

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2025

2025 HOLIDAY ISSUE



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Comments? Questions?

Email the Editor DGiwner@DRF.com



Thanking our Catch Drivers



(CREDITS LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM) QUENTON EGAN / NIKKI SHERMAN / JESSICA HALLETT / LISA PHOTO



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [X BergmanJay](#)

The season for giving thanks is upon us. With more than 50 years observing and interacting with people in the standardbred sport, 2025 has been a blessing of sorts as the ranks of the elite driving colony have shifted with some of the old guard moving on and a youth movement showing no fear having emerged. The shift is a welcome addition for anyone looking for increased competition. It's also an indicator that no matter how much we'd like to settle for a sure thing, change is inevitable.

Young Braxten Boyd made it clear to me when we spoke following his drive in the North America Cup elimination in June that opportunity was the missing link that needed to be connected to advance. Without trainers showing confidence in an upcoming driving talent anonymity is assured. For Boyd it meant taking advantage of the opportunity and not simply being awestruck by the level of competition on the biggest stage. To see an athlete (and drivers certainly are) rise to the level without taking a backseat is a game changer, not just for them but for the rest of the colony which now knows their standing is at risk.

Perhaps no driver in 2025 was as impactful on the big stage this year as Jason Bartlett, who

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*ELIMS FOR BOTH AUG 1.***

Fri., Oct. 23

Sat., Oct. 24

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has slowly moved away from his nightly dominance over the half-mile track at Yonkers Raceway to gain traction among the sport's leading stables. The combination of trust and consistency must come when both parties align and for Bartlett that meant stretching out from Westchester County to many places he had been reluctant to travel to in the past. A "homebody" as he's often been quoted, Bartlett moved away from his comfort zone in 2025 and managed to make every leading driver in North America less comfortable in the process. Whether it was pacers or trotters, Bartlett was more effective getting a horse to sprint at the start of a race than any driver we've witnessed in quite some time. To be equally as adept with trotters or pacers getting advantage over his rivals in a split second, Bartlett rapidly put others on the defensive by acting quickly while others were forced to react to his sudden movements.

In a sport that many often conclude has races that fit a definitive pattern with many of the catch drivers accepting the order of business as if the odds-board is the only factor in a race, Bartlett managed to shake things up wherever he traveled outside of New York, to the surprise of some who only thought of him as a half-mile track – specifically Yonkers – specialist.

Bartlett's breakout or breakaway from his own routine changed the racing dynamic but it also pointed to a shift in where the sport has gone for all catch drivers. As we approach the winter season for harness racing it is more apparent than ever that fewer tracks remain open and some that do race under modified conditions. The days when The Meadowlands ruled the roost and was the absolute drawing card for every horseman in North America have long passed. With only a few days of racing each week, many of the sport's leading drivers use this time of year to regenerate on the sidelines without spending any days going to a race-track. While we could moan about the change, it's better to understand the reasoning some drivers virtually disappear from the sport.

Money!

Harness racing's leading catch drivers make the most money during the primary stakes racing season. Their schedules are incredibly intense, often traveling multiple times during a week to hit as many spots as possible and generate the most income for themselves and their clients. As one driver who will be wintering away from the track pointed out, "If I have to travel to Kentucky (from New Jersey) I have to be up at 3:30 a.m. to catch a plane and probably change in Charlotte." The nuances of the commitment to drives outside of their home turf totally escapes the public, but I guess that's a good thing.

If one thing became more than obvious in 2025 it was that despite the premise that drivers will always choose the best option to win a race when given multiple horses to drive in a specific race, quite often those decisions don't work out as anticipated.

While Dexter Dunn enjoyed yet another magical year in 2025 winning on all fronts, it's hard not to remember the "Big Decision" he was forced to make prior to this year's Hambletonian. With two great options in Maryland and Super Chapter, both from the Marcus Melander stable, those in the media and those betting at home waited for his move thinking of course that whichever his pick was would be more likely to win on Hambo Day. In hindsight neither horse did win the big race, but Maryland finished behind Super Chapter to the benefit of Yannick Gingras who picked up the drive.

At year's end Gingras got off She's A Bulldog to guide Seaside Shuffle in the Three Diamonds at The Meadowlands. Dunn picked up the drive and gave the daughter of Bulldog Hanover her first win of the season.

Obviously our leading drivers are more often right than they are wrong when choosing between two or three horses to drive in a particular race. Yet for those who justify betting based on that singular factor it is worth conceding that they don't always make the winning choice.

It's somewhat ironic that when I first began following this sport in the mid-70's there was really no place for a "catch driver" in the sport. The concept took some time to evolve until there came a point where the trainer-driver could no longer compete with the catch driver on the track. There were many, including myself at the time, that thought it unfair that the driver and trainer earned the same five percent commission when the trainer did 99 percent of the work over the days leading up to the race and the driver got paid for two minutes or less of his input.

It's obvious in 2025 just how valuable catch drivers are to our sport and worth noting how a change in their ranks from year-to-year is of the most benefit to the sport. We want our horses to compete at the highest level and our drivers to be less predictable as they must navigate elements in races that change from week-to-week.

So here's a thank you to all catch drivers, your hard work has made the sport more fun to follow.



EDITOR'S EYE *Keeping the Thanks rolling*

By Derick Gwerner

[@harnesseveguy](#)

There is something special about Thanksgiving here in the United States. In a society where it seems people are constantly complaining about something (or anything) just for the sake of hearing or seeing their words in action, it is a rare day when we can perhaps put the animosity aside to focus on the good in the world.

Outside of my family, there is no doubt my world revolves around Harness Racing and there are so many things we should be thankful for in 2025. On a personal note, I'm very thankful to have been voted into the Communicator's Corner of the Harness Racing Hall of Fame. As I start my 30th year working in the industry, the election is a bit of validation that the three decades were well spent and I must've done something right along the way. Thank you to all of the people who voted for me and reached out with notes of congratulations this year.

One thing we should all be thankful for in 2025 is the weather. For the first time in recent memory almost every major racing date was contested over a fast track and with minimal weather issues. There was no snow at the Breeders Crown or thunderstorms on Hambletonian Day. For that we should all be thankful.

I'm thankful for all of the 3-year-old and older stakes horses who will be returning in 2026 to put on another show. Those include but are not limited to Miki And Minnie, Yo Tillie, Dandy Ideal, On To Norway, Lexus Kody, Ervin Hanover, Captain Albano, Maximus Miki, Twin B Joe Fresh and others.

That we got to see Sylvia Hanover put in a good run against Twin B Joe Fresh in 2025 has me thankful, as does the prospect of Twin B Joe Fresh hooking up with stablemate Miki And Minnie in 2026. Regardless of the sport, rivalries are imperative to creating interest for the fans. Hopefully there will be some great battles ahead in the coming year.

That I was able to see the undefeated Beau Jangles winning his final start of the year in person and got to watch him compete throughout the year has me thankful. In addition to rivalries all sports need stars to thrive and Beau Jangles certainly has the physique and pure speed of an elite talent. Here's hoping he can continue to shine as the calendar changes to 2026.

While I'm thankful for all of the owners in the sport, I'm especially thankful to the newest ones who put their money up in pursuit of on-track success or profits. I've heard about horse shortages for years in the sport but what we really have is an owner shortage. We need more people with a passion for racing or simply more people with enough curiosity to dip their toes into the ownership waters. You can't own the Los Angeles Dodgers but you can own a harness horse.

Whether you head to the track to watch the races live or sit at home and watch from afar, the show goes on because of many people behind the scenes. Management, video production staff, Judges, caretakers, food service workers, security guards and many more help to make sure the show goes on. Since on most days they go unnoticed and unappreciated, on Thanksgiving we show them some love and recognition. Thank you!

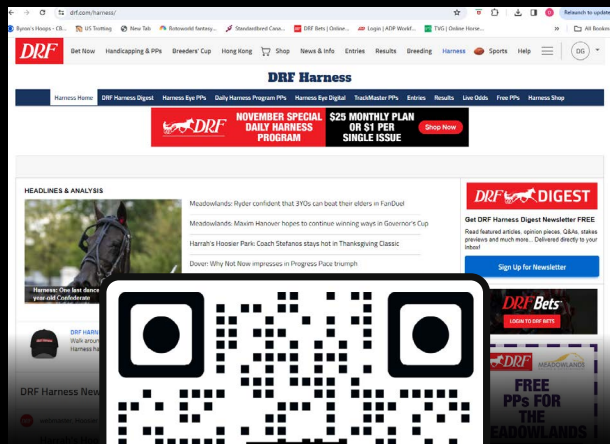
I'd like to personally thank every person during the year who took the time to answer my questions about their horses. From owners to trainers to drivers to breeders and everyone in between, thank you for sharing your knowledge with me so I can bring it to the world. Just as important, thank you to every person, company or organization who supported the DRF Harness brand with advertising. It is with your continued assistance that we can provide our content to the Standardbred community and we couldn't do it without you. And of course, my thanks go out to everyone who reads the newsletter. We appreciate you!

For those that celebrate the holiday, Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families. Remember, nothing but happy thoughts and good feelings . . . at least until the following morning on Black Friday if you are going to battle the crowds for super-low doorbuster deals.

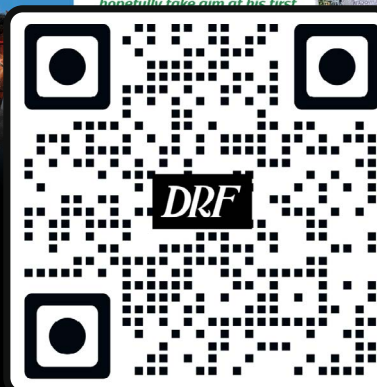


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FanDuel Championships have fallen short of original goal



AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali ✕ [AtTheTrack7](#)

The Meadowlands recently held their final “big” night of racing for the season, the FanDuel Championships and the Fall Final Four races.

When this event was first put together in 2013, it was done with a vision of it being an expansion of the Breeders Crown, to incorporate the potential for the best 3-year-olds to face older horses, similar to the Breeders’ Cup of Thoroughbred racing.

The inaugural edition was held shortly after The Meadowlands opened its new facility. In fact, it was just a week before that the New Meadowlands opened and held its first race – won by Alexie Mattosie – in a snow squall.

The night of November 30, 2013 had tremendous build-up as the leading 3-year-old pacer Captaintreacherous was tackling the best older horses in the Pacing Championship. But the night was full of star power.

The first stakes event was The Goldsmith Maid for the 2-year-old filly trotters, a race that saw Shake It Cerry stamp herself as the premier filly of her generation, dominating in wire-to-wire fashion and establishing what was then a track record for a 2-year-old filly trotter, winning in 1:53 4/5.

The Valley Victory produced the first upset of the evening as Muscle Network defeated heavily favored Nuncio, thwarting the notion that these nights are always just full of favorites winning.

The TVG Free For All Trot (now FanDuel Open Trot) was the first race on the card for the older horses and while no 3-year-olds challenged the best older trotters on that day, it was still a stellar cast of horses in the field. The 2012 Hambletonian winner Market Share defeated fellow Hambletonian alumni from that same year – Uncle Peter and Guccio – to score another milestone win at The Meadowlands.

The eventual North America Cup winner JK Endofanera made a powerful move into strong splits and held off all comers to score in the Governor’s Cup for the 2-year-old pacers.

The Three Diamonds produced the second major upset on the card as Delightful Dragon defeated the strong favorite Ali Blue in the event for 2-year-old filly pacers. It was “Miller Time” at The Meadowlands as driver David Miller won his fourth race on the card and his second upset as he also piloted Muscle Network to his win in the Valley Victory.

The TVG Free For All Pace featured an all-star field, including Captaintreacherous, Sweet Lou, Pet Rock, Foiled Again and more.

The ageless warrior Foiled Again powered to the lead down the backstretch and Captaintreacherous set up his rally off cover as the voice of Sam McKee described the action with a charisma that only Sam could produce, a crescendo of a race call. Foiled Again held off all comers as Yannick Gingras pumped his fist in the air in a thrilling stretch drive. There was disappointment that Captaintreacherous could not produce his best effort that night, but looking back, what better horse to put a stamp on the first major night of racing at The New Meadowlands than Foiled Again?

Not to be outdone, the magnificent Bee A Magician, a Hambletonian Oaks and Breeders Crown champion, finished off the stakes races with a victory in the Moni Maker to close out her championship season.

This year, the same night of racing just did not quite feel the same for me. The Open Mare Trot event only attracted a field of five horses. The Open Mare pace had a field of eight and probably produced the most compelling performance of the night as the 3-year-old filly Miki And Minnie soundly defeated the older pacing mares. The other events on the card all had competitive and full fields, but just a “good night of stakes racing” was not what this card was envisioned to be at its inception.

This night was designed to bring the best 3-year-olds and the best older horses together behind one starting gate. There have been horses to try it over the last 13 years, horses like Captaintreacherous and Confederate on the pacing side. Some 3-year-olds have tried and even won the trotting event, like What The Hill and Tactical Landing.

Like Miki And Minnie this year, the event has sporadically produced a race where a 3-year-old faced older, but when this night was designed, the goal was to produce more than just the occasional occurrence. It was the hope that it would happen routinely.

The vision was the Open Trot would include horses that won races like the Hambletonian and the Kentucky Futurity. The Open Pace had designs on including horses that won the Meadowlands Pace and the Little Brown Jug. The goal was to see Breeders Crown winner against Breeders Crown winner as well.

Again, occasionally this has happened and when it does, it makes for a great story. It just doesn’t seem to be happening as often as people may have envisioned, myself included. I am not sure what can be done to increase the frequency of these occurrences. Perhaps a bonus in the purse winnings for a 3-year-old who finishes in the top five for attempting the feat?

To show the significance of such an event, my vote for Horse of the Year this year did not come down to the Breeders Crown. It came down to the FanDuel Open Pace for the Free For All Mares. Miki And Minnie ended her 3-year-old season with 13 wins in 15 starts and earnings of \$1.1 million and that win against older mares landed my vote for Horse of the Year. We need those moments in the sport and we need them to happen more often.

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Zeron 'Optimistic' about closing out 3-year-old stakes season with a win in Wednesday's Progress Pace at Dover

By Jay Bergman

Driver Scott Zeron is more than optimistic about his chances of capturing Wednesday's \$274,720 Progress Pace at Dover Downs. The final major stakes event on the calendar for sophomore pacers finds Zeron behind Captain Optimistic, a son of Captaintreacherous looking to regain his winning form and exact a bit of revenge against the logical favorite Dandy Ideal.

"I was very happy with the draw," said Zeron from Florida where he'll likely spend most of the next three months. The draw put elimination winner Dandy Ideal to post eight while Captain Optimistic will start from post four in the nine-horse field.

"I think it's the third time in a row we drew post four," said Zeron correctly.

Captain Optimistic chased Dandy Ideal to a second-place finish in the Matron a few weeks ago but the Progress figures to be a different kind of race. "My horse has been strong right throughout. I pulled the pocket behind Dandy Ideal in the Matron and chased him to the wire," said Zeron.

Obviously post position plays a major role in nearly every race but Zeron's confidence in the Nancy Taktetrainee comes from experience. "I followed Prince Hal Hanover in the elimination, and he got a little tired," said Zeron of the troubled trip in last Thursday's (November 20) Progress Pace elimination. "I think that trip will set him up nicely for the final."

Captain Optimistic showed his solid gate speed in the Progress trial, getting away in second through a 26 2/5 opening quarter behind Prince Hal Hanover. When the leader tired Zeron had to wait for room with Captain Optimistic full of pace at the finish. Ultimately he settled for third behind Madden Oaks and Papis Rocket.

Zeron picked up the drive behind Captain Optimistic in this year's Little Brown Jug and guided him to a third-place finish behind Louprint. Since then he's been ultra-consistent, winning a Bluegrass division at The Red Mile in late September in a 1:48 clocking and then finishing a solid third in this year's Breeders Crown following a long overland trip. The Dover five-eighths mile track appears to suit him well, with his tactical speed and closing power his biggest assets.

With \$612K banked this year, Captain Optimistic is the third richest horse in the Progress, with Dandy Ideal's \$914K bankroll leading the group. Dandy Ideal enters the progress in brilliant form for trainer Hunter Oakes and 2025's leading driver Jason Bartlett. The son of American Ideal has shown blistering gate speed and plenty of courage winning 11 of his 18 starts this year, and is undefeated at Dover with a win in the Matron followed by a Progress Pace elimination score

last week. None of those attributes helped in the open post draw as Dandy Ideal starts on the outside of the gate in Wednesday's tenth race at Dover.

Last year Dandy Ideal won the last race of his campaign and first start for then new trainer Oakes in the Matron for 2-year-olds, going wire-to-wire in a 1:50 3/5 seasonsal-best clocking.

As a sophomore Dandy Ideal was dominant on the New York Sire Stakes circuit winning the rich final, but also showed his talent at multiple Grand Circuit events. A memorable score in the \$300,000 Max Hempt Memorial at Pocono in August where Dandy Ideal battled and defeated many of the same rivals he'll meet on Wednesday was perhaps his biggest achievement.

Meadowlands Pace winner Madden Oaks debuted another driver in last

week's Progress trial and Simon Allard could have been the key to the return to the winner's circle for the Cam Capone trainee. Madden Oaks, who got his nose up ahead of Papi's Rocket, completed the 1:50 3/5 mile as a 15-1 outsider but should be lower odds in Wednesday final. Allard indicated that both he and Capone had come up with a plan to help calm down Madden Oaks before the race and make him more manageable to drive in competition. Madden Oaks drew post three for the final.

With five horses qualifying for the final trainer Ron Burke has the numbers working to his advantage, but it's hard to say which

of his horses will step up enough to beat the favorites in this contest. Swingtown (post 1) drew the best of the quintet but barely scraped his way into the final with a fifth-place finish in last week's trials. Railroad Station (post 5), Papi's Rocket (post 6) and TH Colby (post 7) have been bit players in the major sophomore races throughout the season. Newcomer Fallout (post 9) made his first start in the Burke stable following a two-year career with trainer Tony Alagna and was a decent third to Dandy Ideal after being hard-used through the opening quarter in his elimination. With a second-tier draw Fallout may give Burke his best chance at an upset.

Rounding out the Progress field is Fusion (post 2) for trainer Brett Pelling and driver Dexter Dunn. Much like Captain Optimistic, Fusion was trapped inside in last week's elimination and found room in time to reach the final while not actually getting a chance to show much before the wire. The impeccably bred son of Always B Miki and Pure Country has done some of his best racing in the last six weeks and should be a factor.

Dover's pre-Thanksgiving program offers 15 races with a first post of 4:30 p.m. expected. As a co-feature there's a \$110,000 Standardbred Breeders Fund for 2-year-old filly pacers slated as race eight.



AMANDA STEPHENS

Captain Optimistic starts from post four as the 7-2 morning line choice in Wednesday's \$274,720 Progress Pace final at Dover Downs.

Todd McCarthy doubles in MGM Grand Prix Pacing Series opener

Driver Todd McCarthy won two of the four \$50,000 divisions of the opening leg of the MGM Grand Prix Pacing Series on Monday night (November 24) at MGM Yonkers Raceway after he was victorious with Captain Albano and Spring Inhis Step A. Soho Firestone A (George Brennan) and Coaches Corner (Jason Bartlett) captured the other two splits.

Captain Albano got away fourth in the opening flight while Huntinthelastdolar (Bartlett) forged his way around Jamaican Rock A (Matt Kakaley) to take charge past the 27 second opening quarter. Huntinthelastdolar remained in front to the half in 55 3/5 and the three-quarters in 1:23 1/5 as Captain Albano made progress first-over after he was brought to the outside late on the third turn.

Huntinthelastdolar remained ahead of Captain Albano around the last turn and into the lane, but Captain Albano was able to sustain his uncovered brush and wore down the game Huntinthelastdolar late in the mile, prevailing by a neck in 1:50 4/5. Tip Top Cat (Yannick Gingras) was third, followed by Nandolo N (Lauren Tritton) and Jamaican Rock A.

Noel Daley trains Captain Albano, a 4-year-old son of Captaintreacherous bred by Fred Hertrich III, for owners Patricia Stable, L A Express & Sjoblom Inc., Sjoblom Racing Inc. and Michael Dolan. A Dan Patch Award winner in 2023 and 2024, Captain Albano now has 24 victories from 42 starts, has earned \$2,055,823 and paid \$3.26 to win as the favorite. He keyed a \$3.72 exacta and a \$9.82 trifecta.

McCarthy and Spring Inhis Step A bagged the finale in 1:51 2/5. 1-5 favorite Miki Shan N (Colin Kelly) was clear on the point through fractions of 27 2/5, 55 2/5 and 1:22 2/5 while Spring Inhis Step A bided his time in third before McCarthy fired him to the outside before three-quarters. Spring Inhis Step A paced into second on the final bend, charged by the tiring leader in the upper part of the stretch and then kicked clear to defeat pocket-sitter The Greek Freak (Kakaley) by two lengths as Miki Shan N wound up third. Captain Moore A (Brennan) and Courts On Fire (Gingras) were fourth and fifth, respectively.

Spring Inhis Step A, conditioned by Jeff Cullipher for owner Pollack Racing LLC., is an 8-year-old Somebeachsomewhere gelding. He is now a 30-time winner from 99 trips behind the gate, has banked \$516,835 and returned \$10.02 to win as the 4-1 second choice. The exacta was worth \$96.74 and the trifecta kicked back \$423.14.

In his section, Soho Firestone A worked out a pocket trip behind Calicojack Hanover (Daniel Dube) to the 27 2/5 quarter, 56 1/5 half and 1:23 3/5 three-quarters, then out-kicked the pace-setter in the stretch to get the nod by half a length in 1:50 4/5. Calicojack Hanover, Redwood Hanover (Bartlett), Always A Thrill (Kelly) and Catalpa Rescue A (McCarthy) rounded out the top five.

A 6-year-old gelding by American Ideal, Soho Firestone A was sent out by Doug Dilloian Jr. for owners David Linker, Brian Loman and Robert Venable. Soho Firestone A has a summary of 19-15-8 from 71 appearances, has put away \$305,339 and paid \$8.64 to win as the 3-1 fourth choice. He led a \$37 exacta and a \$114.90 trifecta.

Coaches Corner (Bartlett), the runner-up in the final of this series a year ago, was a romping 1:51 2/5 victor in his tilt. He drove on two-wide to hit the front from Blazing Home N (McCarthy) beyond the 27 3/5 quarter, and following middle-half stations of 56 2/5 and 1:24 1/5, he sprinted home in 27 1/5 to defeat a second-over Desperate Man (Kakaley) by 6 1/2 lengths. Verdun (Pat Lachance) wound up third following a first-over trip, followed by Blazing Home N and American Dealer N (Dube).

Trained by Per Engblom, Coaches Corner is a 5-year-old gelded son of Always A Virgin owned by Jeff Fought Racing and Brian Carsey. Bred in Indiana by Black Creek Farm and Hickory Hollow Stable, Coaches Corner made his 33rd trip to the winner's circle in his 89th effort and he has now pocketed \$1,321,487. He returned \$2.30 to win as the 1-9 choice



MIKE LIZZI

Captain Albano (4) got his nose up on the wire to beat Huntinthelastdolar in the opening round of the MGM Grand Prix Pacing Series.

and topped a \$4.68 exacta and an \$8.10 trifecta.

Two more prelims of the MGM Grand Prix Pacing Series will be held, with the second round on Monday, December 1 and the third leg on Monday, December 8. Points for the series will be earned on a 50-25-12-8-5 scale (winner gets 50 points, runner-up gets 25, etc.).

The top 10 point earners get a spot in the \$250,000, 1 1/4 mile final on Friday, December 19, while the next 10 point earners go in the \$75,000, 1 1/4 mile consolation on the same card. A horse must race in all three legs to be eligible for the final and the consolation for both the MGM Grand Prix Pacing Series and the companion MGM Grand Prix Trotting Series.

Through the end of the meet on December 19, MGM Yonkers Raceway is operating on a Monday through Friday live racing schedule with post time each night at 6:45 p.m. (EST). However, the oval will be dark the remainder of this week following Tuesday night's (November 25) program in honor of Thanksgiving.

-release (Yonkers Raceway Media)

18,000 wins for Anthony Morgan

Anthony Morgan became just the second driver in North American history to reach the 18,000 win mark when he steered Inter Mischief to victory in the first race at Dover Downs on Tuesday evening.

The 67-year-old Morgan, who has driven in more than 100,000 races over the last 50 years, has steered horses to just over \$150 million in earnings, good for 12th all time. His lifetime win total trails only Dave Palone (21,421) on the all-time leaderboard.

A sixth generation horseman originally from Ohio, Morgan won his first race as a 15-year-old behind Peachakona at the Celina Matinee. Now based in Delaware, Morgan has gone on to win races at tracks across the United States, with his best year for wins coming in 2006 (1,004) and earnings in 2008 (\$10,879,414).

A four-time National dash-winning champion and member of the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame, one of Morgan's biggest wins came in the 1995 Jugette with Magic Shopper.

-DRF Harness

RACE OF THE WEEK

10 DOVER DOWNS WED

1 Mile Pace PROGRESS PACE FINAL GRADE 2, 3 YEAR OLDS. Purse \$274,720

EXACTA - TRIFECTA | \$1 PICK 4 (10-11-12-13)

1 SWINGTOWN

31:49.2 (5/8) \$27,357

15-1 T. McCarthy 1177-212-190-156 (180)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	6	7	9	7 ⁵ 3	6 ³ 1	5	5	3	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	3	6	7	6 ⁴ 1	5 ³ 3	8	7	8	1
31 Oct/25	13HoP	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:49	D-MonCircle	172500	1	4	4	4	2 ¹ 1	3	4	5	3
25 Oct/25	11Wbs	fst460	26	:54	1:21	1:48	Qn 3YO	35500	9	7	9	7 ⁵ 3	6 ³ 1	5	5	3	1
18 Oct/25	7Wbs	fst600	26	:54	1:21	1:48	BRDRS CROW	25000	6	2	9	7 ⁵ 3	6 ³ 1	5	5	3	1
5 Oct/25	10Lx1A	fst800	27	:53	1:20	1:46	Tattersall	220000	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2
27 Sep/25	8Dtn	fst800	25	:53	1:21	1:48	D-OHSS	400000	9	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	1

b c 3, by Downbytheseaside, Swinging Beauty by Art Major

Burke Rco Stb, Frdrcktn, PA; Hatfield Sts, Climbs, OH; Knox Services, Mt Vm, OH; R A S Rco, Pw, OH

R. Burke 5141-1043-825-716 (203)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	6	7	9	7 ⁵ 3	6 ³ 1	5	5	3	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	3	6	7	6 ⁴ 1	5 ³ 3	8	7	8	1
31 Oct/25	13HoP	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:49	D-MonCircle	172500	1	4	4	4	2 ¹ 1	3	4	5	3
25 Oct/25	11Wbs	fst460	26	:54	1:21	1:48	Qn 3YO	35500	9	7	9	7 ⁵ 3	6 ³ 1	5	5	3	1
18 Oct/25	7Wbs	fst600	26	:54	1:21	1:48	BRDRS CROW	25000	6	2	9	7 ⁵ 3	6 ³ 1	5	5	3	1
5 Oct/25	10Lx1A	fst800	27	:53	1:20	1:46	Tattersall	220000	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2
27 Sep/25	8Dtn	fst800	25	:53	1:21	1:48	D-OHSS	400000	9	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	1

Last 5 Sts-\$12,150

1:49.2 ScD 5/8

1:50.1 M1

25 DD 2 0 0 0

24 DD 0 0 0 0

23 DD 0 0 0 0

\$1,750 25 Tot

-24 Tot 11 6 2 1

-Life 30 10 7 3

\$519,790

\$474,454

\$394,244

2 FUSION

31:48.1 (1) \$13,825

10-1 D. Dunn 1219-278-201-174 (228)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	2	3	2	3	5	3	4	3	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	3	2	3	3	4	2	3	3	1
25 Oct/25	8Wbs	fst460	25	:54	1:20	1:47	BRDRS CROW	600000	10	10	12	10	7	10	10	10	10
18 Oct/25	4Wbs	fst600	26	:56	1:23	1:49	BRDRS CROW	25000	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
5 Oct/25	6Lx1A	fst800	26	:52	1:19	1:48	Tattersall	220000	1	3	1	3	2	4	3	2	1
27 Sep/25	12Lx1A	fst790	27	:53	1:20	1:48	Bluegrass	71000	2	5	3	5	2	5	7	1	1
15 Sep/25	6Lx1A	fst800	27	:53	1:21	1:50	COMMONWLT	100000	1	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1

b c 3, by Always B Miki, Pure Country by Somebeachsomewhere

Diamond Creek Racino, Wellsville, Pa

Bt. Pelling 336-95-60-43 (283)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	2	3	2	3	5	3	4	3	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	3	2	3	3	4	2	3	3	1
25 Oct/25	8Wbs	fst460	25	:54	1:20	1:47	BRDRS CROW	600000	10	10	12	10	7	10	10	10	10
18 Oct/25	4Wbs	fst600	26	:56	1:23	1:49	BRDRS CROW	25000	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
5 Oct/25	6Lx1A	fst800	26	:52	1:19	1:48	Tattersall	220000	1	3	1	3	2	4	3	2	1
27 Sep/25	12Lx1A	fst790	27	:53	1:20	1:48	Bluegrass	71000	2	5	3	5	2	5	7	1	1
15 Sep/25	6Lx1A	fst800	27	:53	1:21	1:50	COMMONWLT	100000	1	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1

Last 5 Sts-\$81,972

1:48.4 Lx1

1:50.4 Lx1

25 DD 2 0 0 0

24 DD 0 0 0 0

23 DD 0 0 0 0

\$20,722 25

-24 14 5 4 1

-Life 20 9 5 1

\$183,545

\$106,322

\$299,867

3 MADDEN OAKS(L)

31:48 (1) \$40,257

9-2 S. Allard 1569-234-239-222 (149)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	3	5	3	6	4	3	7	5	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	2	5	3	6	4	3	7	5	1
25 Oct/25	8Wbs	fst460	25	:54	1:20	1:47	BRDRS CROW	600000	1	6	7	5	1	9	9	8	1
18 Oct/25	4Wbs	fst600	26	:56	1:23	1:49	BRDRS CROW	25000	1	6	7	5	1	9	9	8	1
5 Oct/25	6Lx1A	fst800	26	:52	1:19	1:48	Tattersall	220000	4	6	5	5	4	2	1	2	1
27 Sep/25	7Lx1A	fst790	26	:54	1:21	1:47	Bluegrass	71000	5	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	1
24 Sep/25	11TQDA	fst750					D-FmpBreed	190650									

b c 3, by Huntsville, Hard Eight by Bettor's Delight

S Tawil, Syrcs NY; P Kautz, Frnkln Lks NJ; A Henn, Mnls, NY; N Fullmer, Mnls, NY

C. Capone 422-74-60-54 (175)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	3	5	3	6	4	3	7	5	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	2	5	3	6	4	3	7	5	1
25 Oct/25	8Wbs	fst460	25	:54	1:20	1:47	BRDRS CROW	600000	1	6	7	5	1	9	9	8	1
18 Oct/25	4Wbs	fst600	26	:56	1:23	1:49	BRDRS CROW	25000	1	6	7	5	1	9	9	8	1
5 Oct/25	6Lx1A	fst800	26	:52	1:19	1:48	Tattersall	220000	4	6	5	5	4	2	1	2	1
27 Sep/25	7Lx1A	fst790	26	:54	1:21	1:47	Bluegrass	71000	5	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	1
24 Sep/25	11TQDA	fst750					D-FmpBreed	190650									

Last 5 Sts-\$37,100

1:48 M1

1:51.3 TgD 5/8

25 DD 2 1 0 0

24 DD 0 0 0 0

23 DD 0 0 0 0

\$17,500 25 Tot

-24 17 6 4 3

-Life 20 8 5 3

\$684,363

\$16,330

\$700,869

4 CAPTAIN OPTIMISTIC

31:48 (1) \$32,250

7-2 S. Zeron 1414-184-194-221 (130)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
31 Oct/25	13HoP	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:49	D-MonCircle	172500	6	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25 Oct/25	8Wbs	fst460	25	:54	1:20	1:47	BRDRS CROW	600000	4	8	9	8	6	6	5	3	4
18 Oct/25	4Wbs	fst600	26	:54	1:21	1:48	BRDRS CROW	25000	3	3	1	4	1	5	4	3	2
5 Oct/25	10Lx1A	fst800	27	:53	1:20	1:46	Bluegrass	220000	5	5	5	7	4	4	2	3	1
27 Sep/25	2Lx1A	fst790	26	:53	1:21	1:48	Bluegrass	70000	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

b c 3, by Captainreacherous, Cinamony by Art Official

3 Brothers Stbs, NY; M Katz, ON; Cavart Fms, Vienna, VA; Deo Valente Fms, LLC, Flemington, NJ

N. Takter 429-60-64-46 (140)

20 Nov/25	14DD	fst460	26	:54	1:22	1:50	Progress	35000	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
13 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:50	MATRON 3YO	149350	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
31 Oct/25	13HoP	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:49	D-MonCircle	172500	6	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25 Oct/25	8Wbs	fst460	25	:54	1:20	1:47	BRDRS CROW	600000	4	8	9	8	6	6	5	3	4
18 Oct/25	4Wbs	fst600	26	:54	1:21	1:48	BRDRS CROW	25000	3	3	1	4	1	5	4	3	2
5 Oct/25	10Lx1A	fst800	27	:53	1:20	1:46	Bluegrass	220000	5	5	5	7	4	4	2	3	1
27 Sep/25	2Lx1A	fst790	26	:53	1:21	1:48	Bluegrass	70000	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Last 5 Sts-\$202,788

1:48 Lx1

1:49 M1

25 DD 2 0 1 0

24 DD 0 0 1 0

23 DD 0 0 0 0

\$41,538 25 Tot

-24 11 7 2 1

-Life 30 12 7 6

\$612,747

\$454,830

\$1,067,577

5 RAILROAD STATION(L)

31:49.3 (5/8) \$8,716

12-1 Y. Gingras 1863-236-293-243 (175)

20 Nov/25	12DD	fst460	26	:54	1:21	1:49	Progress	35000	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
14 Nov/25	7Mw	fst520	27	:56	1:23	1:50	NW500L4	12000	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
31 Oct/25	13HoP	fst460	26	:55	1:22	1:49	D-MonCircle	172500	7	9	11	8	9	8	1	3	4
17 Oct/25	1Mw	fst600	26	:53	1:20	1:48	nw700L4	12000	1	5	4	5	1	4	3	4	3
10 Oct/25	6Mw	fst600	27	:55	1:23	1:50	W4NW7EXTPM	12500									
27 Sep/25	7Lx1	fst790	26	:54	1:21	1:47	L2NW3	12000	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19 Sep/25	10HoP	fst720	27	:55	1:23	1:49	D-Jenn	12000	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Trainer Annie Stoebe to co-host Big M simulcast show



She's a trainer of stakes-caliber trotters and a business woman with her own apparel line.

But that's not enough for Annie Stoebe, who will add "television co-host" to her resume this weekend when she sits alongside Dave Little on the Sam McKee Memorial Broadcast Set and offers her insights, opinions and selections on The Meadowlands' live simulcast show this Friday (Nov. 28) and Saturday (Nov. 29).

The broadcast begins nightly at 5:45 p.m. when there is live racing. Post time for the first race is 6:20 p.m.

Stoebe says she touched base with Meadowlands Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jeff Gural as well as Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir, both of whom liked the idea of her doing the show.

"It was a little bit of them and [Big M Winner's Circle Host] Gary [DiLeo] pitched in and we just kind of all talked about it and it just snowballed from there," said Stoebe. "[Co-hosting] is different, but I'm always up for trying something new, and I figured, why not, this is a great opportunity."

"We are in the midst of having a different co-host every week as compared to the past, when we had two people on set doing a majority of the shows," said Settlemoir. "This format allows people from different walks of the industry to be on our show and share their perspectives."

"Journalists are great, and they are the backbone of who we use to do the show with Dave. But to get the opinions of a trainer like Annie is something we feel is something our fan base might find interesting, because we certainly do."

Stoebe, whose two stable stars are Diabolic Hill and Elista Hanover, doesn't appear too intimidated by the fact that a majority of the gig calls for handicapping the races.

"I'll make some extra money," said Stoebe with a laugh. "I'll do my studying."

In addition to horse training, Stoebe also has a line of apparel that she's hawking that includes tank tops, T-shirts and baseball caps.

"There are links on all of my social media," said Stoebe. "There is also a Shopify store, which is where all of those links will take you."

To take a look at the merchandise, go [here](#).

Diabolic Hill was one of the top 2-year-old male trotters of 2025, winning half of his 10 starts and banking just over a half-million dollars. On Nov. 15, in his last start of the season, the son of Muscle Hill-Crysti Dream won the \$421,000 Valley Victory at The Big M, getting some revenge on Breeders Crown champion Spencer Hanover, who defeated 'Diabolic' in the Crown up at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

Does the trainer have Hambletonian dreams?

"I had dreams from the second I saw him in the paddock," said Stoebe. "But after the Valley Victory, we are definitely looking forward to next year."

Diabolic Hill, Elista Hanover, an apparel line, and handicapping and commenting on two racing programs. All of these things will be discussed at length this weekend. And Stoebe is ready for the challenge.

"I was asked and jumped on the opportunity," said Stoebe. "I can't wait to co-host."

-edited release (Meadowlands)



HANDICAPPER'S CORNER

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 head to your nearest ADW and simply make a win bet.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

RACE 2

(5) JOHNNY BUCKSHOT is the obvious class of this group. He is likely to be the horse to catch when turning for home. I think he turns back all challengers.

-Kevin Plowcha



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

RACE 8

(9) CHILLIN BYTHE POOL comes off a good effort at Yonkers and if you dig deeper into her PPs, there is a win at this level back in September here. You can also find a number of lines where she shows early speed.

-Derick Gwerner



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29

RACE 7

(4) GO GO GRASSHOPPER was in an impossible spot versus much better from post nine last time when coming back from a four week absence. His best destroys this field.

-Gwerner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

[Friday](#)

Meadowlands Analysis

[Friday](#)

[Saturday](#)

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

AARON MERRIMAN ECLIPSES THE 17,000 WIN PLATEAU



Aaron Merriman, 47, reached yet another remarkable milestone in his legendary career on Tuesday (Nov. 25) evening, becoming just the third driver in harness racing history to eclipse 17,000 career wins. The history-

making victory came aboard Baby Yoda, trained by Northfield Park's current leading trainer Cory Kreiser.

Merriman entered the night needing four wins to reach the milestone and wasted little time narrowing the margin. He won the opener with Bettor B Sirius (Randy Bendis) in 1:57 2/5 after the duo overcame a demanding first-over journey. Merriman returned a few races later with Mae Knows It All (Daryl Bontrager), winning from off the pace in 2:00 1/5. For his third victory of the night, Merriman guided Jack My Style (Brian Miller) to a 1:56 3/5 effort, putting himself just one victory shy of history.

The record-setting victory came aboard Baby Yoda, who gutted it out after making the lead from post eight in 1:58 2/5.

Merriman's career has been defined by skill and consistency. Since earning his first driving victory with Albert's Filly in 1998 at Raceway Park, he has accumulated more than \$129 million in purse earnings and several national dash titles.

In 2013, Merriman became the youngest driver to be inducted into Northfield Park's Wall of Fame. He has more driving victories than anyone else in the track's history.

"I'm unbelievably grateful to be in this position. I've had the privilege of working with great trainers, owners and horses throughout my career, and none of this happens without them," said a jubilant Merriman. "It's special to get a milestone like this here at Northfield, a place that means so much to me."

With another milestone achieved, Merriman continues to add to a fabulous career that has established him among the sport's all-time greats.

-edited release (Northfield)

SUNDAY RACING TO RETURN TO THE MEADOWLANDS IN 2026

According to the track's live racing calendar, The Meadowlands will race four consecutive Sunday afternoon cards in 2026 from January 11 to February 1 as part of 102 total racing dates during the year.

In addition to the Sundays, The Meadowlands will race each Friday and Saturday from January 2 to September 12 (there is also a scheduled card on Thursday, August 6 on the week of the Hambletonian). After a brief hiatus for Thoroughbred racing, Standardbreds start up again on October 17 and continue on the Friday/Saturday schedule until adding Thursdays in December. There will be no live racing on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or New Year's Eve.

BETTOR'S WISH STUD FEE SET AT \$6,000 FOR 2026

The Bettor's Wish Syndicate has announced that the stud fee for Bettor's Wish will be set at \$6,000 for the 2026 breeding season. He is standing at Southwind Farms in New Jersey.

Bettor's Wish's three crops of racing age numbering 188 foals have earned \$7.4 million to date. His first-year NJ eligible crop have earned an impressive \$103,638 in earnings per registered foal.

"Bettor's Wish has passed on his speed and determination to his offspring, like this season's standout Twisted Destiny and multiple stakes winners Royally Hot and Wedlock Blue Chip," said trainer Chris Ryder.

Twisted Destiny, p 3, 1.48F (\$447,069) raced against the best of the 3YO colt pacers all season long, winning the G2 Messenger at Yonkers, elimination of the G1 Adios where he set his 3YO mark, the Liberty Bell, and the PA Sires Stakes at Harrah's Philadelphia beating Captain Optimistic.

The New Jersey stakes schedule provides a very robust program at the Meadowlands all season long. In 2025 a 2YO NJ sired pacer had \$920,000 in stakes to race for. New for 2026, NJ Sires Stakes is planning for a platinum and silver level offering even more racing opportunities.

Expanded racing opportunities combined with NJ breeders, sired and resident mare rewards make NJ a winning place to breed and race.

New Jersey 2YO pacing race program:

Kindergarten Series	5 legs & final	250,000
NJ Sires Stakes	3 legs & final	315,000
Homegrown Pace		40,000
Renaissance	elimination & final	60,000
NJ Classic Series	elimination & final	165,000
Stdbred. Dev. Fund	2 legs & final	90,000
TOTAL		\$920,000

To book your mare to two-time Dan Patch Award winner Bettor's Wish P1:47 3/5 (\$2,601,233) please go to southwindfarms.net/bettors-wish. For other questions call the Bettor's Wish syndicate at 908-451-4135.

-edited release (Bettor's Wish Syndicate)

M-M'S DREAM JOINS KOUNTRY LANE BROODMARE BAND

Kountry Lane Standardbreds is proud to announce that they have purchased superstar trotting mare M-M's Dream.

M-M's Dream won the Indiana Sire Stakes Super Final at the ages of 2 and 3 and then took her talent nationwide to capture the Hambletonian Maturity, Dr. John R Steele Memorial Trot and Miss Versatility Final at the age of 4, Dr. John R Steele Memorial Trot at 5, and the Dr. John R Steele Memorial (a three-peat), the Miss Versatility Trot Final (a two-peat), the Dayton Derby Distaff and the FanDuel this year at 6.

She retires with a record of 1:49 4/5 and \$2,296,334 in earnings. M-M's Dream was owned throughout her racing career by Hillside Stables and Frank Baldachino and trained by Henry Graber and Ron Burke.

M-M's Dream joins What A Bid Hanover 3,1:51 4/5 \$453,088 and McSeaside p,3,1:48 4/5 \$595,238 as the latest additions to the Kountry Lane Standardbreds broodmare band. Both M-M's Dream and What A Bid Hanover will be bred to Chapter Seven in 2026 and McSeaside will be paired with first crop sensation Louprint.

-edited release (Dr J. Stallion Management)

WOLFPACK ONE PREVAILS IN MARV BACHRAD DSBF FINAL

An early break in stride by 1-20 favorite Tuis Star opened the door for Wolfpack One to spring an 11-1 upset in the \$110,000 Marv Bachrad Delaware Standardbred Breeders' Fund championship for 2-year-old trotting fillies on Monday (Nov. 24) at Bally's Dover.

READ MORE

THISKISSFORMARYELL MAINTAINS DSBF DOMINANCE

Following his sweep of the Delaware Standardbred Breeders' Fund series for 2-year-old male trotters at Harrington Raceway in October, Thiskissformaryell capped another series sweep on Tuesday (Nov. 25) with a career best-equaling 1:58 4/5 win in the \$110,000 championship of his DSBF series at Bally's Dover.

READ MORE

SPECIAL THURSDAY CARD AT RIDEAU THIS WEEK

Rideau Carleton Raceway would like to remind horseplayers and fans that while live racing continues every Sunday evening at 6:30 pm (Eastern) up to and including Dec. 14, Wednesday night racing is now done for the year.

There will be a special 4 pm (Eastern) post time for the Thursday, Nov. 27 Rideau races, which are available for wagering on major North American ADWs. The livestream can also be watched on the track's YouTube and Facebook pages.

Thursday's 10 live races are highlighted by the race 3 Preferred Handicap Trot, plus a Pick 5 carryover of \$1,039.34 in race 6.

-edited release (Rideau Carleton)