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Email the Editor [DGiwner@DRF.com](mailto:DGiwner@DRF.com)

## EDITOR'S EYE



By Derick Giwner

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

The world is truly getting smaller when it comes to harness racing. There is no clearer sign of that fact than the number of imports currently competing on United States soil.

The amount of Standardbreds arriving from regions like Sweden, New Zealand, Australia and even Italy are on the rise over the last few years according to data acquired from the Information and Research team at the United States Trotting Association. From 2023 to 2025 the total number of foreign-bred horses which stepped on the track have jumped 118% from 182 to 398. The last figure represents approximately 3% of the total horses racing – a small number but certainly one of worth to an industry which has dealt with horse shortages over the last decade.

While it is worth noting that some of these horses – like 2025 Hambletonian winner Nordic Catcher S – have raced here since the start of their 2-year-old campaigns and others – Maximus Mearas S – were even born in the United States to foreign-born mares or perhaps sold at auction on these shores, the large majority took the long, expensive trip over Oceans to compete in North America. Costs can range from \$12,000 to \$30,000 to get a horse from Europe or Australia to the United States depending on the type of horse and country of origin. Those fees do not include the purchase price, which can be anywhere from the low five digits to hundreds of thousands for an elite-level horse.

Breaking out regions geographically, the greatest equine migration has come from New Zealand with 158 horses from that country making at least one start in North America this year. A close second in terms of numbers is Australia with 121 horses having raced in 2025. Both tallies are

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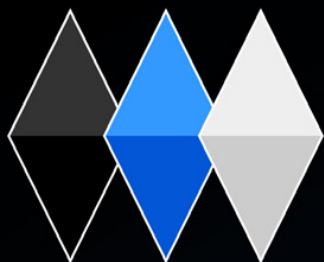


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### NY

#### BLUE CHIP

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nearly double the totals from those vicinities in 2023.

Pollack Racing LLC (Tom Pollack), one of the leading owners in North America, brings about one horse over from Australia or New Zealand every other month according to Racing Manager Marc Reynolds, who estimated they've added about 20 such horses over the last few years.



CURTIS SALONICK

**Spring Inhis Step is an Australian bred that has earned over \$350K since coming to the U.S. for Pollack Racing.**

"Our model is to buy higher caliber horses for the most part," said Reynolds, who added that they started looking Down Under in about 2020 or 2021 and tend to stay with U.S.-based sires. "The least expensive has been \$70,000 and the most expensive has been \$135,000 [these prices include shipping/delivery, which Reynolds said averages about \$25,000]."

Some of the standouts racing for Pollack Racing include Spring Inhis Step A, who has a 1:48 4/5 mark and has earned over \$350K the last two years, July 2023 arrival Elektra A (\$250K+), and a newcomer named Christopher Dance N who arrived in August of 2025.

"Christopher Dance N is a lightly raced horse that is doing very well and we think very highly of him," said Reynolds. "He has a bright future if stays healthy and sound."

While every region is of course different, one of the advantages to acquiring horses from Australia and New Zealand is the exchange rate. Currently \$1 U.S. is worth 1.52 (AUD) or 1.74 (NZD).

"That's the huge factor. Sellers in Australia and New Zealand can't really turn down a big offer in U.S. dollars, especially based on their purse structures, etc.," said Reynolds.



FOTOWON

**Nezuko Kamado was bred in the U.S. but sent to Sweden prior to turning 1 to gain Swedish eligibility.**

Checking in with notably lower totals but hardly insignificant are the number of Swedish horses currently in action in North America. The population has nearly tripled from 15 in 2023 to 41 this year. With Sweden especially, the numbers are increasing because Swedish mares are being bred to North American sires with the intent of racing at least their first two years here before potentially heading over to Sweden for a 4-year-old campaign. Joviality S is a good example and her owner Anders Ström (Courant Inc.) is certainly responsible for at least a portion of the rise in

horses with Swedish lineage competing on this continent.

"We normally bred Swedish 'citizen' mares in the U.S. and brought the foals to Sweden to register as Sweden eligible before they were turning 1. For Courant, Joviality and Nezuko Kamado were such examples. Green Manalishi was born and bred in Sweden and went to U.S. for training as late as in the fall of his 1-year old season," said Ström, who explained that the rules are about to change. "Now Sweden won't accept the dual registrations anymore to protect their market. They say a horse has to be born on Swedish soil to be eligible for all rights."

Thomas Svenson, who works as an agent to bring Standardbreds over from countries like Sweden and Norway, says he is personally responsible for almost 200 horses making their way to North America over the last few years. These are a mixture of Standardbreds that will race, mares that will be bred, or even stallions for Amish country that have a desire for certain pedigrees. His purchases for clients have ranged from \$1,000 to into the six figures depending on the quality of the horse. Then there is the shipping cost.

"A gelding is \$12,000 with shipping and delivery to New Jersey. A mare is \$16,000. A colt costs \$22,000 because it has to spend five weeks in quarantine," said Svenson, who added that the costs can be upwards of \$30,000 for Australian shippers.

Svenson recalled one of his best purchases being Bontoni Degato S. He bought the 5-year-old in 2023 and paid \$16,000 all-in to get the horse to the U.S. where he was stabled in the Per Engblom barn. After seven starts that included four wins and over \$40,000 in earnings, the gelding was sold for many times the purchase price.

Of course not all purchases work out quite that well. If the average shipping cost is \$15,000 and the approximate cost to upkeep a horse for



MIKE LIZZI

**Diamante Trio was brought in from Italy and has earned \$408K.**

the year is \$35,000, a foreign shipper would need to earn \$50,000 plus the sales price to break even over the course of the year. Assuming a \$20,000 price tag, only 91 of the imports would have at least broke even for 2025. Though for every year they stay in the same barn and race the cost basis would be drawn out over the longer period and thus potentially resulting in a profit. Quite a few horses fit that bill. With Australian imports alone there are a couple of dozen horses who earned well over \$35,000 in 2024 in addition to eclipsing that total in 2025, meaning the success rate of bringing horses into the U.S. is quite good compared to some other avenues for purchasing horses.

A somewhat newer trend has been Standardbreds arriving from Italy, Great Britain and Ireland. The numbers have only averaged in the teens for each region the last couple of years but each has shown increases. With respect to Italy, Nick Catalano appears to be a driving force behind more than half of the recent Italian arrivals. If you see an Italian horse racing in North America with the name "Trio" included, you can bet Catalano likely played a part in bringing it to these shores.

Catalano's involvement began about four years ago when he was introduced to the Bolognesi family from Italy that has a breeding farm and equestrian center. They race under the name Scuderia Trio 1985 and their breeding farm is Allevamento Trio 1996.

After just dipping his feet in the waters early on, Catalano has upped the numbers as he has become more comfortable with the procedures. In 2023 there were just two "Trio" horses racing in North America versus eight this year.

"I'm not a broker. I bring the horses over for myself and my partners," said Catalano, who has owned horses for more than a decade according to USTA data and now aims to bring about 10-20 horses over each year. "I think you are going to see more horses from Italy because the economy of racing over there is on the decline."

"The breeding farms like the one I deal with have so many horses and there aren't many great avenues for them to make money," continued Catalano. "We have a partnership. They are ramping up their breeding operation with higher quality stallions and better mares while looking to shuttle off more horses to me. Things could change obviously. They may decide to start selling at the sales or something because I'm not going to be able to buy all of them, obviously."

The early returns have been strong according to Catalano, who pointed to Diamante Trio It as his biggest success story. She came over in June 2023 with only a few wins to her credit and has since earned nearly \$400,000 off a four-figure purchase price. Finding horses with minimal wins or low earnings is a formula that works well.

"When horses come over and fit non-winners of one or two races it gives you time to evaluate them without racing over their heads. Then you can make a decision on whether you want to keep the horse long term or move on. There is not as much pressure," said Catalano.

Another major plus to bringing horses over from Italy and some other countries is the varying rules. While horses are permitted to use the medication Lasix, trotting hobbles and faster race bikes here in North America, those options are often banned in other regions. The quality of the racing surfaces also can be worse in some situations.

Perhaps no one in the sport buys more Standardbred horses than Mark Weaver as part of his partnership with perennial leading trainer Ron Burke and co-owner Mike Bruscelli. It's been well over a decade since the combination of Weaver Bruscelli and Burke Racing Stable hasn't led the sport in earnings and starts, and of course they've dabbled in horses from all over the world.

Some of the bigger imported names racing under the Weaver Bruscelli banner include Swedish-bred Antognoni (\$306K in 2025) and Great Britain's Borninlockdown (\$104K), but Weaver admits they've had little luck when it comes to Australian and New Zealand horses.

"I think [Great Britain and Ireland] racing maybe mirrors fair racing over here and they seem to translate better for us. We've never had any luck with Down Under horses for whatever reason over the last 20 years. A lot

of people do, just look at Yonkers, it is all 'A's' and 'N's', but for us we found a niche with Ireland and Great Britain horses. Unfortunately now everyone is on it and it makes it a lot tougher," said Weaver, who got involved with Ireland and Great Britain Standardbreds through Derek Delaney from Oakwood Stud. "I trust him to identify which horses would work best over here."

"I can look at any track or horse in North America and know who they are racing against, who the trainer is, who the driver is, how the class compares to other classes. I'm very comfortable with it. With Down Under, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, I have no idea. I don't know any of the aspects, so I try to get somebody that can give me a U.S. comparison for a horse, or track or class."

"We do very well over here so it is hard to put my faith in somebody else's opinion," concluded Weaver.

One huge benefit when it comes to horses coming over from Ireland is that the wins from that country don't count as pari-mutuel and thus allows horses to work their way up the non-winners condition ladder. It was a key factor for Weaver, who stressed that he is always looking for horses that won't conflict with the 250-plus others he typically has racing under the Burke banner.

Everything isn't peaches and cream when it comes to flying horses across an ocean and even continents to arrive in the United States. There are often delays as shippers look to maximize space on planes or due to equine wellness issues. Then there are potential quarantine setbacks and potential transport problems. Even more important to the bottom line are the increasing costs.

Every person brought up the constantly rising price of shipping horses. Some saying it has gone up thousands over the last few years and one mentioning it has basically doubled over the last decade.

There is also the "T" word of the year for those who live in the United States – Tariff. Introduced shortly after President Donald Trump took office, buyers must pay an additional premium for the right to import a horse. According to a web search that figure ranges from 10 to 25% depending on the country, though one importer explained that the rules have been lax and are expected to be enforced more strictly starting in January.

It is also worth questioning whether the increase in the number of imported horses is affecting the yearling market as a whole. Both of the major sales – in Lexington and Harrisburg – have seen a somewhat weak middle market and perhaps it can be traced back to the influx of Down Under and European horses.

"These horses come over here, I don't know why breeders haven't fought it; maybe because of the horse shortage, but there are a lot of horses which aren't born here that are taking out millions of dollars every year," said Weaver. "Maybe if we didn't have all the 'A's' and 'N's' there would be more of a market for [middle and lower-level yearlings]."

"Almost every track deals with the struggle at times to adequately fill their race cards," said Reynolds, providing a bit of a counter point. "So the foreign horses certainly add greatly to the overnight horse supply which is essential in my opinion."

Whether it is a positive or a negative, the fact remains that Standardbred imports are on the rise and there is no clear end to the stream in sight. Although there is no way to determine if the trend will continue at the current rate to produce another 100% increase by 2028, that possibility certainly exists.

If not smaller, technology and the ease of doing business from afar has indeed made the world more accessible to all and has Standardbreds becoming at least one immigrant group on the rise in the United States.



LISA PHOTO

**Oakwood Heymiki is a 2024 Irish import that has won 11 of 16 races for trainer Robert Cleary.**



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#### **NZ-BRED MILLIONAIRE DON'T STOP DREAMING ON MOVE TO U.S.**

Reports from journalist Garrick Knight and Harnesslink.com state that (AUS) \$1.2 million winner Don't Stop Dreaming will be heading to the United States and trainer Per Engblom confirmed that on Thursday afternoon.

"He is supposed to arrive next week," said Enblom, who had nothing to do with the purchase but hopes he can compete in the Borgata. "I hope so. We hope he can be a stakes horse."





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# Dilloian hitting on all cylinders with his AUS/NZ imports



## JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman ✕ [Bergmanjay](#)

It's rare in this business when an owner or trainer sets a plan for success and achieves it. When you combine the goals of men and women with the uncertainty of a horse's physical capabilities, often things get derailed. For trainer Doug Dilloian Jr., the last two years have been vivid proof, as a strategy of bringing to his stable quality horses has evolved into a pair of record-setting campaigns.

Dilloian isn't unique with his strategy in some ways, but in others he's been quite particular, making certain horses he's imported come from relationships he's built for a long time. With a stable that varies between 25-30 horses, Dilloian's stable went over the \$1 million mark for the first time in 2024 racing primarily at Yonkers Raceway. The likelihood that the 2025 numbers will see the earnings figure cross \$2 million has been made more apparent by three of his top pacers racing in this year's MGM Grand Prix at Yonkers, with the Australian import Soho Firestone, a likely finalist having won and finished second in the initial two legs.

"He's been a pleasant surprise," said Dilloian of the son of American Ideal with a first name "Soho" that has been somewhat of a signature moniker in the Dilloian stable. "I had Soho Lennon and he was a solid horse for years."

Soho Firestone, like many Dilloian has purchased from Australia, was more of a mid-priced horse with the trainer hoping to achieve a certain earnings mark to make the investment pay off.

"I'm looking to make \$100,000-\$125,000 with most of the horses I bring over," said Dilloian. "He's made over \$200,000 this year and he's surprised me, not just by winning in 1:50 4/5 but doing so against some of the top horses."

Dilloian's formula at least when it comes to Australian imports has been to only find horses that have campaigned at Gloucester Park. Over the years he's developed solid contacts, and those relationships have allowed him to locate and purchase horses designed specifically to race at Yonkers. "I know the kind of horses that race over that track," said Dilloian. "It's a half-mile track that's very similar to Yonkers."

The stable's success with the "Soho" brand extends as well to another Grand Prix participant in Soho Dow Jones, a horse that earned more in Australia than Firestone and just eclipsed the \$100K mark in earnings for the year with a fourth-place finish in Monday's (December 1) second leg of the MGM Grand Prix at Yonkers.

"A lot of trainers are looking for younger horses that have been successful down there," said Dilloian. "I try to look for horses that have raced often and done well over the years."

Like all trainers, Dilloian looks for something particular in each horse.

"I like a horse that looks fast standing still," said Dilloian specifically about Soho Firestone, a horse that's not too big but is instantly recognizable with a slick gait going around a half-mile track.

Longevity is a major part of any success story in this sport and it's quite clear the rigors of racing on a half-mile track year-round can have its peaks and valleys, but Dilloian is unlike many other conditioners in his approach.

"I train them hard," said Dilloian. "I try to race them competitively but I'm not looking for the drop in class. If they aren't racing up to the level, I expect I just give them some time off."

That strategy has served the stable well and midway through the 2025 season Dilloian saw the potential to reach new heights. "It's not just the horses that we have imported," said Dilloian, "but we've put together a solid group of top pacing mares as well."

The pacing mares Lydeo and Cheryl's Shadow have collectively earned over \$300K this year as hard-hitting overnight campaigners.

Dilloian's strategy in adding horses to the stable has changed a bit given the quality he has amassed. "I bought a couple at the Harrisburg Sale; a 2-year-old filly coming 3 and a trotter," said Dilloian.

The risk of course is having too many that fit a particular class and in the trainer's words "racing against yourself." With that said, Dilloian has not stopped his Down Under crusade and may have a few horses ready for

battle this winter that could make his 2026 stable even stronger. New Zealand-bred Blaze On could be the next in line to race on or near the top classes as the son of Sweet Lou, soon-to-be a 7-year-old, is set for his North American debut.

"He made a break qualifying at Yonkers and Jason (Bartlett) thought he may have needed to have the hobbles tighter," said Dilloian. "I didn't want to miss any time with him, so I went over to The Meadowlands and qualified him."

Blaze On won his qualifier at The Meadowlands on November 29 in 1:52 1/5, pacing home in 26 3/5. He is now entered on Monday (12/8) at Yonkers where he drew post one in the seventh race.

Blaze On fits a different description of the type of horse the trainer will pursue. Specifically, a horse that may not have raced often as a young horse but showed abil-

ity and was sidelined. Blaze On made but three starts as a 3-year-old and just seven as a 4-year-old but has found his form in the last two years.

Australian import Majorcrowdcontrl is another worth mentioning because he was a top-flight 2- and 3-year-old that has had setbacks in the last few years that have kept him from racing at the elite level. He finished fourth with a 27 1/5 final quarter in a qualifier at Yonkers on November 21.

While Dilloian is hopeful to have representation in the \$250,000 MGM Grand Prix final, with at least one of his horses likely assured a spot, he's proud of what the stable has done throughout the year.

"To have over 100 wins is something special," said Dilloian. "Yet what I'm most proud of is when you look at the standings the average earnings per start we've had."

Through Monday (December 1) the stable had 105 wins in 469 starts with the average earnings per start at a very respectable \$4,166.

With a bit over two weeks remaining until the final day of the Yonkers season (December 19), Doug Dilloian Jr.'s stable is still hitting on all cylinders as it did during the first four weeks of the meet back in January. That's quite an accomplishment.



MIKE LIZZI

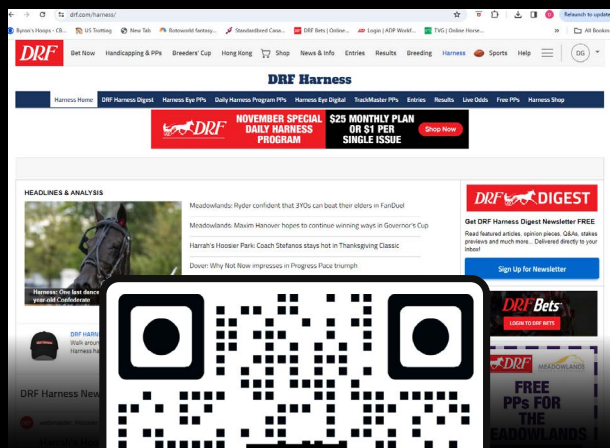
**Soho Firestone has won \$219K for trainer Doug Dilloian since coming to the United States from Australia.**





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# Hank LeVan is furthering his family name in the Buckeye State



## CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser



BRAD CONRAD PHOTO

**Hank LeVan has increased his earnings as trainer and driver each of the last four years.**

Haughton. Tetrack. Takter. These family names are nearly dynastic in our sport nationally. Here in Ohio we have Irvine, Miller and Hanners. One name that you don't hear much about outside of the Buckeye State is LeVan. Their iconic family colors, maroon with a large white circle and a maroon script L on the back, may be the most easily recognizable in all of Ohio.

It started with Vic LeVan, who trained a few Standardbreds on his Woodstock, Ohio farm, which was better known for its cattle. He named the spread LeVanderosa after the

ranch on the beloved TV show Bonanza. Vic's son Herb LeVan was a fixture on the Ohio circuit for many years and campaigned the gritty Caramel Dumpling from ages 2 through 14. Louis LeVan followed in his footsteps and today Hank LeVan keeps up the tradition as a fourth-generation horseman. Although if you had asked him several years ago, he would not have thought so.

"It was an afterthought," he said. "I grew up showing cattle and was very active in livestock judging. I attended Blackhawk East Junior College in Kewanee, IL and earned my Associates Degree and then got my degree from Western Illinois Macomb, both in Animal Science. I earned my Masters at the Ohio State University in Agricultural Education with a focus on Youth leadership. I coached the Ohio State Livestock Judging team and taught in the Ag science program."

When young, Hank spent the summers going to the fairs with his grandpa Herb, where he would help out and maybe "warm one up once," he recalled. "My first real interest level came before my junior year of college. It wasn't a money thing, but that fall I purchased my first horse – a yearling."

This year, 19 of the 35 horses in his barn are yearlings. There are eight 2-year-olds and the rest are older. As Hank points out, "Ask anybody who knows me, I don't do real good just dabbling. It was four or five the first year; then eight, then 12-15. If you do all the work it would be unrealistic to not succeed."

I interviewed him while he was making the five hour round-trip to race at Northfield, so yes, he definitely puts in the work.

"We built a 20-stall barn. Then, we added 15 more stalls this year and we are at 35. I don't see us as having 100 horses, but that is up in the air. We'll see what happens," said LeVan. "It's a good opportunity if you are willing to get out of bed and put the work in. I am young enough. I give every opportunity to my owners to succeed. We have 16 owners. We retain a piece of most of them, but we do have a few pay horses."

Asked about his best horses, he mentioned Sandis Commando L immediately. The 6-year-old daughter of Break The Bank K has banked over \$400,000 in her career. Megan and Rosemary LeVan share title with LeVan Stables and Max Perry. His 3-year-old pacing filly Legendary L qualified for both the Buckeye Stallion Series Final and the Ohio Fairs Final.

The Covid outbreak turned LeVan to training full-time, since Ag science involves a lot of hands-on, and with schooling being remote, he decided to take the plunge. 2025 has been Hank's best year, with over 100 wins and a UDRS of over 300, both as a driver and trainer. He finished second in wins on the Ohio Fair circuit in both categories and his trainees banked over \$800,000.

"I drive almost all of my own horses," said LeVan.

On Saturday, October 4 he raced three at Northfield in the \$75,000 Buckeye Stallion Series Finals and the next day was at Dayton for a noon first post to race 11 in the Montgomery County Fair stakes. The following Saturday he

was at Northfield for the \$50,000 Ohio Fair Finals where he raced six, with six more qualifying for the consolation finals.

LeVan is no Weaver Bruscelli or "Team Luther" when it comes to buying yearlings, even though he is buying a lot of them.

"I am looking at individual conformation and value. I spent between \$6,000-21,000 this year. Pedigree is important, but we don't pay \$60,000-70,000. There's a lot of nice ones between \$10,000-20,000. I try to look at the big picture and say can I make this work," he said. "We try the Sires Stakes, but we stake everywhere. You find a level that's a good fit. Certain fairs we go to each year. Summertime, my life revolves around The Huff's Guide. It's open on the dining room table all the time. We typically stake to all Ohio Colt Racing Association Fairs and some Home Talent Fairs. Maybe a few Southern Valley circuit fairs. We need to with the number we want to be able to keep them all racing. It's one reason we have as many as we do."

LeVan is serving his first term on the Board of Directors of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association. He fittingly sits on the Fairs Committee and also is on the Banquet Committee.

"Steve Bateson approached me," he explained. "He thought they could use some younger people on the board for a different perspective."

He doesn't do it alone. LeVan has six full-time employees and several part-timers, depending on the time of year. His wife, Megan, is the expert Huff's Guide reader in the family. Soon their three kids – Perry, age 5; Scarlet, age 2; and Henry, age 1 – will be mucking stalls. Who knows which one will carry on the LeVan tradition?

"The kids have ponies. It will be up to the kids. All three have the horse bug. If they do decide to do it, I want them to be able to walk into something successful. No expectation, but if they want to that's perfectly fine too," said LeVan.

That's it for this time. Now go cash. Maybe on a horse that ends with an "L".



COURTESY HANK LEVAN

**Hank LeVan admits that one of his kids could certainly continue the family tradition of being involved with harness racing.**





# Grand Prix leg winners look to firm up spots in Dec. 19 final

By Jay Bergman

There are a pair of horses set to race in the MGM Grand Prix this coming weekend looking to fine-tune their form and prepare hopefully for the \$250,000 finals on December 19 at Yonkers Raceway.

Sir Pinocchio, a winner in the first leg for trotters two weeks back, looks for his second straight win on Friday (December 5) while New Zealand import Mossdale Ben, the winner of the MGM Borgata Series this spring at Yonkers, looks to punch his ticket into the final in Monday's third and final preliminary leg for pacers. Both horses had missed some time in advance of the series and hope to be peaking for the final big-money race of the year.

"He popped a splint," said Ed Hart when asked why Sir Pinocchio had missed about a month of action. "I thought he qualified back well and then raced very well in the first leg."

Sir Pinocchio not only raced well but also quite fast as he trotted to a 1:53 3/5 mile, sprinting a 27 4/5 final quarter while holding off a determined bid by Swedish-bred Antognoni at the wire. By comparison the two other legs in the opening round of the MGM Grand Prix for trotters were won in 1:55 and 1:55 1/5.

"He had a pretty good horse chasing him (Antognoni) and he fought him off," said Hart. "I would expect him to be better since he needed that start."

On Friday, Sir Pinocchio drew post three in the ninth race and third of a trio of \$50,000 divisions. He's inside Periculum (post 4), the richest horse in the field who finished second in last year's International Trot and then found himself boxed in for the 2025 edition. A heavy favorite in his first leg of the Grand Prix, Periculum broke stride on the first turn and was never a factor. Trainer Marcus Melander has put him back in looking to rebound from a rare miscue.

Sir Pinocchio is perhaps the perfect horse for Yonkers and specifically this series.

"He can leave the gate like a runner," said Hart of the incredible gate speed his 4-year-old son of Met's Hall possesses. "And he handles the half-mile track turns perfectly."

That combination has helped Sir Pinocchio, a winner of the 2024 Yonkers Trot who has earned \$886K over his career, with a chance to reach seven figures before the year is out.

"It's a tough transition to race against these horses as a 4-year-old. I think he'll be better next year," said Hart.

Antognoni has had a big year for trainer Ron Burke, winning 13 of his 21 starts with a 2025 bankroll of \$306,537. A 5-year-old by Father Patrick, Antognoni captured the John Brennan series early this year at Yonkers and has transitioned into a top Invitational performer over the half-mile track. He'll look for his first series win from post two in Friday's first Grand Prix division (race 2).

Take All Comers, the winner of the initial Grand Prix for trotters in 2024, returned to the series in style, converting on a pocket trip for just third win of the year in 11 starts. The 7-year-old gelding by Creatine landed post seven in Friday's fourth-race \$50,000 division.

Switching to the pace, Jordan Stratton is hoping that time is on his side, at least when it comes to Mossdale Ben. The 7-year-old had taken a while to return to the winner's circle as he did in the series' second leg on Monday (December 1).

"I think he's about 85 percent now," said Stratton. "His first race in the

series was better than his qualifier and last week he was closer to where he needs to be."

Stratton recognized that fitness is something that's required for any horse to succeed at this level and Mossdale Ben had missed some time and has been playing catch-up to reach the level of competition he's facing in the MGM Grand Prix.

"I think by the final he should be 100 percent," said Stratton.

On Monday (December 8), Mossdale Ben landed post three in the third of four \$50,000 divisions in the third and final preliminary leg of the series. The inside draw should keep him close to the pace, with Stratton a firm believer in how to best handle the Peter Tritton-trained gelding.

"He's made nearly \$500,000 this year racing from off the pace so I'm not about to change that," said Stratton, who thinks Mossdale Ben has every bit as much talent as any horse currently racing in the series.

Mossdale Ben more than likely will be chasing second-leg winner Redwood Hanover (post 5) in his division with the Per Engblom-trained horse, a noted front-runner, drawing into the same division with Jason Bartlett in the bike. Engblom's stable has been dominant all year at



MIKE LIZZI

**Sir Pinocchio (4) dug in gamely to hold off a late charge from Antognoni in round one of the MGM Grand Prix Trotting series at Yonkers Raceway.**

Yonkers and has the power to qualify multiple horses for the rich final.

Captain Albano (post 2) looks to sweep his preliminary legs in the first \$50,000 stanza (race 2) on Monday with Todd McCarthy guiding the 4-year-old son of Captaintreacherous. Captain Albano was victorious over the Yonkers strip on International Trot Day winning the Aria Invitational. He's come back strongly, winning his opening leg of the series racing without cover the final half and then following that up with a two-move effort while holding off the classy Coaches Corner last week.

Coaches Corner looks to regain his winning form in the second division (race 4) from post five. A rugged warrior from the Engblom stable, Coaches Corner has banked nearly \$550K this year finishing first or second in 14 of his 25 starts racing at the elite level.

Huntinthelastdollar (post 4) heads the fourth division on Monday against six rivals in the evening's eighth race. The New York-sired son of Huntsville got the pace to his advantage in capturing a division of the second leg in 1:52 4/5 last week. Spring Inhis Step, a winner in the first leg of the series, drew post two and appears the chief threat in this division.

The 12-race Friday card and 11-race Monday program start at 6:45 PM (ET).

# RACE OF THE WEEK

## 9 YONKERS FRI

1 Mile Trot MGM GRAND PRIX TROTTING SERIES LEG #2. Purse \$50,000

\$2 PICK 4 (9-10-11-12) | \$2 EXACTA | \$2 TRIPLE | \$1.10 SUPERFECTA

<b>1 KHAOSAN ROAD</b> 41:52.1 (5/8) \$5,726		br g 5, by International Moni, Jewels In The Sand by Sand Vic Knutsen Trotting Inc./Del Ray Beach, FL		Last 5 Sts-\$10,500		1:53.2 Phl 5/8	25 YR	8 1 3 1	\$48,930	25 Tot	12 3 4 1	\$58,710					
<b>12-1 D. Dube</b> 674-70-69-69 (104)		<b>A. Svanstedt</b> 30-6-4-5 (200)		Br.- Kelly Duval Lacaille, QC, CA		1:52.1 Phl 5/8	24 YR	5 3 1 0	\$52,750	24 Tot	14 6 1 0	\$81,790					
21 Nov25 7YR fst49 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57.3 1:26 1:55.1 MGM GP L1		50000 5 57 57.2 50.4 54.1 68.2		DaDube		AkSvnstst	292	293	28	294	1:56.4	79	+1 5w	60.99	ArFerariAsteroidCecilHnv	2nd ov,gap,nd bid-7	
6 Nov25 8PHl fst43 <sup>rd</sup> 27 :56.1 1:24.1 1:53.3 NW15000		13000 5 21.2 21.2 21.2 21.2 1.3		JoAhle		AkSvnstst	271	291	28	291	1:53.3	88	+4 3w	1.70	KhasRoad Chaperczr GetAWshK	-7	
30 Oct25 10PHl sly64 <sup>th</sup> 27.4 :57.1 1:26.3 1:54 W/O 10K		16000 5 11.2 21.2 21.2 21.2 2.4		TiTetrck		AkSvnstst	274	293	292	271	1:54	90	-1 6w	*50	MBlebrd KhasRoad KindrThnk	-6	
9 Oct25 7YR fst51 <sup>st</sup> 28.1 :57.4 1:26.3 1:55.2 Inv		39000 6 67.3 67.3 65.1 65 74.1		DaDube		AkSvnstst	294	293	281	283	1:56.1	81	+2 5w	30.06	CecilHnvDwsPntManTkeAlCmrs	Sat bk,rail,nd bid-7	
25 Sep25 4YR fst73 <sup>rd</sup> 28.1 :58 1:26.1 1:53.4 Inv		39000 3 45 44.3 30.3 47 61.0		DaDube		AkSvnstst	291	294	274	29	1:55.4	85	+0 5w	4.26	SrPincho CecilHnv DwsPntMan	1st up,stadl,td-6	
18 Sep25 7YR fst78 <sup>th</sup> 29.1 :59.2 1:28.2 1:56 Inv		39000 1 11.2 11.2 11.2 11.2 1nk		DaDube		AkSvnstst	291	301	29	273	1:56	84	+5 3w	2.53	KhasRoad Feretti DribingBi	Ld,wel,rat,safely-6	
28 Aug25 13PHl fst76 <sup>th</sup> 27.4 :57.2 1:25.1 1:53.2 W/O 10K		16000 4 33.2 33.2 21.3 12 1nk		JoAhle		AkSvnstst	282	293	272	28	1:53.2	92	+4 5w	2.00	KhasRoad ReslvTwn ShTyrion	-8	
21 Aug25 10PHl fst69 <sup>th</sup> 27.2 :57.3 1:26.1 1:54.1 W/O 10K		16000 5 21.2 21.2 21.2 3.2 41.3		JoAhle		AkSvnstst	273	302	282	281	1:54.3	83	+2 9w	2.20	FmchWine ReslvTwnDlaSqure	-6	
<b>2 ULTION FACE (L)</b> 91:52.1 (5/8) \$4,469		b g 9, by Joke Face, Croix D'am by Love You Enblom Stable LLC,Wrightstown,NJ/Jesper Blom Arvemberg,Hammaro,SD		Last 5 Sts-\$23,810		1:52.1 Phl 5/8	25 YR	3 0 2 1	\$22,250	25 Tot	12 4 4 2	\$53,625					
<b>4-1 Ty. Buter</b> 690-89-74-100 (129)		<b>P. Enblom</b> 1108-254-171-145 (229)		Br.- Lutfi Koljini & Anna Svensson, SD		None in U.S.A.	24 YR	0 0 0 0	- 24	0	8 4 0 0	\$15,310					
21 Nov25 5YR fst49 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57.1 1:25.4 1:53.3 MGM GP L1		50000 2 33.1 32.3 32.3 33 33.3		TyButer		PeEngblom	283	291	283	28	1:54.2	90	+1 5w	L10.53	SrPincho Antognoni UltinFace	Rode rail,nd bid-7	
6 Nov25 3YR fst43 <sup>rd</sup> 27.1 :57 1:26.1 1:55.1 Inv		35000 1 21.2 21.2 21.2 21.2 2nk		TyButer		PeEngblom	271	30	291	284	1:55.1	90	+1 2w	L*1.37	ShCoorsUltinFaceAstrd	Ld,yld,2w bf 3/4,trot-5	
30 Oct25 10YR gp61 <sup>st</sup> 27.4 :57 1:25 1:53.3 nw30000L5		30000 1 11.2 11.2 11.2 11.2 2nk		TyButer		PeEngblom	271	291	28	283	1:53.3	97	+0 5w	L*7.5	TkeAlCmrsUltinFaceKegStand	Ld,gam,ovtkn late-5	
23 Oct25 11PHl fst60 <sup>th</sup> 28.1 :57 1:24.3 1:53.3 NW15000		13000 8 81.1 81.1 81.0 77.3 33.1		TrBeyer		PeEngblom	302	284	272	273	1:54.1	85	+1 7w	L3.20	KindrThnk CdbBambo UltinFace	-8	
20 Sep25 4Wbs fst57 <sup>th</sup> 27 :55.4 1:24 1:51.2 FFA		54750 9 81.0 89.4 87.4 76.2 98.4		TiTetrck		PeEngblom	29	283	274	274	1:53.1	88	+9 5w	L1.14	Antognoni LoganPark DrawnImp	Struggled-10	
11 Sep25 10PHlA fst70 <sup>th</sup> 28.1 :56.3 1:24.4 1:52.1 NW15000		13000 2 11.2 11.2 11.2 12 12.1		TiTetrck		PeEngblom	281	282	281	272	1:52.1	97	+5 8w	L*29	SrPincho CecilHnv DwsPntMan	-6	
5 Sep25 1PHlA fst81 <sup>st</sup> 26.4 :56.2 1:23.3 1:51.4 Opn		25000 4 21.2 21.2 21.2 3.2 21		DaMiller		PeEngblom	27	293	27	282	1:52.2	96	+0 6w	L1.70	Antognoni UltinFace LtlExps	Ld,won handily-7	
28 Aug25 12PHlA fst76 <sup>th</sup> 28.3 :57.4 1:25.3 1:53.1 NW15000		13000 6 34.2 33 30.3 11 12.1		DaMiller		PeEngblom	292	29	274	27	1:53.1	92	+4 5w	L*70	UltinFace OutsdTfR SntfD	-6	
<b>3 *SIR PINOCCHIO (L)</b> 41:51.3 (1) \$11,624		br g 4, by Met's Hall, Lady Cromwell by Chapter Seven Carolyn Atherton,Scarsdale,Ny		Last 5 Sts-\$74,000		1:51.3 M1	25 YR	7 5 0 0	\$108,500	25 Tot	17 6 2 1	\$197,605					
<b>7-5 J. Bartlett</b> 1554-532-269-217 (342)		<b>E. Hart</b> 61-14-5-9 (230)		Br.- Carolyn Atherton,NY		1:51.4 Pcd 5/8	24 YR	4 4 0 0	\$327,007	24 Tot	17 11 4 0	\$540,902					
21 Nov25 5YR fst49 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57.1 1:25.4 1:53.3 MGM GP L1		50000 3 11.2 11.2 11.2 11.2 1hd		JaBartitt		EdHart	28	291	283	274	1:53.3	96	+1 5w	L2.21	SrPincho Antognoni UltinFace	Ld,dug in,gamely-7	
14 Nov25 1YR fst44 <sup>th</sup> 28.4 :58.1 1:27.1 1:56.1 <b>Qua</b>		35000 5 12.3 11.2 11.2 11.2 1.3		JoStratt		EdHart	284	292	29	281	1:56.1	97	+1 2w	L2.1	SrPincho BlsmFace FadewHnv	-5	
16 Oct25 8YR fst51 <sup>st</sup> 28 :58 1:27 1:55.4 Inv		39000 8 56 56 50.3 32.2 x81.1		EdHart		EdHart	291	30	283	302	1:58	73	-1 6w	L2.50	Feretti Antognoni DribingBi	Tuck,2nd ov,bnk-8	
2 Oct25 4YR fst61 <sup>st</sup> 27.2 :56.2 1:25.4 1:54.1 Inv		39000 4 21 21.2 21.2 31 12.1		JaBartitt		EdHart	273	29	292	281	1:54.1	91	+7 4w	L*3.36	SrPincho Feretti Antognoni	Yld,room rail,safely-5	
25 Sep25 4YR fst73 <sup>rd</sup> 28.1 :58 1:26.1 1:53.4 Inv		39000 4 12 11.2 11.2 14 12.1		JaBartitt		EdHart	281	294	281	273	1:53.4	95	+0 5w	L*29	SrPincho CecilHnv DwsPntMan	Ld,won handily-6	
13 Sep25 7YR fst76 <sup>th</sup> 27.1 :56.1 1:25.1 2:23.2 D-RM TROT G2		200000 1 21.2 21.2 21.2 55.3 11		JaBartitt		EdHart	272	29	29	59.1	2:24.3		+4 5w	L1.85	UpYourDeoScaryPntGhstlyCs	1.1 yld,plt,nd bid-10	
4 Sep25 8YR fst72 <sup>nd</sup> 28 :57 1:26.3 1:55.3 Inv		39000 5 11.2 11.2 11 13 12.1		JaBartitt		EdHart	28	293	29	29	1:55.3	86	+2 5w	L*10	SrPincho DribingBi QueenOfAl	Ld,won handily-7	
28 Aug25 3YR fst71 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57 1:25.3 1:54.1 NW30178L5		30000 4 11.2 11.2 11.2 13 12.1		JoStratt		EdHart	28	29	283	283	1:54.1	93	-2 3w	L*3.5	SrPincho MsspiStrm OverNBack	Led,won handily-6	
<b>4 PERICULUM</b> 61:49.3 (1) * \$69,909		b h 6, by Muscle Hill, Amour Heirss by Cantab Hall Brixton Medical Inc./Matawan,NJ/Holly Lane Stud East LTD,Vero Beach,FL		Last 5 Sts-\$392,500		*1:49.3 M1	25 YR	2 0 0 0	\$0	25 Tot	12 5 5 0	\$383,902					
<b>2-1 S. Zeron</b> 517-70-72-82 (135)		<b>M. Melander</b> 17-2-5-3 (118)		Br.- Order By Stable,SD		*1:50.4 Wbs 7/8	24 YR	1 0 1 0	\$250,000	24 Tot	17 6 4 3	\$521,084					
21 Nov25 7YR fst49 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57.3 1:26 1:55.1 MGM GP L1		50000 3 x72.4 72.4 72.4 72.4 7ds		ScZeron		MarMelndr	324	293	284	30	2:01.1	56	+1 5w	*0.9	ArFerariAsteroidCecilHnv	Took bk,bk 1st turn-7	
15 Nov25 10M1 gd49 <sup>th</sup> 27.1 :55.2 1:23.3 1:51 D-FanDuel		350000 4 60.4 60.3 42.1 33.1 22.1		ScZeron		MarMelndr	28	281	274	272	1:51.2	97	+2 3w	*1.00	LexusKodyPctmLgnPrk	2wide,2nd ov,trot ln-10	
8 Nov25 2M1 fst64 <sup>th</sup> 27.4 :55.4 1:24.4 1:52.1 <b>Qua</b>		600000 7 33.2 32.1 32.1 32.1 2hd		ScZeron		MarMelndr	282	274	29	271	1:52.2				ArFerari Pericolum AetosKms	Shole ang in,trot-4	
25 Oct25 7Wbs fst47 <sup>th</sup> 26.4 :54.3 1:22.1 1:50.1 BRDRS CROW		600000 7 65.2 60.4 64.3 64.3 2nk		ScZeron		MarMelndr	272	28	271	271	1:50.1	105	+10 4w	2.15	FmchWinePericolumLexusKody	3d ov,juss-10	
17 Oct25 4Wbs fst46 <sup>th</sup> 28 :56 1:24 1:51.1 <b>Qua</b>		4 24.2 22.1 21.2 21.2 21.2		ScZeron		MarMelndr	284	273	28	271	1:51.3				ElstahHnv Pericolum EmojHnv	-4	
5 Oct25 2Lx1A fst80 <sup>th</sup> 26.4 :55 1:23.1 1:49.3 Allerae		160000 2 64.1 70.5 60.3 63.1 1nk		ScZeron		MarMelndr	273	282	28	25.3	1:49.3	106	4w	*7.9	PctmAtskMsfmchWn	3rd up,surge,track rec-10	
19 Sep25 13HoP fst68 <sup>th</sup> 26 :53.3 1:22.2 1:51.1 D-CT CLASSIC		200000 2 55.3 50.5 30.3 32.1 1hd		ScZeron		MarMelndr	271	272	282	281	1:51.1	103		*6.0	Pericolum LexusKody FmchWine	Dh-9	
13 Sep25 6YRA fst71 <sup>st</sup> 28.1 :57.2 1:27.1 2:24.4 D-MGM IT G1		1000000 19 53 53.3 53.3 54.1 72.3		ScZeron		MarMelndr	284	291	294	57.3	2:25.2		+4 5w	3.44	LexusKodyDivaEtfPwwnWn	1.1 Inside,boxd in lane-10	
<b>5 BENNY (JL)</b> 31:51.2 (1) Q \$2,216		b h 4, by Walner, Anywhere With You by Muscle Mass Kenneth E. Jacobs,Baldwinsville,NY		Last 5 Sts-\$14,700		1:53.1 M1Q	25 YR	1 0 0 0	\$4,000	25 Tot	8 0 2	\$17,730					
<b>15-1 G. Brennan</b> 1655-230-250-221 (139)		<b>T. Alagna</b> 12-2-1-0 (167)		Br.- Brittany Farms LLC,KY		1:51.2 M1	24 YR	0 0 0 0	- 24	Tot	16 3 2 1	\$162,165					
21 Nov25 8YR fst49 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57.2 1:26 1:55 MGM GP L1		50000 2 44.3 46.1 40.4 42.1 42.3		JaBartitt		ToAlagna	294	284	281	284	1:55.3	85	+1 5w	L13.59	TkeAlCmrsShCoorsDSttrs	Rail,2w bf 3/4,even-7	
15 Nov25 2M1 fst51 <sup>st</sup> 28 :56.2 1:24.3 1:53.1 <b>Qua</b>		50000 2 11.2 11.2 11.2 12.2 12.3		JaBartitt		ToAlagna	283	274	281	283	1:53.1				Lrb BennyJ FastApgr KingingHnv	Ld,won handily-4	
4 Nov25 8Cbr fst61 <sup>st</sup> 27 :55.3 1:23.3 1:53.1 KYSS4YOHG		50000 2 43 55 55 56.3 55.4		JoBongirn		ToAlagna	273	29	28	301	1:54.4				34.77	HungOverOrdained WmsMens	-9
26 Oct25 3Cbr fst61 <sup>st</sup> 27.3 :57.3 1:26.1 1:54.2 KYSS4YOHG		50000 3 45 44.1 43.1 44.1 41.0		JoBongirn		ToAlagna	283	294	282	33.1	1:56.2				14.56	HungOverWayMens WmsMnGAS	-8
19 Oct25 7Cbr fst61 <sup>st</sup> 27.3 :56.2 1:24.1 1:55 KYSS4YOHG		50000 2 45.1 45.1 43.3 44.1 79.3		JoBongirn		ToAlagna	283	284	273	32	1:57				12.64	Ordained WayMens DmeGdMns	-5
11 Oct25 1Cbr fst64 <sup>th</sup> 29.4 :1.00 1:28 1:56.1 <b>Qua</b>		5 11.2 16.2 16.1 11.0 11.3		MaLuna		ToAlagna	294	301	28	281	1:56.1				nb BennyJ PshDmDmS BoysDove	-6	
9 Sep25 6Lx1 fst77 <sup>th</sup> 28 :56.3 1:25.3 1:53.1 KYSS4YOHG		35000 2 21.2 21.2 21.2 1x1 x3.4		AnMcCrthy		ToAlagna	284	28	284	282	1:54	85			16.96	DmeGdMns MisterDad BennyJ	-5
2 Sep25 3Lx1 fst83 <sup>rd</sup> 28.1 :55.3 1:24.1 1:53 NW4500		7000 3 56.1 56.1 40.3 32.1 33		AnMcCrthy		ToAlagna	292	272	274	282	1:53	89			12.86	QnOfAlmrc MntMskle BennyJ	-7
<b>6 HOLT FLASH KIMMY (L)</b> 41:53.1 (5/8) \$5,786		b m 5, by LooksiKeachpndale, Hortop Temper by E L Titan Caldwell Marie Racing LLC,Bellaire,OH		Last 5 Sts-\$29,650		1:55.1 YR	25 YR	25 9 5 5	\$154,700	25 Tot	27 5 9 6	\$156,225					
<b>20-1 J. Stratton</b> 1669-231-236-249 (138)		<b>C. Stratton</b> 959-141-151-151 (147)		Br.- Cynthia E Graham-William Woolfrey,Warkworth		1:53.1 Pcd 5/8	24 YR	8 0 1 1	\$12,940	24 Tot	33 6 4 5	\$204,805					
21 Nov25 7YR fst49 <sup>st</sup> 28 :57.2 1:26 1:55.1 MGM GP L1		50000 7 68.2 69.2 65.3 64.4 53.3		JoStratt		CoStratt	294	293	274	284	1:56	82	+1 5w	L50.54	ArFerari Asteroid CecilHnv	Off pace,rail,nd bid-7	
6 Nov25 5YR fst43 <sup>rd</sup> 28 :57.2 1:26 1:55.1 NW30901L5		27000 1 21.2 21.2 21.2 21.2 1nk		JoStratt		CoStratt	281	292	283	29	1:55.1	86	+1 2w	L3.54	HoltFlashKimmyGndSndEscr	Ld,ovtkn in,clr 2nd-7	
30 Oct25 3YR gp61 <sup>st</sup> 28.3 :58.1 1:27.2 1:55.4 FM Inv		39000 1 11.2 11.2 11.2 11.2 1hd		JoStratt		CoStratt	283	30	284	282	1:55.4	86	+0 5w	L10.10	EntHtFshKnmYdDlC	Pkt,ld bf 1/4,tuf beat-5	
9 Oct25 3YR fst51 <sup>st</sup> 27.4 :57.1 1:25.2 1:54.4 NW30000L5		30000 4 58 56.1 60.4 65 53		JoStratt		CoStratt	292	29	28	284	1:55.1	87	+2 5w	L12.48	Asteroid MsspiStrm Eterialt	Sat bk,2nd ov,stay-6	
2 Oct25 3YR fst51 <sup>st</sup> 27.3 :57 1:25.2 1:53.3 nw30000L5		30000 6 68 67.3 64 54.4 43		JoStratt		CoStratt	291	291	274	283	1:54.8	88	+7 4w	L7.48	DribingBi Asteroid QueensFace	Traild,ov,nd bid-6	
25 Sep25 3YR fst73 <sup>rd</sup> 28 :57.4 1:26 1:54.4 FM Inv		39000 5 56.2 57.4 40.3 31.2 2nk		JoStratt		CoStratt	291	292	28	281	1:54.4	90	+0 5w	L6.88	EterialtHoltFlashKimmyQueenOfAl	2nd ov ang in,trot-6	
18 Sep25 8YR fst76 <sup>th</sup> 28.1 :58.4 1:27.3 1:56.3 nw30000L5		30000 1 33.2 33.2 20.3 12 2hd		JoStratt		CoStratt	284	303	282	284	1:56.3	83	+5 3w	L3.51	TheHazHnHoltFlashKimmyCrdCn	1st up,balld,tuf beat-8	
11 Sep25 7YR fst74 <sup>th</sup> 28.1 :58.1 1:27.1 1:56.3 NW34128L5		30000 3 57 57.1 50.4 42 2hd		JoStratt		CoStratt	293	30	282	283	1:56.3	80	-1 8w	L9.59	MsspiStrmHoltFlashKimmyCrdCn	2nd ov ang in,trot-6	



# Herschberger a perfect 10 last weekend at The Meadowlands

By Dave Little for The Meadowlands

At the conclusion of racing Friday (Nov. 28) night, Mark Herschberger had joined an exclusive Meadowlands club. He had just won six races on the program, becoming just the third driver in 2025 to win a half-dozen times on a single Big M card.

Apparently not satisfied with being in the same exclusive camp as Yannick Gingras and Jason Bartlett, Herschberger won four races on Saturday's (Nov. 29) program, to become the first driver in 2025 – not to mention recent memory – to take 10 walks down victory lane during the course of a weekend. And while The Big M has been racing three times a week recently, last week, there were just two programs contested.

On Friday, Herschberger's winners were Im The Muscle (\$12.20 to win, race 3); Miz Captain Cruze (\$6, race 4); Rock My Universe (\$3.60, race 7); Camlachie Chrome (\$6.40, race 11); Parody (\$9.40, race 13); and Thaneeya (\$17.40, race 14). By guiding the last two winners on the card, Herschberger swept the late double, which returned \$85.

The driver offered some insights from his Friday night successes.

"Parody? That's my father-in-law's horse," said Herschberger. "We changed his training a little and thought he'd fight a little more to the wire.

"Thaneeya? I don't know how many times I've landed her in the pocket but things did not go all that great. But she responded to the outside trip even though she's more of a grinder.

"The track was a bit dead that night. Dead, as in Thaneeya's race, Joe Bongiorno [driving Sweet Sandy] made a big move late there and drew away for a bit, but the way the track was playing, you couldn't make huge moves and expect for that speed to carry for you."

On Saturday, the man in the red and black colors guided Haggard (\$7.80, race 2); LMC Peanuts Watchn (\$8.80, race 4); Laser Speed (\$3, race 5); and Divine Right (\$3.40, race 11) to victory.

Herschberger made it clear that not overreacting is part of what helps him win races.

"I try not to force anything," said Herschberger. "If a horse doesn't leave as hard as you want him to, sit fourth, try not to force it."

Remarkably, 2025 marks just the second year that Herschberger has been making his mark driving full-time. A year ago, the 30-year-old reinsman won 104 races, 21 of those at The Meadowlands, which was good for 17th in the Big M standings.

This year has seen the pilot's numbers reach new heights. He has 201 wins, so at season's end, he will have far more than double the victories than he had a year ago. His 90 wins at The Meadowlands are good for second in the standings, trailing only Brett Beckwith, who has made 110 winner's

circle visits.

Given your success, why did you start so late as compared to just about every other driver?

"Opportunity is the main thing," said Herschberger.

"Going back, I worked for my uncle [Erv Miller] for seven or eight years and that got me into it. The opportunity wasn't there to be a driver. Fast forward eight years and I put my name out there. I think just being personable and talking to people, and after a race having

good feedback is key. Being able to call yourself out [when something goes wrong on the track], trainers appreciate that. I'm not trying to blame the horse. I think that's been a huge factor."

Herschberger now finds himself in another club, as one of The Big M's wintertime "Big 4". Brett Beckwith, Braxten Boyd and Johnathan Ahle complete the quartet that first caught the eye of Meadowlands patrons last year, and they have continued to cement their names near the top of the mile-track oval's standings.

"Those guys are phenomenal," said Herschberger. "They can all make speed, and they all have great heads on them. Brett, Braxten and Johnny, they all keep a level head, even when things aren't going well on a given night.

"We are all very close. Brett put us all on group chat the other day. Racing in the winter [when the big-name Grand Circuit drivers aren't around], I think it's helped us young guys out, opening the door for us to be in the spotlight. Everybody watches The Meadowlands, they all have it on their TVs, it's the mecca of harness racing. So, if that can be us young guys up there winning races, I think it's great for the sport."



LISA PHOTO

**Mark Herschberger shows off six fingers for the number of wins he got at The Meadowlands on November 28.**

## WINTER WONDERLAND AT BATAVIA DOWNS

Photographer Wendy J. Lowery, with the help of Sierra Smith and Drew Monti, created a masterful harness holiday scene at the upstate New York track. →



Wendy J. Photography



# NEWS

## NOMINATION DEADLINE ON DEC. 7 FOR CARETAKER OF THE YEAR AWARD

It's time for last call for nominations for the 2025 Caretaker of the Year as nominations will be accepted through Sunday, Dec. 7. The award, sponsored by Art Zubrod and Leah Cheverie's Fair Island Farm in conjunction with the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), recognizes the unsung heroes of the sport: the caretakers who maintain the health and welfare of the horses on a daily basis.

Any caretaker working for any stable or farm in North America is eligible to be the Fair Island Farm Caretaker of the Year. All that is needed to nominate is an email, 200 words minimum, from an individual or group detailing the skills and special qualities of the caretaker.

The 2025 Fair Island Farm Caretaker of the Year will receive a cash prize of \$2,500 as well as transportation costs to the USHWA Dan Patch Awards banquet in Orlando, FL on Sunday night, Feb. 22, 2026, where he or she will be recognized and presented with a trophy. The winner will also enjoy a two-night stay at Rosen Shingle Creek, host hotel for the USHWA activities, as well as two complimentary dinner tickets. All nominated caretakers will receive a certificate recognizing their accomplishments.

"Leah and I are honored to continue the tradition of recognizing caretakers and the hard work they do on a daily basis," said Zubrod. "And it is especially gratifying to honor one most-deserving person as the Caretaker of the Year."

The winner will be chosen by an eight-person selection committee comprised of USHWA members, all of whom are former caretakers: Tim Bojarski (chair), Kim Rinker, Tom Charters, Moira Fanning, Jessica Hallett, Dean Hoffman, Mary McDermott and Shawn Wiles.

All nomination emails must be received by Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, and sent to chairman Bojarski at [a159star@gmail.com](mailto:a159star@gmail.com).

## SCOTT KEPPLER CHOSEN USHWA AMATEUR DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Scott Keppler has been selected as the U.S. Harness Writers Association (USHWA) Amateur Driver of the Year for 2025 in a vote conducted by USHWA with the amateur driving clubs.

Keppler, 59, said he appreciated being chosen and that it's a great honor.

"There are a lot of great drivers that are in that [amateur] division that I race against on a regular basis on the East Coast, so it's important to me," Keppler said. "I mean, it's historic, and I think it's wonderful. I couldn't be happier."

[READ MORE](#)

## JAMES PLATZ NAMED JANUARY DAVIES HUMANITARIAN AWARD WINNER

James Platz from Noblesville IN has been selected as recipient of the 2025 January Davies Humanitarian Award from the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA). The award was created in 2008 by U.S. Harness Writers Association member Callie Davies-Gooch in memory of her daughter to recognize contributions beyond harness racing; it is presented annually at the Dan Patch Awards Banquet.

[READ MORE](#)

-all above releases from U.S. Harness Writers Association

## NEW YORKERS FOR HARNESS RACING LAUNCHES WEBSITE

New Yorkers for Harness Racing, a harness racing education and advocacy organization, today announced the launch of its website: [www.newyorkersforharnessracing.com](http://www.newyorkersforharnessracing.com). The site is a valuable resource for New Yorkers to learn about the extraordinary benefits that the harness racing community brings to New York State.

[READ MORE](#)



## 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.

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

#### RACE 9

(1) SHE STINGS looked like a filly coming into herself a couple of starts back but then got caught in a traffic jam last time and couldn't stretch her legs in the stretch. Two-year-old faces older for here but nothing that scares me from sticking with her.

-Derick Gwerner



### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

#### RACE 4

(1) STYLE FOR A MILE takes a drop in class after a solid effort in the F&M Open in her latest. She picks up Louis-Philippe Roy this evening and this will be a great opportunity to pick up win #1 for her new connections.

-John Rallis



#### RACE 2

(2) ANTOGNONI S just missed to a good one in Sir Pinnochio two weeks ago in round one of this series. Burke trotter sat the pocket in that race but I'd be surprised if co-owner Gingras doesn't have him on the front end tonight.

-Matt Rose



### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

#### RACE 10

(1) SUGAR MAN was facing stakes foes much of the year and last time lost to a 1-5 shot. This looks like a prime spot for him to shine unless someone steps up.

-Giwner



### FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

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

Meadowlands Analysis

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

Yonkers Analysis

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

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES



# NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

## 2026 LIVING HORSE HALL OF FAME BALLOTS ARE IN THE MAIL

The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame's Living Horse Hall of Fame ballots are in the mail. This year's outstanding candidates are:

BETTOR'S WISH	BUCK I ST PAT	MANCHEGO
MISTER BIG	NUNCIO	PURE COUNTRY
SAN PAIL	SHAKE IT CERRY	

Standardbred horses are elected into harness racing's Living Horse Hall of Fame by current members of the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame. Under new 2023 rules establishing an expanded slate of candidates, EIGHT (8) horses are now presented to the Museum membership on ballots mailed in early December. Ballots must be returned (postmarked) by December 31, 2025. The FOUR (4) top vote-getters will be inducted into the Living Horse Hall of Fame on Hall of Fame Day – Sunday, July 5, 2026 – in Goshen, New York.

If you wish to participate in the Living Horse Hall of Fame election process and are not currently a Museum member or if you are a Museum member and do not receive a ballot, please contact the Museum.

The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame is located at 240 Main Street in Goshen, New York. For information on the Museum, membership, special events, gift shop services and educational programs the Museum offers, please call (845) 294-6330 or visit [www.harnessmuseum.com](http://www.harnessmuseum.com).

-release (Harness Racing Hall of Fame)

## BEAU JANGLES TOPS FINAL 2025 HAMBO SOCIETY/BREEDERS CROWN POLL

With the conclusion of the Grand Circuit season last week, the final Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll of 2025 was released Wednesday, with Beau Jangles leading the way at No. 1.

Beau Jangles took over the top position in the poll in Week 20 of the rankings, following the Breeders Crown, and remained there for the remaining five weeks.

The horses ranked second through fourth also spent time at No. 1 during the season. Miki And Minnie occupied the top spot for six weeks, Yo Tillie for one week, and Louprint for seven weeks at the beginning of the rankings and later for an additional five weeks.

Following the top four were Lexus Kody, Loua Dipa, Twin B Joe Fresh, Super Chapter and Ervin Hanover – all in their same spots as a week ago.

On To Norway, who last week closed his campaign with his 23rd consecutive win, joined the Top 10 at No. 10. On To Norway leads all horses in North America in victories this year, as of Wednesday.

Emoticon Legacy dropped out of the Top 10.

The Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown poll does not determine year-end awards. Rankings based on the votes of harness racing media representatives on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

Rank	Name (1st-Place Votes)	Age/Sex/Gait	Record	Earnings	Points	Pvs
1	Beau Jangles (22)	2cp	12-12-0-0	\$1,227,326	327	1
2	Miki And Minnie (3)	3fp	15-13-2-0	\$1,123,824	277	2
3	Yo Tillie (2)	3ft	12-11-1-0	\$979,195	263	3
4	Louprint (6)	3cp	12-10-1-0	\$1,025,971	237	4
5	Lexus Kody	7gt	21-11-3-4	\$1,317,651	209	5
6	Loua Dipa	2fp	13-9-2-1	\$827,028	143	6
7	Twin B Joe Fresh (1)	5mp	9-6-2-1	\$526,714	130	7
8	Super Chapter	3ct	14-9-3-1	\$1,236,099	108	8
9	Ervin Hanover	5hp	17-10-1-1	\$848,218	69	9
10	On To Norway (1)	3gt	24-23-1-0	\$636,294	54	--

-edited release (by Ken Weingartner)

## OHHA TO LIVE STREAM CHARITY NIGHT DRAW

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association will host Charity Night on Saturday, Dec. 6, at Hollywood Gaming at Dayton Raceway.

Ten charities will participate in the event, each paired with a horse during a designated race. The charity paired with the first-place finisher will receive \$10,000, while second and third place will receive \$5,000 and \$3,000, respectively. All other charities will receive a \$2,000 donation from the OHHA for participating.

The charities will find out which horse they will be cheering for during

a live stream on the [OHHA Facebook page](#) on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 1 p.m.

The participating local charities are 4 Paws for Ability, Dayton Unit NAACP, Fisher/Nightingale Houses Inc., Hannah's Treasure Chest, Honor Flight Dayton, Miami Valley Meals, Ohio's Hospice of Dayton, Pink Ribbon Good, Ronald McDonald House Charities Dayton, and Ticket to Dream.

-release (OHHA)

## MEADOWLANDS RACETRACK'S TOYS FOR TOTS COLLECTION DRIVE

This holiday season, the Meadowlands Racetrack is once again partnering with former Jets wide receiver, Quincy Enunwa, for its annual Toys for Tots Collection Drive, running now through Friday, December 12th.

All are welcome to donate new, unwrapped toys through Friday, December 12th. Enunwa will be on site on December 12th to help collect toys and talk with fans at the track.

The US Marines Toys for Tots and Quincy Enunwa will personally deliver the collected toys to children at SBH Health System – a Safety Net Hospital in the Bronx, NYC – on Tuesday, December 16th at noon.

"Children need our help more than ever this holiday season," said Jason M. Settlemoir, GM/COO of the Meadowlands Racetrack. "We encourage all of our patrons and horsemen to donate a new, unwrapped toy to our toy drive to help make a child's day a little brighter during the holidays."

For more information on the Toys for Tots collection drive and live racing, visit [PlayMeadowlands.com](http://PlayMeadowlands.com).

-release (Meadowlands)

## OSS STALLION REGISTRATION FORM IS NOW LIVE

The Ontario Sires Stakes program stallion registration form is now live.

Those wishing to register a stallion with the OSS Program for 2026 can do so by filling out the [online stallion registration form](#).

A pdf version of the application form can be [downloaded here](#) for those wishing to submit a paper copy.

If you require assistance contact the OSS Program Coordinator, Christina Saffit, at 416-407-4841 or at [ossprogram@ontarioracing.com](mailto:ossprogram@ontarioracing.com).

Please note that stallions must be registered with the program prior to any mare(s) being bred to be eligible for OSS57.

-release (Ontario Racing)

## ALWAYS A MIKI TO DUPUIS FARM FOR 2026

Dupuis Farm is pleased to announce Always A Miki will be joining their stallion lineup for the 2026 breeding season. The iron tough son of Always B Miki was a standout during his rookie season, winning the Governor's Cup in 1:50 2/5 to end his debut season on the track during which he earned well over \$300,000.

As a sophomore he continued to compete with the elite of the class including in all three triple crown races and then successfully transitioned to open competition from ages four through seven. In total Always A Miki compiled a record of 29-26-23 from an impressive 158 lifetime starts for more than \$787,424 in earnings.

Not only does Always A Miki bring grit and talent to the stallion barn, he also brings first class breeding. His dam, Beach Gal, is sired by the great Somebeachsomewhere and earned more than half a million during her impressive career.

In addition to Always A Miki she has also produced his full brother, Maximus Miki p, 1:47 4/5s –'25 (\$1,087,847), winner of the \$350,000 Fan Duel Championship Final at the Meadowlands on November 15th in 1:47 3/5 to tie the stakes record. His half-siblings Ammo p, 3, Q1:49 2/5 (\$693,355) and Sweet Gal p, 3, 1:49f (\$296,497) and Strangeronthbeach p, 3, 1:52 3/5s –'25.

Always A Miki's 2025 yearling sister by Bulldog Hanover recently sold at Lexington for \$200,000. His dam is a full sister to Nicholas Beach p, 1:47 (\$544,215) and his second dam is a full sister to \$1.8 million winner Atochia p, 1:49f.

Always A Miki joins Wings Of Royalty, State Treasurer, and Dudes The Man in the Dupuis Farm stallion barn. His introductory stud fee has been set at \$2,500. For further information or to book to Always A Miki, please go to [dupuisfarm.com](http://dupuisfarm.com).

-release (Dupuis Farm)