

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025

Dunn isn't GOD, but who is?



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EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner

[@harnesseveguy](https://twitter.com/harnesseveguy)

Catchy title, right? Before anyone gets bent out of shape, I'm not about to tell you that Dexter Dunn isn't a great driver. Statistics and FIVE Driver of the Year titles in the last six years clearly prove otherwise. Dunn is a special talent and is certainly in the conversation with a handful of others as to who is the best current driver and maybe one day we can even discuss him among the best all time.

Watching The Meadowslands the last few weekends, I couldn't help but notice that every horse picking up Dexter Dunn for the first time was being bet like he was the almighty and specifically selected to bring new life into a horse that wasn't performing up to par. Any new driver can of course "wake up" a horse that hasn't been racing well, but people have been expecting a bit too much and betting him like he is Walter Case Jr. from the late 1990s at Yonkers Raceway.

While I'm not a big fan of UDRS (basically a weighted calculation of wins, places and shows for a driver), Case batted an insane .506 one year and was over .400 for 11 straight years! Dunn's career high is .346. Just to show that I'm not

trying to pick on Dunn, a sampling of top earning and winning drivers shows Tim Tetrick's best as .366, Yannick Gingras at .384, Brian Sears coming in at .378, David Miller hitting .394 one year, and Aaron Merriman with a .387 top mark. The one man I found who has consistently topped .400 is the all-time leader in terms of wins. Dave Palone (21,000+ wins career) owns a .446 top mark and 13 years over .400 in his career. Interestingly the current leading driver in the country in terms of wins, earnings and UDRS is Jason Bartlett. He is batting an elite .464. Now that is bordering on Case territory.

Alas, I've gotten off track a bit from the point, which is that as good as Dexter Dunn is as a driver, people aren't properly tempering their expectations on what he is capable of doing on the track given either lackluster talent or dull horses. Is he better than a guy who is winning at 5%? Absolutely! Is he or any of the other drivers competing in the U.S. going to make a bad/dull horse worth betting as one of the favorites? Absolutely not!

Generally there are three handicapping angles which elicit the most wagering attention – driver changes, trainer changes, and good form. They are all good reasons to play a horse given the right odds, and this is where people go wrong because they go in thinking a horse will improve because of a change and see that the horse is being bet

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heavily because of the change, yet they don't pivot to a better option due to the lack of value.

I'm sure I've done this exercise in a previous column but it bears repeating with current stats. Trackmaster offers a great program called StatsMaster which provides driver Return on Investment (ROI) figures for drivers and trainers. You can search any period of time and see how well any driver performed in terms of your wagering dollar. Like with handicapping winners, it isn't easy to be in positive territory, but the numbers do a reasonable job of pointing out which drivers are burning a bit too much money.

For 2025 at The Meadowlands, 34 drivers (including amateurs) have at least 25 starts and eight of them have a positive ROI. Not surprisingly, three of them are amateur drivers – James Slendorn, Mark Silva and William Clark, Jr. – who brought in a longshot or two. You may be surprised to learn that two of the regulars are Austin Siegelman (79%) and Bradley Chisholm (7%). Those aren't names people are typically running to bet at The Meadowlands but they both have delivered for loyal followers. Lauren Tritton (13%) has also come through in more limited starts, but the main man on campus in 2025 at The Meadowlands has been leading driver Brett Beckwith. Not only does he have a commanding 14-win lead over Jason Bartlett, but he is producing an 11% flat win profit versus a negative 7% ROI for Bartlett.

While I don't recommend it, if you bet any of the above drivers to win exclusively, you would have more money in your pocket today than when the calendar turned to 2025. Of the people currently racing at the track on a fairly regular basis, which names are removing the most money from the pockets of bettors? Andy Miller leads the way at -84%, though I believe that he'll pick up the pace a bit with his younger horses making returns soon. The other four Big M regulars with more than 50 starts who sit north of 40% on the negative side are Anibal Borjas (-70%), Tyler Miller (-49%), Justin Huckabone (-45%) and, wait for it...Dexter Dunn (-42%).

Names which sit in very respectable range in the single digits of the negative spectrum are Jordan Stratton (-1%), Patrick Ryder (-2%), Jonathan Ahle (-5%), and Mark Hershberger (-8%).

It is worth noting that some of the most popular names from a wagering perspective on the amateur side are producing some of the worst numbers. Yogi Sheridan is an awful -63% and followed closely by Anthony Verruso (-60%) and Anthony Beltrami (-55%).

To be fair, four-plus months of one year isn't exactly the biggest sample size and much can change during the Championship meet which just started on May 2. With that in mind I pulled the stats from the top eight drivers in terms of starts/wins from May until the first Saturday in August during 2022 to 2024. The results are interesting as some numbers are more consistent than others. There is one certainty – Todd McCarthy is your best bet!

Driver Todd McCarthy's horses produced a flat-bet profit in both 2023 and 2024, checking in at 10% and 4% each of the last two years. Taking it a step further, McCarthy was at positive 4% in 2022, making him the only driver above breakeven during the last three years of the championship meet.

Yannick Gingras is the clear leader in terms of total wins but checks in as a consistent loser in terms of ROI. He is negative 38%, 29% and 24% over the last three years. Dunn ranks second in wins and you can see his ROI progression getting worse as his star rises. In 2021 he was -17%, then in 2022 in rose to +5%, then it fell off the cliff with -53% and -27% the last two years.

Outside of McCarthy and the one year from Dunn, the only other top driver to produce a positive ROI year dating back to 2021 is Andrew McCarthy. He's been a bit of a rollercoaster ride at +4%, -46%, -39% and +44%, but at least there have been some profitable years. Sitting firmly at the bottom of the barrel is Andy Miller at -71%, -44%, -44% and -53%.

I realize I threw a bunch of stats at you in this column and a lot of you will simply toss them aside as irrelevant in any one race. While that is certainly your right, I do think that you're perhaps missing some valid points that shine through in the numbers and are simply a good practice in general.

First, Todd McCarthy is clearly the most overlooked of the top drivers at The Meadowlands in terms of odds. Second, his horses are going off at overlay prices because people are betting the other drivers too heavily. Finally, it may be wise to reconsider making a wager on any horse unless you are getting a better than expected price. And to be clear, that doesn't eliminate betting on a 4-5 as sometimes, like with Madrid A in race 11 on May 2 at The Meadowlands, a \$3.60 win price is value.

Of course all the above evaluation on pricing requires you to be a good handicapper and an honest evaluator of talent without falling victim to preconceived biases. Those skills are easier said than done.

Best of luck during the Championship meet at The Meadowlands. I'm off to a flat start with a -2% ROI through the first 28 races. Last year during the meet I was -18% and the previous year I was -20%. My best bets and spot plays have shown a combined flat bet profit of 33% and 5%, respectively. Maybe the lesson is you are better off wagering on all of my picks than any one driver. Certainly my ROI at The Meadowlands is better than

one unnamed driver who may've heckled me in the recent past.

Let me finish with one last handicapping tip. When doing my analysis I am handicapped by having to complete it days before I know what the conditions will be like, whether there will be scratches, etc. That's why it is always a good idea to read my comments. If it seems like my feel for the second pick is as good as the first and the price is better on the second pick, go that way. That's what I do.



CONRAD PHOTO

Driver Todd McCarthy is the only Meadowlands regular who has a positive ROI during its Championship meet the last three years.



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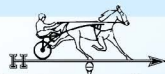
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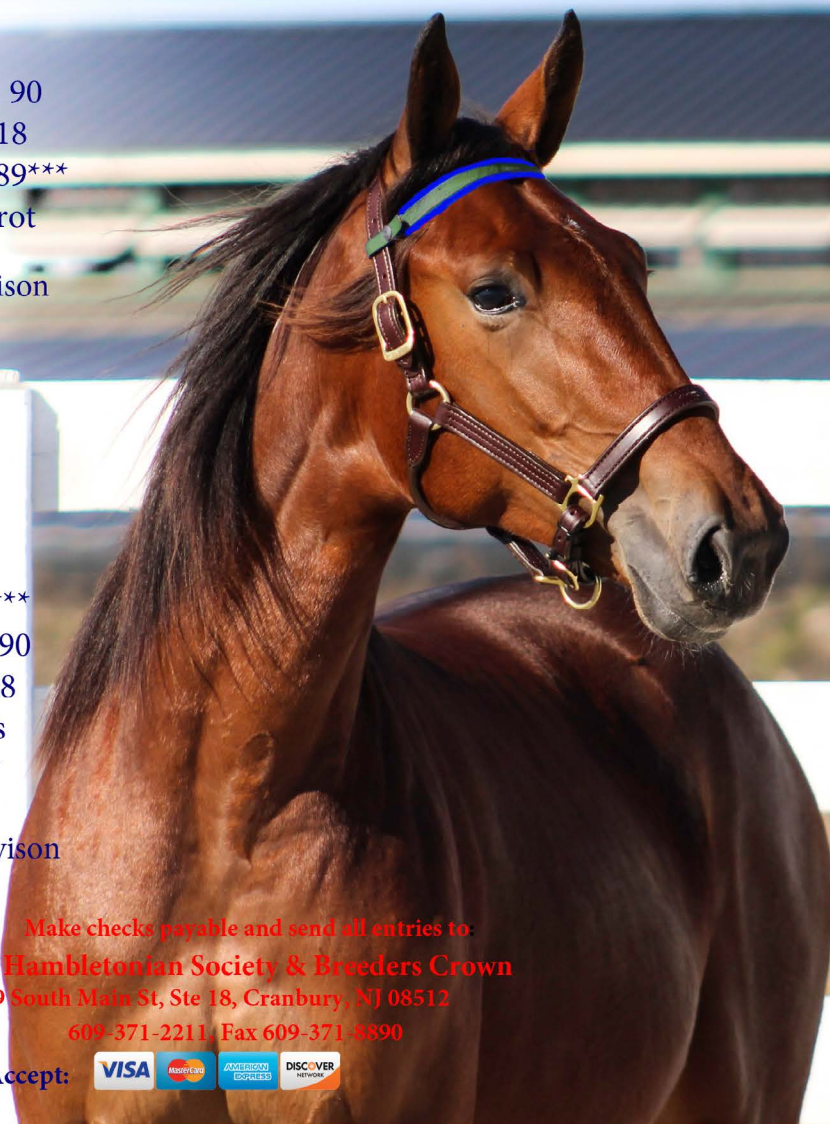
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CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

Grismore is no grizzled veteran

When Greg Grismore piloted his 8,000th winner, bringing Disgruntled Carl home on April 22 at Northfield Park, it put the crown on a career that started nearly 50 years ago, although Grismore wasn't convinced at the time. "Giss," he said. "You want to interview me? It must be a slow harness racing news week."

But Grismore's story is a good one.

"I jogged my first horse when I was 6, so by the time I got my license, I had been jogging and training for years," recalled Grismore. "I started with my dad, Mark, who was a huge influence. We didn't race at the fairs, so I got my qualifying license at Raceway Park and after about a dozen starts, I got my license. I've never wanted to do anything else."

Grismore credits his dad, saying he was a great horseman, for teaching him the right way. Having raced against Mark at Raceway Park in the late seventies, I can vouch for that. Mark's horses were always properly rigged and well classified. If there were two divisions of a race, you would generally hope to draw into the one Mark did not have a horse in. Although trainer stats were not kept until 1991, between that year and 2005, he posted a UTRS under .300 only twice, and was over .350 five times.

"Dad trained horses since I was born. I lived on the farm and was around them my whole life. This is all I've ever done. It wasn't easy, but I had an advantage. I felt comfortable," said Grismore. "Dad made sure I had easier horses to drive my first year. We had old classy racehorses and dad always classified well. My dad, in my opinion, was one of the best horsemen around. I learned that way – no catch drives, just for my dad."

Because he worked for his dad, Greg's opportunity to get catch drives

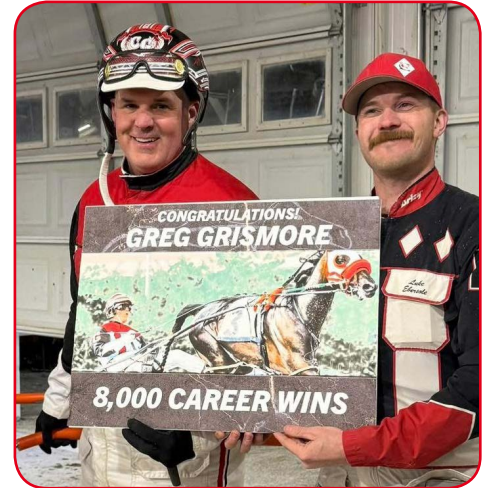
was limited. After starting at Toledo, the horsemen went on strike, so Greg took a few horses to Northfield for his dad. "I went and started getting drives, and it started going well and it just got going from there, quicker than I thought," said the driver. "I moved there full-time in February of 1998. My wife was from the area, too. I had raced there a few winters but never full time."

Greg quickly became a fixture at Northfield with trainers like Kent Sherman, Mike Weller and Jeff Cox using him as their primary driver. He won a couple driving titles and had a great deal of success at the Route 8 oval.

His biggest victories include wins in the Cleveland Classic (Won The West, 2007), the George Morton Levy (Maltese Artist, 2007), the Beckwith (Maltese Artist, 2007) and the Jugette (Good News Lady, 2008).

"That was sentimental. Dad had just passed away," said Grismore about the Jugette win. "I went out East and started getting drives for Ron Burke and when I finally came back to Ohio for personal reasons I continued to get drives from Ronnie. I won a few American Nationals in Chicago, too."

Greg's only regrets are that he never won Northfield's Battle of Lake Erie – he was second three times—or the Little Brown Jug. He drove in



ELIYN RYDER PHOTO

Greg Grismore (left) with fellow driver Luke Ebersole after his 8,000th win.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6](#)

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CONRAD PHOTO

Greg Grismore ranked winning the Jugette with Good News Lady as one of the greatest moments of his career.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

three Jugs, making the Final once with Won The West. After finishing third in his elimination, he was fourth in the final.

But the two horses that left the biggest impression on him are Maltese Artist and Cambest Prince. "Maltese Artist was the best horse I ever drove," said Grismore. "And Cambest Prince. He put me on the map outside of Ohio, although we were second twice in the Battle of Lake Erie, but we won some big races out East. That got my foot in the door and I raced in New York for about four years and at The Meadows for four more. Then I decided to come back home to be closer to my son, Curtis, so I ended up back at Northfield."

Grismore's first win came in 1987 and in the nearly forty years since, in addition to winning over 8,000 races, his drives have amassed over \$58 million in purses, with two years over five million and 11 more over two million, including every year from 2006-2012.

Perhaps nobody in the business knows Grismore better than longtime Northfield OHHA Rep Amy Hollar. Of Grismore, she said, "I've known Greg since 1990 and have lots of great stories, most of which are not printable. I will say he has driven cheap claimers and stakes horses for us over the years and I consider him one of my favorite drivers. Greg drives to make money and doesn't abuse the horse. If he screws up, he'll admit it. He's competitive and he's the driver I have probably had the most fights with, but in the end, I consider him a good friend."

As lofty as Grismore's stats appear on paper, there has been a noticeable decline in terms of starts, wins and earnings over the last few years. The 55-year-old was a bit frustrated as he was not getting a lot of drives. So when Jason Brewer called and asked if he would train a string for him at Northfield, Greg said yes. Now, he even has a couple of his own, but most importantly, after 40 years in the business, the change has been in attitude as much as wakeup time.

"I am enjoying it a lot more now – I didn't realize how much I missed the day-to-day interactions. I went a few years of being really sour," said Grismore. "I have eight horses right now – seven for Jason and one of my own. One employee. We will see what happens down the road."

"I'm getting old," he quipped.

Asked about octogenarian Don McKirgan, who he races against at Northfield, Grismore was blunt. "I don't want to be out there at that age. As long as you're out there and safe and know what you're doing, fine. It's just not for me. I can see myself training for a long time though."

Grismore's story has taken him across the country to dozens of tracks, where he has sat behind thousands of horses (he was surprised when

I told him he had over 57,000 career drives). Where it takes him next remains to be seen.

That's it for this time. Now go cash. Maybe on Disgruntled Carl and Greg Grismore, but perhaps you missed the boat since he won at \$75 on Wednesday at MGM Northfield Park.



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- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Sun. July 13 |
| 2 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 26 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Sat. Aug. 9 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Sat. Aug. 23 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Sat. Sept. 6 |

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 12 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Wed. July 23 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Sun. Aug. 10 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Sat. Aug. 23 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Mon. Sept. 1 |

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Sun. July 13 |
| 2 Scioto Downs | Fri. July 25 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Sat. Aug. 9 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Sat. Aug. 23 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Sat. Sept. 6 |

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 12 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Sun. July 20 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Sun. Aug. 10 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Sat. Aug. 23 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Mon. Sept. 1 |

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Sat. May 17 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Sat. June 7 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 5 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 26 |
| 5 Northfield Park | Wed. Aug. 27 |

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Sat. May 17 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Sat. June 7 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 5 |
| 4 Northfield Park | Sat. Aug. 9 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Sat. Sept. 6 |

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Fri. May 16 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Sat. June 7 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 5 |
| 4 Northfield Park | Sun. Aug. 10 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Sat. Sept. 6 |

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Fri. May 16 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Sat. June 7 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Sat. July 5 |
| 4 Northfield Park | Sat. Aug. 9 |
| 5 Scioto Downs | Fri. Sept. 6 |

BUCKEYE STALLION SERIES

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Sat. July 19 |
| 2 Scioto Downs | Fri. July 25 |
| 3 Urbana | Mon. Aug. 4 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Fri. Aug. 22 |
| 5 Delaware | Wed. Sept. 17 |

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Bucyrus | Wed. July 16 |
| 2 Scioto Downs | Thurs. July 24 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Wed. Aug. 13 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Tues. Aug. 26 |
| 5 Delaware | Tues. Sept. 16 |

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Mon. July 14 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Wed. July 23 |
| 3 Urbana | Mon. Aug. 4 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Thurs. Aug. 21 |
| 5 Delaware | Sun. Sept. 14 |

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Thurs. July 10 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Mon. July 21 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Tues. Aug. 12 |
| 4 Northfield Park | Sun. Aug. 24 |
| 5 Delaware | Mon. Sept. 15 |

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Sat. May 24 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Sun. June 8 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Sun. July 6 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Sat. Aug. 16 |
| 5 Delaware | Thurs. Sept. 18 |

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Scioto Downs | Fri. May 23 |
| 2 Northfield Park | Mon. July 9 |
| 3 Northfield Park | Mon. July 7 |
| 4 Scioto Downs | Fri. Aug. 15 |
| 5 Delaware | Tues. Sept. 16 |

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Sun. May 18 |
| 2 Scioto Downs | Fri. June 20 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Fri. July 4 |
| 4 Northfield Park | Sun. Aug. 17 |
| 5 Delaware | Thurs. Sept. 18 |

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Northfield Park | Tues. May 20 |
| 2 Scioto Downs | Thurs. June 19 |
| 3 Scioto Downs | Wed. July 9 |
| 4 Northfield Park | Mon. Aug. 11 |
| 5 Delaware | Mon. Sept. 15 |

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Stratton hopes to escape Borgata scrum with coveted win

By Jay Bergman

It's the richest race of the year thus far and perhaps the most difficult to handicap. The culmination of five weeks of preliminary rounds has led to what figures to be an epic final on Friday night (May 9) at Yonkers Raceway when the cream of the crop will decide the champion in the \$516,000 MGM Borgata Series final.

While some of the eight finalists needed to improve their point totals to reach the big dance, trainer Cory Stratton's pair of For Once Inmy Life and Chase H Hanover had been managed to perfection and entered the final leg with virtual certainty to qualify for Friday's event. For Stratton, everything did not go as planned in the April 28 final round as three-leg winner For Once Inmy Life made an uncharacteristic break in stride behind the gate and struggled mightily to find firm footing.

"I have no idea what happened," Stratton said a little over one week after the miscue. "Jordan didn't know what happened and after trying to get him back he decided to pull him up in case there was an injury."

Going from being among the favorites for Friday's final to questioning For Once Inmy Life's soundness gave Stratton some moments of anxiety, but the morning after the concluding preliminary round of the Borgata he sat behind For Once Inmy Life and the 5-year-old son of Downbytheseaside was a different horse.

"He jogged sound, and I was relieved," said Stratton.

Thinking quickly, the trainer realized that though For Once Inmy Life had enough points to compete in the final the fact that he had not completed the mile meant he would have to requalify to be eligible.

"I could have qualified him at The Meadowlands," said Stratton. "But I called over to Pocono and entered him for the next day (Wednesday April 30)."

For Once Inmy Life handled the qualifier well winning in 1:53 4/5, but time was not the issue.

In less than 48 hours Stratton's life – concerned about his best horse – was a roller coaster, but following the qualifying mile things flattened out and preparations were made for Friday's final.

"I'm happy they moved the final. It works out well for both of my horses that have done well with additional time between starts," said Stratton. Both horses were given weeks off within the series and returned with victories two weeks later.

While Stratton is happy with the condition of both horses and the likelihood that they will be in peak form on Friday, he recognizes just how difficult this race could be.

"I would say that six or seven of the eight horses have a legitimate chance to win," Stratton said, obviously including his pair.

For Once Inmy Life drew post three and Chase H Hanover landed post six. "Sure, I was happy with the draw. Chase H Hanover is outside but at least he didn't draw the seven or eight," said Stratton.

Stratton had been concerned about rounding up a driver for the final with his brother Jordan guiding Mossdale Ben N and For Once Inmy Life throughout the prelims.

"I had given Dexter (Dunn) a call a few weeks back to ask if he would be interested," said Stratton. "I knew that Per (Engblom) was also going to need a driver for one of his and I wanted to get to Dexter first."

Stratton's stable has been hitting on all cylinders this year with roughly 65 horses in training.

"I've got more horses and it's a much better group," said Stratton of his 2025 success. "Yonkers is my main track, and we're heavily involved in the claiming game. My owners are willing to jam them back in the same class and you can make \$8,000-10,000 a week."

With \$516,000 on the line on Friday, Stratton is in position to do significantly better than that in just one race.

"Winning a race like this at my home track would be something special," said Stratton. "Probably the second biggest race I could win."

With Stratton growing up near the Delaware County Fairgrounds in Ohio it wasn't a surprise that winning the Little Brown Jug would eclipse an MGM Borgata victory. "I've been going to the Jug since I was a little kid."

Stratton, like most handicappers, hasn't a clue just how the Borgata final (race 8) will go on Friday night. "You have to figure Verdun (Patrick Lachance) will gun out from the rail and Binge On Yankee (Scott Zeron post 2) can leave fast as well. There's not much of an angle from post



MIKE LIZZI PHOTO

Chase H Hanover looks to parlay a fifth-leg Borgata victory into a win in the \$516,000 final.

three," said Stratton of the chances of For Once Inmy Life seeing the front in the early stages.

"You have to figure Coaches Corner (Jason Bartlett post 8) will be leaving and Desperate Man (Matt Kakaley post 7) can't take back," said Stratton.

Chase H Hanover from post six has shown quickness at the outset in his races but Stratton feels that both of his horses are versatile. "Chase H is better on the bigger track, but he showed grit coming first over to win in the fourth round," said Stratton. Chase H Hanover came back in leg five to wire the field in 1:51, outsprinting Borgata morning-line favorite Mossdale Ben N (Jordan Stratton post 5).

Mossdale Ben N has won seven of his nine starts while racing from off the pace for trainer Pete Tritton since his arrival earlier this winter. Though his two second-place finishes came in the final three legs of this series, a slow pace worked to his disadvantage each time.

Though not meant to be a handicap race, the draw for this year's MGM Borgata final played out just like that with last year's second- and third-place finishers returning to the final but getting the worst of the draw. Coaches Corner finished second behind Hellabalou from post six a year ago while Desperate Man settled for third after being parked the distance by favored Linedrive Hanover. Desperate Man had post four a year ago and starts from post seven this Friday.

Leading Yonkers trainer Per Engblom sends out Huntinthelastdolar (Yannick Gingras) from post 4, and that could be a perfect spot for an upset. Gingras posted the upset last year from post five with Hellabalou.

In addition to the rich MGM Borgata final, Yonkers will also host a \$100,000 consolation (race 6) event. Miki Shan N (post 2) and Charlie May (post 4) are the morning-line favorites.

\$516,000 MGM BORGATA PACE FINAL - GRADE 1 - FRIDAY - RACE 8

POST-HORSE	DRIVER	TRAINER	ODDS
1-Verdun	P.Lachance	P.Lachance	8-1
2-Binge On Yankee	S.Zeron	J.Gillis	15-1
3-For Once Inmy Life	D.Dunn	C.Stratton	5-1
4-Huntinthelastdolar	Y.Gingras	P.Engblom	12-1
5-Mossdale Ben N	J.Stratton	P.Tritton	5-2
6-Chase H Hanover	A.Napolitano	C.Stratton	9-2
7-Desperate Man	M.Kakaley	T.Alexander	7-2
8-Coaches Corner	J.Bartlett	P.Engblom	4-1

***see past performances on page 14**




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Pelling pair eyes richest-ever Blue Chip Matchmaker final

By Jay Bergman

In what will be the richest Blue Chip Matchmaker final in history, trainer Brett Pelling has a pair of incredibly talented pacing mares with eyes on the top prize. Though both Walkin On Sunshine and Rocket Deo drew outside of the likely odds-on favorite Aardie B Miki N in the \$490,000 co-feature on Yonkers' Friday night program, the veteran conditioner believes the final will see a lot more activity than the preliminaries.

"Walkin On Sunshine came back with the earplugs in the last two times she faced Aardie B Miki," said Pelling. "Jason (Bartlett) does a great job of backing into you on the final turn."

Walkin On Sunshine won two times and finished second on three occasions during the five preliminary legs and perhaps that's a positive heading into Friday's final. "She's feeling great," said Pelling. "She goes out to train and I'm just a passenger. She's ready to go."

As eager is driver Scott Zeron, who has put the mare in striking position but has had to work with limited real estate through the short Yonkers homestretch. While Aardie B Miki N is undefeated in her four starts, all in the Blue Chip Matchmaker, Pelling believes the probable favorite hasn't had to do much work thus far.

"I think she's had pretty easy trips," said Pelling, who thinks the large purse on Friday as well as the post draw could make things much different in the final.

With Aardie B Miki N landing the pole position, driver Jason Bartlett will be called on early in the race and need to make decisions on whether to cut the mile or race from off the pace and perhaps provide Walkin On Sunshine a cover trip.

"The rail can be tricky," said Pelling. "Jordan (Stratton, Silk Cloud A) has a mare that can leave the gate sharply." Silk Cloud A drew post four and that will put her inside of Rocket Deo, Pelling's other major contender in the final.

Andrew McCarthy will pick up the driving assignment behind Rocket Deo, who was driven to victory in the last three legs by Bartlett. "Andy won't be intimidated," said Pelling with full confidence that Rocket Deo will be a player in the Blue Chip Matchmaker.

"She's a big mare but gets through the turns great," said Pelling of Rocket Deo, one of only two 4-year-old mares in the field. "I think the best thing about both of my mares is that they race well with any kind of trip. They are both great coming first-over."

While Pelling may have the numbers, Aardie B Miki N has Yonkers' leading driver Jason Bartlett and a prime post position. A winner from off the pace in her first two races over the Yonkers half-miler, Aardie B Miki N seemed comfortable when put on the front end and then coasted to victory without a challenge.

What makes the Blue Chip Matchmaker (race seven) a compelling event and far from a two- or three- mare contest is likely the draw. Though Aardie B Miki N has all the credentials, the large purse offers more incentive for longshots to leave the gate with hopes of gaining good early position. Yannick Gingras landed post eight with the Ron Burke-trained Seaside Diva and it would be no surprise if they attempted to step out of the gate quickly with a chance of improving early position. Seaside Diva was a solid second behind Rocket Deo in the final preliminary leg.

Talk Curdy To Me (post 3) had some adventurous trips during the preliminary legs and finally put it all together in round five with Todd McCarthy guiding the mare to her first victory in five starts this year. McCarthy has tried to leave the gate hard with this daughter of Betterthancheddar during the series with limited success and thus may be forced to race from behind on Friday.

Turn The Page N (post 5) has battled tenaciously throughout the series and reached the final despite not winning any of the five legs she competed in. Nevertheless, this Ron Cushing-driven mare has been quite gritty and could surprise if the pace becomes excessive.

Beautiful Seaside (post 7) rounds out the stellar field of mares. A two-leg winner, Beautiful Seaside is another that does her best racing coming from off the pace.



MIKE LIZZI

Rocket Deo goes for her fourth straight win in Friday's Matchmaker final.

As for a potential fast pace in the race, Pelling summed up the situation quite well. "If they go a 58 middle half with Bartlett on the lead it's going to be tough for everyone," Pelling said. "If the middle half is 55 or 56 it's another story."

Last year's Blue Chip Matchmaker final champion Lit De Rose was unable to qualify this year but has an opportunity to race for solid money in the \$100,000 consolation carded as race 5 on Yonkers' 10-race Friday card. Lit De Rose drew post eight.

A recent addition to the Pelling stable, the 4-year-old Sabonis made his first start for his new connections in a qualifier Tuesday (May 6) at Harrah's Philadelphia. Sabonis was an open-lengths 1:53 1/5 winner with Jack Pelling in the bike.

"He's a very serious horse," said Pelling when asked. "I've had him maybe six weeks now and he's really impressed me. He's just a classy horse."

Sabonis, a dominant force in Indiana as a 3-year-old that also captured the Milstein at Northfield Park, is heavily staked this year but Pelling isn't getting ahead of himself yet.

"We'll probably look to start him in the Graduate at Woodbine Mohawk Park," said Pelling. "It's not going to be easy, there are a ton of top 4-year-old pacers this year."

Pelling expects to dodge Captain Albano in the first round of the Graduate (May 31) with last year's champion still yet to qualify, but North America Cup champion Nijinsky has qualified (1:51 4/5 winner at Mohawk on May 5) and will be heading for the Graduate.

Though he's yet to start for Pelling, the trainer sees characteristics in Sabonis that are quite familiar. "He reminds me a lot of Rocknroll Hanover," said Pelling, recalling the 2005 Meadowlands Pace champion he trained some 20 years ago.

\$490,000 BLUE CHIP MATCHMAKER FINAL - GRADE 1 - FRIDAY - RACE 7			
POST-HORSE	DRIVER	TRAINER	ODDS
1-Aardie B Miki N	J.Bartlett	P.Engblom	6-5
2-Walkin On Sunshine	S.Zeron	B.Pelling	4-1
3-Talk Curdy To Me	T.McCarthy	J.Cullipher	12-1
4-Silk Cloud A	J.Stratton	P.Tritton	10-1
5-Turn The Page N	R.Cushing	H.Cushing	15-1
6-Rocket Deo	A.McCarthy	B.Pelling	5-2
7-Beautiful Seaside	T.Tetrick	S.DiDomenico	20-1
8-Seaside Diva	Y.Gingras	R.Burke	15-1

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Pinske with power for Oak Grove 4-year-old Sire Stakes finals

By Derick Gwerner

Harness Racing has discovered a pot of riches in Kentucky over the last few years and the first major pile of cash will be distributed in Sunday's quartet of \$100,000 Kentucky Sire Stakes finals. The event for 4-year-olds of both sexes and gaits scheduled for a 1:45 p.m. (CDT) start at Oak Grove includes a good mix of strong state-bred horses as well as potential Grand Circuit types.

Looking to dominate on the trotting side on Sunday at Oak Grove is trainer Carter Pinske, who sends out a pair of top contenders – Woman Of Passion and Pizzelle – in race four and another – Convoy Hall – in the eighth and final Sire Stakes split.

Woman Of Passion, the 7-5 morning-line favorite in the mare trotting division as she starts from post four with Todd McCarthy in the bike, has continued her good fortune at Oak Grove that she displayed as a 3-year-old. The daughter of Walner was perfect in four starts including last year's \$100,000 final in 2024 and after a narrow defeat in leg one this year, rolled to a seven length win in 1:53 on April 28.

"She was very solid at 3, a bit up and down, but she's grown up from 2 to 3 the same amount as she has from 3 to 4. She has an excellent gait and just a great attitude," said Pinske. "Everything seems all systems go with her and I think we'll have a solid year."

Pinske got Woman Of Passion after her rookie season with trainer Matt Bax where she campaigned mostly in stakes events and exclusively in Canada. At that point, along with owner Al Libfeld, the decision was made to keep her mostly in Kentucky.

"Not having her at 2 it is hard to really gauge what type of speed they really have," said Pinske, who has Woman Of Passion fully staked this year and hinted we will likely see her in at least one leg of the Graduate Series for 4-year-olds. "Bax thought maybe she would trot in 1:52 or 1:53 on a sunny day at The Red Mile and she surprised everybody. If I would've known she was going to trot in 1:50 1/5, she would've been staked, but maybe it will be a blessing in disguise."

Pinske was referring to Woman Of Passion's Kentucky Sire Stakes preliminary leg victory over the Red Mile in 1:50 1/5 where she defeated eventual final winner Date Night Hanover. That foe is nowhere to be found in Sunday's race but perhaps stablemate Pizzelle, who Pinske got into the barn around February 1 this year, can make her presence felt.

Pizzelle starts from post seven this weekend with David Miller in the bike. The Hall of Fame driver, who is also slated to drive on Sunday, steered her to be a distant second behind Woman Of Passion in her 2025 pari-mutual debut.

"The idea is to race her in Kentucky and have a good 4-year-old year," said Pinske on Pizzelle, who won the Goldsmith Maid as a 2-year-old for trainer Noel Daley. "She's a very nice horse to be around. The idea [in her last race] was to get a check and make the final, and sometimes the plan goes accordingly."

"I was really happy with her. David said she had lots of trot, probably more than I expected," continued Pinske. "I'm not totally sure she can

be a top Grand Circuit horse but the 4-year-old series at Oak Grove will be very good for her and we can have a lot of fun with her in Kentucky."

Another horse in the field to watch is Spy Coast from the Ron Burke barn. She won a leg of the Sire Stakes on April 21 in 1:54 1/5 but broke in the last leg. A number of horses have had issues with the track lately but Pinske thought that could be behind them.

"It was a little shaky getting going at Oak Grove but they brought in an outside crew and the report was the track was excellent yesterday [May 6]," said Pinske, who added that they had about 10 inches of rain in the area which played havoc with the surface and led to some bad spots on the track.

In the eighth race final for horses and geldings, Pinske sends out the 3-1 second choice on the early line in Convoy Hall from post seven. The trainer picked up the son of Muscle Mass following the passing of his former trainer Bob McIntosh.

"The McIntosh family owns him. He's a bit quirky but has lots and lots of go. Last year I don't think he ended the way they wanted to and

with Bob passing away they had to do something. Being Kentucky eligible they approached me about training him," said Pinske. "He's been a treat, really. I don't know if you put him on a mile track whether he can go in 1:50 with the big boys but he doesn't get tired. He's a big rugged thing."

With eight wins in just 11 career starts it is clear that Convoy Hall has the ability to win in bunches. Whether he can overcome the outside post and 8-5 morning like chalk Bargain (post three, Dexter Dunn), remains to be seen.

"I think he can work his way into

it," said Pinske about Convoy Hall's perceived lack of early speed. "He did a lot of his work at 3 up in Canada on the front end but he's actually a horse that seems to prefer a trip. If he can get second or third over and the fractions work out right, I think he can overcome the post."

Switching to the pace, Bath Bomb (post one, Andrew McCarthy) is the 8-5 favorite in the mares division (race one) after winning both preliminary legs while Women Layer rides a four race winning streak into the \$100,000 final for the boys. He'll have to overcome post eight with Todd McCarthy in the bike for trainer Virgil Morgan Jr.

One day prior to the Kentucky action, Pinske will actually be in New Jersey at The Meadowlands watching his potential Hambletonian entrant Go Dog Go make his first qualifying start of the year. The 3-year-old who was third in the Breeders Crown final last year starts in the first race at 9:00 a.m. (EDT) on Saturday.

"He's a very fast horse. The problem is his brain can be faster than his feet," said Pinske. "He's really trained back great. It seems like maybe the Greenshoes are better at 3. He has the talent and just has to put it all together."

Pinske added that Go Dog Go would get a couple of qualifiers and stay local to The Meadowlands over the next few months, mentioning possibly racing in a Pennsylvania Sire Stakes leg at Pocono if it worked into the schedule.



MARK HERRON PHOTO

Woman Of Passion has won five of six starts at Oak Grove in her career.

SBOA elims drawn; Chantilly heads straight to May 17 Final

The entry box for this year's SBOA Stakes at Woodbine Mohawk Park closed Tuesday with eliminations needed in two of the four divisions.

The SBOA Stakes for Ontario sired 3-year-olds will require eliminations for both trotting events, while the pacing events will proceed directly to the final on Saturday, May 17.

Canadian Horse of the Year Chantilly was one of 11 to enter the SBOA Filly Pace, which pushes the highly anticipated season debut of the undefeated Nick Gallucci trainee to the May 17 final.

Chantilly went a perfect nine for nine in her 2-year-old season and drew off-season headlines when owner/breeder Millar Farms made her eligible to the Pepsi North America Cup.

With no elimination race this weekend, it's likely Chantilly will prep for the final with another qualifier this Friday.

The field for the C\$126,912 SBOA Filly Pace final is listed below in alphabetical order.

Barb Lahey
Chantilly
Lady Cafe Au Lait
Macapelo Seelster
Millie May Hanover
Oneformybaby
Outtathisworld Deo
Perfectly Chic
Tricky Wicky
Wicked Cruizer
Wicked N Single

The SBOA Open Pace saw 11 3-year-old colts and geldings entered.

Ontario Sires Stakes Super Final champion Crack Shot is among the entrants. The Gregg McNair trainee has qualified three times in preparation for his sophomore campaign, including a 1:54 3/5 (last-quarter 26 4/5) tour of Mohawk Park last Friday.

OSS Gold winner Fifth And Five is also in the field for the May 17 final. The Carl Jamieson trainee won his season debut last Saturday from post 10 in 1:51 2/5.

The field for the C\$123,937 SBOA Open Pace final is listed below in alphabetical order.

Asiago Seelster
Bettorseetheshow
Boxer Seelster
Crack Shot
Fifth And Five
Out Of Ice
Readyforprimetime
Set Shot
Sterling Choice
Time Passer
Tip Of Time

A pair of C\$25,000 eliminations for the SBOA Filly Trot event will take place on Friday evening.

OSS Super Final winner Lil Sweet is the headliner in the first split for trainer Susie Kerwood. The daughter of Green Manalishi S scored two wins and banked just shy of \$250,000 in her 2-year-old season. She'll make her season debut Friday off a pair of qualifiers.

The second elimination will see the 3-year-old debut of O'Brien Award winner Monalishi for trainer Blake MacIntosh. The daughter of Green Manalishi S won six of 10 starts at age 2, including the C\$390,000 Peaceful Way, and made \$562,811.

The fields for the SBOA 3-year-old filly trot eliminations are listed below. The top five finishers from each elimination will advance to the final on May 17.

Race 3 – Friday, May 9, 2025

- 1 – Exquisite Taste (Roy/Nadeau)
- 2 – Incantation (Rooney/Williams)
- 3 – Stormont Beautiful (McClure/Benn)
- 4 – Tellers Choice (Jones/Blais)
- 5 – Lil Sweet (McNair/Kerwood)
- 6 – Shampoo Girl (Zeron/Zeron)
- 7 – Green Glider (Henry/McEneny)

Race 6 – Friday, May 9, 2025

- 1 – Roxie Hart (Henry/Baillargeon)
- 2 – Sprite Seelster (Borth/MacNeil)
- 3 – Ivy Lynn (Plante/Tourigny)
- 4 – Nightingale (Christoforou/Kerwood)
- 5 – Monalishi (MacDonald/MacIntosh)
- 6 – Bright Green (Roy/Nadeau)
- 7 – Not Passable (J. Jamieson/C. Jamieson)

The SBOA Stakes for 3-year-old colt and gelding trotters will have its two elimination races held this Saturday

Marcus Melander trainee Galen Erso returns to Mohawk Park for his season debut in the first elimination. The son of Green Manalishi S won three of seven starts last season and made just over \$200,000.

Among the top earners in the second elimination is Getthegreen for trainer Roger Mayotte. Despite going winless in seven starts at age 2, the son of Green Manalishi S made over \$100,000 and already has a win in two starts this season.

The fields for Saturday's SBOA Open Trot eliminations are listed below. The top five finishers from each elimination advance to the final on May 17.

Race 3 – Saturday, May 10, 2025

- 1 – Galen Erso (McNair/Melander)
- 2 – Manforce (Jamieson/Kerwood)
- 3 – Fast Snap (Davies/Davies)
- 4 – Green Monster (Hudon/Duford)
- 5 – Day (Roy/Blais)
- 6 – Cousin Halifax (Cullen/Crone)
- 7 – Artful Dodger (MacDonald/Beaton)
- 8 – Rising Interest (Borth/Puddy)

Race 6 – Saturday, May 10, 2025

- 1 – Lookatmegoamigo (Roy/Blais)
- 2 – Flanagan Sunshine (Hudon/Dion)
- 3 – Chicago Hall (Jamieson/Gladu)
- 4 – Call Me Parker (Borth/Baillargeon)
- 5 – P L Spencer (McNair/Bossence)
- 6 – Getthegreen (MacDonald/Mayotte)
- 7 – Fleetwood Mac (McClure/Steacy)

Post time on Friday and Saturday evening is 6:35 p.m.

-edited release (Woodbine Communications)



RACE OF THE WEEK

8 YONKERS FRI

1 Mile Pace MGM BORGATA PACE FINAL, GRADE 1, Purse \$516,000

\$1 PICK 3 (8-9-10) | \$2 EXACTA | \$2 TRIPLE | \$10 SUPERFECTA

1 VERDUN(L)

31:50.3 (7/8) \$12,895

8-1 P. Lachance 267-23-37-41 (086)

28 Apr25	8YR	fst7 ¹⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:51	1	BORG #5
21 Apr25	7YR	fst5 ⁴⁰	27	:55	1:24	1:51	1	BORG #4
14 Apr25	4YR	fst5 ⁹⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:51	1	BORG #3
7 Apr25	9YR	gd4 ²⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:51	1	BORG #2
31 Mar25	5YR	gd6 ³⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:52	1	BORG #1
24 Mar25	4YR	gd4 ⁷⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:52	3	6 YO OPN
17 Mar25	8YR	fst4 ⁵⁰	27	:57	1:25	1:52	3	6 YO OPN
10 Mar25	8YR	fst5 ⁵⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:52	1	Inv

b h 5, by Bettor's Delight, Pop Goes Theweasel by Mach Three

Thomas Ceraso Jr, Stamford, CT

P. Lachance 215-22-32-32 (102)

50000	1	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	2 ¹	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	273	291	274	264	1:51	2	105	+6.7w
50000	2	1 ²	2 ²	2 ²	2 ²	2 ¹	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	272	28	274	28	1:51	1	108	+5.4w
50000	4	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	273	283	28	272	1:51	3	104	+6.6w
50000	1	4 ³	4 ³	3 ²	3 ²	3 ¹	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	28	281	272	282	1:52	1	105	+5.8w
50000	6	6 ⁹	6 ⁹	7 ⁷	6 ⁵	1 ^{hd}	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	293	284	27	264	1:52	1	103	+4.4w
35000	5	4 ⁹	4 ⁵	4 ⁵	4 ³	2 ^{hd}	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	293	281	272	272	1:52	3	101	+5.4w
35000	2	3 ³	3 ²	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ³	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	274	30	273	28	1:53	2	99	+1.5w
35000	4	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ²	2 ¹	2 ^{dp3}	PaLachanc	PaLachanc	273	291	282	273	1:52	4	98	+5.6w

Last 5 Sts-\$81,000

1:51.3 YR

1:51 DD 5/8

25 YR	10	3	5	2	\$128,950	25 Tot	10	3	5	2	\$128,950
24 YR	17	10	2	2	\$203,180	24 Tot	38	14	4	4	\$255,565
23 YR	0	0	0	0	- Life	75	24	13	13		\$326,210

2 BINGE ON YANKEE(L)

41:18.3 (1) \$7,988

15-1 S. Zeron 299-44-40-43 (147)

28 Apr25	5YR	fst7 ¹⁰	28	:56	1:25	1:52	1	BORG #5
21 Apr25	2YR	fst5 ⁴⁰	26	:54	1:23	1:52	1	BORG #4
14 Apr25	7YR	fst5 ⁹⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:52	1	BORG #3
7 Apr25	8YR	gd4 ²⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:51	1	BORG #2
31 Mar25	9YR	slv6 ³⁰	27	:57	1:24	1:53	1	BORG #1
24 Mar25	4YR	gd4 ⁷⁰	27	:57	1:24	1:53	3	6 YO OPN
17 Mar25	8YR	fst4 ⁵⁰	27	:57	1:25	1:52	3	6 YO OPN
10 Mar25	4YR	fst5 ⁵⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:51	1	nk3000L5

b g 5, by Stay Hungry, Bootleg Yankee by Allamerican Native

Jeffrey R Gillis, Ferqus, ON, CA; Ellen F Ott, Buffalo, NY

J. Gillis 119-18-23-22 (151)

50000	2	1 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ^{hd}	ScZeron	JeGillis	282	283	281	27	1:52	1	101	+6.7w
50000	5	1 ¹	1 ^{hd}	1 ^{no}	1 ¹	2 ^{nk}	ScZeron	JeGillis	262	282	283	283	1:52	1	104	+5.4w
50000	1	3 ¹	3 ³	3 ²	3 ¹	6 ⁴	ScZeron	JeGillis	262	292	274	293	1:51	1	101	+6.6w
50000	4	3 ¹	3 ³	3 ³	3 ²	3 ²	ScZeron	JeGillis	273	283	28	272	1:53	1	105	+5.8w
50000	7	1 ²	1 ¹	1 ³	1 ²	1 ^{nk}	ScZeron	JeGillis	274	291	274	281	1:53	1	103	+4.4w
35000																+5.4w
35000	1	2 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ³	3 ³	JoStrattn	JeGillis	273	294	281	283	1:54	1	91	+1.5w
27000	5	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	JeGillis	271	29	274	271	1:51	1	108	+5.6w

Last 5 Sts-\$56,000

1:51.1 YR

1:48.3 M1

25 YR	13	3	3	2	\$103,850	25 Tot	13	3	3	2	\$103,850
24 YR	12	4	0	0	\$63,160	24 Tot	29	5	11	1	\$128,393
23 YR	0	0	0	0	- Life	69	14	21	10		\$330,507

3 FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE

31:50.1 (5/8) Q \$12,576

5-1 D. Dunn 3-0-1 (000)

30 Apr25	6PcD	fst5 ⁴⁰	28	:56	1:24	1:53	1	Qua
28 Apr25	5YR	fst7 ¹⁰	28	:56	1:25	1:52	1	BORG #5
21 Apr25	8YR	fst5 ⁴⁰	26	:56	1:24	1:52	1	BORG #4
14 Apr25	7YR	gd4 ²⁰	27	:56	1:23	1:52	1	BORG #3
7 Apr25	6YR	gd6 ³⁰	27	:55	1:23	1:51	1	BORG #2
31 Mar25	9YR	slv6 ³⁰	27	:57	1:24	1:53	1	BORG #1
24 Mar25	4YR	gd4 ⁷⁰	27	:57	1:24	1:53	3	6 YO OPN
17 Mar25	8YR	fst4 ⁵⁰	27	:57	1:25	1:52	3	6 YO OPN
10 Mar25	4YR	fst5 ⁵⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:51	1	nk3000L5

b g 5, by Downbytheseaside, Flyme To The Moon by Bettor's Delight

Winters Racing Stable, Foxboro, MA

C. Stratton 322-57-55-45 (177)

50000	5	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ²	1 ³	1 ^{hd}	CoStrattn	CoStrattn	284	274	281	29	1:53	4		-5
50000	x7x	x7x	x7x	x7x	x7x	dnf	JoStrattn	CoStrattn								+6.7w
50000	3	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	CoStrattn	271	29	282	274	1:52	1	100	+5.4w
50000	1	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	CoStrattn	271	284	283	283	1:52	1	104	+5.8w
50000	4	1 ^{no}	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JoStrattn	CoStrattn	272	28	28	273	1:51	1	110	+4.4w
50000	8	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ³	1 ³	CoStrattn	CoStrattn	283	292	27	264	1:54	1		-8
25000	6	1 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ^{hd}	JoStrattn	CoStrattn	281	281	273	264	1:49	1	104	+1.5w
25000	7	1 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	JoStrattn	CoStrattn	274	272	271	281	1:53	1	102	-4.6w

Last 5 Sts-\$81,250

1:50.3 M1

1:50.2 M1

25 YR	5	2	1	2	\$86,500	25 Tot	10	6	3	0	\$125,755
24 YR	4	1	1	2	\$17,570	24 Tot	20	4	3	5	\$95,520
23 YR	0	0	0	0	- Life	52	14	9	9		\$466,515

4 HUNTIN'THE LAST DOLLAR(L)

31:49.2 (7/8) \$12,542

12-1 Y. Gingras 587-100-91-69 (170)

28 Apr25	8YR	fst7 ¹⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:51	1	BORG #5
21 Apr25	7YR	fst5 ⁴⁰	27	:55	1:22	1:51	1	BORG #4
14 Apr25	7YR	fst5 ⁹⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:52	1	BORG #3
7 Apr25	4YR	gd4 ²⁰	27	:56	1:23	1:52	1	BORG #2
31 Mar25	5YR	gd6 ³⁰	27	:56	1:24	1:52	1	BORG #1
24 Mar25	10M1	fst5 ²⁰	27	:54	1:21	1:50	W/O	
17 Mar25	10M1	fst5 ²⁰	27	:54	1:21	1:50	W/O	
10 Mar25	7M1	fst5 ⁰⁰	29	1:00	1:28	1:53	Qua	
30 Nov24	12M1	fst3 ³⁰	26	:54	1:21	1:48	D-FanDuel	

b g 5, by Huntsville, Eighthundredollar by Bettor's Delight

E Five Racing, Boca Raton, FL; John D Fielding, Scarborough, ON, CA

P. Engblom 415-105-66-51 (253)

50000	5	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ²	3 ¹	JaBarritt	PeEngblom	271	291	274	272	1:51	3	104	+6.7w
50000	6	2 ¹	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	3 ³	JaBarritt	PeEngblom	272	282	273	281	1:51	3	106	+5.4w
50000	5	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JaBarritt	PeEngblom	262	284	28	29	1:52	1	103	+6.6w
50000	1	2 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	1 ¹	JaBarritt	PeEngblom	272	283	274	282	1:52	1	104	+5.8w
50000	1	2 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	2 ^{hd}	JaBarritt	PeEngblom	28	284	272	28	1:52	1	102	+4.4w
25000	6	1 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	5 ²	AnMcCrthy	PeEngblom	271	271	271	284	1:50	2	98	+3.7w
25000	7	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	BrBeckwith	PeEngblom	30	301	281	254	1:54	1		
325000	7	8 ¹⁰	8 ⁹	7 ⁹	7 ⁵	8 ⁷	YaGingras	PeEngblom	282	274	262	271	1:49	1	101	+6.5w

Last 5 Sts-\$74,500

1:52.1 YR

1:49.2 Wbs 7/8

25 YR	5	2	1	2	\$74,500	25 Tot	6	2	1	2	\$75,250
24 YR	3	0	0	0	\$30,450	24 Tot	19	5	1	3	\$24,658
23 YR	2	2	0	0	\$140,500	Life	48	15	7	6	\$807,301

5 MOSSDALE BEN(N,L)

71:51.1 \$16,278

5-2 J. Stratton 651-99-96-92 (152)

28 Apr25	6YR	fst7 ¹⁰	28	:56	1:23	1:51	1	BORG #5
21 Apr25	3YR	fst5 ⁴⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:52	1	BORG #4
14 Apr25	8YR	fst5 ⁹⁰	27	:56	1:23	1:50	1	BORG #3
7 Apr25	9YR	gd4 ²⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:51	1	BORG #2
31 Mar25	9YR	gd6 ³⁰	26	:55	1:23	1:51	1	BORG #1
24 Mar25	8YR	gd6 ³⁰	26	:56	1:22	1:51	1	BORG #1
17 Mar25	7YR	fst4 ⁵⁰	27	:57	1:25	1:53	Inv	
10 Mar25	7YR	fst5 ⁵⁰	27	:57	1:25	1:52	nk2035L5	
24 Feb25	11YR	14YR	28	:57	1:25	1:53	nk15000L5	

b g 7, by A Rocknroll Dance, Mossdale Sue by Bettor's Delight

Pit Investments LLC, Madison, CT

P. Tritton 45-11-12-8 (244)

50000	1	3 ³	3 ³	3 ²	2 ¹	2 ¹	JoStrattn	PeTritton	283	281
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Countdown to Hambo 100 is on

There are just 86 days to go.

Harness racing's most-storied event is celebrating a remarkable milestone this year at the industry's top venue as the 100th edition of the Hambletonian will take place in just under three months at The Meadowlands, on Saturday, Aug. 2.

The Hambo, as well as a laundry list of supporting stakes events, will take place on the first Saturday in August. That day is so special on the Big M's calendar, that it is the only card of the 94 this year at the mile oval that takes place during the day. Post time is noon, and the \$1-million Hambletonian for 3-year-old trotters tops a card that features nine other major events – including the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks for sophomore filly trotters – on a day where purses for the program are estimated at \$3.24 million.

"Hambletonian Day is the most popular event in harness racing," said Meadowlands' Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemyer. "It always brings out a big crowd, and features the very best horses, trainers and drivers in the world. For true harness fans, it is a can't miss day at the races."

Maryland, the standout 2-year-old from 2024, is the early favorite to win The Hambletonian after winning six-of-nine starts a year ago, good for earnings of just over \$1.2 million, a bankroll that led all horses in the sport.

The Marcus Melander trained son of Chapter Seven-Crucial is certain to open up at No. 1 in Big M track announcer Ken Warkentin's weekly "Road to The Hambletonian" Top 10, which will make its debut during the first week of June and will come out for 10 straight Wednesdays.

A national television audience will once again be able to watch The Hambletonian live, as FOX Sports will broadcast the event as part of its "America's Day at the Races" series.

In the coming months, there will be a plethora of special events surrounding "America's Trotting Classic". Much of that information will be available on The Meadowlands website, playmeadowlands.com. For complete statistical data, upcoming events, upcoming prep races and everything else Hambletonian, go to the society's website, hambletonian.com.

Do you like lots of fun facts about the #Hambletonian100 countdown? Of course you do! To get in on the fun, go to <https://www.facebook.com/HambletonianSociety> and <https://www.facebook.com/HarnessRacingDC>.

Road to the Meadowlands Pace

The second edition of Dave Little's Road to The Meadowlands Pace saw a Tony Alagna trainee leap from obscurity all the way to No. 7 in the weekly poll. Making History used an explosive final eighth-of-a-mile to pull off a surprise in a division of the New Jersey Sire Stakes in his career debut to make the biggest splash of the week as all horses in the top 10 either qualified or raced seven days.

1-Louprint - LOOKED ABOUT AS GOOD AS ONE CAN TAKING HIS 2025 DEBUT AT THE MEADOWS. BURKE: "THE HORSE SEEMS LIKE HE'S IN MID-SEASON FORM. HE COULD GO [1:48] TODAY IF HE WANTED TOO. [DESPITE THE TOUGH TRIP.] IT WASN'T THAT HARD OF A MILE. THE EAR PLUGS WERE IN ALL THE WAY. HE'LL BE BACK IN AT POCONO ON THE 17TH. THIS IS THE BEST COLT I'VE HAD SINCE SWEET LOU."

2-Captain Optimistic - FOLLOWED COVER BEFORE ROLLING PAST FALLOUT IN A QUALIFIER THAT FEATURED 30% OF THE TOP 10 (PAPIS PISTOL WAS THIRD). THUS, HE TAKES OVER THE SECOND SPOT. TAKTER: "I WAS VERY HAPPY WITH HIM. DEXTER NEVER PULLED THE PLUGS." WHAT'S HIS BEST CHARACTERISTIC, NANCY? "HE'S VERY GOOD AT HIGH SPEED." THE 'CAPTAIN' WILL BE OFF THIS WEEK AND THEN QUALIFY AFTER THAT.

3-Fallout - WAS GUNNED DOWN, BUT LOOKED GOOD NONETHELESS IN THAT QUALIFIER. ALAGNA: "I WAS VERY HAPPY WITH MY HORSE. WE STILL HAVE AN OPEN BRIDLE ON HIM, WHICH MEANS WE HAVE HIM RELAXED. WHEN WE PUT THE CUPS ON, IT'LL FIRE HIM UP. HE'S OFF THIS WEEK AND, HOPEFULLY, THEN WE FIND AN OVERNIGHT."

4-Papi's Rocket - WENT AN INSIDE TRIP, RALLIED FOR SECOND TO 1-5 GO GO GRASSHOPPER IN WESTERN PA. A GOOD FIRST START? BURKE: "HE WAS GOOD. FINISHED ALERTLY. WE'RE TRYING TO BUILD SOME CONFIDENCE WITH HIM BECAUSE HE'LL HAVE TO STEP HIS GAME UP TO BEAT THESE HORSES. WE'LL BE BACK IN AT POCONO ON THE 17TH."

5-Papis Pistol - RACED ALONG THE INSIDE TO BE THIRD TO CAPTAIN OPTIMISTIC. DEPINTO: "I THOUGHT IT WENT PRETTY WELL. ANDY CAME BACK WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE AND SAID HE WAS REALLY GOOD. WE'LL QUALIFY AGAIN ON SATURDAY, THEN MAYBE WE'LL GO IN THE SIRE STAKES AT POCONO ON THE 17TH. WE'LL TAKE IT WEEK BY WEEK."

6-American Son - 7-Making History - 8-Prince Hal Hanover

9-Manotele - 10-Fusion

-edited release (Meadowlands)

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, MAY 8

RACE 8

(4) BLUE HERON was trotting well late in the mile to be a good 2nd to a dominant winner. He should be tighter going into his second start of his 3YO season and is the one I'll give top billing to in this spot.

-John Rallis



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, MAY 9

RACE 10

(2) LOU ON THE BEACH blew away an amateur field two starts back despite broken equipment and then rallied very nicely from an impossible class last time despite starting from post 10. He's in a good spot here.

-Derick Giwner



RACE 5

(2) HIGH FLYIN' FILLY was a sharp winner in the second leg and then was the victim of tough trips on the rim in her last three. Burke trainee draws well again into a spot where it's likely that Gingras will get more aggressive.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, MAY 10

RACE 6

(2) SOMBODYITREASURE surprised me a bit by being even better last week than the start prior. Can climb the ladder without issue.

-Giwner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

[Thursday](#)

[Friday](#)

[Saturday](#)

Meadowlands Analysis

[Friday](#)

[Saturday](#)

Yonkers Analysis

[Thursday](#)

[Friday](#)

[Saturday](#)

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

SCIOTO OPENS THURSDAY NIGHT

Eldorado Scioto Downs kicks off the 2025 race season with 16 races on opening night, Thursday (May 8), and full cards will continue throughout opening weekend (Friday-Saturday).

"We're pretty happy with the number of horses in the box," said Jason Roth, Scioto's Director of Racing. "We had to move a couple races from Thursday to Friday due to five divisions of a mini-series. Of course I'd love to get everyone raced, but we 'only' built a 16-race paddock, so our max is 160 horses each night."

The Jerry Knappenberger series, named after the long-time general manager of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association, is for colt & gelding pacers who are non-winners of one pari-mutuel race. The event goes off as races 2-5-10-12-14.

Seaside Star leaves from the rail in race 12 for driver Trevor Smith and trainer Dean Glispie. The 3-year-old gelded son of Downbytheseaside was an \$85,000 purchase from the 2023 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale and has earned \$28,810 while staying a true maiden finishing second or third in 10 of his 11 lifetime starts.

"I had him for one start as a 2-year-old. He was a nice colt but just had some maturing and growing up to do," said Glispie. "Over the winter he did a lot of growing up but not out – I would like to see him get a little bigger. He's a very nice colt but was green and immature."

The wagering menu at Scioto on Thursday features a \$7,500 guaranteed pool as part of the USTA's Strategic Wagering initiative. The .50 Pick-4 starts in the seventh race and has a low 14% takeout. Other featured wagers include two .50 Pick-5 (starting in race one and 11); two more .50 Pick-4s (starting in races three and 13); and .20 Super High Fives in races 4, 9 and 16.

Free program pages will be available for each live (and qualifying) card will be available online at the Scioto Downs website. The PP's link will also be posted via X (formally known as Twitter), so be sure to follow @SciotoRacing for wagering updates, features and horsemen information.

The 90-day 2025 Eldorado Scioto Downs race meet runs through Saturday, September 13. Races will be held Tuesday-Saturday, with special holiday cards on Memorial Day and Labor Day. First post is at 5:45 p.m. each day except for Memorial Day (4 p.m.), June 19th (4:00 p.m.), Thursday, July 4th (3:15 p.m.) and Friday, September 12 which will have a 6:45 p.m. post to help accommodate horsemen attending the Ohio Selected Yearling Sale. More information about racing at Scioto can be found on the [Eldorado Scioto Downs website](#).

-edited release (Scioto Downs)

APPLICATION ONLINE FOR 2025 ALLEN J. FINKELSON SCHOLARSHIP

Steve Wolf, president of the Florida Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association, has announced that the chapter is now accepting applications for its 2025 Allen J. Finkelson Scholarship.

The scholarship fund was established in memory of Hall of Famer Allen J. Finkelson, the former Vice President of Public Relations at Pompano Park and longtime Chairman of the Board of the national USHWA organization.

Preference for these scholarships will be given to a student majoring in journalism, communications or veterinarian related studies.

Applicants must be a resident of the state of Florida and currently accepted or enrolled in a fully accredited college or university in the United States.

Criteria for selection include community service, academic achievement, and leadership.

Applicants must have demonstrated scholastic ability with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 and show evidence of community service and leadership through certificates, awards and/or letters of commendation.

Fully completed applications must be postmarked no later than July 15, 2025 for consideration for a September award. Recipients may reapply annually for a maximum of four years.

Applications should be submitted/addressed to the Florida Chapter USHWA, Scholarship Committee, 601 N. Federal Hwy. #320, Pompano Beach, FL 33062.

For more information or to receive an application on the internet, visit www.ushwa-florida.com or contact via e-mail Thomas H. Hicks at renparlc@gate.net or Steven Wolf at stevenwolf1956@gmail.com.

-release (Florida Chapter of USHWA)

SBOANJ/TROPAC TO HOST FUNDRAISER FOR SPEAKER COUGHLIN

The SBOANJ and TrotPAC are hosting a fundraiser for Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin at Fair Winds Farm on Monday, May 19th at 1:30 pm.

The fundraiser lunch will allow attendees to meet Assembly Speaker Coughlin, vital to the 5-year \$100 million state appropriation approval, and express their views on the 50% budget cut to our state appropriation proposed by Governor Murphy in the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

The SBOANJ urges anyone with an interest in New Jersey Racing to attend and support the Speaker. Your attendance and financial contribution are of the utmost importance to the success of our industry and future appropriations.

For more information, please call the SBOANJ office at 732-462-2357.

-release (SBOANJ)

GRASSO SUSPENDED FOR 10 YEARS BY NJ BOARD OF VETS

According to a story on the Paulick Report's website, Dr. Louis Grasso, who was sentenced to 50 months in federal prison, was handed a 10 year suspension by the New Jersey Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

[READ MORE](#)

SECRET AGENT MAN SHINES IN PHILLY QUALIFIER

At a time of year when many stakes 3-year-olds are making their way back to the racetrack, it was the more seasoned performers who made the best showings during Tuesday morning qualifiers at Harrah's Philadelphia.

[READ MORE](#)

FRESHMAN FOCUS TO FEATURE JEFF SMITH

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

Hosted by Roger Huston, Freshman Focus will air at 7 PM on Thursday (May 8) on the OHHA's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

-edited release (OHHA)

R MELINA RETURNS TO RACES WITH POCONO "Q" VICTORY

Tyler Buter, who has been the leading driver at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania during the afternoon and evening pari-mutuel racing, decided to extend his dominance to the mornings as well, as he won five qualifying races at the northeast Pennsylvania oval on Wednesday, guiding three of trainer Hunter Oakes's four victorious charges and also doubling for trainer John Butenschoen.

Among the winners he drove for Butenschoen was R Melina, who last year was generally regarded as the second-best filly in her class behind Allegiant. The now four-year-old daughter of Chapter Seven, who numbered the Kentucky Filly Futurity and the New York Sire Stakes Championship among her successes, returned to the races with a dominating 1:56 3/5 victory for the ownership of M and L Delaware / Armitage Farm.

Trainer Oakes had a trio of talented three-year-old pacing males take victories, with two of them driven by Buter and sired by Huntsville: Excelsior final winner Invictus wired his field in 1:53 4/5 - 28, and multiple stakes winner Thirsty Thursday went to the lead nearing the far turn and came home in 27 3/5 to stop the clock at 1:55 2/5. Oakes teamed with Jason Bartlett as Dandy Ideal, a son of American Ideal who ended his baby campaign with four straight successes including the Matron final (in which Thirsty Thursday was second), flashed home in 26 2/5 from second-over in a 1:54 1/5 triumph.

The Pocono qualifiers can be seen at www.phha.org.

-edited release (Pocono/PHHA)