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Comments? Questions?
Email the Editor DGiwner@DRF.com

THURSDAY, JULY 3, 2025

Welcome aboard!

**Newest class of
Hall of Famers -
human and equine
- to be honored on
Sunday in
Goshen, NY**



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [X BergmanJay](https://x.com/BergmanJay)

The next generation of honorees will be firmly inducted into the Harness Racing's Hall of Fame this weekend (Sunday, July 6) in Goshen, New York. It's a solid class anchored by individuals that excelled both on and off the racetrack. As countless have found out, the path to Goshen is much like the path of championship horse racing. It starts with promise for most but ends with just a select few earning championship credentials and elite status within the Hall of Fame. Chris Ryder, Bob Boni, Tom Aldrich and Mal Burroughs represent a wide swath of men and women dedicated to the great sport and honored for distinction.

Some people think longevity in the sport is a virtual guarantee for induction into the Hall of Fame but that is simply not the case. For Chris Ryder's long history that has mostly been domi-

nated in North America by his training accomplishments, there have been a series of significant bright spots and championship caliber horses. There have been horses he broke and trained that would later rise to even greater standing with other trainers. Yet most recently in the long timeline has been Ryder's uncanny ability to look through pedigrees, spot individuals, and then see the results play out on the racetrack incredibly well. That it took this long for Ryder to find a Horse of the Year, as Twin B Joe Fresh proved to be in 2024, is perhaps the biggest surprise of his career.

Champion Bettor's Wish and Twin B Joe Fresh emanated from the same maternal line of Three Diamonds, a champion on the racetrack and since a broodmare that's line has flourished for 30 years with Ryder a major beneficiary.

Despite the success with McArdle and Tattoo Artist, Ryder's work with pacing fillies in the last decade has been astonishing to say the least, with a series of gifted pacers that dominated on the racetrack. Party Girl Hill, Niki Hill, Put On

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A Show and I Luv The Nightlife paved the way for Ryder's trip to Goshen. Ryder has also directly and indirectly helped change the landscape on the driver's side of the ledger in this sport over the last decade as a conduit for Down Under drivers. Specifically, Dexter Dunn's emergence in North America would not have been possible without the work of Ryder and his wife Nicola helping to clear the diplomatic hurdles necessary for the budding superstar driver to acclimate to these shores.

With his son Patrick now flourishing on the racetrack as a driver, there's a great chance the family name will continue to rank among the elite in the sport in the future.

Though there is enormous pressure when preparing horses for major races, Ryder has been overly generous with his time with the press, recognizing that sport needs to get out the message to prosper.

For Bob Boni the arrival in the Harness Hall of Fame has nothing to do with training or driving horses but his innate ability to connect with people and recognize talent on the racetrack. A career spent in various capacities behind the scenes to those who watch the races on a regular basis, Boni has been known publicly as a bloodstock agent but that does very little to define his life's impact on this sport in various ways. My knowledge of Bob's impact came in the early days of The Meadowlands when 2-year-old races took off with seven-figure purses and investors from outside the game began to take notice. Boni worked with Wall Street investor Lou Guida to come up with the best 2-year-olds they could find from the first crop of champion Niatross and that led to Woodrow Wilson winner Nihilator among an incredible group of stars. He found top pacing mares for the Dreamaire stable, a group that was interested in quality pacers that could go on to be valued broodmares.

In the last 20 years or so, Boni has been an active participant with the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey and through his work with them has helped not just keep the Garden State alive but more recently gotten a significant boost from the government to do so.

"It's the one thing I'm proudest of," said Boni when speaking of how he and fellow horsemen worked tirelessly with interested politicians in New Jersey to forge out an agreement that assured a solid supplement to purses within the state. The legislation also helped revitalize the breeding business that had fallen on hard times due to competition from other states rich from alternative gaming revenue.

Boni's wealth of breeding knowledge is likely surpassed by his capacity to recognize a horse's talent on the racetrack. He's often needed to evaluate horses with countless owners and trainers seeking out his advice before buying or selling a particular horse.

The late Mal Burroughs first had a hand in helping build The Meadowlands and then went on to win the tracks' two greatest Trotting races, first capturing the Hambletonian Oaks in 1994 with his gifted filly Gleam and then coming back three years later as an amateur driver to win the Hambletonian with Malabar Man, a horse he bred and owned with future Hall of Famer Jimmy Takter as the trainer.

My recollection of Burroughs from the moment we first met and spoke was that of a man who believed he could do anything he set his sights upon. In an era where catch-drivers ruled the game, Burroughs, technically an



NEW IMAGE MEDIA

Chris Ryder trains 2024 Horse of the Year Twin B Joe Fresh.

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CONGRATULATIONS

to all of the 2025 Hall of Fame inductees, including



Bob Boni, Chris Ryder and Debbie Little

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amateur, was so poised in the sulky that he gained the respect of those competing against him. The thought of someone else driving because the Hambletonian was such a big race and a professional might give Malabar Man a better chance at victory never once entered Burroughs' mind. He was focused, understood how to sit behind a horse and knew how to make them go when necessary. His Hambletonian victory came as a surprise to many, but he was not among those.

Unlike the others on the Hall of Fame docket, I have never met Tom Aldrich. He helped build Northfield Park into the force it is today as well as working at other tracks and horseman's associations. The Ohio native has a long résumé that certainly seems worthy of enshrinement.

Both Judy-Davis Wilson and Debbie Little have devoted their lives to the promotion of the sport in varied capacities. Wilson spent many years with the Hambletonian Society working with horsemen to advance stakes racing throughout North America. Debbie Little has a long career in the New York press helping get harness racing noticed in every way possible.

The distinction of becoming Hall of Famers will be official on Sunday for the inductees, though their individual accomplishments have clearly set them apart through the years.

Others being enshrined...

Also being honored are the new members of the Living Horse Hall of Fame: Ariana G, Marion Marauder, Put On A Show and Shartin N, as well as broodmares Fireworks Hanover and Steamy Windows. Lester Hollenback, Bob Key, Harmon Showers, American Winner, Grades Singing, Magician, Romalie Hanover and Town Pro will be inducted as Harness Racing Immortals.



STOCK PHOTO

Owner/driver Mal Burroughs.

Betting strategies for babies

By Derick Giwner

While you've seen a few races for 2-year-olds start to pop up at tracks across North America, for me July 1 is the official starting date when the floodgates open and horses begin to make their first career starts. It is always a bit of a guessing game when trying to handicap races for first-timers and thus we bring you a betting guide to lend a helping hand.

The absolute best tool for evaluating the performance potential of 2-year-olds is to watch the qualifiers. I have personally viewed every race from The Meadowlands, Magical Acres and Gaitway Farms as my prep work for providing my daily Meadowlands analysis. That is 129 races in June alone, though some of them were for 3-year-olds or older horses. The video is available to everyone on The Meadowlands [website](#) or via 412 Communications [YouTube page](#).

Some people may wonder why it is best to watch the races and the answer is simple: the past performance lines don't show the full picture. Sure, you'll see if a horse won and posted a fast time, or if they finished with a strong final quarter, but there are many details which are hidden. My goal is to have a comment for anything noteworthy on every horse that raced. What am I looking for?

Was the horse right on the gate? If they started in two qualifiers, did they go from being off the gate the first time to on it the second time? Do they have a fast first few steps off the gate?

Is the horse acting up during the mile and showing signs of greenness? Did they drift out or bear in during the mile?

Does the horse need encouragement in the form of whip taps to keep up?

How professional was the horse if facing adversity? Can they finish inside? Can they handle being in tight quarters?

Did the horse finish with something left in the tank? Was it a positive experience or were they all out?

Other nuggets of information available during these morning sessions are weather conditions and driver selection. Often a driver is listed on multiple horses and which one they elect to drive could be a good indication of the one they think has the most talent.

Armed with all of the qualifying information we start to handicap the races. While obviously I'm looking for horses that impressed me in the morning, I'm more trying to avoid betting the favorite and fading horses coming off victories, even if they looked great doing it. You are going to lose more money than you make betting 2-year-olds in their first start at odds-on prices.

There is an evaluation process that needs to take place, not just when it comes to 2-year-olds but any race. If you have a horse that qualified great and won easily, is there any other entrant in the race that given their odds seems like a possible upsetter? Remember, most of the time the pari-mutuel races are going to go at least two seconds faster than the qualifiers. There is no guarantee that a horse that looked great going in 1:58 will be able to do the same thing at 1:55.

Those that don't have the time to watch the qualifiers or are simply looking for more information can read my Meadowlands analysis on the [DRF Harness homepage](#) for clues. I'm going to make an extra effort for first-time starters to list more horses and provide as much insight as possible. Sometimes I'm going to pick the favorite and they aren't going to be worth betting because I can't predict three days out what the final prices will be on horses who have never raced. That said, there should be enough information for you to pivot, which I'll do as well, if the situation calls for it.

The Kindergarten series kicks off at The Meadowlands on July 1 and you'll see a steady diet of 2-year-olds on Fridays throughout the month. Some of the best betting opportunities are in these races as most people will gravitate to the obvious. If you can zig when they zag, your wallet (or betting account balance) will benefit.



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Will New Jersey work together to bring a casino to the Big M?



AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali ✕ [AtTheTrack7](#)

It's hard to believe that it has been nearly a decade and a half since then Governor Chris Christie mandated that the state of New Jersey would be getting out of the horse racing business and barring private intervention, The Meadowlands and Monmouth Park were scheduled to close at the end of 2010.

Initially, Jeff Gural stepped forward pertaining to The Meadowlands and real estate developer Morris Bailey entered the picture as potential lessee for Monmouth Park.

Gural, of course, followed through to the end and became the lessee of The Meadowlands, but challenges arose as it pertained to Bailey's bid and Monmouth Park eventually would be leased by a group led by New Jersey thoroughbred owner Dennis Drazin.

Many trials and tribulations would take place over the next 14 years. Some moments of partnership between the two entities, working toward a brighter future for the New Jersey industry. Some moments were contentious as each entity also had to protect their own interests.

In 2016 a bid for casino gaming to be expanded outside of Atlantic City was spearheaded by Jeff Gural. That bid was met with fierce competition from Atlantic City interests that did not want to see a casino anywhere in New Jersey outside Atlantic City. Thus, Gural's bid fell short. Gural often pointed to the vagueness of the language in the bill as to where a casino could be developed. That was low-hanging fruit for the opposition who were able to sell a campaign against expanding casinos, making it seem like one was going to be built in your backyard, attracting unsavory individuals and increasing crime. New Jersey responded by saying "no thanks" and the bill was soundly defeated.

This week, an **article** was published in the Jersey Vindicator entitled "A Game Changer for New Jersey Racetracks? Meadowlands and Monmouth Park could get casinos."

Sure, we have been here before. In fact, a decade ago The Meadowlands had an unveiling of the Hard Rock Casino at The Meadowlands, which of course, was never built. Why is this subject a hot topic once again? New York has begun the request for proposal and bidding process for a "down-state" casino destination, which naturally is a threat to New Jersey's gaming landscape. Why go to Atlantic City if there is a brand new casino resort 20 minutes away in New York? Of course, countering that by building a casino in North Jersey makes sense. The question is, can the Standardbred and Thoroughbred horsemen as well as Gural and Drazin get on the same page and get this bill passed together?

What could prevent that from happening you may ask? While the two locations getting expanded gaming would undoubtedly help both racetracks, again, there are personal interests that each track will want to protect.

The Meadowlands has the most desirable location for a casino in North Jersey. It is a stone's throw from Manhattan and has a massive population center to draw people from, which is the ideal scenario for a casino development project. They are also about a two and a half hour car drive across 125 miles to Atlantic City, so they can argue that any cannibalization of Atlantic City casino guests could be mitigated as players who live close to The Meadowlands are already choosing closer locations in surrounding states.

Monmouth Park is located a few minutes from the expanding Jersey Shore town of Long Branch, New Jersey. It is filled already with shops, restaurants and bars, and carries summertime appeal as a potential resort destination. But their closer proximity to Atlantic City could be problematic.

As mentioned earlier, Gural cites the vagueness of the language in the 2016 bill as the catalyst for its defeat. It did not call out The Meadowlands as the desired location for a casino. Naturally he would want The Meadowlands referenced in the bill as a location for the casino. The thoroughbred horsemen would likely have no issue with that, so long as Monmouth Park was also listed as a desired location, and here is where things begin to get dicey.

In the article I referenced earlier, Gural cited the inclusion of Monmouth Park as a potential roadblock. He believes the one hour drive from the Monmouth/Oceanport area to Atlantic City, which are only 55 miles apart

from one another, will be concerning for Atlantic City interests. They would be worried about the cannibalization of that business and might oppose such a bill once again. They already proved they know how to soundly defeat this bill, doing so by a near three-to-one margin in 2016.

In the same article, Drazin noted that a compromise between the two interested parties could be possible if Gural sought only slot machines at his racetrack and not a full-fledged casino.

Gural and Drazin have had their battles and they have had their agreements. Both genuinely want to see the other not only survive, but thrive as they both realize one benefits the other. However, they have their own interests to protect as well and that has been a point of contention pertaining to several issues since the privatization of the two tracks. Now, we face the largest issue of them all. A casino at The Meadowlands would undoubtedly instantly thrust The Big M into the position as hosting the greatest harness racing in the United States once again. If Monmouth were to land a casino, they would be able to produce an annual meet that may resemble the 2010 elite meet, but with more racing days. Perhaps they will never rival Saratoga for the top summer meet each year, but being a strong number two would put them in great position.

There are a great many things that need to be sorted out. First and foremost, Gural and Drazin will need to be able to work together, concede on certain points that may benefit the other as the two try to finally push this incredibly important piece of legislation for New Jersey racing across the finish line. It is plausible that the future of horse racing in New Jersey depends on it. If you don't believe that to be case, I would remind you that Garden State Park, Atlantic City Race Course and Freehold Raceway, all long-term staples of racing in New Jersey, are gone. Let's all hope Gural and Drazin are in this together and put the bigger picture first. I believe they will.

\$20 million purse supplement fully restored for NJ horse racing

The Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey (SBOANJ) is thrilled to announce the full restoration of the \$20 million horse racing purse supplement in the newly adopted FY2026 state budget—a major win for harness racing and the entire equine industry in New Jersey.

This annual funding, split evenly between Standardbreds and thoroughbreds (\$10 million each), is part of a second five-year, \$100 million reauthorization of the purse supplement program first established by the Governor and Legislature in 2018. The program was reauthorized shortly after the initial five-year period concluded in 2023.

"This is a massive win for harness racing in New Jersey," said Mark Ford, President of the SBOANJ. "Restoring the full \$20 million purse supplement reaffirms the state's long-standing commitment to the horse racing industry—an industry that supports thousands of jobs, protects open space, and generates millions in tax revenue. This funding is more than a line item; it's an investment in our farms, our breeders, our trainers, our fans, and the future of racing in New Jersey."

The purse supplement has proven to be a strategic lifeline, allowing New Jersey to compete with neighboring states that heavily subsidize racing through casino revenues. It supports a stronger stakes program, a more robust breeding industry, and helps position New Jersey as a premier destination to breed, train, and race horses.

The Meadowlands Racetrack, recognized as one of the top harness racing venues in the world, has been a direct beneficiary of these continued investments—ensuring that New Jersey remains the gold standard in Standardbred racing for generations to come.

New Jersey's horse racing sector contributes more than tens of millions of dollars annually in direct tax revenues and generates hundreds of millions more in spin off economic activity, while preserving thousands of acres of farmland and open space across the state.

The SBOANJ extends its sincere thanks to the Governor and members of the New Jersey Legislature for their continued support and belief in the importance and economic value of the racing industry.

"This victory keeps the momentum going," added Ford. "We're grateful—and we're just getting started."

-release (SBOANJ)



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EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner ✉ @harnessyeguy

Revamping the Meadowlands Pace

Is there a better way? Everyone should be asking themselves that question on a daily basis. If we aren't looking for new paths to improve the status quo then we've simply accepted that this is the best it can be.

The above thoughts popped into my head when the reality set in that the Meadowlands Pace only had 10 entrants and will not require eliminations. It was a bit of a shock to many people as this was the first time in the race's near 50-year history that it happened.

First we must ask ourselves, is not having eliminations a bad thing?

In 2024 there were two eliminations with 17 total horses split into an eight- and nine-horse field where the top five advanced in each. Those eliminations went for \$50,000 and the final offered a \$650,000 purse. A similar scenario occurred in 2023 when 15 horses entered into two eliminations and the final purse was \$668,000. This \$656,000 final purse for 2025 clearly falls right in line with previous elimination years, so that wasn't affected at all.

Looking back over the previous 10 years, the average number of entrants for the Meadowlands Pace has been 14.1. That number alone tells you that the race has been flirting with not having an elimination for quite some time. Twice during that period an elimination was conducted to reduce 11 horses down to 10. Let's be honest, no one wants to watch an elimination race where fewer than half the horses get the boot from the final and that has been the case every year for a decade. People complain about the lack of effort and movement in these races, so from that standpoint it is hard to understand why anyone is upset about not having an elimination this year.

Thinking about the situation from a logic standpoint, what does the track or the sport really lose by not having elimination races?

I see two possible downsides for the track. First, it is always nice to have marquee horses on the card, even if some of them are simply prepping for the following week. Second, there is a 10-20% handle hit by removing a Meadowlands Pace elimination and replacing it with an overnight race. Still, we are talking about a \$1,000 hit in total revenue so it isn't really damaging.

For the industry as a whole, is there really less build-up for the race without an elimination? Would having a pair of seven-horse eliminations the week before move the needle for viewership and interest? By now we all know who the contenders are being just four weeks removed from the North America Cup where many of them convened. This isn't 1980 when people may not have been able to watch other 3-year-old stakes at other tracks and become familiar with the participants.

The one strong argument that can be made is that more competition is good for the sport. Basically, having 30 or 40 horses competing for 10 spots on the gate in the final makes for some drama and excitement in each of the eliminations and speculation on who may be able to beat who in the final. But is it even feasible to nearly triple the number of entrants for The Meadowlands' signature race?

It has been 15 years since the Pace required three eliminations (2010 – 23 horses total) and the most horses that have entered in the last two decades is 26 back in 2008. Over the last decade, 17 entrants is the high water mark. So clearly we aren't getting anywhere near 30 with the current system, which leads me to a comment from either Shane or Lauren Tritton on their X account:

"Personally since I have been here and experienced the staking style system of grand circuit racing, I think it would be much better for the sport as a whole if races went for much less and you didn't have the early stake payments. Then you would get full fields and the best horses."

The idea is interesting. Would removal of payments increase entrants for the elimination round and what payments should be removed? Let's examine 2025.

After the May 15 yearling nomination round (these \$50 payments are made by the breeders) in 2023 there were a strong 728 horses eligible to the Meadowlands Pace. No change needs to occur there. Four more

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 9](#)

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horses were supplemented at a cost of \$125 each on August 15 later that year. Again, nothing needs to be adjusted and we now have 732 horses in the pool. The next payment round is March 15, 2024 with \$400 required to sustain and \$1,000 to supplement. This is where the numbers take the first major hit as 732 becomes 210. That's an eye-opening 71% decrease. Continuing along, another payment is due almost one year later on February 15, 2025 for the now 3-year-olds. That \$500 fee was plunked down by just 39 horses, an 81% reduction.

Thinking about the above for a moment, 693 horses dropped out of the Meadowlands Pace over \$900 worth of payments. I don't want to make that seem like a small amount, because if you pay \$900 to 10 races, that is closing in on a five-figure nut for stakes payments.

To put a bow on things, the eligible horses dropped from 39 to 34 when the \$2,000 March 15, 2025 was due and stayed at that number when another \$2,000 needed to be paid on April 15. It then costs \$2,500 to enter the eliminations (if they are necessary) and \$5,000 for the final.

So, along the lines of what the Trittons suggested, what if all 2- and 3-year-old payments were eliminated and the only cost to enter the Meadowlands Pace was a \$2,500 fee to be part of the eliminations? How many horses would enter? Could we get 40 of the 732 eligibles? I'm not sure because you are still putting up \$2,500 and would have to face horses that are in theory better in terms of speed and class. That said, there is a luck of the draw in that you could get into an easier \$25,000 elimination and get a good check or find yourself in the \$336,900 final (yearling payments and \$300,000 added by the track).

My concern with the above is that the lower purse for the final would hurt the breeding industry. Why pay for the \$400,000 yearling you think will dominate if your earning power decreases in half?

Maybe there is another way...

First, we create a 3-year-old sustaining payment of \$250 on April 15. It's cheap enough and late enough that I'm guessing about 100 horses will sign on (hopefully even more). That adds \$25,000 to the final purse. Next, we reduce the purses for the elimination races to \$12,500 each and change the payout structure so the top five horses get \$2,500. Let me stop here for a moment and explain. Your reward for doing well in the

elimination should be making the final, not a big payday. That should come by winning the big race. So here we reward more people, making it more enticing to enter, and those that make the final get the added benefit of racing for a large pot the following week.

Going back to the numbers, if the estimated 100 horses pay the April 15 amount and the original 40 estimated horses enter, the Meadowlands Pace final is boosted to \$411,900. Yes, still \$188,100 less than the lowest total it has gone for in the last decade, but still a good number. Of course there is also a chance that more horses enter and the final purse will rise. What if 200 horses pay the \$250 and 60 enter the final? That would add another \$50,000. Keep in mind that this is a chance to be part of the Meadowlands Pace without a huge cost. Some people are

going to take a chance knowing that there is even a reasonable chance of breaking even.

The above is just one potential idea. I have others. Since the worry that a lower cost could hurt the yearling sales, maybe the yearling fee should be \$100 instead of \$50? Maybe the sales company should have to make a contribution? Maybe there needs to be a \$50 payment as a 2-year-old to replace the \$400 one? Maybe there could be a side pot like in poker? Those who want can put up an extra \$5,000 each prior to the elimination and the two highest finishers in the final split it 70%/30%. Does that sound

crazy? Why? Everyone who buys a horse is betting that they will have the best one. Now instead of paying it over time and making it part of the main purse, you are putting it up in one lump sum with a chance to get an even bigger piece of it back.

I will point out that any change is years down the road because the process has already started. For the 2026 Meadowlands Pace, 853 horses made the yearling payments (a nice increase over 732 from 2025) and 227 signed on as 2-year-olds (slightly up from 210). For 2027, the initial \$50 payment was made by 765 horses.

To be clear, this isn't saying The Meadowlands has been doing things wrong over the years. If anything, they typically go out of their way to try new things to see if it works, which is one of the reasons I don't mind spending an hour or two coming up with new ideas and putting them on paper. It is simply an idea. Is it a good one? Well, those of you who own and train 3-year-olds around North America, you tell me.



Karl not in training; stallion career planned for 2026

After his stallion career was placed on hold for 2025, last year's Hambletonian champion Karl is now heading down that road again according to co-owner and trainer Nancy Takter.

"He's at Rood N Riddle collecting for the European market because we can't do that next year while he's standing stud," said Takter. "It has always been our number one priority to have his breeding future as our priority."

Karl was originally expected to stand at Diamond Creek Farm in 2025 but those plans were scrapped when it was announced that he may not be able to breed to a full book of mares in 2025. Those concerns appear to be in the rearview mirror now.

"We collected frozen [semen] for domestic use because it was too late to get mares that were decent by the time his fertility improved," said Takter on whether he was bred at all in 2025.

While original plans were to see Karl back on the track around August this year, that is now on hold with him in Kentucky and not in training at Takter's home base in New Jersey. The trainer was unsure how long Karl would be away and thus couldn't comment on when or if he would race in 2025. Where the now 4-year-old will stand in 2026 is also unknown.

- Derick Giwner

Meadowlands Pace gets 10 entrants; no elims needed

Entries for the 2025 Meadowlands Pace, sponsored by Fashion Farms, were taken Tuesday morning and when the box closed at 9:00am exactly 10 3-year-old pacing colts had been declared.

Stakes conditions dictate that under this circumstance, there will be no elimination races and all 10 declared will race in the \$656,000 Meadowlands Pace on Saturday, July 12.

The horses entered in alphabetical order are:

**CAPTAIN OPTIMISTIC
FALLOUT
JOEL AND THE JETS
KNOCKOUT ROUND
LOUPRINT
MADDEN OAKS
MANOLETE
PAPIS PISTOL
PAPI'S ROCKET
PRINCE HAL HANOVER**

-edited release (Meadowlands)

Takter, Pelling send out a pair each in Saturday's Graduate

By Jay Bergman

Two of the sports' leading trainers are in a unique position on Saturday night as The Meadowlands hosts the finals of the Stan Bergstein Graduate Series for both pacers and trotters.

Trainer Nancy Takter has a pair of 4-year-olds that raced for different trainers as sophomores entered in the \$230,000 trot final. Brett Pelling has a duo of pacers with slightly different origins. Sabonis, a champion in Indiana as a sophomore, debuted as a 4-year-old for him and Arbitrage Hanover raced in his stable at 2 and 3 but was sold and in trainer Rob Fellows care until returning to him for two Graduate legs. That pair put Pelling in solid position for the \$230,000 pace final.

"He was the one horse that worried me last year," said Takter when describing Highland Kismet, the runner-up to her Karl in last year's Hambletonian.

Highland Kismet has been with Takter for just over a month and thus far the results have been spotty to say the least. Highland Kismet broke in his first qualifier and a Graduate division before Takter shedded the hobbles and entered the Father Patrick-sired gelding in a qualifier at The Meadowlands on June 27.

"He was much better in the qualifier," said Takter of a horse that she still considers a work in progress. "I'd say he's about 85 percent to where we like our horses to be."

While Highland Kismet sometimes has a mind of his own, Takter said that the gelding hasn't made a break while training.

Dexter Dunn drove Highland Kismet in his qualifier and is listed to drive on Saturday from post three.

Gruesome Twosome, a 12-time winner as a sophomore racing primarily in Indiana, has a second- and fourth-place finish in a pair of Graduate legs and Takter believes he's moving in the right direction.

"I thought he was super in his last start (June 21). He raced hard to get the front at the half and then got shuffled and locked in," Takter said about Gruesome Twosome, who drew post seven with Yannick Gingras in the bike.

In between Takter's pair are the likely favorites in Private Access (post 5) and Sir Pinocchio (post 6). Following a sophomore campaign that saw him win just once, Private Access has been superb this year winning all three preliminary legs of the Graduate series, with his 1:50 2/5 victory on June 21 a career-best effort. Luc Blais trains Private Access.

Sir Pinocchio won 11 times as a sophomore including a victory in the Yonkers Trot and sports a win in one of the two legs of the series he competed in. A son of Met's Hall, Sir Pinocchio made multiple moves against Private Access and was only beaten four lengths at the finish for trainer Ed Hart.

Amazing Catch (post 4) moves into the Linda Toscano stable with just a third-place finish in three starts this year. The Canadian Trotting Classic winner in 2024 will need to pick up his game to reach the elite level.

The Stan Bergstein Graduate field of 10 has three solid trotting mares, with Date Night Hanover (post 2), Warrawee Michelle (post 8) and Elista Hanover (post 10) indicating during the preliminaries that they have the capacity to go with the male competition.

The Bergstein Graduate for trotters goes as race seven with the pacing final slated for race five.

Pelling's Sabonis is a horse that Diamond Creek Racing and he recently purchased. Following a lackluster debut under new ownership Sabonis put a scare into Nijinsky in the June 21 Graduate leg racing first over for more than the final half and just missing a neck in a well-rated 1:48 4/5 mile.

"He got to running out on the turns," Pelling said. "We corrected that and he was much better last time."



DERICK GIWNER

Trainer/co-owner Brett Pelling hopes Sabonis gets over the top in the \$230,000 Graduate Pace final at The Meadowlands.

A staunch closer while winning 16 of 18 starts and dominating Indiana as a sophomore, Sabonis showed a new wrinkle to his game in the last Graduate leg.

"I was a bit nervous when Dexter (Dunn) left the gate with him," said Pelling.

The nerves wore away as Sabonis was able to race wide through much of the opening quarter before getting a seat and then marched without cover to put Nijinsky to work for the final half.

Sabonis drew post two for the final inside both Nijinsky (post 6) and Captain Albano (post 10), but Pelling predicted his horse would not be likely to see the front end in the early stages.

Given the draw, both Nijinsky and Captain Albano are likely leavers, with Nijinsky, last year's North America Cup champion, showing high speed leaving in all four of his starts this year. A winner in both of his Graduate legs, Nijinsky, a son of Bettor's Delight, will be driven by Louis Philippe Roy.

Captain Albano has looked solid in both of his 4-year-old starts for trainer Noel Daley and is already familiar with post 10 having drawn it for the June 21 preliminary leg. That said, driver Todd McCarthy allowed Nijinsky to regain the lead on that occasion through a soft second quarter and then was lacking in racing room in the final quarter sprint.

Pelling was a little surprised to see Arbitrage Hanover, a top New Jersey Sire Stakes horse in his stable in 2023-24, nominated and racing at this level. Still the son of Bettor's Wish finished second in the opening leg of the Graduate and deserved a chance to return to the Garden State for the remaining legs.

"He's going to need to carry a bit more weight if he's going to compete at this level," Pelling said, hoping that Arbitrage Hanover (post 5) could get a piece of the pie with an easy trip.

Graduate leg winner Captain Luke (post 7) could be a sleeper in with a chance with top pilot Jason Bartlett in the bike. Captain Luke has shown sub-26 final quarter speed in his most recent starts and has the tactical speed to work out a favorable journey.

The Meadowlands has a special 7:00 p.m. first post time for Saturday's program with 10 races programmed followed by fireworks.

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Emoticon Legacy aims for another big effort in Zweig at Vernon

By Ken Weingartner

After enjoying a “crazy big effort” from Emoticon Legacy three weeks ago in the Goodtimes Stakes, driver Louis-Philippe Roy is hoping the colt can put together another memorable performance in Thursday’s \$320,000 Grade 2 Dr. Harry M. Zweig Memorial for 3-year-old trotters at Vernon Downs.

Roy teamed with Emoticon Legacy to capture the Goodtimes by 3-1/4 lengths in 1:50 2/5 on June 14 at Ontario’s Woodbine Mohawk Park. The time was the fastest ever by a sophomore trotter on Canadian soil and equaled Canada’s all-age record.

“He’s kind of the talk of the town here,” Roy said prior to driving at Mohawk on Tuesday evening. “He showed coming into that race that he was ready, but that was a little more than what I expected. It was a crazy big effort. I hope he can repeat it, that it’s not a one-time thing. I hope when I get behind him that he feels the same way.”

Emoticon Legacy was parked going to the front in a 26 4/5 opening quarter in the Goodtimes, then reached the half in 55 1/5 and three-quarters in 1:23 as Ake Svanstedt-driven Gap Kronos S looked to apply first-over pressure on the final turn. Emoticon Legacy trotted home in 27 2/5, which equaled the best last quarter of any of the race’s nine participants.

“I couldn’t see how fast the (first) quarter popped up because I was parked a little bit there and kept driving to the front,” Roy said. “When the half came up in 55 1/5, I was a little bit worried, and I didn’t get much of a break because Ake Svanstedt was already on the move. I was worried I’d used mine a little too much and he wouldn’t be able to sustain it. But he did the opposite. When I asked him, he opened up.”

Emoticon Legacy, trained by Luc Blais and owned by breeder Determination, is 2-for-2 this season. Last year, the son of Walner-Emoticon Hanover won four of seven races, including the Champlain Stakes and eliminations of the William Wellwood Memorial and Breeders Crown. He was fourth and sixth, respectively, in those finals.

“He was a different horse pretty much every time you sat behind him, which is hard as a driver,” Roy said about last year. “I remember early in the year that he was so hot you had to keep him quiet. I thought maybe some races he raced himself twice between the post parade and the race itself.

“Then later on, he was the other way. I thought maybe I should get him a little more on the bit, and more ready to go. Now this year, we took our time qualifying him and making sure we knew what he had going into his first races. One thing about him is that he’s very efficient with his gait. He’s not a big horse and he just floats on the track.”

Emoticon Legacy qualified four times, all wins at Mohawk, before his debut this season.

“Last year, he was a little bit green and didn’t always know what to do,” trainer Blais said earlier this year. “Now, he’s more focused.”

Emoticon Legacy and Roy will leave from post five in Thursday’s Zweig Memorial, which attracted a field of seven. He is the 5-2 second choice on the morning line behind 9-5 favorite Maryland.

Maryland, who received the Dan Patch and O’Brien awards as the sport’s best 2-year-old male trotter in 2024, made his seasonal debut on June 13 in a division of the Empire Breeders Classic at Vernon. He finished second to stablemate Super Chapter, who last week won the MGM Yonkers Trot, the first jewel in the Trotting Triple Crown.

Trained by Marcus Melander, Maryland will leave from post two with driver Dexter Dunn.

All seven Zweig participants are eligible to the 100th edition of the



JULIE WRIGHT/DRF PHOTO

Emoticon Legacy posted a track record 1:50 2/5 win in the Goodtimes at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

Hambletonian on Aug. 2 at The Meadowlands. Maryland is ranked No. 2 in Meadowlands announcer/analyst Ken Warkentin’s Road to the Hambletonian (behind Super Chapter) while Emoticon Legacy is No. 3. Sixth-ranked Hidalgo and No. 7 Onajetplane also are in the Zweig.

“It’s a great group, and that’s what you want going into the Hambletonian,” Roy said about the overall 3-year-old trotting division. “I think it’s fun for the fans right now.”

Nine 3-year-olds entered Thursday’s \$135,000 filly division of the Zweig Memorial, also a Grade 2 event. Roy and Blais will team up with Lasting Dream in that race. She will leave from post two and is 9-1 on the morning line.

In two starts this season, the Determination homebred daughter of Cantab Hall-Dream Together has a second and a third (beaten by a neck). Last year, she hit the board in seven of nine races, winning two. She finished second to Maryland in the Mohawk Million and second to O’Brien Award-winning filly Monalishi in the Peaceful Way Stakes.

“I know Lasting Dream doesn’t show much in her first two starts at Mohawk, but she came back really sound compared to where she was last year, especially late in the year,” Roy said. “She’s not really a sprinter and the first few starts I maybe got her in bad spots for her. She might be a little bit under the radar right now.

“I think she can go forever; she never really gets tired. I might be wrong later on, but right now I’ve got good hopes for her.”

The 3-1 morning-line favorite in the Zweig filly event is New York Sire Stakes standout My Debt Collector, who has five wins and three seconds in eight races this season for trainer Nifty Norman. She will leave from post one with Tyler Buter in the sulky.

Also in the field are 2024 Goldsmith Maid Stakes winner What A Bid Hanover and runner-up Voguish, who were separated by a nose at the finish.

Racing begins at 5:05 p.m. (EDT) at Vernon Downs. The \$135,000 Zweig for fillies is race eight and the \$320,000 Zweig open is race nine.

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MacDonald trio set for Saturday's Next Generation at Scioto Downs

By Derick Gwerner

Ohio-bred 2-year-olds get their "welcome to the show" moment on Saturday night at Scioto Downs when three \$150,000 Next Generation stakes highlight a Buckeye State card that offers a dozen races for the hometown crew and over one million in purse money.

Anthony MacDonald's thestable.ca has representation in all three Next Generation races, an event which requires the purchase of slots at a cost of \$8,000-\$12,000 and doesn't require nomination of a horse until entries are due.

"Anytime you can put on a showcase for the talent in a state I think it is a good idea, whether it is July 4 weekend like the Next Generation or Sire Stakes finals later in the year," said MacDonald. "Some of the people who are getting their horses ready early end up selling their horses for the Next Generation. So it opens up a market – it's been tough to buy horses this year – where you can sell your horse or buy one and race for \$150,000 right off the bat."

In fact two horses have changed barns going into Saturday's races, with Speedbewithyou moving from Chris Beaver to Todd Luther in the filly trot and I'llbetyourboots going from Judy Roegner to Ron Burke in the colt pace.

The Next Generation also drew some of the bigger barns in the country. In addition to Burke having an entrant in all three races, Marcus Melander and Nancy Takter train one entrant in the filly trot. Ohio regulars Chris Beaver, Virgil Morgan, Jr. and Erv Miller are also well represented.

For MacDonald, he seems to like his chances of getting a big piece of the \$150,000 prize in two of the three features. To succeed in the tenth race 2-year-old filly trot, the 48-year-old driver will have to navigate post eight with Tomboy Strong, a Long Tom homebred from The Stable.

"We weren't going broke enough so we decided to really expedite it by buying some broodmares," joked MacDonald, who said they now have 11 broodmares and eight yearlings this year. "Last year we had her full brother and he wasn't as good. We ended up selling him. [Tomboy Strong] is our first true-blue quality homebred."

Tomboy Strong won his first career start at The Meadows in 1:58 1/5 making him the fifth-fastest filly in the race and MacDonald is hoping they mix it up so he can get his charge into the race.

"Anyone that says they aren't concerned with the eight hole is either naïve or super confident or an idiot," said MacDonald. "She races better from off the pace and taking a quick look at it there seems to be a lot of early speed. It is a 2-year-old trot so the first job for everyone will be to keep them trotting. She doesn't generally make breaks and she's a pretty level-headed filly. If they mix it up at all she has a really big shot."

Perhaps MacDonald's best chance of getting his picture taken comes with 2-1 morning-line favorite Uncle Danny in the 2-year-old colt trot slated as race 11. The son of Uncle Peter was an easy winner in 1:57 1/5 in his debut at The Meadows and checked in second clocked in 1:56 3/5 in his second start.

"He's a super-talented colt with lots of speed," said MacDonald, who will steer Uncle Danny from post five. "My only concern is that in the past flip-flops haven't been friendly footwork for Scioto, so we've taken them off and opted for a 9/16 trotting shoe. I don't think they will be a problem, but there is always that tiny question in my mind. He trained well with them on the other day."

MacDonald finds himself back in the eight hole with Highest Honors for the 2-year-old colt pace carded as race 13.

"He's a nice colt. I don't really know what to think of him. In his first start he was just a little green on the front end and got picked off. Last week I thought we'd give him an easy race at Northfield and he drew the eight hole there also, so we ended up racing him easy and he finished up well," said MacDonald. "He's a handy horse but he's not the type who can just pull at the three-eighths and fly by everybody. He's going to need a lot of help."

Highest Honors is 12-1 on the morning line and the gelded son of Summa Cum Laude will have his hands full with another from the sire, the previously mentioned I'llbetyourboots, who already owns a race-best 1:52 2/5 victory.

The 16-race Scioto card begins at 5:50 PM (EDT) and will be featured on Fox Sports 2 as well as streamed live on the Ohio Harness Horseman's Association Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Bubbles Out Looks to Remain Perfect in BSS

By Wes Mayberry for OHHA

What has been the secret to Bubbles Out's success in the Buckeye Stallion Series thus far? Trainer Trish Foulk says there's no magic formula.

"She's been fortunate so far with her draws, and Chris Page has driven her really well. She's just been in really good spots," Foulk said.

After not racing as a 2-year-old, Bubbles Out has gotten off to a great start this year with six wins in nine starts. She also holds the distinction of being the only horse to win each of the first two legs of the BSS for sophomore filly pacers.

Page, who drove her to victory in the first two legs, credits the Downbytheseaside filly for much of her own success.

"She's probably a Sires Stakes filly racing in the Buckeye. She's probably a notch better than the others right now," he said. "There's not a bad trip for her — she can win from the front, she can win from last, she can win from second up. When you have all those tools in your arsenal, it makes my job as a driver easier."

Bubbles Out will look to keep her unbeaten streak in the BSS intact as one of 37 fillies competing across four \$20,000 divisions at Eldorado Scioto Downs on Friday (July 4). Page is again the driver of choice after winning the opening leg in 1:53 1/5 at MGM Northfield Park and the second leg in 1:51 2/5 at Scioto.

"Any time you get Chris, you're ahead of the game," Foulk said. "He's been a good friend for a long time. You can't go wrong with him."

Bubbles Out is the 9-5 morning line favorite in the fourth division, but staying perfect probably won't come easily after drawing the far outside post. She will also be contending with a pair of first-leg winners in 9-2 second choice Maddie's Delite and Pink Jammies.

"She drew the nine hole, so it's going to be tough — she has her work cut out for her," Foulk said. "Anything can happen, but things will definitely have to line up for her."

Page is confident Bubbles Out has what it takes, though, as she reminds him of another fast horse he has driven — her mom, Valerya. In seven seasons from 2011 to 2017, Valerya racked up 30 wins and over \$277,000 in earnings, and Page recognizes her speed in Bubbles Out. He just hopes to continue to be part of the filly's ongoing development.

"Seeing as she didn't race as a 2-year-old, she was kind of a crapshoot, so it's been cool watching her mature," he said. "I've been trying to do the right things with my driving to make her successful but also keep her sharp all year long."

Owned by Foulk Stables, Bubbles Out has \$52,720 in earnings this season and posted her lifetime best of 1:50 4/5 on June 13 at Scioto.

Page is also scheduled to drive Euphoria Rising, the 4-1 second choice behind 2-1 morning line favorite Queen Of Fear in the third division. Kurt Sugg will drive Queen Of Fear, who has one win and one second in three seasonal starts. The Edward Miller trainee has hit the board in seven of 12 lifetime starts with \$162,850 in earnings. She is owned by Miller and Ashley Dunn.

Friday's first and second divisions both feature a pair of winners from prior legs.

In the first division, Rylee Too enters as the 2-1 morning line favorite. Jeremy Smith is set to drive the Steve Carter trainee as she seeks her first BSS win of the season. The Lather Up filly has hit the board in five of six career starts with \$25,760 in earnings and a lifetime best of 1:51 3/5. She is owned by SCP Stable.

Second-leg winner Judge Me Again is the 5-2 morning line favorite in the second division and will leave from post two alongside first-leg winner Four Carat Rock along the rail. Four Carat Rock shares 7-2 odds with Seven Sisters as the second choice in the division. Trevor Smith is set to drive Judge Me Again for trainer Chris Beaver. The Western Vintage filly has hit the board in six of seven starts this season with two wins, including the second leg of the BSS at Scioto in a lifetime-best 1:51 3/5. She has \$34,692 in lifetime earnings and is owned by Beaver, Jim Burnett, Leo Fleming, and Tim Homan.

Friday's Buckeye Stallion Series races at Eldorado Scioto Downs are part of a 16-race Independence Day card that also features the \$25,000 Fillies and Mares Open. First race post time is 3:20 p.m.

RACE OF THE WEEK

5 MEADOWLANDS SAT

1 Mile Pace. STAN BERGSTEIN GRADUATE SERIES - FINAL. 4 YEAR OLD OPEN (DECLARATION FEE - \$4,600) Purse \$230,000

EXACTA AND TRIFECTA | 10 CENT SUPERFECTA | PICK 3 (5-6-7)

1 VANDIEMEN BLUECHIP (L)

41:49.3 (7/8) \$2,474 SHS-HBG \$40,000

10-1 Br. Boyd 260-27-31-31 (104)

21 Jun25	9M1	fst8 ³⁰	264	:55	1:22.4	1:48.4	Graduate
13 Jun25	8M1	fst7 ³⁰	271	:55.4	1:23	1:49.2	Graduate
7 Jun25	1Wbs	fst6 ⁵⁰	263	:55.2	1:23.2	1:49.3	NW17500L5C
31 May25	4Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	261	:53.4	1:20.2	1:49.2	Graduate
25 May25	7TgDA	fst5 ⁸⁰	271	:55.2	1:23.3	1:51.4	NW6PM
18 May25	1TgDA	fst6 ²⁰	264	:54	1:22	1:51	NW6PM

br g 4, by Huntsville, Peppermint Patti by Bettor's Delight

S Tawil, Syrcs, NY P Kautz, Frnkln Lks, NJ N Fuller, Mns, NY A Henn, Mns, NY

C. Capone 69-4-11-9, (058)

75000	1	4 ³ ₂	4 ³ ₃	6 ⁴ ₄	6 ⁴ ₁	6 ³ ₂
75000	1	4 ³ ₂	6 ⁴ ₄	5 ⁵ ₄	6 ⁴ ₁	6 ³ ₂
17520	7	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
49640	4	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
10000	1	2 ³ ₃	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
10000	7	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁

Last 5 Sts-\$16,242

1:49.3 Wbs 7/8

1:53 TgD 5/8

25 M1	7	0	1	2	\$3,475	25 Tot	12	3	1	2	\$29,882
24 M1	4	0	0	1	\$5,200	24 Tot	19	3	6	3	\$135,134
23 M1	0	0	0	0	-Life	40	9	8	8		\$324,010

25 M1 7 0 1 2 \$3,475 25 Tot 12 3 1 2 \$29,882

24 M1 4 0 0 1 \$5,200 24 Tot 19 3 6 3 \$135,134

23 M1 0 0 0 0 -Life 40 9 8 8 \$324,010

2 SABONIS

31:48.2 (7/8) \$4,100 MIDW-M \$9,000

9-2 D. Dunn 152-27-23-23 (178)

21 Jun25	9M1	fst8 ³⁰	264	:55	1:22.4	1:48.4	Graduate
13 Jun25	8M1	fst7 ³⁰	271	:55.4	1:23	1:49.2	Graduate
7 Jun25	11M1	fst7 ³⁰	284	:56.4	1:24.3	1:50.4	Qua
31 May25	9M1	fst5 ⁸⁰	271	:54.4	1:21.3	1:48.4	Opn Hop
17 May25	9M1	fst7 ²⁰	281	:56.1	1:24.1	1:49.4	Qua
6 May25	8PH1	fst6 ⁸⁰	284	:57.4	1:25.1	1:53.1	Qua

b h 4, by Tellitikeitis, Gypsy Bellevue by Roll With Joe

Diamond Creek Racing, Wellsville, PA; Pelling Racino LLC, Creamridge, NJ

Bt. Pelling 23-6-3-6 (261)

75000	7	5 ⁴ ₃	5 ⁵ ₃	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁
75000	5	6 ⁴ ₃	8 ⁵ ₃	7 ⁰ ₅	9 ¹ ₁	8 ⁵ ₁
27500	2	3 ¹ ₁	3 ² ₄	2 ² ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
27500	2	3 ¹ ₁	3 ² ₄	3 ⁵ ₃	3 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁
27500	6	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁
27500	3	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁

Last 5 Sts-\$57,550

1:49.4 M1Q

1:48.2 HoP 7/8

25 M1	3	0	0	2	\$12,300	25 Tot	3	0	0	2	\$12,300
24 M1	0	0	0	0	-Life	24	18	16	1	0	\$491,000
23 M1	0	0	0	0	-Life	23	17	1	3		\$512,500

25 M1 3 0 0 2 \$12,300 25 Tot 3 0 0 2 \$12,300

24 M1 0 0 0 0 -Life 24 18 16 1 0 \$491,000

23 M1 0 0 0 0 -Life 23 17 1 3 \$512,500

3 CALICO JACK HANOVER (L)

41:50.2 \$19,516 SHS-HBG \$200,000

6-1 Ti. Tetrack 108-11-15-6 (102)

21 Jun25	9M1	fst8 ³⁰	264	:55	1:22.4	1:48.4	Graduate
13 Jun25	8M1	fst7 ³⁰	271	:55.4	1:23	1:49.2	Graduate
31 May25	10Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	272	:54	1:21	1:48.3	Graduate
18 May25	10FID	fst5 ⁵⁰	263	:54.3	1:22.3	1:50.2	Juravinski
11 May25	5FID	fst5 ¹⁰	262	:54.4	1:22.4	1:50.2	Juravinski
3 May25	1Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	262	:54.4	1:22.3	1:49.3	NW16500L5C

b h 4, by Captaintreachous, Charisma Hanover by Dragon Again

Determination, Montreal, QC, CA

L. Blais 4-2-1-0 (500)

75000	3	6 ⁶ ₆	6 ⁵ ₅	4 ³ ₃	5 ³ ₄	5 ² ₂
75000	10	1 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	3 ² ₃	2 ² ₂	2 ² ₂
49640	4	5 ⁶ ₄	5 ⁶ ₄	4 ³ ₃	4 ³ ₃	4 ³ ₃
178200	4	2 ² ₂	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁
25200	4	2 ² ₂	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁
17820	6	5 ⁶ ₃	5 ⁶ ₃	6 ⁶ ₃	7 ⁹ ₁	8 ⁷ ₁

Last 5 Sts-\$136,610

1:50.2 FID

1:51.2 Wbs 7/8

25 M1	2	0	0	2	\$22,500	25 Tot	7	2	2	0	\$136,610
24 M1	2	0	0	0	\$68,667	24 Tot	14	3	2	1	\$103,034
23 M1	0	0	0	0	-Life	27	7	5	1		\$278,092

25 M1 2 0 0 2 \$22,500 25 Tot 7 2 2 0 \$136,610

24 M1 2 0 0 0 \$68,667 24 Tot 14 3 2 1 \$103,034

23 M1 0 0 0 0 -Life 27 7 5 1 \$278,092

4 TIMEISSONYSIDE (L)

31:49.3 (5/8) \$4,328 SHS-HBG \$165,000

10-1 S. Zeron 172-17-13-26 (099)

21 Jun25	9M1	fst8 ³⁰	264	:55	1:22.4	1:48.4	Graduate
13 Jun25	8M1	fst7 ³⁰	271	:55.4	1:23	1:49.2	Graduate
31 May25	10Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	272	:54	1:21	1:48.3	Graduate
24 May25	7Wbs	fst6 ⁵⁰	262	:53.4	1:20.1	1:47.4	Prf
18 May25	10FID	fst5 ⁵⁰	263	:54.3	1:22.3	1:50.2	Juravinski
11 May25	5FID	fst5 ¹⁰	262	:54.4	1:22.4	1:50.2	Juravinski

b g 4, by Captain Crunch, Macharouthclock by Mach Three

Thestable Timeissonside, Brunswick, OH

T. Twaddle 2-0-0-0 (000)

75000	6	8 ⁷ ₇	8 ⁶ ₆	7 ⁴ ₁	9 ⁵ ₁	9 ⁴ ₁
75000	6	4 ² ₁	5 ² ₃	4 ³ ₁	5 ⁴ ₁	4 ² ₂
49640	4	6 ⁷ ₆	6 ⁶ ₆	6 ⁴ ₄	6 ⁶ ₃	3 ¹ ₁
26280	7	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
178200	8	9 ¹² ₂	9 ¹² ₂	8 ⁸ ₃	15 ⁵ ₁	5 ⁵ ₁
25200	2	4 ⁵ ₁	4 ⁵ ₁	4 ² ₃	4 ² ₃	4 ² ₃

Last 5 Sts-\$24,021

1:51.1 Mw 5/8

1:49.3 Mw 5/8

25 M1	2	0	0	0	\$6,000	25 Tot	13	3	0	2	\$56,254
24 M1	2	0	0	1	\$3,000	24 Tot	23	9	5	3	\$281,746
23 M1	0	0	0	0	-Life	40	13	5	5		\$344,908

25 M1 2 0 0 0 \$6,000 25 Tot 13 3 0 2 \$56,254

24 M1 2 0 0 1 \$3,000 24 Tot 23 9 5 3 \$281,746

23 M1 0 0 0 0 -Life 40 13 5 5 \$344,908

5 ARBITRAGE HANOVER (L)

31:49.1 (1) \$2,553 SHS-HBG \$42,000

15-1 J. Stratton 152-25-21-17 (145)

21 Jun25	9M1	fst8 ³⁰	264	:55	1:22.4	1:48.4	Graduate
13 Jun25	8M1	fst7 ³⁰	271	:55.4	1:23	1:49.2	Graduate
31 May25	4Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	261	:53.4	1:20.2	1:49.2	Graduate
11 May25	3FID	fst5 ¹⁰	271	:55	1:23.1	1:51.1	Juravinski
3 May25	8Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	266	:55.4	1:23.3	1:49.2	Prf
26 Apr25	9Wbs	fst4 ²⁰	271	:55.2	1:24	1:50.1	Preferred

b g 4, by Bettor's Wish, Ana Hanover by Somebeachsomewhere

Ken W & Glenn H Hardie, NS; Anthony P Symest, NS

Bt. Pelling 23-6-25-17 (145)

75000	8	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
75000	7	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
49640	3	5 ⁶ ₃	5 ⁵ ₃	4 ³ ₃	4 ³ ₃	2 ¹ ₁
25200	1	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁
25920	1	6 ⁸ ₁	6 ⁷ ₁	6 ⁶ ₃	5 ⁷ ₁	5 ⁶ ₁
20160	1	4 ⁷ ₁	4 ⁶ ₁	4 ⁴ ₁	4 ⁵ ₁	4 ⁴ ₁

Last 5 Sts-\$13,706

1:52.3 Wbs 7/8Q

1:49.1 M1

25 M1	2	0	0	0	\$0	25 Tot	6	0	1	0	\$15,319
24 M1	4	0	0	0	\$25,000	24 Tot	12	9	1	0	\$276,500
23 M1	6	0	0	0	\$17,550	Life	30	10	3	1	\$339,569

25 M1 2 0 0 0 \$0 25 Tot 6 0 1 0 \$15,319

24 M1 4 0 0 0 \$25,000 24 Tot 12 9 1 0 \$276,500

23 M1 6 0 0 0 \$17,550 Life 30 10 3 1 \$339,569

6 NIJINSKY (L)

31:47.3 (1) \$21,825 SHS-HBG \$120,000

5-2 Lo. Roy 43-10-1 (750)

21 Jun25	9M1	fst8 ³⁰	264	:55	1:22.4	1:48.4	Graduate
14 Jun25	8Wbs	fst6 ⁸⁰	266	:54.4	1:21.4	1:47.4	GOLD CUP
13 Jun25	10Wbs	fst4 ⁸⁰	272	:54	1:21	1:48.3	Graduate
31 May25	9Wbs	fst5 ⁵⁰	273	:54.5	1:22.3	1:49	Prf
17 May25	5Wbs	fst5 ³⁰	274	:57.4	1:26	1:51.4	Qua
28 Apr25	6Wbs	fst5 ⁷⁰	284	:57.1	1:24	1:52.2	Qua

b h 4, by Bettor's Delight, Pirowette Hanover by Western Ideal

West Wns Sts, Winton, FL; J Fielding, ON; M Duman, Pr Bsh, NY; Winbak Fm, Chspk Cty, MD

A. Beaton 1-1-0-0 (1,000)

75000	5	2 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁
74000	5	2 ¹ ₁	2 ¹ ₁	3 ¹ ₁	3 ² ₂	2 ¹ ₁
49640	6	3 ³ ₃	1 ¹ ₁	1 ¹ ₁	12 ¹ ₂	1 ¹ ₁
25920	7	3 ³ ₂	3 ³ ₂	3 ³ ₄	25 ³ ₄	24 ³ ₄
	4	1 ² ₂	1 ³ ₃	15 ¹ ₄	1 ⁹ ₉	1 ¹ ₁
	5	2 ³ ₃	23 ¹ ₁	23 ³ ₃	23 ³ ₃	23 ³ ₃

Senate version of spending bill limits tax offset for gambling losses

By Matt Hegarty

A wide-ranging tax and spending bill passed by the U.S. Senate on Monday contains language that would limit the tax offset for gambling losses to 90 percent of total winnings, a change to long-standing policy that could have significant impacts on horseracing and other forms of gambling.

The Senate bill, which is forecast to result in a \$3.3 trillion increase in the deficit over the next 10 years but slashes taxes by \$4.5 trillion over that same timespan, was being debated in the House of Representatives on Wednesday under pressure from President Donald Trump, who has been pressing his conservative allies to pass the bill by July 4.

The limitation on offsetting losses would upend decades of tax policy that allowed gamblers to claim losses up to the amount of their winnings, just as any other business can use expenses to offset revenue. Under the new language, which was inserted into the Senate bill after the passage of a similar bill in the House that did not include the policy change, a gambler with \$100,000 in winnings but losses equal to or in excess of that amount could only offset \$90,000 in losses and would pay taxes on \$10,000 in winnings, even if the gambler had a net loss for the year.

A number of professional gamblers in horse racing, including the operators of computerized robotic wagering systems, rely on high-volume, low-margin models that would be severely impacted by the new policy if it is enacted (and if the operators are subject to U.S. tax law – many CAWs are incorporated offshore). CAWs are estimated to provide up to 30 percent in handle on U.S. Thoroughbred races.

Under the new policy, a CAW operator or professional horseplayer subject to U.S. tax law who churns \$500,000 through the pools to net a \$10,000 profit – a 2 percent margin – would only be able to offset a maximum of \$451,000. The gambler would then pay taxes on \$59,000 of income, rather than \$10,000, which would likely wipe out the original profit.

Though language can technically be removed from the bill, the legislation is likely to face an up-or-down vote without any changes, according to Tom Rooney, the chief executive officer of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and a former four-term Republican U.S. Representative. As of Wednesday afternoon, Republican House leaders were attempting to marshal support for the bill in the form sent over from the Senate, but it was unclear if Republicans had enough support to call for a vote.

Rooney said in an interview on Wednesday afternoon that the NTRA had put substantial work into the bill to protect tax and depreciation language in the House bill that was also included in the Senate bill. He called the Senate addition of the language changing the gambling-loss offset a “curveball at the 11th, actually the 12th hour.”

“This is a big deal,” Rooney said. “It’s a big hit to people who support our sport, because without horseplayers we don’t have a sport.”


On social media, professional poker players have been especially vocal about how the change in policy would impact their professions, with some saying that it would force them to quit.

Senate Republicans have introduced dozens of changes to tax policies and slashed benefit programs in order to mitigate the impact of the tax cuts on the national deficit, but the current version of the bill comes nowhere close to wiping out the gap, according to multiple independent, non-partisan analyses of the bill. Democrats have united around opposition to the bill.

“[Republicans] are looking anywhere and everywhere they can to find money,” Rooney said. “Going after gamblers may look good, and it’s true there’s money there. But make no mistake. This is going to hurt us and any other” gambling enterprise.


Given the circumstances, in which President Trump is pressing the House to pass the bill without any changes to the Senate bill, gambling industries may have to “look down the line to see how we can make this right” after the bill passes, Rooney said.

“If the bill passes [the offset limit] is not going to go into effect right away,” Rooney said. “The only thing we may be able to do is work with our colleagues on the Hill on a way to move forward that doesn’t hurt us.”



Handicapper's Corner

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THURSDAY, JULY 3

RACE 8

(4) ALLSMOKEANDMIRORS could get a setup in this spot if there's as much gate speed as I predict. She has been right there at the wire in recent starts.

-Kevin Plowcha



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, JULY 4

RACE 9

(4) WOLFPACK CROWN was two-for-two in qualifying action at Mohawk Park before running into a very talented field of youngsters in his debut; note that race went in a speedy 1:55 3/5. Dr. Ian Moore isn't bringing this guy south for NY pizza.

-Derick Giwner



RACE 3

(4) KATIES UP had to come from second over last week and was not a serious threat but the difference tonight is Bartlett should be able to get her to the front and once established they may be tough to catch.

-Matt Rose



SATURDAY, JULY 5

RACE 3

(3) RAPTORS FLIGHT N almost rallied from last on the class hike a week ago. He's clearly the sharpest horse in this field and I expect he'll be put in play much earlier. .

-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

MILESTONES FOR DRIVERS TRACE TETRICK, TYLER SMITH

Trace Tetrick posted the 8,000th win of his driving career on Wednesday night at Harrah's Hoosier Park after driver Tyler Smith joined the 5,000 victory club earlier during the day at Eldorado Scioto Downs.

[READ MORE](#)

PA SIRE STAKES DOUBLES FOR RONNIE WRENN JR., CAPTAIN COREY

Two-year-old trotting fillies ventured to Hollywood Casino at The Meadows on Wednesday afternoon for three Pennsylvania Sire Stakes events. Driver Ronnie Wrenn Jr. won twice, as did sire Captain Corey.

[READ MORE](#)

OVERALLS IMPROVES TO TWO-FOR-TWO IN NEW YORK SIRE STAKES

The expected showdown between Overalls and My Philomene in the \$110,200 New York Sire Stakes for the 2-year-old filly trotters at Buffalo Raceway on Wednesday afternoon (July 2) never materialized. But the fizzled-out battle didn't bother Overalls one bit as she went gate-to-wire in producing a 3 1/2 length victory over Sharp Seven in 2:00 3/5.

[READ MORE](#)

SUPREME COURT INSTRUCTS FIFTH CIRCUIT TO ISSUE NEW HISA RULING

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday handed down an order requiring the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court to issue a new ruling on the constitutionality of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority, the private company that administers regulations in most major racing states.

The order requires the Fifth Circuit to review a Supreme Court decision issued on Friday in a case involving the Federal Communications Commission and a private company the FCC appointed to administer a fund providing payments to communities that lack broad internet access. In that case, FCC v. Consumers' Research, the Supreme Court rejected a challenge from a party that contended the FCC had violated the non-delegation principle, which is at the core of the Fifth Circuit decision on HISA.

[READ MORE](#)

OVER \$1 MILLION UP FOR GRABS FOR OHIO-SIRED HORSES AT SCIOTO

Saturday (July 5) will be a large card for Ohio-sired horses, with purses topping \$1 million for the in-state horses competing at Scioto Downs.

Headlining the card are three \$150,000 divisions of the Next Generation races for 2-year-old filly trotters, colt and gelding trotters and colt and gelding pacers. The races go off as numbers 10, 11 and 13 and will be featured on NYRA's Day at the Races broadcast on Fox Sports 2, which will run from 8-11 p.m. (EDT)

[READ MORE](#)

PERICULUM LEADS THREE TOP 10 NEWCOMERS IN WEEKLY POLL

Three newcomers joined the Top 10 in the Week 3 edition of the Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll released Wednesday, led by older male trotter Periculum in the No. 6 position.

Louprint and Twin B Joe Fresh remained in the top two spots. Louprint, who was idle, solidified his hold on No. 1, receiving all but one first-place vote following Twin B Joe Fresh's second-place finish behind Sylvia Hanover in the Perfect Sting Mare Pace this past weekend at The Meadowlands.

Ken Hanover, who won a division of the Dave Brower Memorial, garnered the remaining first-place vote and moved from fifth to third in the rankings, 51 points out of second.

Emoticon Legacy and Miki And Minnie, who were both idle, completed the top five.

Periculum, unbeaten in two starts after winning the Crawford Farms Open Trot, led the changes in the second half of the Top 10. He was followed by stablemate Super Chapter, who arrived at No. 7 after winning the MGM Yonkers Trot.

Brue Hanover and Chantilly, both idle, were next in the rankings at

eight and nine, respectively. Sylvia Hanover captured the final spot in the Top 10 off her upset victory in the Perfect Sting.

Dial Square S, Mossdale Ben N and Nijinsky dropped from the Top 10. The Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll, which will continue weekly on Wednesdays through the Grand Circuit season, does not determine year-end awards. The members of the U.S. Harness Writers Association vote on all Dan Patch Award division winners plus Trotter of the Year, Pacer of the Year, and Horse of the Year.

Rankings based on the votes of harness racing media representatives on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown Poll: Week 3 – 7/2/2025

Rank	Name (1st Votes)	Age/Sex/Gait	Record	Earnings	Points	Pvs
1	Louprint (34)	3cp	5-5-0-0	\$449,132	349	1
2	Twin B Joe Fresh	5mp	3-2-1-0	\$184,732	283	2
3	Ken Hanover (1)	5hp	6-5-0-1	\$174,952	232	5
4	Emoticon Legacy	3ct	2-2-0-0	\$94,940	190	4
5	Miki And Minnie	3fp	4-3-1-0	\$186,105	165	3
6	Periculum	6ht	2-2-0-0	\$152,980	99	--
7	Super Chapter	3ct	3-3-0-0	\$223,175	95	--
8	Brue Hanover	5gp	14-11-0-1	\$186,192	80	7
9	Chantilly	3fp	3-3-0-0	\$111,939	70	8
10	Sylvia Hanover	5mp	4-2-1-1	\$123,244	47	--

ALSO: Nijinsky 41; Dial Square S 35; Twisted Destiny 29; Smooth Dream 28; Mossdale Ben N 26; Bythemissal 20; Go Dog Go 19; Call Me Goo 18; Yo Tillie 14; Conversano 11; Aetos Kronos S 9; Captain Albano, Odds On Chesapeake, Private Access 7; Antognoni S, Desperate Man, Maryland 6; Aardie B Miki N, Logan Park 5; Coach Stefanos 4; Overthemoonforyou 3; Rodeo Drive Deo, Variegated 2; Dandy Ideal, Madden Oaks, Monalishi, On To Norway, Ponda Jet 1.

-release (by Ken Weingartner)

STAN BERGSTEIN GRADUATES, FAN APPRECIATION SATURDAY AT BIG M

To honor a man who dedicated his life to the sport and whose face and voice were the most recognized in the history of harness racing, The Meadowlands has seen fit to add his name to the featured events taking place this Saturday (July 5) night at The Big M, as the Stan Bergstein Graduate finals take place with a pair of \$230,000 events for 4-year-olds, one for pacers and one for trotters.

Saturday is Fan Appreciation Night at the mile oval, and has a special later-than-usual post time of 7 p.m., on an evening when on-track patrons will have plenty to enjoy.

The Meadowlands Pace was scheduled to have had eliminations Saturday, but with only 10 horses having dropped into the entry box Tuesday (July 1) morning, the one-dash-for-the-cash final will go on Saturday, July 12.

For those who want to see how some of the contenders are coming along, the eighth race on Saturday will be a 3-year-old Open, which will feature a half-dozen of the horses who will go in the Pace.

What else is happening Saturday?

- At 6 p.m., the post-position draw for the Meadowlands Pace will take place in the winner's circle (Jessica Otten will host)

- Face painters will be in the Backyard from 6:30-9 p.m.

- Fan Appreciation specials will be offered from 6-11 p.m., with \$1 hot dogs, pretzels, popcorn and soda, as well as \$2 Bud and Bud Lite. These cost-friendly concessions will be available at the Café, Terrace, Café Apron Window and Backyard only

- After Race 6, Horseplay. You could win a 2025 Toyota GR86

- Fireworks! Approximately 10 minutes after the last race, there will be a fantastic fireworks show. Anywhere in the Meadowlands grandstand, outside on the standee level, or up on the roof will all be the best place to watch from

"Giving back to our loyal fan base is something all of us at The Meadowlands can get behind," said Big M Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemyre. "Fan Appreciation Night is one way we can do that. Our on-track patrons will be treated to a pair of races named for Stan Bergstein, a man who is synonymous with harness racing, and during the night, can enjoy some low-cost concessions before a great fireworks show lights up the sky at the conclusion of racing. It's a great way to spend a warm summer night."

-edited release (Meadowlands)