms, Hunting For Kisses is a 4-year-old daughter of Huntsville and the Pro Bono Best mare All About Kisses. The mare made her first start as a sophomore in February of 2024, appearing in a qualifying session at The Meadows, finishing second in 2:01 4/5 with Ron Burke holding the lines for trainer Michael Burke. She had been unraced to that point due to a fracture in her knee, leading to a blank 2-year-old campaign and time training back as a 3-year-old.

Two weeks after that first qualifier, she competed in her first career race, a \$9,000 conditioned distaff pace, which she won by 13-1/2 lengths in 1:54 4/5 with Ronnie Wrenn, Jr. in the bike for Michael Burke. Another two weeks went by and she was back in-to-go in that same \$9,000 conditioned distaff pace at The Meadows. She won wire-to-wire by a half-length in 1:57 with the same driver/trainer combo.

Hunting For Kisses was quickly showing promise as a young filly, but then she faced a hurdle that stopped her in her tracks.

"I worked for Ron Burke and we were training her down as a 3-year-old and she was one of the best 3-year-olds that we were training down, as one of 79 horses there, and we were looking forward to her sire stakes and everything," trainer/driver Dan Rawlings explained.

"I had taken her to Dr. Brown because she had come up a little sore after her first lifetime start that she won and Dr. Brown did some work on her. The second time she won, we brought her back up to Brown's again and she basically had two broken knees.

"She had to have a bunch of time off, then was put into the Harrisburg Sale," Rawlings continued. "I talked to owner Cliff Grundy because I liked her so much. We paid \$20,000 for her. I took my time with her. I took my time bringing her back because I thought she could be something more than just your everyday horse in the barn. I thought she had some serious talent and she just keeps winning."

And "just keeps winning" is the truth for Hunting For Kisses.

Rawlings brought her back in mid-February of 2025 in a qualifier at Pocono Downs, a race she won in 1:57 2/5.

"The first time I qualified her I wanted to take her off the gate. She's a Huntsville so they are known to get a little hot. So I said I was going to race her from off the pace."

From that point on, Hunting For Kisses has raced at Saratoga in conditioned classes. Each race she reeled in the lion's share of the purse by 3 lengths, 4 1/2 lengths, 3 lengths again, and 4 1/4 lengths with a season's best time of 1:56 2/5.

"The first time I raced her at Saratoga, I put her behind the car and she was absolutely a loose cannon. She was really, really tough behind the car and I ended up quarter-poling her to the front and she relaxed on the front," said Rawlings. "She just does it easy. I don't think she's had to put any effort in yet. That being said, since then, I have left with her. I get her to the front but I just kind of let her ease her way there."

To date, Hunting For Kisses' career record stands at six-for-six with a little over \$25,000 in her bankroll.

"She's just learning to race and now she relaxes behind the car and is great in the post parade. She's great to train; two fingers to train. Anybody could train her, but they aren't allowed to because she's mine. Honestly nobody has sat on her in a training mile yet. I just think she has a lot of talent. I think she is the type of horse that can go sub-1:50. Right now she hasn't had to do that. Right now, it's just educating."

In the barn, she reads as a typical mare with a strong personality and the role of the boss.



JESSICA HALLETT PHOTO

Dan Rawlings with his undefeated mare Hunting For Kisses.

"She bites every horse that goes by in the barn, she really doesn't like women that much. She's the boss, she's the queen and she lets everyone know it," laughed Rawlings. "She does love getting turned out with other horses, though. She's submissive even in the field with other horses. But everything is always her way, all the way."

"I get along with her," Rawlings continued. "She's my baby. I do everything that needs to be done, like I have to catch her in the stall. Wendy, who is one of the grooms, has got her now on her softer side. She gives her treats every time she's there. And that's how she catches her and gets her ready."

"You can put a horse in front of her stall on cross ties, but she's going to bite them. She lets everybody know when it's time to eat. She's a dinosaur, a huge horse. On the racetrack, anybody could jog her; two fingers, so professional. As far as driving her, she's just learning how to become a racehorse. Anything I've asked her to do, she's done."

Rawlings emphasizes the key to education with the young mare.

"Right now, I'm trying to educate her and teach her how to race. I don't know what her talent level is. I will honestly say I don't think she's tried yet. She just does it that easy. Everything you ask, she does."

And it seems no matter what hurdles the mare faces, she keeps on climbing.

"Unfortunately, she just popped a curb. We just had that froze and she's sounder than ever," said Rawlings. "Her knees are holding up great. We put flip flops on her to train her down because of her knees and she still has them on today."

Rawlings is unsure of what the future will hold for her, but he has many plans to get there.

"She's only had six lifetime starts and now that she's popped her curb, I'd like to get one or two more starts into her and then I'd like to bring her to a big track because she's the biggest horse I've ever had in the barn," he said. "I'd like to try her at Meadowlands or even a 5/8ths mile track. I brought

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

her to Pocono to qualify her and she won the qualifier against some relatively nice mares in against her. Everything she's done, she's done it easy.

"I'm just taking my time with her. I more than took my time bringing her back. I almost brought her back like a 2-year-old instead of a 4-year-old. We got her in November and she just had her first start [in February]. I think it's going to pay dividends in the end. I wanted to put her in the [current] series at Saratoga, but I didn't have 10 starts as a trainer last year so I couldn't, otherwise she would have been in there. But if there are any early/late closers, I'm going to test her out at some point. I just don't know when. I think I'm going to try her a couple more starts at Saratoga and see if I can race her at Meadowlands or maybe even take her to Plainridge. It's hard to get into Pocono or Chester because she's not PA-sired, PA-owned, and not PA-trained. She's young, green, fresh, and she's full of talent."

Rawlings even said that her former connections still check in and follow her career. And her personality is a match for her mothers, All About Kisses.

"Heather Reese-Marshall and Michelle Crawford still inquire about her and watch her race. That's one of their favorite mares, her mom. The mom has the same attitude and they put that attitude on the track and it's tough to beat. Not to hurt anybody, but they aren't going to let anyone push them around.

"Honestly, she's just a sweetheart. She ships good. She does everything in the barn is pretty good. She doesn't kick or anything, she's easy to walk and likes to be turned out. She's nice to be around, but in her stall that's her domain so watch yourself as you're walking by because she might get a taste of you," Rawlings laughed.

"We had a small setback with the curb. She's jogging right now and will train tomorrow and we'll assess it then. She just seems like she's going to go to the next level and be the horse you're looking for. She's had her adversities, but her talent was shown when I worked for Ronnie. The last start I asked her to a little bit more than I needed to and she just responds. She's fun.

"I'm excited for her future. I don't think I've touched near where her ability is," Rawlings concluded.

Daley duo set for Saturday's Home Grown series at The Big M

By Jay Bergman

Stakes season begins at The Meadowlands on Saturday night as sophomore pacers will take the stage in divisions of the Home Grown, an event for horses either sired or bred in New Jersey. Trainer Noel Daley has a pair of potentially exceptional sophomores that made debuts in spectacular fashion last Saturday (April 19).

Worklifebalance and Smooth Dream were at opposite ends of the betting spectrum when they made their initial start for Daley in overnight events at The Meadowlands. Worklifebalance came from the back of the pack to score in 1:50 4/5 for driver Andy McCarthy as a 26-1 outsider. Smooth Dream paced to an impressive 1:50 1/5 mile in his debut for Daley and went off at 3-5 odds, as many bettors were witness to a wickedly inspiring qualifying mile a week earlier.

"They were going pretty fast that night," said Daley in explaining the fast times. "If you saw Smooth Dream in the qualifier, you knew what kind of handful he was."

The Cattlesh-wash-sired gelding, a half-brother to Desperate Man, only joined Daley's stable recently. "I knew they thought highly of him. He's still a work in progress but he has high speed," said Daley.

Smooth Dream had shown promise in just a handful of starts as a 2-year-old but had a bone chip removed following his final start of 2024 (August 22 in the New Jersey Sire Stakes final).

Following the April 12 qualifier Daley had to make some equipment changes. "We didn't have earplugs in the qualifier," Daley said about one of the adjustments made that included an adding a headpole.

Smooth Dream was much smoother in his debut, with driver Todd McCarthy getting him away cleanly and relaxed enough to let a horse pass in a comfortable second quarter. Smooth Dream paced home effortlessly with a 25 4/5 final quarter for just his first career win in four lifetime starts.

For Daley, the prep mile was perfect given the level of competition expected in the coming weeks as the Home Grown will be followed by the New Jersey Sire Stakes that should be quite competitive.

On Saturday, Smooth Dream starts from post five (race 8) but faces horses with stakes success, including Manolete (post 6), another son of Cattlesh-wash that was first or second in 10 of his 12 starts as a freshman for trainer Bruce Saunders. Manolete held his own racing with older horses in his sophomore debut on April 19 at The Meadowlands.

McCusker, the upset winner in last year's New Jersey Sire Stakes final, has prepped for his debut in Florida with a pair of solid qualifiers at Spring Garden Ranch for trainer George Ducharme. One of six sons of Cattlesh-wash in this the lone \$50,000 Home Grown division for males, McCusker drew post four.

Daley's Worklifebalance (post 3) faces a solid group of five in one of two divisions of the Home Grown for sophomore filly pacers carded as race six of 14 on The Meadowlands Saturday program.

"She qualified well," said Daley. "Andy (McCarthy) just kept her quiet."

A winner of \$70k as a freshman, Worklifebalance rallied strongly to capture her season's debut in 1:50 4/5 and Daley hopes she can build off that performance.

On Saturday, Worklifebalance meets a far more qualified level of talent and will need to step up her game to compete. Rodeo Drive Deo (post 4) has qualified back on a pair of occasions for trainer Ron Burke and looks well-prepared to tackle the best on the Grand Circuit. Bred in New Jersey by Deo Volente Farms, the daughter of Captaintreachorous finished third in last year's Breeders Crown despite starting from post 10. With four wins in 11 starts Rodeo Drive Deo earned over \$393K.

Reckless Abandon (post 6) makes her sophomore debut in this division following a juvenile season where she won three of her six starts, good enough for a six-figure bankroll. Brett Pelling trains the daughter of Cattlesh-wash.

The first Home Grown division for 3-year-old pacing fillies goes as race two on the card with Breeders Crown finalist Gigglingonthebeach (post 1) making her sophomore debut against just four fillies in the \$30,000 contest.

Daley has 40 2-year-olds in training and is gearing up Captain Albano for his 4-year-old campaign.

"He's coming back well," said Daley. "I'm probably going to skip the Graduate leg in Canada with him. I'm looking to have him qualified and hopefully his first race will be in the invite at Harrah's Philadelphia."

That Invitational, called the Joe Auger Memorial, is slated for May 25.



USTA PHOTO

Trainer Noel Daley won a pair of races last weekend at The Meadowlands.

Campbell prospects make early strides towards future success



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner X [@harnesseveguy](#)

The Harness Racing Hall of Fame called for trainer Jim Campbell in 2024 following a career of achievements. That lifetime success story is far from complete for the 63 year old as he looks to complete his 17th consecutive year of seeing horses under his care earn north of \$1 million.

Just two years removed from winning the Hambletonian with Cool Papa Bell and Oaks with Fashion Schooner, Campbell actually recorded the his lowest earnings (\$1,083,020) and wins (25) total since 2007. The sport can be a rollercoaster and Campbell is hoping that he's about to head back up the track in 2025.

"The Runthetable horses had a good year but Fashion Farms had a horrible year," said Campbell, recalling 2024.

With 18 in training, Campbell's barn tends to hit high gear as the warmer months approach and during the week of April 14 the trainer unveiled his two best chances for a third Hambletonian trophy. Mr Walner Fashion and Fashion Green both qualified impressively at different tracks, and while we are still months away from the big dance on August 2 at The Meadowlands, it is never too early to dream.

Had the second qualifier at The Meadowlands on April 19 been a betting race, few would've been on the bandwagon of Mr Walner Fashion. The Fashion Farms homebred son of Walner and Cooler Schooner made breaks in his final three starts of 2024 and added in another one in a qualifying race to close out his campaign. At the conclusion of his first qualifying mile of 2025, it was clear that Campbell had done his job and the gelding had matured during the winter.

After coming away fifth and charted 11 lengths back at the half, Mr Walner Fashion gained nearly a half-dozen lengths prior to the three quarter call and uncorked a visually impressive 27 1/5 final quarter to trot by the field with ease while timed in a career-best 1:54 4/5.

"I was very happy with him. He's a wildcard. He's a horse that has a lot of ability if we can keep him in the right frame of mind," said Campbell, who wasn't all that surprised with the performance. "I knew he had ability last year. In one of his lines he trotted the last quarter in 26 seconds. I know he has the speed. It is just a matter of getting everything to work right for him."

With the big races for 3-year-old trotters still down the road a bit, Campbell will give Mr Walner Fashion a week away from the races before looking for a spot for him in the "non-winners of 1 or 2 races" class since the 3-year-old has yet to win in five career starts. After that, the New Jersey Sire Stakes is in the plan for the end of May at The Meadowlands.

Fashion Green presents the other side of the spectrum for Campbell as he was undefeated in four starts last year. The son of Greenshoe appeared for the first time this year on April 15 at Harrah's Philadelphia in a qualifier. The gelding sat in the pocket under a hold by driver Tim Tetrick through fractions of 29 3/5, 58 4/5 and 1:26 2/5 before being unleashed. The pair produced a 27 3/5 final quarter en route to a wrapped-up 1:54 2/5 victory.

"He was very good qualifying and was well in-hand," said Campbell. "He showed us a lot last year and we're happy with the way he's come back so far this year."

"Doing this for 46 years, I know that we have to take it one race at a time and just hope they bring their 'A' game when they need it most."

Fashion Green followed up his qualifying performance with a dominant victory on April 24 at Harrah's Philadelphia as the 1-9 favorite. With Tetrick in the bike, he sat third behind wild fractions of 27 2/5 and 56 before pulling at the five-eighths marker and blowing past the leader like he was standing still, posting a final quarter of 28 and change while well within himself late.

According to Campbell, Fashion Green will aim for the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes on May 9 for his next start.

Campbell also has a trio of older trotters in his stable that could appear in some big races. Take All Comers, the oldest of the group at age 7, was responsible for Campbell getting over the million dollar mark in 2024 as



DERICK GIOWNER

Mr Walner Fashion exhibited a monster closing kick to swallow up the field in his first qualifier of 2025.

he accounted for the trainer's final win of the year on November 15 in the \$250,000 MGM Grand Prix final, netting \$125,000 in earnings for the barn. That win also boosted the son of Creatine over the million dollar mark himself and while he's back in training, we won't see him on the track for a little while.

"There's no hurry. With his schedule most of his races are later in the year," said Campbell on Take All Comers.

Although his former Hambletonian winner Cool Papa Bell hasn't raced particularly well in two qualifiers and is still finding his form, the youngest of the three, 5-year-old Once In A Lifetime, won his Harrah's Philadelphia qualifier and finished second in his 2025 debut behind Resolve To Win in a 1:53 2/5 mile. A son of Father Patrick, Once In A Lifetime sat just shy of \$700,000 in earnings heading into the 11th race on the April 24 card.

Two-thirds of the Campbell stable consists of 2-year-olds and while he admitted to liking some more than others at this point, as usual he wasn't showing his cards quite yet.

"The first baby race tells you more than what you know training them all winter long. After that it is just a question of whether they can go the speed and do it week-in and week-out," said Campbell.

Whether his babies will become stakes winners or his 3-year-olds will be crowned a Hambletonian champion is yet to be determined. Campbell was making no predictions, but he has the horses to perhaps make some noise. "I'd like to talk to you on a certain Saturday at The Meadowlands in August. That's always a good time to talk," joked the trainer, alluding to Hambletonian Day.



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Netflix's 'Race for the Crown' puts focus on people, not horses

By Matt Hegarty

The lament of equine veterinarians and television producers is the same: Horses can't talk. In an ideal world, equine veterinarians get around that limitation by relying on body language, physical examinations, and diagnostic testing. For television producers, there's no such well of knowledge to create an intimate human-horse connection.

What, then, should the strategy be for producers attempting to document the world of Thoroughbred racing? For Netflix, which debuts a watchable, sometimes illuminating but largely surface-deep six-episode series called "Race for the Crown" on Tuesday, the solution is to rely on a tried-and-true formula used in its other successful sports docu-dramas – focus on the humans and ignore the rest.

The formula has produced some acclaim for Netflix's "Formula 1: Drive to Survive" – to the consternation of gearheads who are more interested in race car dynamics than team dramatics – and for its "Full Swing," which follows professional golfers through their often coddled and disconnected social and sporting lives. As a casual watcher of both series, I'm cognizant of the need to keep the audience hooked by playing up the drama. I'm also often frustrated that the avid fan seems to be the secondary audience.

Hard-core racing fans will probably experience the same frustrations with "Race for the Crown," which spends its first three episodes on the run-up to the 2024 Triple Crown and then devotes the next three to each of the races in the series. The deliberate focus on trainers, owners, and jockeys, to the detriment of the horses that provide their livelihoods and, in some cases, fulfill their dreams, is by far the most glaring limitation of the series. Still, there are gems among the scree, and there's no reason that a serious racing fan should avoid it.

In fact, viewers with only a casual interest in racing will likely enjoy the peeks inside the lavish, ultra-competitive, and often small-minded worlds inhabited by the brash billionaires Mike Repole and John Stewart, especially when contrasted with the work-a-day routines of the trainers who appear in the series. Kenny McPeck and Danny Gargan, who each trained a winner in the 2024 Triple Crown, come off especially likeable in the series, but that may be because both are representative of that fading hero, the lifelong racetracker who gets a well-earned turn in the spotlight.

No criticism of the series or its subjects should ignore the gargantuan task facing the producers. Unlike professional auto racing and golf, with their limited rosters of high-profile participants, a great racehorse can emerge from hundreds of barns scattered across the country. Landing on the right story is a combination of luck and casting the net wide despite a limited budget. That Netflix's cameras trailed McPeck throughout 2024's Arkansas Derby Day – when the trainer won four races, including the Fantasy Stakes with budding superstar Thorpedo Anna, the eventual Horse of the Year – seems to be a product of sheer serendipity, especially when considering Mystik Dan wasn't on the short list of Derby favorites at that time and needed his third-place finish to earn a spot in the race he would eventually win.

For jockeys, the producers early on decided to key their bets to Lanfranco Dettori, the Italian superstar who unretired late in 2023 after winning all there was to be won in Europe over his three-decade-plus career. When the documentary filming starts, Dettori has just recently relocated to Southern California in search of a new continent to conquer, including a desire to add a Triple Crown race to his trophy case.

Viewers get an intimate look at Dettori's lifestyle, in which a glass of champagne appears to be the one guilty pleasure along with his low-calorie, leafy meals with his ever-present wife, Catherine. Dettori's relationship with two young Italian riders in the Santa Anita jockey colony, Umberto Rispoli and Antonio Fresu, also produces several heart-warming moments, even for insiders of racing's multi-generational ecosystem, where up-and-comers often end up competing with and eventually socializing with their heroes.

However, to establish Dettori's connection with the upcoming Triple Crown, the producers have to rely on a time-shift in the first episode by airing a scene of a 2024 phone call between trainer Bob Baffert and Dettori that names him on Imagination, a colt who has no chance of running in the Derby due to Churchill Downs's ban on Baffert but is being pointed to the Preakness. That thread eventually wears thin even as Dettori runs up some scintillating successes on the 2024 Santa Anita card alongside Rispoli and Fresu.

Perhaps aware of the weakening case for such a close look at Dettori, the series makes a smart pivot in its fifth episode to Katie Davis, the New York-based jockey who took off riding for 16 months surrounding the birth of a child in 2023. Though Davis has no mounts in the 2024 Triple Crown races but rides in some prominent undercard races, the meager connections to the main narrative can be excused given the deft handling of Davis's story.

In one clip, Davis's agent, Joe Migliore, tells Davis – perhaps for the first time, he says – that trainers told him that they didn't want to ride Davis after she returned in 2023 because they didn't want anything bad to happen to a new mother. Viewers watch Davis as she wheels a stroller past the parking-lot attendant who didn't believe she was a jockey. In other clips, she quietly attends to her pre-race and post-race routines in small, empty locker rooms – in stark contrast to the bustling, camara-derie-filled jocks' rooms for men on the same properties. On the whole, the viewer is made fully aware that the struggle is real, and that Davis is determined to overcome.

Any review of the series would be derelict not to mention Michael Iavarone, the subject of the first episode's opening scene. Iavarone was part of a Wall Street-flavored partnership, IEAH Thoroughbreds, that scored big-time when Big Brown won the 2008 Derby and Preakness and was subsequently sold for an undisclosed price as a stallion, surely in the tens of millions.

A former New York junk-bond trader in soul and style who disappeared from racing a decade ago and then emerged from his cocoon in Miami with an expensive tan, a ludicrous wardrobe, and a coterie of short-skirted hangers-on, Iavarone gets included in the narrative despite his utter irrelevance to what's happening on the dirt. But that's showbiz, folks. Fortunately, the font runs dry 3 1/2 episodes in.

Still, Iavarone's baffling inclusion does serve to underline the dilemma facing the producers, who surely went over their footage in the editing room and wished they could include a post-Derby comment from Mystik Dan about that frightening rush up the rail or from Dornoch about his attitude toward co-owner Jayson Werth.

When you can't get your words from the horse's mouth, you often have to settle for a horse's ass.



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Harvey loving his time with Hackett Memorial starter 'Loverboy'

By Ken Weingartner

Returning Ohio divisional champ LT Loverboy will make his seasonal debut in Thursday's (April 24) \$25,000 James K. Hackett Memorial elimination for 3-year-old male trotters at Miami Valley Raceway and trainer Daren Harvey is looking forward to getting the campaign underway.

"Hopefully, the sky's the limit for him," Harvey said. "Everybody gets the stars in their eyes, but you try to stay grounded. But it's hard when you sit behind him in a mile.

"We'll see how he came back. One day at a time, that's where we are."

Last year, LT Loverboy hit the board in all 10 of his races, winning six and finishing second three times on his way to being honored as Ohio's top 2-year-old male trotter by the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association. The gelding was an Ohio Sire Stakes champion and earned \$304,855 for owners Wayne Mast Jr. and Callam Racing.

"You always hope you get to be around horses like this," Harvey said, adding about LT Loverboy's divisional recognition, "The feeling is unexplainable. It was a dream come true."

LT Loverboy, a son of Long Tom-Fortheloveoflindy, was purchased for \$60,000 at the 2023 Ohio Selected Jug Sale. He is a full brother to multiple Ohio Fair Stakes winner Commander Tom and a half-brother to another multiple Ohio stakes winner, Vivi D. His family also includes the likes of Dan Patch Award-winners Pizza Dolce and Bella Bellini as well as millionaire French Wine.

After beginning his career with two starts in a pop-up series for 2-year-old male trotters at Hollywood Casino at The Meadows, LT Loverboy spent the remainder of 2024 competing on the Ohio stakes circuit. And while Harvey certainly enjoyed the horse's wins, it was a head loss to Scrappys Love in a division of the Ohio Breeders Championship at the Delaware County Fairgrounds that most impressed the trainer.

LT Loverboy and driver Brett Miller began a first-over move from third just prior to the mile's halfway point and engaged in a duel with leader Scrappys Love from there. The two raced side-by-side for nearly the entire final quarter-mile.

"The race where he awed me, and I've watched the replay a dozen times now, was the Breeders Championship," Harvey said. "It takes a next-level horse to fight twice down the lane. Scrappys Love kind of pulled away from him by a half-length, and we were still charging back to the wire. You don't see that. That's a rarity. I know we finished second, but all the same, it's just watching that desire. You can't train that."

On Thursday, LT Loverboy and Miller will leave from post seven in a Hackett elim field of nine. LT Loverboy is 7-2 on the morning line, behind Battle Hill at 2-1 and the three-horse Ron Burke entry of Rose Run Alex,



CONRAD PHOTO

LT Loverboy and driver Brett Miller will start from post seven on Thursday night at Miami Valley.

Hilltop Sonar, and Memory Vault at 5-2. The top eight finishers will join bye-taker Whats Shakin in the final.

LT Loverboy heads to the race with one qualifier, which he won in 1:57 4/5 at The Meadows on April 8, under his belt. The horse's connections had the first crack at accepting the Hackett bye as the field's top money-earner, but Harvey wanted to get the gelding a start.

"I hoped to have another qualifier, but I feel we're ready," Harvey said. "We might be a little short this week, but with how he trained last week, I feel pretty confident.

"We've got some good competition on Thursday. Nothing we didn't see last year, but we'll see if they've developed more than what they were then. Hopefully, we did too."

So far, Harvey has been pleased with the changes he's seen in LT Loverboy as they prepare for the season.

"The horse has always been extremely handy, but he's a racehorse now," Harvey said. "I can't believe the racehorse mentality that he's developed. He's always been on the lazy side, but now this year, I don't want to say he's aggressive because I don't know if this horse ever could be aggressive, but he's just right there."

In addition to the Hackett elimination for 3-year-old male trotters, Miami Valley on Thursday hosts Hackett elims for sophomore female trotters and sophomore male pacers (there is a prep for the filly pacers). Racing begins at 4 p.m. (EDT).



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Brennan Series sweep has Antognoni S' connections dreaming of Elitlopp invite

After going three-for-three in his prelims, Antognoni S put the cherry on top of his John Brennan Trotting Series dominance with a romping 2:24 3/5 win over the mile and a quarter distance in the \$132,000 final on Wednesday night (April 23) at MGM Yonkers Raceway.

Driven by co-owner Yannick Gingras, Antognoni S settled in the fifth spot from post seven while fellow Ron Burke trainee Busy Making Moni (Scott Zeron) went to the front from the five-hole and cut fractions of 29 seconds for the quarter and 59 1/5 for the half. Gingras had Antognoni S off the pylons before the half-mile clocking went on the board, and he brushed to the top beyond that marker.

Once he had control of the race, Antognoni S kept clear to three-quarters in 1:27 4/5 and the mile in 1:55 3/5, and he was in-hand as he crossed the wire 5 1/2 lengths ahead of his stablemate. Scottish (Jordan Stratton) overcame post eight to finish third, followed by Green Pastures (Matt Kakaley) and Mycrownmykingdom (Brent Holland).



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

Antognoni's final time in the Brennan Final was faster than Jiggy Jog's in last year's MGM Yonkers International Trot.

"He's a very nice horse who we bought especially for this series," said Gingras, who added that the initial hope was that he'd be an Open horse at Yonkers, but the 5-year-old has surpassed his expectations. "He follows great and can do it on the front as well."

With these victories at Yonkers now under his belt, the connections are hoping to get an invitation for a return trip to Antognoni's native Sweden in next month's Elitlopp.

"One race I've always wanted to win, maybe even over the Hambletonian, is the Elitlopp. If we can get an invite, I think he has a shot. I'm not saying he is going to win, but it would be a great thrill and Ronnie [Burke] and I are very interested. He's the perfect horse for it because he doesn't wear hobbles, isn't on Lasix and right now he goes with heavy shoes, so we could race barefoot over there," said Gingras, who said he would reach out to Swedish officials to inquire. "It would be a dream come true to win it."

Gingras also mentioned that maybe they could tag along on the flight Canada's Elitlopp representative Logan Park was taking if they were invited. If they don't get the pink ticket, the Arthur J. Cutler Memorial at the Meadowlands is next on the schedule.

A gelding by Father Patrick, Antognoni S is trained by Burke and is co-owned by Gingras in partnership with Burke Racing Stable LLC., Weaver Brusceci LLC. and Fac Racing LLC. He has 14 wins from 29 career starts, has earned \$211,984 and paid \$2.20 to win as the 1-9 favorite. He led a \$9.70 exacta and a \$120.50 trifecta.

Another Swedish-bred, Golden Rain, took the \$50,000 consolation in 2:27 2/5 for the mile and a quarter. Jason Bartlett piloted the 7-year-old Bold Eagle mare to the victory for trainer Per Engblom and owners Engblom Stable LLC. and Thomas Lind-Holm.

The John Brennan Trotting Series, a fixture on the schedule in April at Yonkers, is named in honor of the longtime SOA of NY horsemen's representative who passed away from complications of COVID-19 in March 2020.

-release (Yonkers Raceway Media)

Horses of the Year to qualify at Mohawk Park, Meadowlands this weekend

A pair of female pacers who were named 2024 Horse of the Year will be on display for the first time in 2025 during qualifying action this weekend.

Dan Patch winner Twin B Joe Fresh makes her first start since winning the FanDuel Open Mares final on November 30 at The Meadowlands. She drew post five in race 12 on a 15-race qualifying session at The Meadowlands featuring a who's who of equine talent.

Twin B Joe Fresh earned \$895,562 while winning 11 of 13 races in 2024 and finished second in both her defeats. A 5-year-old daughter of Roll With Joe, she is trained by Chris Ryder and driven by Dexter Dunn, both of whom co-own her as well.

Sharing the spotlight with Twin B Joe Fresh are fellow Dan Patch winners Champagne Problems (race 3) and Miki And Minnie (race 15), along with Sir Pinocchio (race 4), Swingtown (race 7), Sippinon-searoc (race 8), Fallout (race 8), Seven Colors (race 10), Voukefalas (race 10) and Mirage Hanover (race 11).

Meadowlands qualifiers, which begin at 9:00 a.m. (EDT) can be seen [here](#).

Undeclared filly Chantilly, O'Brien Award winner for Horse of the Year, will make her first on-track appearance on Friday morning (April 25) at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

The now 3-year-old, who won all nine of her starts in 2024 and set a mark of 1:50 2/5, will start from post six in race four.

One race later the Ontario Sire Stakes champion 2-year-old male trotter You Got It Kemp will make his first start since October 12 from post seven. The 3-year-old son of Muscle Mass has only one loss in six career starts and earnings approaching \$400K CDN.

The 11-race session of qualifiers at Mohawk Park begins at 9:30 a.m. and can be seen [here](#).



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1 AARDIE B MIKI N(L)

51:53.1 * \$25,000

1-1 J. Bartlett 606-210-102-72 (347)

11 Apr 25	6YR	fst46 ⁰	273	56	1:25	1:53	BCMM #3
4 Apr 25	9YR	fst63 ⁰	282	57	1:25	1:53	BCMM #2
28 Mar 25	4YR	fst55 ⁰	271	57	1:26	1:53	BCMM #1
22 Mar 25	4M1	fst60 ⁰	292	58	1:27	1:54	Qua
30 Nov 24	6Aus						
9 Nov 24	9Aus						
2 Nov 24	8Aus						
12 Oct 24	7Aus						
5 Oct 24	5Aus						
21 Sep 24	6Aus						

br m 5, by Always B Miki, Tatjana Bromac by Rocknroll Hanover

MT Stables Ontario Inc, Scarborough, ON, CA

P. Engblom 365-93-59-44 (255)

50000	4	1 ⁰ ₁	1 ¹ ₂	1 ¹ ₂	1 ¹ ₃	1 ¹ ₃	JaBartlett	PeEngblom	273	291	283	274	1:53	98	-7	5w	L*30	ArdBMMNlknOnSnUpwtnHrv	2w/ld pst 1/4, handy-6
50000	5	4 ⁵ ₅	4 ⁵ ₅	2 ⁰ ₁	1 ¹ ₂	1 ¹ ₂	JaBartlett	PeEngblom	292	291	271	273	1:53	99	-6	3w	L*15	ArdBMMNlknOnSnUpwtnHrv	1st up, ld lane, handy-7
50000	6	6 ⁷ ₃	6 ⁰ ₅	4 ⁰ ₂ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	JaBartlett	PeEngblom	284	30	274	271	1:53	95	+1	4w	L*60	ArdBMMNlknOnSnUpwtnHrv	2nd ov, 3w/ld trn, handy-6
	6	5 ⁷ ₃	5 ⁵ ₃	4 ⁰ ₂ ₁	3 ² ₂	3 ² ₂	JaBartlett	PeEngblom	31	29	281	263	1:54				Lnb	RocketDeoArdBMMNlknOnSnUpwtnHrv	2nd ov, ang in, pace-6
13927							PMcmullin						1:54				nr	AardieBMMiN TheJanitorNz Iron	1 ¹ ₆
21302							PMcmullin						2:35 ³				nr	AardieBMMiN ShesFulspitn	1 ¹ ₆
17414							PMcmullin						1:54 ²				nr	AardieBMMiN ChynhillNz Deal	1 ¹ ₆
100583							PMcmullin						3:19 ¹				nr	CoastaBabelNz KissNz Showsemej	1
13411							PMcmullin						3:22				nr	AardieBMMiN Eureka KissNz	1
13927							PMcmullin						1:54 ³				nr	ChynhillNz AardieBMMiN ltsE	1 ¹ ₆

Last 5 Sts -\$92,615

1:53.1 YR

None in U.S.A.

25	★	3	3	0	0	\$75,000	25	★	3	3	0	0	\$75,000
24	YR	0	0	0	0		24	YR	0	0	0	0	
23	YR	0	0	0	0		23	YR	0	0	0	0	

-Life 24 12 6 3 \$225,955

2 HIGH FLYIN FILLY(L)

41:49.3 (5/8) \$6,614

6-1 Y. Gingras 526-92-79-60 (175)

18 Apr 25	7YR	fst59 ⁰	273	56	1:24	1:53	BCMM #4
11 Apr 25	5YR	fst46 ⁰	271	57	1:25	1:54	BCMM #3
4 Apr 25	2YR	fst63 ⁰	271	56	1:24	1:53	BCMM #2
28 Mar 25	7YR	fst55 ⁰	28	58	1:25	1:53	BCMM #1
13 Mar 25	10MVR	fst72 ⁰	264	55	1:22	1:50	Opn Hcp FM
27 Feb 25	10MVR	fst52 ⁰	28	56	1:23	1:52	Opn Hcp FM
20 Feb 25	8MVR	gd22 ⁰	281	57	1:24	1:52	Opn Hcp FM
6 Feb 25	10MVR	fst43 ⁰	263	55	1:23	1:51	Opn Hcp FM
23 Jan 25	9MVR	fst28 ⁰	27	55	1:23	1:52	Opn Hcp FM
16 Jan 25	4MVR	fst31 ⁰	274	56	1:24	1:53	Opn Hcp FM

br m 5, by Domethatagain, Live The Extreme by Always A Virgin

Burke Racing Stable LLC, Fredricktown, PA Weaver Bruce LLC, Canonsburg, PA

R. Burke 191-36-37-16 (188)

50000	2	4 ⁵ ₁	4 ⁵ ₁	3 ⁰ ₂	3 ² ₂	3 ² ₂	YaGingras	RoBurke	283	283	274	284	1:53	95	+1	6w	L16	RocketDeoSilkCloudHighFlyN	1st up, stail, even-8
50000	3	4 ⁵ ₁	4 ⁰ ₄	4 ⁰ ₃	5 ³ ₃	7 ⁵ ₂	YaGingras	RoBurke	282	293	28	283	1:53	86	-7	5w	L3.65	SilkCloud CherylSh TrmThPage	2nd ov, empty-7
50000	4	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ⁰ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	YaGingras	RoBurke	272	291	282	28	1:53	101	-6	3w	L7.80	HighFlyN CherylShTrmThPage	Ld, yld, 2w/ld 3/4, handy-6
50000	2	4 ⁴ ₂	4 ⁰ ₃	5 ⁰ ₃	5 ³ ₂	5 ³ ₂	YaGingras	RoBurke	284	30	272	272	1:53	96	+1	4w	L8.50	SilkCloud RckD LydsLvs	2nd ov, gapd, no bid-7
36000	3	4 ⁴ ₄	4 ⁰ ₃	5 ⁰ ₂	6 ⁰ ₃	7 ¹ ₂	BrMiller	RoBurke	273	283	27	291	1:52	99			L7.10	HeyHeyMma DoltKb DgnByTheS	-8
36000	1	3 ² ₂	5 ² ₃	6 ² ₃	5 ² ₃	3 ¹ ₁	BrMiller	RoBurke	282	282	273	28	1:52	97			L6.80	BontsBstB ResRunVsn HighFlyN	-8
32000	6	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	DaNoble	RoBurke	281	291	271	274	1:52	98			L2.80	HighFlyN Anthem NcdOnAHL	-8
36000	1	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	6 ¹ ₁	ChPage	RoBurke	264	282	282	292	1:53	94			L5.10	DoltKbB UttopiaKb ResRunVsn	-7
36000	2	5 ⁵ ₄	4 ⁰ ₂ ₁	3 ⁰ ₁ ₂	3 ¹ ₂	3 ⁰ ₁ ₂	ChPage	RoBurke	28	28	274	283	1:52	100			L9.80	DgnByTheS AlexSkye HighFlyN	-9
32000	1	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	ChPage	RoBurke	28	282	281	282	1:53	94			L2.50	GiasSual HighFlyN ResRunVsn	-8

Last 5 Sts -\$33,500

1:52.2 MVR 5/8

1:49.3 ScD 5/8

25	YR	4	1	0	1	\$33,500	25	Tot	10	2	1	3	\$66,140
24	YR	0	0	0	0		24	Tot	26	5	4	3	\$113,729
23	YR	0	0	0	0		23	Tot	0	0	0	0	

-Life 80 24 12 14 \$498,137

3 FACTORY GIRL

31:50.3 (5/8) \$3,286

20-1 G. Brennan 500-52-79-69 (104)

18 Apr 25	7YR	fst59 ⁰	273	56	1:24	1:53	BCMM #4
11 Apr 25	3YR	fst46 ⁰	283	57	1:25	1:54	BCMM #3
4 Apr 25	8YR	fst63 ⁰	274	56	1:25	1:54	BCMM #2
28 Mar 25	4YR	fst55 ⁰	271	57	1:26	1:54	BCMM #1
18 Mar 25	10DD	fst54 ⁰	272	57	1:24	1:53	Opn Hcp FM
12 Mar 25	10DD	fst52 ⁰	26	55	1:24	1:52	Opn Hcp FM
26 Feb 25	14DD	fst53 ⁰	261	56	1:24	1:52	Opn Hcp FM
19 Feb 25	10DD	fst27 ⁰	264	55	1:23	1:51	Opn Hcp FM
12 Feb 25	12DD	slv37 ⁰	271	56	1:25	1:53	Opn Hcp FM
5 Feb 25	10DD	fst34 ⁰	271	56	1:24	1:52	Opn Hcp FM

br m 6, by Downbytheseaside, Passionate Beauty by Rock N Roll Heaven

Angela Cornell, Freeport, NY

S. DiDomencio 229-31-39-32 (135)

50000	8	8 ¹² ₂	8 ¹⁴ ₂	8 ⁶ ₁	7 ⁶ ₅	8 ⁵ ₁	GeBrennan	ScDiDomnc	30	29	264	282	1:54	91	+1	6w	83.25	RocketDeoSilkCloudHighFlyN	Trail, rail, no fact-8
50000	5	5 ⁷ ₄	5 ⁷ ₄	5 ⁵ ₄	5 ⁴ ₃	5 ⁴ ₃	TtTetrick	ScDiDomnc	30	29	27	281	1:55	88	-7	5w	38.75	RocketDeoCoachhndTalkCrDyT	Gapd, cvr, no bid-6
50000	2	5 ⁶ ₄	5 ⁶ ₄	5 ⁴ ₃	5 ⁴ ₃	7 ² ₁	TtTetrick	ScDiDomnc	29	28	281	281	1:54	90	-6	3w	15.20	LiD Rose TrmThPageMwDls	Rail, traf, in, no bid-6
50000	3	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	4 ² ₁	3 ³ ₃	TtTetrick	ScDiDomnc	272	303	282	281	1:54	89	+1	4w	6.20	ArdBMMN TalkCrDyT FctyGrI	Ld, yld, pkt, no bid-6
25000	6	6 ⁶ ₃	6 ⁶ ₃	6 ⁶ ₃	6 ⁶ ₃	5 ⁴ ₂	VkKirby	ScDiDomnc	284	292	272	281	1:53	89			6.70	MajorcaN CndyJo Ludacous	-7
25000	4	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	VkKirby	ScDiDomnc	261	291	29	282	1:52	92			8.00	MajorcaN FctyGrI CndyJo	-6
25000	4	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	VkKirby	ScDiDomnc	262	30	274	28	1:52	95			22.80	FctyGrI MajorcaN Incasyddn	-7
25000	2	3 ³ ₃	3 ³ ₃	4 ² ₁	4 ² ₁	4 ² ₁	VkKirby	ScDiDomnc	272	29	274	274	1:52	96			30.30	MajorcaN Incasyddn ElektraA	-6
25000	1	3 ³ ₃	3 ³ ₃	3 ³ ₃	5 ⁵ ₄	5 ⁵ ₄	VkKirby	ScDiDomnc	274	293	283	282	1:54	88			10.60	DstbtrHrv Incasyddn BldMoonA	-6
25000	6	7 ⁹ ₃	7 ⁵ ₁	7 ⁴ ₁	7 ⁶ ₁	7 ⁷ ₁	VkKirby	ScDiDomnc	291	282	28	281	1:54	89			24.70	MajorcaN Elektra Incasyddn	-7

Last 5 Sts -\$9,750

1:52.1 DD 5/8

1:50.3 M1

25	YR	4	1	0	1	\$9,750	25	Tot	14	1	2	3	\$46,000
24	YR	0	0	0	0		24	Tot	3	1	0	0	\$3,350
23	YR	0	0	0	0		23	Tot	0	0	0	0	

-Life 80 24 12 14 \$156,019

4 SILK CLOUD A(L)

6:15.13 \$11,020

5-1 J. Stratton 580-96-96-91 (148)

18 Apr 25	7YR	fst59 ⁰	273	56	1:24	1:53	BCMM #4
11 Apr 25	5YR	fst46 ⁰	283	57	1:25	1:54	BCMM #3
4 Apr 25	4YR	fst63 ⁰	272	56	1:24	1:53	BCMM #2
28 Mar 25	7YR	fst55 ⁰	28	58	1:25	1:53	BCMM #1
14 Mar 25	7YR	fst52 ⁰	264	55	1:24	1:53	FNW33541L5
7 Mar 25	9YR	fst42 ⁰	282	57	1:25	1:54	FNW3300L5
21 Feb 25	3YR	fst26 ⁰	272	57	1:26	1:55	FM INV
14 Feb 25	8YR	fst30 ⁰	273	56	1:24	1:53	FM INV
7 Feb 25	1YR	fst25 ⁰	301	59	1:28	1:57	Qua
9 Nov 24	9M1	fst45 ⁰	271	55	1:23	1:49	FM W/O HC

br m 7, by Shadow Play, Modern Babe by Modern Art

Eric K Good, Davidsonville, MD David C Krywaj, Amherstburg, ON, CA

P. Tritton 37-9-11-5 (243)

50000	6	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	JoStrattn	PeTritton	28	282</
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Big M 'young guns' choose different paths during Championship meet

Every winter, there are a handful of young drivers who make an impact at The Meadowlands, as most of the A-list pilots who won the Meadowlands Paces, Hambletonians, Breeders Crowns and Fall Final Four/FanDuel Championship events take a well-deserved rest after a hectic six months of Grand Circuit grind.

Since the start of 2025, four of The Big M's "Young Guns" – drivers under the age of 30 – have excelled, becoming part of the culture that is The Big M experience, but now, like every year when spring is sprung, it's time for these pilots to make decisions as to what to do next, as work for them becomes increasingly scarce with the drivers' room getting more and more crowded.

The driver with the toughest call to make is Brett Beckwith. The 2024 Dan Patch Rising Star Award winner has made a number of eyebrows rise with his success at the East Rutherford, NJ, mile oval, as the 22-year-old is currently atop the driver standings with 60 victories.

"If you were to have asked me a year ago, I would've said I'm going to go where I can get the most work, but as it's going right now, it wouldn't make much sense to leave," said Beckwith. "If I want to advance my career to the next level, then I have to take the chance and stay at The Meadowlands throughout the year. At that point, you need a little luck and the right opportunities. Plus, I have a very strong work ethic and drive to be my best, so that never hurts."

Braxten Boyd, whose 27 wins are good for a tie for fifth in the standings, is sure of what he has to do. Friday's (April 18) card may be the last Big M fans will see of Boyd for a while.

"I actually have already made the decision to leave," said the 25-year-old. "I get lots of work at Tioga. It's a business. Usually, I have a better chance at making more money driving there and it's an hour closer to my home. With the top drivers back at The Meadowlands, I'll stay at Pocono and Tioga for as many races as I can and try to follow the New York Sire Stakes as much as possible."

Mark Herschberger, who didn't turn 30 until two weeks ago, has been the biggest surprise. For the most part unknown until a solid 2024 at Freehold, he currently sits fourth in The Big M standings with 29 winner's circle visits.

"Ideally, I'd love to stay at The Meadowlands through the summer, although that may not be an option with the Grand Circuit drivers returning," said Herschberger. "Right now, I'm driving seven days a week at four different tracks – Pocono, Yonkers, Chester and The Meadowlands. I'm hoping that, perhaps, when the big drivers take off for Sire Stakes, with the amount of travel they do, I'll still have a foot in the door at some of these tracks and be able to pick up some live mounts."

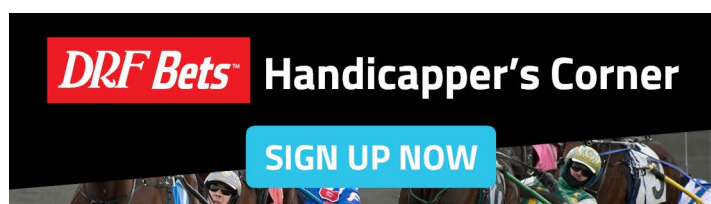
"I've prioritized The Meadowlands and Yonkers since they are closest to my home and where I'd like to really focus my drives. Freehold closing was a significant blow to the power I sit behind, so for now, I'm just waiting to see what tracks I get the nicest drives at and I'll take it from there."

Johnathan Ahle, a regular at Rosecroft and the leading pilot at the Maryland track in 2024, is currently tied for the fifth spot in The Big M standings with Boyd.

"Chester is now open, so I'll be over there," said the 28-year-old Ahle. "As far as The Meadowlands goes, opportunities will start slimming down."

"I was usually at Freehold on Saturdays. It was another day of racing and another paycheck and it's nice to fill an afternoon. As far as the weekends coming up, I have no real plan set up. I'll take it as it goes. There'll be some possibilities at Pocono, and, who knows, maybe a New York track. Once the stakes season starts, a lot of the bigger drivers are always moving around, so I'll try to hit'em where they ain't."

-release (Meadowlands)



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 24

RACE 6

(7) JAZZVILLE found a seam very late in the stretch and just exploded late to get up for the narrow victory. You can only imagine how big the margin of victory would've been had she gotten a cleaner trip and she is tough to go against in this spot.

-John Rallis



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

RACE 7

(5) OUTCRY spent most of the first turn on the rim and then attacked first over only to lose to a fresh horse with an easier trip. The price should be right here.

-Derick Giwner



RACE 5

(1) AARDIE N MIKIN was a big earner Down Under and she's sure looked the part here with three dominating wins so far; Engblom trainee will be heavily favored again looking for a fourth.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, APRIL 26

RACE 8

(6) MANOLETE faced a salty group that included mostly older foes in his 3-year-old debut and got a nice easy trip. There is more money on the line now and you can expect to see his early speed on display.

-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

DE LONG RECORDS 4,000TH VICTORY ON WEDNESDAY AT HOOSIER

Entering the night just three wins away from his 4,000th career driving victory, driver John De Long parlayed a Wednesday (April 23) night hat-trick to a milestone victory in the finale aboard the Alvin Miller trained Northern Rocks at Harrah's Hoosier Park Racing & Casino.

[READ MORE](#)

NORTHFIELD REGULAR GREG GRISMORE SCORES 8,000TH CAREER VICTORY

Northfield Park regular Greg Grismore continued to climb the win ranks on Tuesday (April 22) earning his 8,000th career driving win aboard Disgruntled Carl in the nightcap at MGM Northfield Park.

[READ MORE](#)

HEATHER WILDER APPOINTED TO HALL OF FAME SCREENING COMMITTEE

Heather Wilder, best known for her work with Altmeyer Wilder Racing and as President of the Keystone Chapter of the United States Harness Writers' Association, has been appointed to a six-year term on the Screening Committee for harness racing's Hall of Fame. The committee meets annually to determine what people will reach the final ballot to try to achieve the sport's ultimate honor, membership in the Hall of Fame.

[READ MORE](#)

NEW YORK SIRE STAKES FINALS RETURN TO BATAVIA ON SEPTEMBER 6

The Agriculture & NYS Horse Breeding Development Fund is proud to announce that the 2025 New York Sire Stakes (NYSS) "Night of Champions" will take place on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at Batavia Downs.

[READ MORE](#)

PALONE BAGS NINE WINNERS WEDNESDAY AT THE MEADOWS

Dave Palone, who has won 35 straight driving titles at The Meadows, did his best to climb to the top of the leaderboard in one day on Wednesday (April 23). The all-time leader in wins for drivers with over 21,000, picked up nine victories on the 13-race card.

At one point Palone won five straight races on the card and ended the day 13 wins behind leading driver Ronnie Wrenn Jr., who scored a three-bagger on Wednesday himself.

MEADOWLANDS & PARTNERS DONATE TO THE MYERS FAMILY

The Meadowlands Racetrack is proud to announce that the Hunter Myers Memorial Race raised over \$41,000 on Saturday, March 29.

The Meadowlands thanks the fans and bettors who wagered in the dedicated race. It also thanks partners, the SBOA of NJ, Day At The Track, US Off-Track, Red Rock, and Lien Games for their donations, and of course, Meadowlands Racetrack Chairman Jeff Gural for matching the revenue and donations.

"I recognize that, unlike my job, there is clearly an element of risk in being a driver," said Gural. "And while I did not know Hunter, I am glad our industry stepped up to be there for his family."

Woobine-Mohawk donated directly to the Hunter Myers GoFundMe.

"The passing of Hunter Myers is a devastating tragedy for his family, friends, and the entire racing community," stated Jason Settlemoir, COO & GM of the Meadowlands. "We are thankful that we all could come together and support Hunter's family during this difficult time."

The Meadowlands Racetrack continues to extend its heartfelt condolences and prayers to Hunter Myers' family and friends, including his fiancée, Chloe, and son, Hayden.

[-release \(Meadowlands\)](#)

MEADOWLANDS CONTINUES ROAD TO ZERO DRAG

The Meadowlands Racetrack continues to work towards eliminating the post-time drag each live race night.

The remaining schedule:

- Friday, April 25th (3-minute drag)
- Saturday, April 26th (2-minute drag)

From now on, the TV broadcast will also show a graphic detailing the off time for the next race before displaying the race payouts.

There will be no drag for the opening of the 2025 Championship Meet on Friday, May 2. When the countdown clock hits zero, the horses will be called to the gate.

"We have decided to eliminate the 7-minute drag designed to accommodate our online customers," replied Meadowlands Chairman Jeff Gural. "We value our in-person and online customers, so we agreed to provide the expected time the horses will go to the gate for the next race. We hope this works, as criticism of the 7-minute drag is almost universal, and we need to maintain our off-track handle for this to work."

The Meadowlands is also working on removing the CAWs (computer-assisted wagering groups) from betting in the WIN pools after two minutes to post.

"We continue to work with the NJRC and BetMakers to make this happen," said Jason Settlemoir, the track's COO & GM. "We have encountered some bumps in the road regarding the CAW project, but we hope both the Commission and our tote provider can get this in place for our Championship Meet."

"We want our customers to know we hear them and are listening to their suggestions," continued Settlemoir. "We hope we can count on their continued support at the wagering windows, as so far, removing one minute each live race night to get to zero has had a negative impact on the export handle."

Visit [PlayMeadowlands.com](https://www.playmeadowlands.com) for everything racing, dining, and event-related to the Meadowlands Racetrack.

[-release \(Meadowlands\)](#)

ZERON TOPS AT POCONO WEDNESDAY QUALIFIERS

Scott Zeron emerged as the star of the Wednesday morning qualifying session at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania with four victorious drives, winning the fastest mile of the day and also with three sophomores trained by Jared Bako.

The quickest clocking came in the very first qualifier and was produced by Zeron and No Tresspassing, a Sweet Lou sophomore gelding and a 1:51 1/5 winner at two at Pocono. Here the Deborah Daguet trainee No Tresspassing pounced from the pocket to tally in 1:52 3/5 over Stonebridge Wizard, a Bako pupil who won the Battle Of Waterloo at two.

Zeron/Bako triumphed with the Huntsville filly The Last Martini, who went wire to wire-wire in 1:53 2/5; the fast distaff earned over a half-million at two, finishing 1-2 in her two Breeders Crown events and also winning her New York Sire Stakes Championship.

The Tactical Landing gelding Top Floor Tactics, who only had one start as a baby, was ready to live up to his name, the three-year-old winning from the two-hole in 1:56 3/5 for Zeron/Bako. That pairing's third win came with the Dancin Lou filly Th Cha Cha Cha, a 1:57 4/5 winner.

Also impressive were the Papi Rob Hanover gelding Waterfront, a Pennsylvania Stallion Series winner at two and also a 1:53 2/5 winner Wednesday for driver Jason Bartlett and trainer Hunter Oakes, and the Pace Del Rio gelding Eugenio RL IT, unable to stay on the trot in two previous American starts but a parked-the-mile 1:55 3/5 winner here for driver Matt Kakaley and trainer Travis Alexander.

The Pocono qualifiers can be seen by going to www.phha.org.

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

FRESHMAN FOCUS TO FEATURE BRIAN BROWN

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) will feature Brian Brown and his Ohio two-year-olds in training in this week's edition of Freshman Focus.

Hosted by Roger Huston and Ashley Dailey, Freshman Focus will air at 7 PM on Thursday (April 24) on the OHHA's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

[-edited release \(OHHA\)](#)

SEBASTIAN G. Z. TRISCARI, 71, DIES

Please click [here](#) for the full obituary.